About this guidance


The frameworks set out our approach to outbreak management based on five levels of protection, providing graduated protections locally and/or nationally. This system was originally introduced on 2 November 2020.

Guidance will be reviewed on a regular basis as our priority remains containing the spread of the virus, saving lives and safeguarding the NHS.

We have considered what additional measures we can advise to reduce the increased risk of transmission of the strains of coronavirus and further reduce opportunities for infection. One of the key areas we can focus on is the workplace.

Working from home as a public health measure has been a crucial factor in mitigating the transmission of the virus in the general public and is an effort we must continue.

Our current position is that anyone who is able to work from home, must do so. See the Continue home working section of this guidance for more information.

Under current restrictions, public libraries are allowed to reopen from the 26 April. Subject to progress in suppressing the virus, Public Libraries will operate within protection level guidance of their local authority area, in compliance with this and all other relevant Scottish Government guidance. The remaining travel restrictions within Scotland are lifted and travel within the UK is permitted for any purpose.

We are keen to build confidence and create the right environment for supporting safer work as we continue to live with COVID-19. We have worked with organisations and trade unions from across the public libraries sector to ensure that this guidance is evidence-based, fair and ethical, clear and realistic. As each workplace is different it is for individual businesses to work with trade union or workforce representatives to determine how best to apply this guidance in their circumstances.

This is provided as guidance only and does not amount to legal advice. Public library services may wish to seek their own advice to ensure compliance with all legal requirements.
Safer workplace planning in public libraries must align with wider local authority planning based on local priorities. This is also the case for contracted arm’s length external organisations (ALEOs), as the statutory responsibility for libraries remains with the local authority. This will ensure consistency of mitigation measures across the library service and other local authority services.

This guidance emphasises the importance of undertaking robust and regular risk assessments with full input from trade unions or workforce representatives, and to keep all risk mitigation measures under regular review so that workplaces continue to feel, and be, as safe as possible.

Easing restrictions will not mean returning to how things were before the virus. Physical distancing, hand hygiene, increased cleaning regimes and risk reducing measures will be essential in each area to ensure public and workforce confidence and reassure service users.

Public libraries in Scotland range in size and are often situated within different work environments, including office working, museums and archives, and schools. Host or co-located organisations need to be involved in the library recovery planning to ensure plans are aligned and integrated. There are a number of strands of work currently underway looking at guidance for safer workplaces. This document is designed to be relevant for organisations who provide and for people who work in public libraries.

Links to related guidance can be found at the end of this guidance. Please also see Scottish Government Publications Website for the latest information.

This guide is underpinned by a spirit of collaborative working between organisations and their workforce. Throughout, the term trade union or workforce representatives is used in that context, recognising that public library services have a legal responsibility to maintain workplace health and safety and must consult with the health and safety representative selected by a recognised trade union or, if there is not one, a representative chosen by workers. Public library services cannot decide who the workforce representative will be.

This document is one of a set of documents about how to work safely in different types of workplace. It emphasises in particular the importance of undertaking a robust and ongoing risk-based assessment with full input from workforce representatives, and to keep all risk mitigation measures under regular review so that public libraries continue to feel, and be, safe. Each public library service will need to translate this into the specific actions they need to take using this document as a guide.

Publication of this guidance does not signal an immediate change in Scotland’s lockdown policy. A surge in infection would cause further harm to our health, society and economy. To judge whether and when restrictions can be changed we will consider a range of evidence on the progress of the pandemic in Scotland using the principles set out in the revised Coronavirus (COVID-19):Strategic Framework and
our long established commitment to fair work. As Scotland continues to consider lockdown restrictions, organisations including the Institute of Directors (IoD), SCDI, STUC, COSLA and SCVO have signed a fair work statement underlining the collaborative approach needed between employers, unions and workers to ensure workplaces can operate safely.

The remainder of this guidance sets out our minimum expectations across five key areas public libraries will need to consider as part of their planning for a restart and ongoing production while minimising the transmission of the virus:

- **assessing risk** - involving the workforce in a risk-based approach to a safer workplace
- **workforce planning** - supporting those who should come to work, and those who should not
- **operational guide and checklist** - changing the workplace environment to protect your workforce
- **deliveries, distribution and visitors** - protecting your workforce and those who come on-site
- **training and compliance**

The regulator for health and safety at work is the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) who will utilise the powers under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 to ensure people at work or possibly enforcement of this legislation is undertaken by Environmental Health and Trading Standards local authority staff in agreement with Police Scotland.

If you can suggest ways we can improve the guidance please contact chedcovid19@gov.scot.

**Where we are now**

The First Minister announced that Scotland would be entering a lockdown on 23 March 2020. Under law, the Scottish Government must review that lockdown at least every three weeks.

On February 23 2021, the First Minister announced that the updated Strategic Framework sets out how we will seek to accelerate the easing of restrictions to restore, on a phased basis, greater normality.

*The Coronavirus (COVID-19): Strategic Framework update - February 2021*, updates the original Strategic Framework to take account of important developments, including the new and highly infectious strains of the virus and progress with the vaccination roll-out, and sets out new approach to outbreak management based on
five levels of protection. Public Libraries are allowed to reopen from 26 April within protection level guidance of their local authority area.

Scotland follows a COVID-19 levels system. There are 5 levels (0-4) and each has a different set of rules. Find out the level and rules for an area using the Post Code checker.

Get more information on the current COVID position using the below link:

www.gov.scot/coronavirus

The new, more transmissible variants of COVID-19 mean that it is essential to continue to rigorously adhere to effective mitigations which include physical distancing, ventilation, face coverings and good hygiene practices.

Businesses should ensure that at least 2-metre physical distancing is applied to all parts of a workplace, including staff canteens in Levels 3 and 4 (Levels 2 and below 1m physical distancing applies in workplace canteens), entrances and exits, break rooms, smoking areas, and similar settings.

Good ventilation can help reduce the risk of spreading coronavirus, so a focus on improving general air flow, preferably through fresh air or effective mechanical systems will help keep staff and other building users as safe as possible when planning a return to work. This does not replace the need for other mitigations.

Where possible, employers/building managers should consider ways to maintain and increase the supply of fresh air, for example, by opening windows and doors (please note that fire doors need to remain closed) in all areas of the building.

Face coverings are required to be worn by law, unless an exemption applies, in specific indoor public spaces such as, storage and distribution facilities, and communal staff areas and where there are no measures in place to keep people separated by either a partition or distance of at least 2 metres. More details are set out in the Scottish Government website where you can also find guidance on face coverings.

Those exempt under the Regulations should not be forced to wear a face covering and no one should be abused or treated in an unacceptable way. We ask for people to be aware of the exemptions and to treat each other with kindness, especially when asking why someone is not wearing a face covering.

