Licensed premises reopening guidance

The government COVID-19 secure guidance on keeping workers and customers safe during COVID-19 for restaurants, pubs, bars and takeaway services can be found at [this link](#). This guidance is applicable to all businesses where food and drink is sold for consumption at a premises or for takeaway or delivery; for example, restaurants, pubs, bars, cafes, social clubs, and mobile caterers.

Details of the premises which can open from 4 July (and those which must remain closed until further notice) can be found at [gov.uk/guidance/opening-certain-businesses-and-venues-in-england-from-4-july-2020](#).

Reopening checklist

- Carry out a COVID-19 risk assessment (see [this link](#)) and ensure appropriate signage for customers including social distancing guidelines, hygiene information, entry and exit routes, and instructions for pick up/drop off, service and payment process.
- Check your fire risk assessment is up to date and review capacity levels in light of COVID-19 regulations. Also review any other existing policies in light of the current restrictions, including admission and dispersal, crowd and queue management, security and searches.
- Review the licence conditions to ensure compliance and consider whether any need amending, for example the use of outside areas, or the ability to keep windows and doors open (except fire doors) to assist ventilation. If you would like to change your conditions, please contact us to discuss whether this will be a minor or full variation.
- Consider liaising with neighbours and residents’ associations before reopening. It is likely the ambient noise levels will increase and residents may become sensitive to noise issues. Consider using an incidents and complaints log if you do not already have one, and ensure all staff know how to use it.
- Is the licence fit for purpose? Would you like to change your licensed hours, have an outside bar, or add off-sales? Please contact us to discuss whether this will be a minor or full variation.
- Consider use of external spaces which may be owned by your landlord, or the town, district or county council – you will need permission to use such areas and may need to check whether the areas are licensed, and whether that licence will cover any proposed activities (NB see below reference off-sales of alcohol and the use of adjacent outside areas for consumption).
- Have building works or refurbishment been undertaken during the closure, or are you planning to undertake works before opening? If there have been any changes to your licence plan, please contact us to discuss whether this will be a minor or full variation.
- Is the premises’ licence summary (Part B) and Section 57 notice (telling officers where Part A of the licence is kept) on display? Is the full licence (Part A) available for inspection?
- Has there been a change to the premises licence holder or their registered address? If you are a landlord and your tenant has left, you should check that the premises licence has not been surrendered or lapsed.
- Has the premises licence annual fee been paid? If not, the licence may be suspended.
- Has the gaming machine permit annual fee been paid? If it hasn’t then the permit will have lapsed and you will need to apply for a new one. Is the permit available for inspection?
- Notifications (automatic entitlements to 2 gaming machines) – if the premises licence has been transferred then you need to submit a new notification.
- Is the current designated premises supervisor (DPS) still working at the premises?
- Are all staff authorised in writing to sell alcohol? Where is this authorisation kept, and are all training records up to date? Do staff know how to record refusals of alcohol sales?
- What is the premises’ age verification policy? (Challenge 25 is recommended). Do I have notices to confirm the policy to customers?
- Pubwatch and other local initiatives – check for local advice and support.
Advice on off-sales and takeaways

If you have a premises licence that authorises off-sales of alcohol, you can operate a takeaway service provided you comply with your licence conditions. If your licence covers on-sales only, you will need to apply to vary your licence to add this activity. Please contact the licensing team to discuss how to do this.

If you are providing a takeaway service, it is your duty to take proactive measures to prevent nuisance issues, such as littering and public urination. In addition to considering this as part of your COVID-19 risk assessment, we would recommend that you follow the advice below:

- Do not sell any alcohol in glass receptacles.
- Do not provide external seating or tables and make any existing external areas inaccessible.
- Do not play any music from the premises, as this can attract crowds and make social distancing and dispersal harder to control.
- Carry out extra litter checks and pick up any litter in the immediate and surrounding area.
- Do not place any cutlery, napkins, condiments, etc outside - provide them at the time of service.
- Ensure you are aware of the nearest public toilets so you can direct customers if required.

Until your premises is permitted to open, you should ensure that any alcohol sold is taken well away from the premises and that customers are not staying nearby and returning to buy multiple drinks. If you have any area adjacent to your premises where seating is provided for customers, it is to be treated as part of the premises and therefore cannot be used. This applies whether or not you have provided the seating, and would include for example a public bench.

Advice on food deliveries

You will need to consider how you will maintain good food hygiene, including temperature control of the food during delivery and allergen information for customers. Deliveries should be left at the front door and not taken into the house by the delivery driver.

Deliveries of hot food and drinks between 23:00 and 05:00 will require a premises licence which authorises late night refreshment. There are no time restrictions of any type on the delivery of cold drinks and cold food. Also, alcohol cannot be included in your deliveries unless you have a premises licence which authorises off-sales, and you will need to ensure you have adequate age verification procedures in place.

Contacting us

If you need further licensing advice, or a copy of your licence or permit, please get in touch. While our office is closed, the best way to contact us is by email to licensing.unit@whitehorsedc.gov.uk or leave a message on 01235 422556 and someone will call you back.

If you are considering making an application, please note we can carry out consultation with the responsible authorities on draft applications, and provide guidance on matters which should be considered prior to submission of the full application. You can find an Applicant Guidance document on our website at the link below, along with application form templates and an online portal to submit and pay for applications.

Useful links

Working safely during coronavirus - restaurants, pubs, bars, cafes and takeaways
Working safely during coronavirus - shops and stores
Working safely during coronavirus - hotels and guest accommodation and indoor and outdoor attractions
How to carry out a COVID-19 risk assessment
Best Bar None - Free COVID-19 resources for licensed premises
Licensing Act 2003 Applicant Guidance, template forms and online application portal
Advice from the Food & Safety Team on ensuring safety of staff, customers and visitors to your premises
How to request a licence for putting tables and chairs outside restaurants and cafés
Details of the AA COVID-confident accreditation scheme

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