COVID guidance support factsheet and FAQ's. Version 1.11

Introduction
This document has been created for all level of Management and staff to assist the implementation of the new "Events & Attractions" guidance which replaces the Performing Arts DCMS procedures.

Please ensure you are working from the latest version of the guidance which is available on the government's website Website link.   There are now Six steps to protect yourself, your staff and your customers during coronavirus (COVID-19):

1. **Complete a health and safety risk assessment that includes risks from COVID-19.** It should consider any reasonable adjustments needed for staff and customers with disabilities. You should also share your risk assessment with your staff.
2. **Turn people with COVID-19 symptoms away.** Staff members or customers should not visit any venue and self-isolate if they or someone in their household has any symptoms.
3. **Provide adequate ventilation.** You should make sure there is a supply of fresh air to enclosed spaces where there are people present. This can be natural ventilation through windows, doors and vents, mechanical ventilation using fans and ducts, or a combination of both.
4. **Clean more often.** Increase how often you clean surfaces, especially those that are touched a lot.
5. **Enable people to check in at your venue.** You are no longer legally required to collect contact details, however doing so will help to support NHS Test and Trace to reduce the spread of the virus.
6. **Communicate and train.** Keep all your workers, contractors and visitors up-to-date on how you're using and updating safety measures.

Despite legal restrictions being lifted organisations will still need to manage COVID risks to ensure the health and safety of their employees & visitors. The guidance should be used and adapted to your own individual circumstances in conjunction with a COVID specific risk assessment.

Reference should also be made to the Devolved Parliaments and Assemblies COVID guidance:

Northern Ireland: https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-regulations-guidance-and-what-they-mean-you

Scotland: https://www.gov.scot/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance/

Wales: https://gov.wales/coronavirus

Please check the rules carefully and make sure you understand them as they differ depending on your location within the UK.

If members would like to submit any new items to be included such as FAQs or COVID relevant polices/procedures that they are happy to share with the wider industry please send an email to: ceooffice@soltukt.co.uk.

For general Safety & Risk enquiries please email phillip@soltukt.co.uk

FAQ's

1) **What is the guidance?**
   The guidance covers how to open workplaces safely and organise events while reducing the risk of spreading COVID-19. It provides practical considerations on how to apply this in theatres, live performances and festivals. This guidance supports your existing legal obligations relating to health and safety, entertainment licensing and regulations, employment and equality duties. It contains non-statutory guidance that you should take into account when complying with these existing obligations, to ensure you are working safely by reducing the risk of COVID-19.

2) **How is COVID transmitted?**
   The virus is primarily transmitted between people through respiratory droplets. Like the common cold, infection usually occurs through close contact with a person with coronavirus via cough, sneezes and hand contact. A temperature of 38C or more is usually considered a high temperature (fever). A person can also catch the virus by touching contaminated surfaces if they do not wash their hands. The virus can live on hard surfaces for up to 72 hours (48 hours on fabric/soft furnishings). Tools, equipment and potentially contaminated surfaces should be thoroughly cleaned before use and at regular intervals in accordance with your risk assessment. Airborne transmission is possible in specific settings in which procedures or support treatments that generate aerosols are performed. To date there is no evidence to suggest that the virus can be spread by perspiration.

   https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do

3) **When should I get tested?**
   You should get tested:

   - if you have coronavirus symptoms now (a high temperature, a new, continuous cough, or a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste)
   - if someone tests positive within the company, all those within the company who have been in direct contact with that person should be tested
   - if someone you live with have symptoms
   - if you live in England and have been told to have a test before you go into hospital, for example, for surgery

   Where you are providing testing on-site, you should ensure that workplace testing is carried out in a safe manner, and in an appropriate setting where control measures are in place to manage the risk of COVID-19 transmission during the testing process. These include maintaining social distancing where possible, frequent cleaning, good hygiene and adequate ventilation. You should also ensure that an appropriate setting is available for individuals to wait in while their test is processed. For further details on testing & isolating:

   Get tested for coronavirus (COVID-19) - NHS (www.nhs.uk)

- It is against the law for you to knowingly allow someone who is being required to self-isolate to come to work.
- You can enable workers to work from home while self-isolating, if this is appropriate and they are feeling well enough.
- Ensure you and your staff are familiar with the symptoms of COVID-19
- People who test positive but have no symptoms must also self-isolate. If they develop symptoms during their isolation period, they must restart their 10-day self-isolation period from the day after they develop symptoms.

You can find more information in the [guidance for households with possible or confirmed COVID-19 infections](#).