Other guidance that should be consulted includes:

- HPS: COVID-19 Non Healthcare Settings guidance which provides general information on the background to COVID-19, symptoms, general principles of infection prevention and control and health protection measures and what to do if someone becomes unwell on site
- NHS Inform which has a wide range of useful public facing information including information on symptoms and what to do
Test and protect website from Scottish Government that contains information on how to get tested and what you need to do
Returning to work safely which has details of current sectoral guidance and further sources of advice for organisations and workers
Healthy Working Lives website which provides examples of risk assessment templates and other practical tools for organisations and workers
Health and Safety Executive (HSE) COVID-19 guidance as this will be referred to by HSE inspectors to assess compliance
Coronavirus (COVID-19): local protection levels, which enables the public to find out the rules on what they can and cannot do. Coronavirus restrictions remain in place.
Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance on working from home, which provides guidance to support the continuation of working from home during the coronavirus pandemic.
Coronavirus (COVID-19): retail sector guidance, which includes guidance on the permitted Click and Collect services and a relevant Q&A section.
Coronavirus (COVID-19): one to one support and support groups, which helps people attending or running support groups or one to one support during the coronavirus pandemic.
Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance for the community learning and development sector, which helps local authorities, third sector organisations and partners working in Scotland’s schools, colleges and communities to provide community learning and development (CLD) services safely.
Coronavirus (COVID-19): organised activities for children, for the safe running of organised activities for children and young people.
Coronavirus (COVID-19) - employee testing programmes: guidance for employers, which sets out advice and expectations for employers running COVID-19 private asymptomatic employee testing programmes among their staff.
Test and Protect - collection of customer and visitor contact details: guidance – April 2021 update, which supports customer and visitor data gathering for businesses and other establishments to assist contact tracing as part of NHS Scotland's Test and Protect system.
Coronavirus (COVID-19): shielding advice and support, which helps people make informed decisions and access support services during the coronavirus pandemic.
Coronavirus (COVID-19): calculating physical distancing capacity in public settings, which helps non-domestic premises work out the maximum number of people who can physically distance within a public setting including businesses, places of worship and public events.

Physical Distancing
Physical distancing requirements are set out in the schedules of the Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions and Requirements) (Local Levels)(Scotland) Regulations 2020. A person who is responsible for a place of worship, carrying on a business or providing a service must take all measures, where reasonably practicable:

- to ensure that a distance of two metres is maintained between any persons on the premises (except between members of the same household or a carer and the person assisted by the carer)
- to ensure that they only admit people to its premises in sufficiently small numbers to make it possible to maintain that distance
- to ensure that a distance of two metres is maintained between any person waiting to enter the premises (except between members of the same household or a carer and the person assisted by the carer)

You will need to calculate the maximum number of individuals that can be in the library during a session, based on the maximum number of all persons (including staff) who can maintain physical distancing of 2 metres, taking into account the total floor space, as well as the layout or usage of different sections of the centre/facility. You should consider limiting the number of customers at any time by asking customers to book ahead.

Guidance on calculating physical distancing capacity in public settings has been published. It helps work out the maximum number of people who can physically distance within a public setting including businesses, places of worship and public events.

Public Libraries guidance does not supersede any legal obligations relating to health and safety, employment or equalities and it is important that as a business or an employer you continue to comply with your existing obligations, including those relating to individuals with protected characteristics. It contains non-statutory guidance to take into account when complying with these existing obligations. When considering how to apply this guidance, take into account agency workers, contractors, staff on zero hours contracts, and volunteers, as well as your employees.

Public libraries should therefore use this guidance to look forward and engage with trade union or workforce representatives to develop workplace specific plans for a managed transition between levels, allowing sufficient time for that joint work.

Decisions around restoring services and what that might look like will be made by local authorities to suit the local context and services that can be restored within the levels approach and determined by physical distancing measures that can be put in place by libraries. These decisions will be made in line with Scottish Government decisions and Public Health Scotland guidance. This guidance should be applied for all phases of restoring services.
The Scottish Government has initiated a broad collaborative process to develop sectoral guidance which will underpin that managed transition and provide clarity and confidence to public libraries, employees and local communities, protect public health and concurrently optimise economic recovery. Aligned with that we are reviewing and enhancing testing and enforcement arrangements, and ensuring that the guidance is coherent and connected, recognising for example transport and other inter-dependencies.

We are working with the UK Government to align our approach and guidance, where possible and on the basis of scientific evidence on the levels of infection in Scotland. This guidance is intended to work alongside and build upon UK Government guidance and aims to assist employers, businesses and their workforce ensure a safe working environment and readers will recognise consistent themes within this guidance with the UK Government’s Working Safely during COVID-19 publications.

This guidance should be read in conjunction with the Scottish Government’s business and physical distancing guidance which still applies.

Protection Levels Framework

Protection level breakdown for public library services

The below table is a further breakdown of the protection levels and provides more detailed guidance about the service public libraries are able to offer at each level. The below table also applies to mobile libraries. Services should only be reinstated if safe to do so, following risk assessments and with enhanced hygiene and physical distancing measures in place. The 2m physical distancing rule should be applied at all times which may mean a more restricted occupancy within the library.

Dwell time definition

Dwell time can be considered as any time that is not spent either collecting books, or if the level allows, at a bookable space, browsing, or part of permitted activities. Dwell time can be applied to actions that have the potential for increased contact time and risk of transmission. Examples may include: sitting on sofas, reading a book or newspaper, parents reading to children and conversations in groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>What you can expect</th>
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| Level 0 (Baseline) | • Enhanced hygiene and physical distancing  
| | • Face coverings  
| | • Dwell time allowed  
| | • Enhanced hand hygiene measures, can mitigate the need for 72 hour book quarantine  
| | • Access for browsing the library  
| | • Possibility for unregulated children’s activities, where the 2 metre physical distancing measures can be adhered to and guidance followed. (This does not include regulated childcare settings which are |
registered with the Care Inspectorate or other registration body)

- Possibility for some Community Learning Development (CLD) services to take place adhering to the relevant guidance

- Possibility for 1-2-1 support services, subject to relevant guidance

- PC booking

- Limited access to study spaces, recommended pre-booked only.

- Click and Collect

- Home delivery services

- Online

**Level 1**

- Enhanced hygiene and physical distancing

- Face coverings

- Dwell time allowed

- Enhanced hand hygiene measures, can mitigate the need for 72 hour book quarantine

- Access for browsing the library

- Possibility for unregulated children’s activities, where the 2 metre physical distancing measures can be adhered to and guidance followed. (This does not include regulated childcare settings which are registered with the Care Inspectorate or other registration body)

- Possibility for some Community Learning Development (CLD) services to take place adhering to the relevant guidance

- Possibility for 1-2-1 support services, subject to relevant guidance

- PC booking

- Limited access to study spaces, recommended pre-booked only.

