

Sunderland City Council Licensing Authority

Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Licensing Pre-reopening Checklist

In line with Government guidance and licensing requirements, licensed businesses intending to reopen their premises are advised to observe the following checklist.

COVID-19 Secure guidance for employers, employees and self-employed

Please observe the Government guidance: Keeping workers and customers safe during COVID-19 in restaurants, pubs, bars and takeaway services or for hotels and other guest accommodation as appropriate for your business type. These documents are available on the Council website: www.sunderland.gov.uk/licensing. We will provide any updates to such guidance as and when these may apply.

Your attention is drawn to some key points contained within the Government guidance about managing risk:

COVID-19 is a public health emergency

- Have you carried out a Covid-19 risk assessment which is requirement for all employers?
- If you have fewer than five workers, or are self-employed, you don't have to write anything down as part of your risk assessment. Your risk assessment will help you decide whether you have done everything you need to.
- The Government guidance provides information about "Staying COVID-19 Secure in 2020" and the "Five Steps to Safer Working Together":
- Failure to complete a risk assessment which takes account of COVID-19, or completing a risk assessment but failing to put in place sufficient measures to manage the risk of Covid-19, could constitute a breach of health and safety law.

Other operational matters to consider:

- Is the DPS named on the premises licence operational at the premises? If not a DPS variation application will be required before alcohol sales could recommence.
- Has there been a change to the premises licence holder or their registered address?
- Is the Part B Licence summary on display? Is Part A available for inspection?
- Have bar staff been authorised in writing to conduct alcohol sales? Are training records up to date?
- Has the Premises Licence annual fee been paid or is the premises licence suspended?
- Are any gaming permits and/or notifications paid up to date? If not, permission may have lapsed.
- Is your premises licence up to date and fit for purpose? Consider if you need; earlier or later hours, to modify conditions, add off sales etc. Consider if time limited licence applications or Temporary Event Notices (TENs) would help you if permanent changes are not needed or not possible.
- Do you need late night refreshment if trading after 11pm? Do you need to add activities or any unused spaces which could be used with social distancing (SD) which may require local planning permission?

- Review licence conditions (now and in light of subsequent COVID-19 regulations) and ensure the premises is compliant. Consider any amendments needed, for example use of any existing or new outside spaces, use of external dispense bars, adding off sales, door staff to manage SD etc.
- Consider scheduling delivery and collections to reduce mixing customers and staff with visitors. Do you plan to use new access points and regulate entry and flow of customers? Consider keeping windows and doors open (except fire doors) to assist ventilation.
- Check with us regarding these matters to establish if applications are required to make changes. Variations applications may be required, possibly to add time limited changes. Planning restrictions might also be needed if you wish change use of areas, trading hours or operational conditions.
- If you are considering using an area for customers not previously accessed by customers such as storage, staff areas or a car park a planning change of use may or may not be required.
- Government may permit use of public spaces for consumption of drinks and food outside and while mobile bars may not require planning consent (unless left in a fixed place), consent may be required for any fixed structure. You would need a licensing authorisation to use more bars either by way of TENs or variation.
- If you want to have outdoor bar/marquee/structure/fixed furniture on your land for more than 28 days you may need planning consent. Consider the impact of any new street furniture or advertising.
- Have you got a Tables and Chairs/Pavement licence in place? Is there an opportunity to amend the licence – hours or area?
- Check if you are in an area covered by a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) also known as controlled drinking where alcohol can be seized by the police unless the area is covered by a pavement licence or the area forms part of your premises licence plans.
- If you wish to license any external bars, you may require street trading consent.
- If you wish to use external spaces owned by the council or your landlord, contact us/them to discuss.
- If you are a landlord and your tenant has left, then carry out the necessary checks to ensure that the premises licence has not been surrendered or has lapsed.
- Have building works or plan layouts been undertaken during the closure period? If so, check whether licensing consent required.
- Consider COVID-19 related changes (such as installation of barriers and screens) you wish to make before opening and consider whether these need permissions or a licence variation.
- Is your fire risk assessment up to date? Do you need to review capacity levels within the assessment and/or any premises licence conditions in light of COVID-19 controls?
- Consider existing operating policies in light of COVID-19 regulations and whether these require updating. For example, admission and dispersal procedures, searching, drugs, toilet checks, underage, vulnerable persons, cleaning protocols, security, avoiding overcrowding of confined spaces, controlling queues and ensuring markers are in place or other measures to comply with social distancing.

- Consider website and social media messaging to advance notify customers how you will operate in regarding licensing issues so they know what to expect about queuing, social distancing, admission rules etc.
- What operational changes do staff need training about which are impacted on reopening?
- Consider liaising with neighbours, resident associations and local representation groups. Is it likely that the ambient noise levels will increase and residents may become sensitive to noise issues?
- Undertake pre-opening licence health check and risk assessment to comply with COVID-19 regulations, guidance and signage requirements.. This includes social distancing guidelines; hygiene information; entry and exit routes; pick up and drop off point instructions; customer instructions upon service and payment process.

Please check our website for any updates on Government guidance or amendments to the licensing legislation that may impact your business operation. Please contact us at licensing@sunderland.gov.uk if there are any issues that you are unsure about.

It is worth thinking about changes now to prepare for when restrictions may be further relaxed, whether this be partially or otherwise. We all have a duty to promote public health and safety and ensure activities take place compliantly and in promotion of the licensing objectives. There could be some conditions which cause challenges to comply with and which may require attention now.