4) What is test & trace?
The NHS test and trace service:

- ensures that anyone who develops symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) can quickly be tested to find out if they have the virus
- helps trace close recent contacts of anyone who tests positive for coronavirus and, if necessary, notifies them that they must self-isolate at home to help stop the spread of the virus

You should:

- display an official NHS QR code poster, so that customers and visitors can 'check in' although this is now not a legal requirement
- adhere to General Data Protection Regulations

Further details: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-how-it-works

Managing Risk at Work

5) What should I expect from my employer?
Employers should ensure that all staff are provided with factual information on COVID-19, the steps being taken to identify and manage the virus and what staff can do to protect themselves. Employers are responsible for complying with all health and safety standards, contractual and statutory employment rights as well as equality rights. It's a good idea to talk about:

- when staff might return to the workplace
- how staff will travel to and from work
- how health and safety is being reviewed and managed – you should share the latest risk assessment
- any planned adjustments to the workplace, for example additional hand washing facilities, staggering start and finish times to avoid overcrowding or floor markings to help people stay apart
- if there might be a phased return of the workforce, for example some staff returning before others

6) Can all my employees return to work?
The government is no longer instructing people to work from home if they can, so employers can start to plan a return to workplaces.

It's important to review your employees on an individual basis, including completing risk assessments if required. In considering which employees should return to the workplace, you should consider:

- whether an individual has an underlying health condition and by what factor this increases their risk of suffering from the coronavirus.
- the personal risk assessment should determine if an individual can safely return to work in the environment they are expected.
- whether they can continue to do their job remotely
- if it's essential to your business for the individual to return to the venue
- whether there are control measures, such as an isolated room or increased PPE, that would reduce their risk to a reasonable level.

7) **What should I tell my staff?**
After you have set a date to reopen the workplace it is important to communicate this with employees as soon as possible. This will allow time for you to update them with any changes and share risk assessments, as well as address any queries or concerns they may have.   Some employees might be anxious about safety and returning to the workplace. For example, this might be because they're:

- worried about catching coronavirus if they are considered higher risk and if employees are living with someone who is considered a high-risk individual
- employees who have only had one dose of the vaccine and may feel vulnerable returning to the workplace
- caring for children
- living with someone who has a serious health condition

Employers should encourage staff to talk to them about any concerns they have and try to resolve them together.   For example, they could:

- keep someone on temporary leave if they're temporarily unable to work
- continue to allow remote working if possible
- arrange for someone to work different hours temporarily to avoid peak time travel
- allow the employee to take the time off as holiday or unpaid leave. The employer does not have to agree to this.

If someone refuses to attend work without a valid reason, it could result in disciplinary action.

8) **Do I need to make reasonable adjustments for disabled audience members & disabled employees?**
COVID measures do not take precedence over Equality legislation and venues must be mindful of how any alteration in policy or practice impacts people with protected characteristics. You must ensure any changes to entries, exit and queue management take into account reasonable adjustments for those who need them, including disabled individuals, including those with sensory disabilities.

You should ensure that disabled audience members have clear and comprehensive information about the arrangements that are in place (including permission to go straight to the head of the queue); ensuring vigilance around accessible toilets and providing free companion tickets for anyone, such as a blind or partially sighted person, who needs physical support or guidance to get around safely. It is not appropriate to

turn away an individual who wants to attend an event on the grounds that staff *perceive* them to be at higher risk from COVID.

In line with best practice it is recommended that an equality impact assessment is considered as part of any COVID-19 Secure planning.

9) How can I protect myself at work?

Your employer should be carrying out risk assessments and putting measures in place to minimise the risk of exposure by following current Government guidelines. You should also be given information and training on the risks of exposure and how to minimise your risk. If you're required to use PPE, you should be given training on how to properly use this.

10) How can I reassure my audiences that we are safe?

SOLT and UK Theatre have launched the See It Safely toolkit to support theatres as they reopen and to instil audience confidence. By signing up to the toolkit, venues can show audiences that they are compliant with the latest government guidelines. DCMS are encouraging the roll out of this scheme across the wider live events sector, and the Federation of Scottish Theatre are administering and promoting the campaign in Scotland. The toolkit consists of the following:

- The See It Safely mark
- A health and safety video for audiences
- A selection of signage for your venue
- A certificate which can be displayed in your venue
- Ticketing principles
- Seven Inclusive Principles for Arts & Cultural Organisations
- Website copy which you can adapt as necessary
- Details on the #BackOnStage social media campaign

See it Safely (officiallondontheatre.com) See it Safely Toolkit - UK Theatre

You should also consider:

- encouraging customers & visitors to wear face coverings in crowded space
- while you are not legally required to collect customer contact details it can support NHS Test & Trace.
- display the NHS QR Code poster to allow customers who wish to check in to do so provide an alternative method for customers to check in if you do not display the NHS QR code such as your own QR code check in system

11) What is a COVID Pass?