- Click and Collect

- Home delivery services

- Online

**Level 2**

- Enhanced hygiene and physical distancing, including stricter limits on numbers of people in building to ensure physical distancing of 2 metres.

- Face coverings

- Refreshed risk assessments for staff areas and other high risk public areas

- Enhanced hand hygiene measures, can mitigate the need for 72 hour book quarantine

- No dwell time allowed

- Possibility for unregulated children's activities, where the 2 metre physical distancing measures can be adhered to and guidance followed. (This does not
include regulated childcare settings which are registered with the Care Inspectorate or other registration body.

- Possibility for some Community Learning Development (CLD) services to take place adhering to the relevant guidance.
- Limited access for browsing the library, recommended pre-booked only.
- Limited access for PC booking, recommended pre-booked only.
- Limited access to study spaces, recommended pre-booked only.
- Click and Collect
- Home delivery services
- Online

**Level 3**

- Enhanced hygiene and physical distancing, including stricter limits on numbers of people in building to ensure physical distancing of 2 metres.
- Face coverings
- Refreshed risk assessments for staff areas and other high risk public areas
- No dwell time allowed
- Possibility for unregulated children's activities, where the 2 metre physical distancing measures can be adhered to and guidance followed. (This does not include regulated childcare settings which are registered with the Care Inspectorate or other registration body)
- Possibility for some Community Learning Development (CLD) services to take place adhering to the relevant guidance.
- Enhanced hand hygiene measures, can mitigate the need for 72 hour book quarantine
- Limited access for browsing the library, recommended pre-booked only – emphasis on click and collect where possible.
- Limited access for PC booking, recommended pre-booked only.
- Limited access to study spaces, recommended pre-booked only.
- Click and Collect
- Home delivery services
- Online

**Level 4**

- No public access to library building except for limited access for PC booking, pre-booked only.
- Monitoring and recording of numbers of individuals using the service
- Enhanced hygiene and physical distancing
• Face coverings
• Enhanced hand hygiene measures, can mitigate the need for 72 hour book quarantine
• Click and Collect
• Home delivery services
• Online

Assessing risk

Involving the workforce in a risk based approach

As a minimum we expect:

• an equality, human rights and risk based approach to be followed to protect health and safety of employees, and ensure the longer-term economic viability of the business and;
• employees to be fully engaged in that process, through trade union or workforce representatives.

Organisations have a legal responsibility to protect workers and service users from risk to their health and safety. Employers must take reasonable steps to identify, assess and manage the risks of COVID-19 in the workplace.

Carrying out a robust risk assessment with full workforce involvement (through recognised trade union safety representatives or relevant worker safety representatives) will identify practical measures that can be put in place to minimise the spread of the virus.

The Health and Safety Executive’s short guide can help to support employers with what they need to do to comply with the law.

EHRC have also produced guidance for public sector employers about equality impact assessments and having due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty and Scottish Specific Duties during the pandemic.

Joint working

This guidance has been developed in collaboration with sector and trade union representatives on the basis that both have essential roles to play in planning for restart. Companies that have successfully been able to maintain or increase production of essential goods during the COVID-19 crisis have highlighted the importance of joint working. Protecting the health of employees has been at the heart of this joint approach which is fundamental to establishing shared confidence around the safety of returning to places of work and supporting a recovery in productivity.
Implementation phases

Carrying out a robust risk assessment with full workforce involvement (of recognised trade union safety representatives or relevant employee safety representatives) will identify the practical measures that can be put in place to minimise the spread of the virus at a workplace level. The assessment should include a phased implementation timetable, structured broadly as follows:

1. Planning

Plans to re-open a workplace should be developed in consultation with the workforce and updated on an ongoing basis. That planning should be based around risk assessments and safe systems of work, physical distancing, face coverings, hand washing and surface cleaning, ventilation and fair work principles, and be designed to enable a restart that allows the business to trade while protecting employee health and well-being. Workplaces should make every reasonable effort to enable working from home by default, where possible.

2. Preparation

Physical distancing and hygiene measures require work to be carried out before a restart – for example screens, one-way systems, 2-metre zones, PPE provision, hand sanitisers, quarantining of library stock etc. This is then followed by briefings and inductions into the new ways of working. These all take time and require resourcing and commitment.

3. Pilots

Experience confirms the value of trialling the new way of working before a fuller restart is attempted, so a limited-scale pilot to test systems, find weaknesses and make improvements before a fuller restart is essential.

Public libraries should make sure that the risk assessment for each library venue addresses the risks of COVID-19, using this guidance to inform decisions and control measures. The outcome of the risk assessment is to identify and implement sensible measures to control the risks in workplaces.

Dynamic assessment

A risk assessment or adoption of mitigation measures should not be a one-off exercise, rather part of a regular and ongoing dialogue and feedback loop between employers and trade union or workforce representatives to identify what measures are working, where refinements are possible and any gaps remaining. Reviews of measures and risks should be frequent, with daily assessments of progress initially not unusual. The open and ongoing engagement between trade union or workforce representatives should enable adjustments to be made quickly and smoothly at the relevant stage, including potentially tightening workplace restrictions or reducing
numbers onsite if the dynamic risk assessments indicate this is necessary. This will be particularly important in assessing protective measures needed at levels 2 and 3.

Employers have a duty to consult on health and safety. Consultation should occur with full-time, part-time, contractors, shift workers, security staff, facilities and cleaning staff, and volunteers. You can do this by listening and talking to them about the work and how you will manage risks from COVID-19. This should be done in advance of the facilities re-opening. Your employees and volunteers will have an in-depth knowledge of the risks in the workplace and will have a view on how to work safely. In a small service, you might choose to consult your workers directly. Larger services may consult through a health and safety representative, chosen by your employees or selected by a trade union. As an employer, you cannot decide who the representative will be. This process should be a continuation of an existing process in involving employees in optimising health and safety outcomes.

**Utilising expertise**

Public libraries should ensure their health and safety professionals and representatives have the skills, training and knowledge to understand the risks associated with COVID-19. Where public libraries and their workforce do not have access to these skills in-house they should together explore external support options to put in place appropriate mitigation measures, for example through their trade association, health and safety consultancies or trade union health and safety representatives. All can help public libraries understand the risks associated with different activities and situations within individual branches and offer the support managers and workers may require.

