

January 2021

Dear Sir / Madam

Coronavirus – your support is urgently needed

Since Christmas, the situation across Hampshire has deteriorated significantly, with cases still increasing and our local hospitals and care systems rapidly becoming overwhelmed.

In announcing a further national lockdown, the Government has taken action to reduce the spread of the virus, but there remain many opportunities for COVID to thrive if we are not extremely careful.

We understand that your business may have been required to close during the national lockdown and we take this opportunity to thank you for complying with the regulations set out by the Government during this difficult period. For those businesses who remain open, we are very grateful to business owners across our district for the vital role they play in keeping our local economy going, and supporting our communities with jobs, goods and services, but now is the time to redouble our efforts to fight the virus and to work together to protect everyone who lives and works within our district.

How you can help

The new COVID variant spreads more easily. It needs people to be close, breathe the same air and touch the same surfaces. By taking the right steps, consistently, we can reduce transmission.

Every business must have in place a **COVID secure risk assessment**. As part of this, you must:

- identify what work activity or situations might cause transmission of the virus
- think about who could be at risk
- decide how likely it is that someone could be exposed.

Please ensure your plan is reassessed and fully implemented. If your business is currently closed, ensure that your plan is updated ready for when you are permitted to re-open. Advice on developing your assessment is available at www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/working-safely/risk-assessment.htm

Your workforce

Whether you have one employee or one hundred, we are asking that you:

- follow the Government guidance and wherever possible and practical, support **staff to work from home**
- ensure employees maintain social distancing, follow good handwashing practice, and wear face coverings where necessary, particularly when moving around the workplace – **Hands Face Space** has **never** been more important
- advise anyone with symptoms to **get a test** – this is quick and easy to arrange
- ensure they **stay at home** until they get their results

In addition to doing as much as possible to reduce transmission, it is really important that you know what to do if you have a confirmed case or cases of coronavirus in your business – help and guidance is available at:

www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/coronavirus/businesses or from www.gov.uk/coronavirus.

Your customers/suppliers

Much of the guidance that applies to employees also applies to customers and suppliers - maintaining social distancing, following good handwashing practice, and wearing face coverings are all critical. A checklist is attached with this letter to help you but does not replace your risk assessment.

The scale of the challenge, not only in our borough, but across the country is enormous, but with the support of local business we stand the very best chance possible of tackling the virus head-on and reducing transmission rates so that we can once again enjoy greater freedoms.

If you have any questions or require further support, advice or guidance, please email: EHealth@winchester.gov.uk

Thank you.

Laura Taylor
Chief Executive

This letter has been written in conjunction with the Hampshire County Council Public Health



Keep
Hampshire
SAFE

COVID-19

National lockdown

Stay at home except for essential journeys

Wash hands ▶ Cover face ▶ Make space... and let in fresh air

Keep up to date at hants.gov.uk/coronavirus



Working Safely During Coronavirus (Covid-19) - Guidance for your businesses

Minimising Contact	
1.	Calculate the maximum number of customers that can reasonably follow social distancing guidelines (2m, or 1m with risk mitigation where 2m is not viable) on your premises. Take into account total floorspace, as well as likely pinch points and busy areas.
2.	Put in place systems and monitoring to ensure that the maximum number of customers in the store is not exceeded.
3.	Review how people move through the store and how you could adjust this to reduce congestion and contact between customers, e.g. one-way flows, where possible.
4.	Ensure effective management of social distancing in queues (both outside, inside and at tills) – markers, posters, staff supervision and announcements are all helpful tools.
5.	Encourage customers to shop alone where possible, unless they need specific assistance
6.	Remind customers who are accompanied by children that they are responsible for supervising them at all times and should follow social distancing guidelines.
7.	Provide posters and public announcements. Remind both customers and staff to ensure they socially distance and shop respectfully.
8.	Encourage staff to avoid sharing vehicles except within a household or support bubble. If it is not possible, consider fixed travel partners or keeping the number of people in the vehicle to a minimum and as distanced within the vehicle space as possible.
9.	Train your staff. Provide written or spoken communication of the latest guidelines to both workers and customers inside and outside the store.
Face Coverings and Screens	
10.	Face coverings must be worn. Ensure a poster is displayed at the entrance to the store advising customers that face coverings must be worn (unless an exemption applies).
11.	Face coverings must be worn by customers and staff (when working in indoor areas open to the public and where contact with a member the public is likely).
Hand Hygiene	
12.	Provide hand sanitisers at the entrance to the store – check regularly to ensure it has not run out and replenish when necessary.
13.	Encourage customers to use the hand sanitiser or handwashing facilities as they enter the premises to reduce the risk of transmission by touching products while browsing.
14.	Encourage customers to avoid handling products whilst browsing, if at all possible.

Cleaning	
15.	Ensure frequent cleaning of objects and surfaces that are touched regularly, including self-checkouts, trolleys, baskets, and door handles.
16.	If you are cleaning after a known or suspected case of COVID-19 then refer to the specific guidance at the GOV.UK website.
Ventilation	
17.	Ensure good ventilation. Tiny airborne particles can travel further than droplets and in poorly ventilated spaces this can lead to viral particles spreading between people. Good ventilation can reduce this risk. Further advice is available from the HSE website.
Payments & Deliveries	
18.	Minimise contact during payments and exchange of documentation, for example by using electronic payment methods and electronically signed and exchanged documents. Put in place procedures to minimise contact during deliveries to customers or other sites.
Additional Considerations	
19.	Ensure that your Covid risk assessment covers all areas and activities in the business including staff areas, store rooms and offices with further guidance at GOV.UK
20.	Please also check that you ensure that you know what to do if staff report or show symptoms. Comprehensive government guidance on the GOV.UK website