The NHS COVID Pass lets you share your coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccination records or test COVID-19 status in a secure way. From 19 July, you may be asked to demonstrate your COVID-19 status at places that use the service in England as a condition of entry to a venue or event. Use of the NHS COVID Pass is voluntary for individual organisations. However, the government encourage the use of the NHS COVID Pass in facilities or events where people are likely to be in close proximity to a large number of people from other households for a sustained period of time. Further guidance is available here:

NHS COVID Pass - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

[Using the NHS COVID Pass - NHSX](#)

12) **We have existing, up-to-date risk assessments, do we have to update them?**
The Government requires organisations to do specific Covid-19 risk assessments for workplaces and at-risk staff. These are not the same as the pre-pandemic risk assessments. All the usual health and safety requirements still apply at your workplace but you must now also factor in the danger posed by the virus. You should consider:

- holding a COVID-19 pre-production meeting with Producer, Director, Designer, Production Manager, Venue Management and Stage Management to think about how rehearsals and production will be managed and control measures applied
- sharing the venue seating and stage configuration with the Director, Designer and other key staff at the start of the process to ensure adequate risk assessment planning

HSE guidance on COVID risk assessments:
https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/working-safely/risk-assessment.htm

HSE Simple Health & safety: https://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/risk/index.htm

ABTT Back to Work Safely guidance: https://www.abtt.org.uk/resources-guidance/covid19/back-to-work-working-safely/

When it comes to reopening your business, it is vital that you revisit risk assessments to ensure they are still current and you have the right measures in place to mitigate the identified risks.

13) **Why are Covid-19 risk assessments important?**
As an employer, you must protect people from harm. This includes taking reasonable steps to protect your workers and others from coronavirus. The risk assessment will help you manage risk and protect people. You must:

- identify what work activity or situations might cause transmission of the virus
- think about who could be at risk and those that need to stay at home or protected with special measures
- determine your capacity to reopen or highlight activities that cannot be safely undertaken now
- decide how likely it is that someone could be exposed
- act to remove the activity or situation, or if this isn't possible, control the risk

The control measures arising from your risk assessment will only prove successful if your business, visitors & employees adhere to it. It's also important to review your assessment regularly. If any amendments to your procedures are required always ensure you consult fully with your employees.

14) **What are the legal requirements for Covid-19 risk assessments?**
The Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act 1974 imposes a duty on employers to "ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work" of all employees. In addition The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 requires employers carry out "suitable and sufficient" assessments of the risks to

the health and safety of their employees to which they are exposed while at work, as well as the risks to non-employees who may be affected by their activities.

15) Do I need to employ a COVID Compliance Officer?

Some industries utilise the services of a COVID-19 Compliance Officers who oversee the implementation of COVID-19 workplace plans, ensure adherence to workplace risk control measures put in place to manage the risk of COVID-19 infections, communicate important information to workers and address any concerns.

Compliance should be considered everyone's responsibility within the workplace. COVID responsibilities can be absorbed into a group of employee's everyday jobs to help manage this new workplace hazards. This will be managed alongside other H&S responsibilities. In-house appointments will assist management in safeguarding the welfare and safety of the workforce and visitors ensuring the organisations is up to date with new and evolving government legislation around COVID-19. Duties will include:

- training staff on how to comply with COVID-safe procedures and risks
- monitoring risk mitigation in the workplace
- supporting creation & updating of risk assessments and checklists
- adapting procedures and policies to reflect changes in government guidance, legislation and industry best practice
- reporting/escalation of non-compliance issues

16) Do we need to keep social distancing?

The government has removed social distancing rules. However, those that have not been fully vaccinated or remain vulnerable should be aware of the risks of close contact. You should consider:

- avoiding unnecessary gatherings of people
- altering seating arrangements for employees to ensure adequate distancing
- staggering the work hours/patterns/breaks to ensure there are no mass gatherings of employees
- restricting the number of employees & customers into your workplace, or implementing a one-way system in the workplace to reduce crossovers
- increasing the frequency of hand washing, cleaning etc
- reducing cast, orchestra and other performance group sizes wherever possible to enable social distancing to be maintained
- performers attending rehearsals and performances only when required
- utilising additional entrances/exits around the venue
- evaluating food & beverage outlets and other areas within the venue audience may congregate (toilets, lifts, foyer etc).

