



## Living with COVID-19 – Preventative measures to protect your business or event.

On 21 February, the Prime Minister announced the end of all remaining legal restrictions as part of the government's 'Living with COVID' strategy.

Changes being introduced before 1 April include:

- There is no legal requirement to self-isolate following a positive COVID-19 test result
- An end to routine contact tracing, including venue check-ins on the NHS COVID-19 app
- Free lateral flow (rapid) tests and PCR tests will end for the general public
- Larger venues will no longer need to use the NHS COVID Pass as a means of entry

A full list of the changes can be found on page 22 of the national [Living with COVID Plan](#).

While the government is confident it is appropriate to remove legal restrictions, the future remains uncertain. The pandemic is not yet over and rates in Bristol remain high. It is possible that we will see further spikes and waves of infection both locally and globally.

As we learn how to live with COVID-19 in the long term it is more important than ever to look at your organisations business continuity plans and consider the measures we outline here.

Businesses in higher risk settings, such as care homes or cold stores, should consider stricter levels of control to prevent further COVID-19 outbreaks.

### Implementing a Local Framework for Living with COVID

In response to the national plan for Living with COVID and taking account of our local risk assessment we have developed a [local framework for Bristol](#). This consists of four pillars for action, prevention, protection, treatment and response supported by action on surveillance, communication and engagement.

The challenges businesses have faced is clear, but your continued hard work has helped to minimise outbreaks and maintain business continuity.

To help keep your workforce safe and your business open, Bristol City Council (BCC) and Public Health urge businesses to remain cautious and to continue following voluntary COVID-safe behaviours, proven to be successful over the last two years, for any activity or event on BCC land.

#### Prevention

Individual voluntary behaviours and measures in workplaces and public places will continue to be effective in reducing the spread of infection and preventing harm.

As we move into this new voluntary space there are still many small actions, we can all do, that collectively make a big difference to virus transmission. Where possible, this includes:



## **Vaccinations**

Vaccination remains our best defence against COVID-19, offering substantial protection against infection and hospitalisation. Those who remain unvaccinated are at higher risk from COVID-19.

Two doses of vaccine provide strong protection against COVID-19. However, the protection from vaccines reduces over time. Booster shots have been proven to restore a substantial level of immunity, reducing emergency department attendances and hospital admissions by 80 to 90%.

Make sure you are fully vaccinated and encourage your employees to get their vaccinations. A highly vaccinated workforce will help to keep businesses open, reduce absenteeism and increase your profits.

[Visit the NHS website to book or manage a COVID-19 vaccination](#) or visit [www.grabajab.net](http://www.grabajab.net) for an up-to-date list of local walk-in clinics.

## **Face coverings**

Although wearing a face covering is no longer mandatory, we advise people to protect others as well as themselves and recommend that people consider continuing to wear one in crowded and enclosed spaces and when they come into contact with people they don't usually meet.

Encourage your staff to wear a face covering especially if they are front of house and dealing with customers.

## **Ventilation**

We strongly recommend you maintain good ventilation throughout the premises to help flush out older stale air and let fresh air in. Opening windows and doors allows fresh air in and for air to circulate. Mechanical ventilation can be used where natural ventilation is not practical.

License conditions should be checked, where applicable, before introducing any changes to prevent undue noise and disturbance to your neighbours.

[Visit the Health and Safety Executive \(HSE\) website for more information on ventilation.](#)

## **Sickness**

Support your employees, by asking anyone who is unwell to stay at home and not attend the workplace or venue.

Whether it's COVID-19 or not, looking after yourself at home can help protect more vulnerable people and limit the spread of respiratory illnesses.

## **Cleaning and hygiene**

Providing a safe workplace will increase the confidence of your employees, reassure your customers that your place is safe to visit and help reduce infection rates, helping to keep your business open.



We recommend that you continue to follow good practice measures, including:

- Identify frequently touched surfaces in your risk assessment and develop a documented cleaning schedule.
- Make frequently touched surfaces a high priority for cleaning, paying particular attention to:
  - Shared equipment such as microphones used by speakers at events, and between users where this is practical
  - High-traffic areas, such as door handles, lift buttons and handrails
  - Toilet facilities, setting clear use and cleaning guidance, including a visible and up-to-date cleaning schedule
- Staff and customers should clean their hands regularly with soap or alcohol gels
  - Supply self-service cleaning products to customers such as sprays, disposable cloths and wipes, and provide additional waste facilities
  - Make sure wet handwashing is freely available in toilets and freestanding handwashing stations and hand gels points
  - Following NHS advice to 'Catch it, Bin it, Kill it' [catch-bin-kill.pdf \(nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/catch-bin-kill/)

### **Communications**

Produce clear communications for your staff and your customers so they are aware of the measures in place.

### **Clinically vulnerable**

For those at higher risk from COVID-19, the full lifting of restrictions will bring added levels of anxiety. Businesses should be mindful and sympathetic to the clinically vulnerable who may still want to see and practice COVID-safe measures.

No discrimination should be shown to customers continuing to wear facemasks.

We encourage you to be sympathetic to any requests which may include:

- people wanting to be seated outdoors or near a window for added ventilation
- access to hand cleaning facilities or self-service cleaning products
- online ordering or click and collect service.

### **Further information**

For the latest information and updates on COVID-19 including travel, testing and vaccines visit the government website: [www.gov.uk/coronavirus](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus) or Health and Safety Executive website: [www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus](https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus)

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