**Building confidence, supporting wellbeing**

Some workers may be apprehensive about returning to work and may need reassured that measures have been put in place to ensure safety.

Employers should recognise the need to have clear and regular communications with employees and volunteers, using multiple channels to reinforce key messages. Visual signage has proven to be beneficial in demonstrating changes that have or are being made, especially where language barriers exist.

A clear message from employers and trade unions is that building and maintaining employee confidence is vitally important and a challenge that should not be underestimated.

**Workforce planning**

Planning should be based around risk assessments and safe systems of work, emphasising physical distancing, hand washing and surface and equipment cleaning and fair work principles. Plans should aim to allow organisations to restart whilst protecting worker health and wellbeing.
The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) Scotland can provide advice on a range of issues such as:

- non-discrimination
- reasonable adjustments for disabled people and communication with employees on equality issues
- support for pregnant employees or employees on maternity leave
- flexible working for those with caring responsibilities
- how to deal with harassment at work

EHRC have also produced guidance for public sector employers about equality impact assessments and having due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty and Scottish Specific Duties during the pandemic.

Close the Gap, through their Think Business Think Equality toolkit, have produced guidance on employers supporting employees affected by domestic abuse during the pandemic and a more general online self-assessment resource for employers on domestic abuse. The RNIB also provide information on employing partially sighted and blind workers during COVID, and a COVID risk assessment tool.

Adjustments may need to be made for people deemed to be of higher clinical vulnerability. For more information refer to the section below on Employee Health and Well-being.

Supporting those who should come to work, and those who should not

As a minimum we expect:

- working from home to continue or to be offered to employees, where possible;
- employers must not ask or direct an employee to commit an offence by requiring travel for work that it is possible to be done from home. Nor should employers encourage, authorise or make arrangements that would allow or put pressure on their employees to break the law;
- health factors to be considered in any phasing of who returns to work, with employees living in high risk or shielded households only expected to return when new safe working environment measures have been implemented and a return to onsite work is consistent with individual medical advice. Those identified as being at the highest risk from Covid-19 should follow the most up to date advice.
- Employees who are not shielding but identified as at increased risk from COVID-19 are able to attend work in person but should strictly follow physical measures;
- new public library arrangements to be tested and modified through collaboration between employers and employees; and
- public libraries to take travel to work and childcare considerations into account in decisions around a phased restart, noting the disproportionate impact that these consideration have on women
the health, including mental health, and well-being of workers to be considered.

Continue home working

Minimising the spread of the virus will remain important in ensuring the overall protection of public health. Therefore planning for a safe return to work should assume that those able to work from home will continue to do so. Public libraries should plan for the minimum number of people needed on site to operate safely and effectively, with a phased return necessary for many businesses. Home-working is the default where possible and people are advised to work from home wherever that is practicable. It will only be a reasonable excuse to leave home to go to work, if that work cannot be done from home.

Working from home as a public health measure has been a crucial factor in mitigating the transmission of the virus in the general public and is an effort we must continue. We now need every business and organization to work with their workforce to look again at their operations, and to make sure that every single function that can be done by people working at home, is being done in that way.

Full home working guidance provides more information on this.

Please also see the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) advice on home working for further information.

Pilot measures

As implementing new enhanced safety measures may take time to embed it is good practice to pilot measures, either within part of a facility and / or with a proportion of the workforce at lower risk from the virus, before rolling out across the workplace as a whole. Travel to work and childcare considerations for individual employees should be taken into account by public libraries, in discussion with trade unions or employee representatives, before deciding which individuals to involve in pilots and a phased restart.

Each time you make any changes or when you intend to open your business more widely, you should re-visit you initial analysis to identify what further/new changes are required. In other words, repeat the process above for the changes you have made.

Mandatory Face Coverings

Physical distancing, hand hygiene and respiratory hygiene are the most important and effective things we can all do to prevent the spread of coronavirus. The wearing of face coverings must not be used as an alternative to any of these other precautions.

People must by law wear a face covering in shops, on public transport and public transport premises such as railway and bus stations and airports, and in certain
other indoor public places such as shops, restaurants/cafes including workplace canteens (when not seated), libraries and places of worship, except where an exemption applies.

A face covering must also be worn by all people when in indoor communal areas, where people mingle or gather to, for example, socialise or transit such as passageways, stairs, lifts, staff rooms, training rooms, changing rooms and entrances, except where an exemption applies, or where there is a ‘reasonable excuse’ not to wear a face covering such as eating or drinking. Exemptions also apply if you have a health condition or you are disabled, including hidden disabilities such as autism, dementia or a learning disability.

It is important to note the difference between face masks and face coverings. Where HPS guidance refers to face masks this means surgical or other medical grade masks that are used in certain health and social care situations. Face coverings are made from cloth or other textiles that cover the mouth and nose, and through which you can breathe (e.g. a scarf). It is recommended that it be made of cloth or other textiles and should be two, and preferably three, layers thick and fit snugly while allowing you to breathe easily.

Face shields may be used, but only if they are worn in addition to a face covering underneath, as the evidence shows that they do not provide adequate protection on their own.

Face Covering Exemption Cards

Where an exemption applies you may find that some individuals have an exemption card. To find out more about exemption cards and how to request a card please visit: https://exempt.scot/.

Employee health and well-being

Employers should ensure the organisation culture is inclusive, with the aim that every employee should feel that they are returning to a supportive, caring and safe environment. The pandemic has had an unequal impact across the workforce, as different employee groups, and individuals, will have been affected in diverse ways according to factors such as their job role, and demographic/personal circumstances. Therefore, it is important organisations foster a fair and inclusive working environment that does not tolerate discrimination. There is also a risk of victimisation of those infected, suspected, or more vulnerable to COVID-19 which should be addressed.

The following guides from the Health and Safety Executive provide useful sources of information:

- [working safely during the coronavirus outbreak - a short guide](https://)
Individual health circumstances should be considered and discussed with employees and volunteers before prioritising who is asked to return to work and when. This should recognise the protective measures required to minimise health risks to high risk or shielded workers. Employees in the shielding category should not be expected to physically attend work and every effort must be made to explore how they can work from home.

Pay for workers who are sheltering, self-isolating, sick or balancing care responsibilities is likely to be a source of concern for employees. Public library services should work with trade union or workforce representatives to provide early guidance to workforces on processes and support for individuals affected by these issues. Again opportunities to facilitate home working where feasible should be actively pursued and maintained.

Public library services should also acknowledge the range of factors likely to cause stress or anxiety amongst employees and volunteers, ranging from living with lockdown arrangements to concerns about travel, schools, caring responsibilities and relatives impacted by the virus, amongst others. This may have implications for mental health with managers encouraged to be conscious of how these factors may impact on the well-being of individual staff members. Public library services and trade union or workforce representatives should be alert to this and direct anyone experiencing mental health issues towards available support.