17) Can I start my participation work again?

The type of protective measures providers put in place will depend on their individual circumstances, such as the type of the activity they offer (for example whether participants will be moving around rather than sitting), the size and layout of their premises, and whether the activity is being held indoors or outdoors. The key measures that every setting should have in place are:

- minimising contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring those who have symptoms do not attend. This also applies if a member of their family has symptoms
- encouraging everyone to clean their hands more often than usual, including before and after activities and before and after using toilet/washroom facilities
- cleaning frequently touched surfaces more often than usual
- increased frequency of cleaning of toilets and washrooms
- minimising contact and mixing between groups of participants by altering the environment to allow for social distancing and keeping participants in small groups (no more than 15 participants and one or two staff members)
- rooms are well-ventilated, either by a ventilation unit or naturally (for example, open windows)
- use of toilets and changing rooms is managed to prevent overcrowding
- social distancing is promoted, through physical markers for instance

Department of Education published the following guidance which may be of relevance: Out-of-school settings, schools and further education.

18) Will I need to wear a face covering or PPE?
Face coverings are no longer required by law, but the government expects and recommends that people should continue to wear them in crowded and enclosed settings, to protect themselves and others. We strongly recommend the continuing use of face coverings by workers and customers as a safety measure, in enclosed and crowded spaces where they may come into contact with people they don't normally meet.

Remember that some people are not able to wear face coverings, and the reasons for this may not be visible to others. Please be mindful and respectful of such circumstances. Be aware that face coverings may make it harder to communicate with people who rely on lip reading, facial expressions and clear sound.

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own#when-you-do-not-need-to-wear-a-face-covering

19) Can performers touch & interact on stage or in rehearsal?
Directors and other relevant roles may need to be brought on earlier in the planning and prep for productions to establish what is required to deliver the production within the restrictions of managing the COVID-19 risk. The control measures arising from your risk assessment could include:

- scripts should be provided as early as possible to support with planning
- keep performers in place for as little time as possible
- try to avoid performing in a face-to-face position. If close contact is absolutely essential, minimising this and using fixed teams where possible
- consider a testing regime for performers if essential close proximity working is required
- performers must only be on stage when required for their scene and to avoid unnecessary contact with other crew at all times

20) What if someone falls ill?
Ensure that you have an up-to-date plan setting out the steps to take if a case of COVID-19 is reported and should include the following actions:

- Self-isolate immediately if you show any symptoms of COVID-19 and book a PCR test as soon as possible, even if you are fully vaccinated.
- Close contacts who are exempt from self-isolation will still be advised to take a PCR test but will not be required to self-isolate while they wait for the result. They will also be advised to consider the following precautions until 10 days after their most recent contact with the positive case:
  - limiting close contact with people outside their household, especially in enclosed spaces
  - wearing a face covering in enclosed spaces and where they are unable to maintain social distancing
  - limiting contact with anyone who is clinically extremely vulnerable
  - taking part in regular lateral flow testing
- Staff not exempt will have to self-isolate for 10 days even if they test negative. Employers must not allow anyone self-isolating to come into work or work anywhere other than where they are self-isolating for their full self-isolation period. Failure to do so could result in your firm facing a fine, starting from £1,000.
- If a customer presents with symptoms, or you become aware of a case of suspected or confirmed COVID-19 on-site, they should not be admitted or should be asked to leave the facility. The customer should be advised to self-isolate and take a PCR test
- Inform your public health team, nominate a single point of contact to lead on contacting them
- Ensure your facility is thoroughly cleaned.

From 16 August you will not need to self-isolate if you are notified you have had close contact with someone with COVID-19 and any of the following apply:

- you are fully vaccinated (vaccinated with an MHRA approved COVID-19 vaccine in the UK, and at least 14 days have passed since you received the recommended doses of that vaccine.)
- you are below the age of 18 years and 6 months
- you have taken part in or are currently part of an approved COVID-19 vaccine trial
- you are not able to get vaccinated for medical reasons

Further guidance [NHS Test and Trace in the workplace - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](www.gov.uk)

Hygiene

21) How should I clean my premises?
You can help to control the spread of COVID-19 by cleaning and disinfecting larger spaces or rooms. Fog, mist, vapour or UV treatments may be suitable options for cleaning and disinfecting larger spaces, in order to help control the spread of coronavirus. It's advisable to use a cleaning schedule to make sure that surfaces and equipment are cleaned when they need to be:

