

Preparing to re-open your licensed premises once COVID-19 restrictions are relaxed

Dear Licence Holder

We want to help you be ready and open. The Government has announced a series of guidelines to help businesses open when previously they may have found it difficult. Here are some of the things you will need to think about so you are ready. West Suffolk Council has been supporting businesses through COVID-19 and this is part of our work to help you be ready.

- Is the Designated Premises Supervisor named on your Premises Licence still working at the premises?
- Has there been a change to the Premises Licence holder or their registered address?
- Is the Premises Licence Summary and Section 57 Notice on display? Is the full Premises Licence available for inspection?
- Is your Premises Licence fit for purpose in the new circumstances? Do you need to vary your hours of operation?
- Review conditions – ensure they are compliant and consider whether any need amending – for example use of outside space, licensing of external dispense bars, off sales, last entry, door staff, relaxation of delivery and collections to reduce interaction between customers or staff and visitors; opening new access points to regulate entry and flow of visitors and customers; ability to keep windows and doors open (except fire doors) to assist ventilation. You should discuss with the Licensing Team whether what you want can be dealt with as a 'minor variation' and with the Planning Team to ensure there are no restrictions.
- Has the Premises Licence annual fee been paid? If a Suspension Notice is in force you will need to arrange payment before you re-open (details of how to do this will be on the Notice) and remove if applicable.
- Has any gaming permit annual fee been paid? If it hasn't then the permit will have lapsed and need to apply for a new one.
- 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 been undertaken during the closure? If so, has a variation of your Premises Licence been submitted?
- Consider what works you wish to undertake before opening and consider whether they need permission – such as installation of barriers and screens.
- Check your fire risk assessment is up to date and review capacity levels within the assessment and/or Premises Licence conditions in light of COVID-19 regulations.
- Consider liaising with neighbours and resident associations before the premises reopen; it is likely that the ambient noise levels will increase, and residents may become sensitive to noise issues.
- Look at policies in light of COVID 19 – such as admission and dispersal, drugs, toilet checks and cleaning protocols, security, avoiding overcrowding of areas used regularly like corridors and toilets and other confined spaces, controlling

queues and ensuring one metre markers are in place. Encourage customers to email, use website or apps when ordering or calling ahead to reserve seating.

- Consider use of external spaces which may be owned by your landlord or Local Authority and speak to them.
- Pre-opening licence health check and risk assessment to comply with COVID-19 regulations (when released) and signage requirements – including social distancing guidelines; hygiene information; entry and exit routes; pick up and drop off point instructions; customer instructions upon service and payment process.
- Consider any plans for the local area. There could be a gradual reopening and therefore certain conditions could be problematic initially, for example door staff. [West Suffolk website - Creating safer places](#)
- Contact the local Police and local authority Licensing Officers to discuss concerns.

Pavement licences

The Government is currently working on the Business and Planning Bill that includes a provision for district councils to issue pavement licenses for food and beverage businesses. The council is working through the practical implications of this and as soon as the legislation is enacted, further information will be available on our website: [West Suffolk website - Street Vending / Pavement Cafe Permit](#).

Current government draft guidance can be found on: [GOV.UK - Pavement licences; draft guidance](#)

Advice and enquiries

If you need any further advice, please contact the West Suffolk Council Licensing Team. Email: licensing@westsuffolk.gov.uk, phone: 01284 758050

Police contact details: policealcohollicensing@suffolk.pnn.police.uk

Food safety advice and guidance

- Ensure consideration is given to introducing preventative measures to reduce COVID risk as far as reasonably practicable, such as changing seating to not be face to face, installation of screening, limiting hand contact points, increased cleaning and access to hand cleaning for everyone.
- COVID risk assessments should reflect changes in procedures and give consideration to other risk assessments that could be affected, such as fire safety, changes to delivery procedures, cleaning protocol, kitchen protocol such as dedicated staff for pot wash duties.
- Don't forget that the food businesses HACCP document may need reviewing to reflect changes in menus as well as procedures: many catering businesses use the Food Standards Agency's 'Safer Food, Better Business' pack.
- Remember to review all risk assessments regularly, usually at least annually, as practices and procedures may change and affect other aspects in the business such as fire safety.

For the latest guidance and relevant advice for food business:

- [GOV.UK - Guidance to working safely during COVID-19](#)
- [Food Standards Agency - reopening checklist for food businesses during COVID-19](#)
- [Food Standards Agency - Adapting restaurants and food businesses for takeaway and food delivery during COVID-19](#)
- [Health and Safety Executive - Working safely during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#)

If you need any further food safety advice, please email the West Suffolk Council Commercial Environmental Health Team at foodandsafety@westsuffolk.gov.uk

Check for latest advice on the Government website:

- [GOV.UK - Guidance to working safely during COVID-19](#)
- [GOV.UK - Guidance on opening certain businesses and venue in England from 4 July 2020](#)
- [GOV.UK - Guidance for Hotels and other guest accommodation](#)
- [GOV.UK - Coronavirus outbreak FAQ's: what you can and can't do until 4 July](#)

Helping businesses

- [West Suffolk website - Covid-19 support for business](#)
- [West Suffolk website - Creating safer places](#)