**Shielding**

We are providing this information, advice and tools to help you make choices about your day to day activities and interactions including work.

Specific guidance for those on the shielding list can be found at support for shielding on mygov.scot. This includes information on:

- working in current restrictions
- financial assistance
- Chief Medical Officer letters

**Test and Protect**

**Test and Protect**, Scotland’s approach to implementing the 'test, trace, isolate, support' strategy is a public health measure designed to break chains of transmission of Coronavirus (COVID-19) in the community. The NHS will test people to find positive cases, trace people who may have become infected by spending time in close contact with someone who tests positive, and then support those close contacts to self-isolate. That means if they have the virus they are less likely to pass it on to others.
Updated guidance on the collection of customer and visitor contact details for businesses and other establishments to assist contact tracing has been published. It supports customer and visitor data gathering for businesses and other establishments in Scotland where the nature of the premises means there may be an increased risk of transmission of COVID-19 due to a higher degree of interaction between unknown individuals.

Due to dwelling times associated with libraries, we ask that these premises collect customer and visitor data in line with the guidance to support Test and Protect. That means collecting the details of all visitors unless they are simply using a click and collect service, akin to a takeaway hospitality setting.

In settings not mandated by law to collect contact details in, there is no legal requirement that individuals provide their data for NHS Test and Protect purposes, so if premises want to continue to offer services to customers or visitors that do not choose to provide their information, then they can do so. Establishments are also equally entitled to refuse to allow a member of public onto their premises if they do not share their contact details for the benefit of Test and Protect. Employers should make clear to their employees the approach that they wish them to take in these circumstances.

**Collecting contact details in Hospitality Settings**

The collection of visitor contact details, and provision of data to public health officers, is mandatory in hospitality settings. Guidance for the tourism and hospitality sector, including procedures for staff and customer safety and an operations checklist can be found [here](#). This guidance applies to any establishment such as libraries, that provides on-site hospitality services including cafes. It requests the collection of the name and contact details for every visitor to premises, which will create consistency across the range of settings where this is requested or mandated in Scotland, and at the same time ensure that relevant data is captured to assist the Test and Protect contact tracing service.

**Test and Protect – Contact Tracing App**

Protect Scotland is an entirely voluntary app that is an additional part of NHS Scotland’s Test & Protect service. Having the app should never be a requirement for any workplace. The app complements but does not replace manual contact tracing. It enhances contact tracing and quickly alerts app users that are at risk as they have come into close contact (less than 2m for 15 minutes or more) with an app user that has since tested positive for COVID-19. [Further information about the contact tracing app](#) for employers, workers and customers is available.

Organisations will play a vital role in ensuring that their workers are aware of and able to follow the public health advice.

Organisations should follow public health guidance if a worker becomes unwell with coronavirus symptoms at work, see further information below. The person should leave work to self-isolate straight away and, if possible, wear a face covering on route and avoid public transport.
Organisations should direct workers to NHS Inform or, if they can’t get online, call 0800 028 2816, to arrange to get tested.

Until they have been tested and told if it is safe to leave home, organisations should make sure that staff do not have to, or feel that they have to, come in to work. Workers can request an isolation note through NHS Inform.

People who have tested positive for the virus will need to self-isolate for a minimum of 10 days. NHS contact tracers will interview them and get in touch with people they have been in close contact with, and tell them they must self-isolate for 10 days. If your employees or volunteers are informed by a contact tracer that they should isolate, you should help them to do so straight away. They may feel well, as the virus could still be incubating when they are asked to isolate. Some people who are asked to isolate may not become unwell, but they must stay at home and self-isolate for the full 10 days. Organisations can ask them to work from home if they are able to and they are not unwell. Organisations should not ask someone isolating to come into work before their period of isolation is complete, in any circumstances.

Where Infection Prevention Control measures have been utilised such as protective screen or use of PPE the contact tracer will conduct a risk assessment to identify contacts at risk. The priority is to public health in order to break the chain of transmission of COVID-19.

See Scottish Test and Protect website and NHS Inform for further health advice and information including on duration of self-isolation.

A close contact is defined as:

- Those that are living in the same household as a case.
- Face to face contact with a case for any length of time within 1 metre of a case.
- Extended close contact within 2 metres for more than 15 minutes with a case.

Planning should recognise that ongoing physical distancing measures required to reduce the spread of the virus may mean that the number of employees and volunteers able to be accommodated safely in the workplace is limited. The workforce may have questions or concerns about returning to work. Public library services are encouraged to work with trade union or workforce representatives to enable individuals to work from home while self-isolating, if appropriate. If able to work from home, employees should continue to do so after a period of self-isolation has ended.

We do not recommend the use of temperature checking employees as a means of testing for COVID-19 due to the limitations of this method.

Apprentices can return to work at the same time as their co-workers. For specific concerns regarding the safe return to work for Apprentices there is information and support and Apprentices can speak to an advisor directly on 0800 917 8000.
It is important to ensure there is a functioning training infrastructure to support economic recovery and the sustainability of apprenticeship programmes. For those Training Providers and assessors that are providing continuity of contracted services for apprentices, learners and employers in the workplace during the pandemic must adhere to the applicable sectoral guidance.

**Vaccination**

The vaccine represents an important step in our progress towards a safer return to workplaces. Evidence to date shows it will reduce both mortality and morbidity, however we do not know the extent to which the vaccine reduces transmission of the virus from an infected person to others. That is why it is important for businesses and employees to act responsibly, follow FACTS and continue to align their approach with published guidance. Further information and guidance is available at [Coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccination](https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus).  

**Travel Guidance**

Guidance on travel rules and restrictions and protection levels, including information on essential travel, can be found [here](https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus). From 26 April, Scottish Coronavirus regulations permit unrestricted travel within Scotland and between Scotland and England, Wales, Northern Ireland, the Channel Islands, or the Isle of Man. Travel restrictions remain in place for travel between Scotland and the rest of the world. Read [what you can and cannot do in your area](https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus).

It is important that sectoral guidance is consistent with the travel rules in place across Scotland. All of the travel restrictions are subject to limited exemptions for example travelling for work, education or health reasons is allowed.

**Operational guide and checklist**

**Changing the workplace environment to protect your workforce**

As a minimum we expect:

- Clear instructions for staff as to what is expected of them at each protection level and suitable provision in place to respond flexibly as a result of this;

- enhanced health and safety measures to be in place before staff are asked to return to work, including physical distancing guidance and hygiene measures, generally and at bottleneck situations and;

- safe travel to work arrangements to be considered as part of a risk assessment, with any relevant adjustments adopted.