- **Detergents -** clean the surface and remove grease but do not kill bacteria and viruses

- **Disinfectants -** kill bacteria and viruses but do not work if the surface is dirty. As a general rule the disinfectant should remain on the surface for around 10 minutes
- **Sanitisers -** can be used to both clean & disinfect. First use the sanitiser to clean the surface, then re-apply to the surface. A sanitiser must remain for a minimum of 60 seconds before being wiped off. (min 70% alcohol)

The treatment you use will depend on:

- the size of the area to be treated, its shape and how easily it can be sealed off if delivering an airborne product
- whether there are hard or soft surfaces - soft furnishings may act as a 'sink' for the airborne chemicals and emit them for some time after treatment (it may be possible to remove items such as sofas before treatment)
- Some areas may be better suited to UV surface treatments than airborne chemicals or vice-versa
- Further details can be found on the HSE website:

  https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/disinfecting-premises-during-coronavirus-outbreak.htm?utm_source=govdelivery&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=coronavirus&utm_term=disinfecting-premises-4&utm_content=digest-22-jul-20

22) **What "common touch" items do I need to clean?**
Cleaning should be generally enhanced, including more frequent cleaning of rooms or shared areas that are used by different groups. The use of "hot desking" should be prohibited where possible. Cleaning frequently touched surfaces more often than normal, such as:

- door handles
- handrails
- auditorium seats (including backs & arms)
- table & desktops
- electronic devices/tablets/phones
- taps, washing facilities & hand sanitisers
- toilet flush and seats
- lift and hoist controls
- machinery and equipment
- office equipment
- stage floor
- rehearsal room floor
- dance floors/staging

23) **What is adequate ventilation?**
Indoor settings can increase the risk of catching the virus, due to the fact that COVID-19 virus molecules can accumulate in the air and be inhaled. Therefore businesses are encouraged to ensure there is adequate ventilation in the workplace to improve air flow and prevent the build up of the virus molecules. Consider:

- Opening windows and vents. (Be careful of leaving open doors, particularly if they are fire doors)
- Use mechanical ventilation such as fans and ducts

- Identifying areas of the workplace which may be poorly ventilated. You can use a CO_2 monitor to help you do this. If you can't improve ventilation, and can avoid using these spaces you should do so. Further guidance is available here:

[Ventilation and air conditioning during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic (hse.gov.uk)](hse.gov.uk)

24) How do I clean my costumes?
CITA (Costume in Theatre Association) have developed procedures which aim to highlight the risks and offer solutions to help arrive at a COVID Secure working environment. It gives practical considerations of how these guidelines can be applied in the costume workplace: https://www.costumeintheatre.com/costume-during-covid

25) I have more questions, where can I find more help?

Further GOV.UK guidance:

- [COVID-19: What you need to do](#)
- [Support for businesses and employers during coronavirus (COVID-19)](#)
- [General guidance for employees during coronavirus (COVID-19)](#)
- https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do
- https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation
- https://coronavirusresources.phe.gov.uk/

Useful websites:

HSE Coronavirus (COVID-19): latest information and advice	https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/index.htm
Association of British Theatre Technicians list of relevant COVID 19 resources	https://www.abtt.org.uk/resources-guidance/covid19/
Institution of Occupational Safety and Health	https://iosh.com/coronavirus
BECTU - union for creative ambition	https://bectu.org.uk/coronavirus/
Equity Support for creative workers	https://www.equity.org.uk/support
Musicians Union - latest news on Coronavirus for musicians	https://www.musiciansunion.org.uk/coronavirus
Plasa -technologies and services to the event and entertainment industries. Covid-19 News and updates	https://www.plasa.org/technical-news-topic/covid-19/
Independent Theatre Council Covid-19 Support	https://www.itc-arts.org/resources/covid-19-support
Stage management Association Covid-19 resources for members	https://stagemanagementassociation.co.uk/
Association of Lighting Designers Statement on Coronavirus	https://www.ald.org.uk/coronavirus-the-ald
British Occupational Hygiene Society return to work guidance	http://www.bohs.org/return-to-work-guidance/

Association of Event Organisers guidelines	https://www.aeo.org.uk/covid-19
Cinema UK – Cinema opening guidance	https://www.cinemauk.org.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/guidance-for-cinemas/
ACRE – Action with Rural Communities in England guidance for hall opening	https://acre.org.uk/cms/resources/press-releases//covid-19-information-sheet-opening-your-hall-after-lockdown-20.7.20-final.pdf