**Safe workplace planning and communications**
It is vital steps are taken to ensure a safe working environment and related workforce confidence. This is best done through early, regular and ongoing engagement between public library services and trade union or workforce representatives. As it will take time to complete the necessary risk assessment, identify the relevant mitigation measures and put those measures in place, the engagement between employers, trade union or workforce representatives must be started well before a planned restart date (or ramp-up where production of essential goods or delivery of essential services have continued at less than full capacity).

It is important everyone understands the measures taken to establish the safe working environment as this is likely to have a significant impact on workforce confidence. Being and feeling safe will play an integral role in supporting a recovery in productivity levels. Provide clear visual signage on physical distancing and hygiene to staff, volunteers and library users upon arrival, throughout the venue, and before arrival, for example by phone, on the website, or by email.

Signage at the entrance to libraries is recommended reminding users of the most common symptoms of the virus. Users should not enter the premises if they have any of the symptoms; at busier times having staff who count and limit the number of individual present may be helpful too.

**Ventilation**

The provision of fresh air into indoor environments is essential to preventing the spread of COVID-19. By taking measures to increase the volume of outside air entering a building, such as opening windows, doors or vents you can help minimise the risk of spreading COVID-19 to colleagues, friends, family members and customers.

Relevant guidance has been developed to support the mixing of individuals safely in indoor domestic and commercial properties where this is necessary, with [Ventilation advice for everyone at work](#) and [Ventilation advice for employers](#).

**Enhanced hygiene**

Enhanced hygiene measures should be a key plank of workplace-specific measures to create a safe working environment, including:

- promote good hand hygiene for all staff, volunteers and visitors. Ensure that adequate facilities are readily available for hand hygiene, including handwashing facilities that are adequately stocked. Additionally, if not available, alcohol based hand rub (ABHR) should be placed at key areas, including entry and exit points, reception desk, staff break areas, PCs/study areas, in home delivery vehicles, and on mobile libraries. Employees, volunteers and visitors should be encouraged to use these facilities when entering and exiting the library.

- Recent studies suggest that environmental contamination leading to transmission of COVID-19 is unlikely to occur in real life conditions, provided that standard
cleaning procedures and precautions are enforced. Based on the evidence available, library books are, therefore, likely to carry a very low risk of transmission that in most instances could be mitigated against through good hand hygiene and cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched objects and surfaces.

- Careful hand washing with soap and warm water/use of alcohol-based hand sanitiser should be carried out before and after handling books or similar objects (or other pieces of equipment), and contact of the face with unwashed hands should be avoided at all times. These practices should be sufficient to prevent transmission of infection from these items, even if they are contaminated. Good respiratory hygiene ("Catch it, kill it, bin it") is also required at all times. If this advice is followed, quarantining books for 72 hours is no longer considered necessary.

- Transfer of stock between libraries is permissible as long as strict hand hygiene and physical distancing measures are in place. Hygiene measures outlined in the paragraph above, can mitigate the need to subject stock to quarantine for 72 hours before transferring to another library. If stock is being transferred via a box the handles must be considered a touch point and hand hygiene measure must be in place before and after handling. It is advised that cardboard boxes are used in preference to plastic. Returned books should be collected separately from delivery of new books, to avoid cross-contamination.

- Consider discouraging the handling of books by users, for example through different display methods, new signage or the rotation and quarantine of high-touch stock. Ensure that adequate facilities for hand hygiene are available throughout the premises and in any vehicles used.

- Demand for IT equipment may increase due to the increased number of people seeking work and benefits. Libraries should manage the risk by moving computers two metres apart and/or installing screens. Libraries should consider providing appointments for access to IT equipment, with space between appointments to allow for the cleaning of work areas and equipment between users. At levels 2 and 3 we highly recommend that access to PCs is provided on a pre-booked basis only. At level 4 it is mandatory. Asking users to sanitise their hands on entering and leaving the building and cleaning the desk or PC after use will reduce the risk of transmission. Self-service photocopiers, scanners and printers should have their touch-points cleaned between users and, if possible, should be restricted to staff use to limit the number of people touching the control pads and therefore reducing the risk. These should be cleaned regularly by staff in line with risk assessments.

- Ensure environmental cleaning is done regularly. Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces (e.g. telephones, keyboards, handles, desks, steering wheels, etc.) at least twice daily. Ensure that regular detergent cleaning schedules and procedures are in place using a product which is active against bacteria and viruses and used in line with the manufacturers’ instructions,
particularly in relation to contact time. Minimise the use of touchpoints throughout the library, including exploring where possible how digital processes, such as self-issue, may replace the need for face-to-face interactions. Asking visitors to sanitise their hands on entering and leaving the building or mobile library, and cleaning the screens will reduce the risk of transmission. In particular in level 2, 3 and 4 consider setting cleaning times between bookings for PC usage.

- study spaces can be booked during levels 0-3. The continued access to safe study spaces in libraries, is essential in supporting learning outcomes and individuals’ wellbeing, particularly for more vulnerable users. The primary risks or virus transmission in library settings are people mixing, surface contamination and aerosol transmission. To enable the safe operation of library study spaces, this service should only be made available if risk assessments show it is safe to do so and 2m physical distancing can be followed, enhanced hygiene procedures are employed, and additional mitigation measures including face coverings and effective ventilation are in place. Ensure that detergent cleaning schedules and procedures are in place between users, using a product which is active against bacteria and viruses, and used in line with manufacturers’ instructions, particularly in relation to contact time. Screens may be used between desks if appropriate.

- work vehicles can be issued with plastic sheeting to line boots when collecting returned books and resources and each vehicle should be provided with appropriate cleaning materials. Cleaning should occur between different passengers or shifts as appropriate. Returned books should be collected separately from delivery of new books, to avoid cross-contamination.

- ensure good ventilation (e.g. keep windows open). Check whether you need to adjust ventilation systems, for example, so that they do not automatically reduce ventilation levels to due lower than normal occupancy levels. Guidance on ventilation in the work place can be found here: https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/equipment-and-machinery/air-conditioning-and-ventilation.htm and https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-ventilation-guidance---november-2020/

consider the risk posed by physical newspapers and magazines and the need for 72 hour quarantine, that in most instances could be mitigated against, through good hand hygiene and cleaning of surfaces. Libraries should still consider encouraging use of their digital offering and offer physical newspapers and magazines under lower levels of the Framework

- there is an increased risk of Legionnaire’s Disease when buildings have been out of use, or not running at full capacity. This is because water systems may become stagnant when not in use, increasing the risk of legionella within water supplies. Many public and office buildings have been closed during the COVID-19 crisis, making legionella a legitimate concern as lockdown restrictions are eased. The Health and Safety Executive have published advice on the risk of Legionella in buildings which are closed or running with reduced occupancy during the COVID-19 crisis. This can be found on the Royal Environmental
Health Institute of Scotland (REHIS) website at https://rehis.com/story/legionella-risks-during-coronavirus-outbreak. Building owners or operators should undertake a health and safety check of buildings, and deep cleaning prior to reopening where necessary, to mitigate risks. More information can be found on the HSE website.

**Physical distancing**

Physical distancing is the other key plank of workplace-specific measures to create a safe working environment. If a service is not able to maintain physical distancing while being delivered then public library services should consider removing them until a later phase in the route map. Areas to consider include:

- public library services should continue to promote their digital and online offering to reduce the number of in person visits.

- physical distancing of 2 metres should be adhered to whenever feasible, including at breaks and staff canteens in Levels 3 and 4 (Levels 2 and below 1m physical distancing applies in workplace canteens. Look at how staff, volunteers and users walk through the library and how you could adjust this to reduce contact between people, for example queue management or a one-way flow system to manage traffic through pinch points. Consider library layout and clear signage, including using floor tape or paint to mark areas of help people keep to a 2 metre distance. In particular in level 2/3/4, library occupancy should be limited to ensure adherence to the 2 metre distancing.

- managing library occupancy levels can assist in maintaining distancing. Consider discouraging users from turning up in larger groups. Consider staggering entry and exit times to prevent bottlenecks arising as people arrive or leave. If possible, reduce congestion by having more entry points to the library. Consider having different entry and exit points to the premises if possible.

- consider using outside premises for queuing, for example car parks. Outside queues should be managed to ensure they do not cause a risk to individuals or other businesses, for example by using barriers and having staff direct users. If queueing outside, libraries would need to consider emergency evacuations whilst maintaining physical distancing. Consider limiting capacity numbers in mobile libraries. It is highly recommended that during level 2/3/4 booking is required for browsing and PC usage to limit library occupancy and adhere to 2 metre physical distancing. It is advised that there should be a preference for click and collect during level 3.

- libraries attract a wide range of people from across the community, many of whom may be in high risk or high risk groups. Libraries can consider having opening times set aside for particular groups such as families or high-risk groups.

- to create more space and allow for physical distancing, consider removing non-essential public furniture, such as tables and chairs for children’s activities and
soft chairs for reading, to reduce customer time in the branch and to reduce the number of surfaces and associated risk. If possible, move shelves further apart. Rethink demonstrations and promotions to minimise direct contact.

- where possible, ensure that desk sharing and hot-desking is minimised amongst library staff and volunteers. The physical distance between desks should be maintained at 2 metres. If it is not possible to assign desks to a single user, then high hygiene standards must be maintained with users cleaning the workstations before and after use with the appropriate cleaning materials. If workspaces need to be shared, they should be shared by the smallest possible number of people. If it is not possible to move workstations further apart, arrange people to work back-to-back or side-to-side working whenever possible. Only when it is not possible to move workstations further apart, use screens to separate people from each other. Staff sharing workspaces over different shifts should have access to their own keyboard etc. when reasonably possible. This will reduce the risk of the virus living on IT equipment.

- there may be areas that are common to staff, volunteers and users. In these cases, public use can be limited or removed, while considering the needs of disabled people. Changing places and disabled toilets should be kept publically accessible if possible. Scottish Government have published guidance on opening of public and customer toilets during the coronavirus pandemic. Encourage storage of personal items and clothing in personal storage spaces, for example lockers, during working hours. Face coverings must be worn in all common areas throughout the library at all levels.

- similarly, consider reducing the maximum occupancy of lifts, providing hand sanitiser for operation of lifts, and encouraging use of stairs wherever possible. Make sure that disabled people are able to access lifts.

- where libraries have reception desks, consider installing screens and changing staff work practice from floor walking to being stationed at the desk and making the library as self-service as possible. Have clearly designated positions from which colleagues can provide advice or assistance to customers whilst maintaining physical distance.

- consider how to minimise contacts around transactions, for example using cashless payments by accepting card and online payments if possible, and following good hand hygiene if handling cash. Alternatively public library services should consider suspending all payments until later phases in the route map to reduce the risk to staff.

- Libraries deliver a wide range of daily events and activities that requires close contact with library users. We expect that some public gatherings will be permitted, subject to public health advice. The Scottish Government has provided guidance on organised activities for children, and where restrictions and physical distancing can be followed it may be permissible to have some organised unregulated children’s activities such as Bookbug sessions during levels 0-3, dependent on risk assessments and in line with the relevant guidance. The
guidance is not an instruction for all services and activities to open up at this time, since this will be based on the requirements that need to be met, relevant to each individual delivery setting. When considering indoor activity, other delivery options should continue to be fully considered at this time including outdoor and online activity which minimises contacts and reduce risks of transmission and libraries should continue to develop their online alternatives.

- providing additional parking or facilities such as bike stands to help people walk, run or cycle to work where possible. Bike stands should be regularly cleaned.

- physical distancing, hand washing and respiratory hygiene are the most important and effective measures we can all adopt to prevent the spread of coronavirus. Therefore the wearing of face coverings must not be used as an alternative to any of these other precautions. Library users should consult the up to date advice on wearing face coverings which states that people must by law wear a face covering in indoor public spaces, including libraries and public reading rooms, except where an exemption applies. From 16 October the wearing of face coverings in a workplace canteen, when not seated at a table, such as when queuing, entering or leaving the canteen is mandatory. It is also mandatory to wear face coverings in indoor communal spaces, such as corridors and social spaces from the 19 October. A face covering can be a covering of any type, except a face shield, that covers the mouth and nose. We would encourage the use of re-usable, washable face coverings, rather than single use masks to minimise plastic waste. Face shields may be used, but only if they are worn in addition to a face covering underneath, as the evidence shows that they do not provide adequate protection. Face coverings should be worn in the library, except where an exemption applies, at all protection levels.

**Shift patterns**

Public library services may develop plans to change shift patterns to both protect the workforce and optimise productive capacity. This could include considering opportunities to reduce the need for travel at peak times and opportunities for flexible working patterns. This will require proper negotiation with trade union or workforce representatives if it involves a change in employee terms and conditions.

Splitting the workforce into specific teams can avoid cross-team contamination and provide a level of operational resilience in case someone in one team develops COVID-19 symptoms and must self-isolate. Consider reducing the number of people each member of staff or volunteers has contact with by reducing location rotation. Consider reassigning staff to a branch that is easiest for them to travel to safely, promoting active travel where possible.

**Dealing with emergencies**

Protocols for dealing with emergencies, evacuations and accidents will be impacted by the need to maintain physical distancing while individuals who would normally lead or coordinate site responses in such situations may be amongst those working from home. Emergency, evacuation and accident response processes therefore
need to be considered to ensure effective arrangements are still in place. Everyone onsite should be familiar with new processes and staff might need to be additionally trained to cover across shifts at times of reduced capacity.

If public library services are managing occupancy levels by requesting users queue outside, libraries will need to consider emergency evacuations whilst maintaining physical distancing.

**Travel to work and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

Health Protection Scotland (HPS) have provided COVID-19 information and guidance for general (non-healthcare) settings which reiterates that people should not travel if they exhibit any COVID-19 symptoms. The HPS advice and any subsequent safe travelling advice should be factored into decisions on planned returns to work.

Transport Scotland has produced Guidance to assist the public to travel safely during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. It is important that the latest version of the Guidance is read.

After careful consideration of the medical and scientific evidence and taking into account the representations of transport staff and the views of the public, the Scottish Government have concluded that people must wear a face covering on public transport and in public transport premises such as train and bus stations from 22 June.

The HPS guidance also offers advice on the use of PPE, confirming workplaces should use PPE consistent with local policies and in line with measures justified by a risk assessment. Both the Scottish Government and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) recommend a risk based approach focused on a hierarchy of control which seeks to eliminate risks, combat risks at source, adapt workplaces to individual needs, ensure adequate staff training around processes to manage the risk and then use PPE where required. Where PPE is deemed necessary, an adequate supply and quality must be maintained which is provided free of charge to workers and which must fit properly. Services may wish to consider providing face coverings and instructions on how to adequately clean/maintain face coverings to staff who need to travel via public transport.

Consult the up to date advice on wearing face coverings as this may change with each review stage.

**Security**

The interpretation and use of any guidance should be considered in line with normal protective security operations and practices. Organisations should consult with, and involve, their security departments in the interpretation and implementation of the guidance. In particular, security should be considered in any revised risk assessment.
Under no circumstances do we advise the removal or alteration of, or reduction in, existing protective security measures without providing clear recommendations (e.g. from the National Technical Authority/police CT specialists) on how to maintain effective protective security.

This should extend to measures not primarily intended to provide a protective security benefit, but nonetheless doing so, for example removal of street furniture that could make moving or queueing pedestrians more vulnerable to vehicle-as-a-weapon attacks. Security staff should remain focused on security duties. Where COVID-19 creates additional staffing requirements, e.g. for queue management, employers should ensure additional suitable staff resource is made available. Employers should ensure security staff feel safe, e.g. having access to appropriate PPE and hand-washing facilities, and that they are able and confident to raise any concerns.

Read further detailed guidance on security:

www.cpni.gov.uk/staying-secure-during-covid-19-0

**COVID symptoms within the workplace**

The virus is expected to remain in the population for some time, even after lockdown restrictions have been eased and people begin to return to work. This will cause anxiety for people who will also want to understand how any outbreaks in the workplace will be handled. As part of risk assessments, public library services should explore with trade union or workforce representatives how to respond should anyone develop symptoms while at work, including whether it is possible to identify any particular parts of the site the individual may have accessed or equipment used while symptomatic. As part of this, consideration should be given how best to monitor health of all individuals in a workplace.

Employees and volunteers have a responsibility to ensure they adhere to general **COVID-19 advice**, which says people with symptoms should remain at home and self-isolate. Public library services and employees and volunteers should remain in regular communication throughout any period of self-isolation with public library services encouraged to work with trade union or workforce representatives to enable individuals to work from home while self-isolating if appropriate.

Organisations should suspect an outbreak if there is either:
- two or more cases (confirmed or suspected) of COVID-19 in a setting within 14 days - where cross transmission has been identified; or
- an increase in staff absence rates, in a setting, due to suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19.

If a library service suspects a COVID-19 outbreak, they should immediately inform their local NHS board Health Protection Team (HPT). The library service may be then contacted by them, as they may get information from NHS Test & Protect or other sources.
In the event of an outbreak:

- continue to follow 'General Guidelines' to reduce risk, as detailed above.
- the local Health Protection Team will undertake a risk assessment and conduct a rapid investigation. They will advise on the most appropriate action to take.
- Employees and volunteers who have had close contact with case(s) will be asked to self-isolate at home. In some cases, a larger number of other staff may be asked to self-isolate at home as a precautionary measure. Where settings are observing guidance on infection prevention and control, which will reduce risk of transmission, the local health protection team will take this into account in determining whether closure of the whole setting will be necessary.
- depending on the risk assessment outcome, the Health Protection Team may establish an Incident Management Team (IMT) to help manage the situation.
- the Incident Management Team will lead the Public Health response and investigations, and work with the organisation to put appropriate interventions in place.

To control an outbreak the Health Protection Team and Incident Management Team will work with the library service to put appropriate interventions in place. These will generally include ensuring that the preventive measures described in ‘General guidelines to prevent spread of COVID-19’ (detailed above) are fully implemented. Other measures may include:

- cleaning in the setting: for cleaning and waste management, refer to guidance on cleaning in non-healthcare settings for maintaining hygiene.
- consider wider testing of affected population and staff: information: ensure that employees and volunteers (and other relevant people) are aware of what has happened and the actions being taken.
- closure: may be done following advice from the Health Protection Team and Incident Management Team or the business may make their own decision on closure ahead of this advice as a precaution or for business continuity reasons.

The Health Protection Team or Incident Management Team will declare when the outbreak is over.

Safe home working

Home working will be new to many and may have been implemented at pace, without normal health and safety planning to ensure people have suitable working arrangements and equipment. Public library services should consider that, and how to best support working from home (for example, provision of laptops, mobile phones, video conferencing services etc.). Advice on home working can be found here.

Checklist
A checklist to support public library services in implementing this guidance, has been developed in response to initial feedback and trade union feedback. The checklist can be found as an annex to this guidance.

The checklist should reflect the minimum expectations outlined in the sectoral guidance document.

Public libraries who wish to increase workforce or public confidence are encouraged to display the checklist to help to communicate actions being implemented or undertaken.

**Generic Sector Advice Card**

A generic Sector Advice card has been developed to sign-post relevant guidance for managers and information for workers. The generic Sector Advice Card can be found [here](#).

**Deliveries, distribution and visitors**

**Protecting your workforce and those who come on-site**

As a minimum we expect public library services:

- to provide early clarity to their supply chain about honouring of orders in the system, linked to new production capacity and consumer demand/contracts and
- to treat all site visitors including contractors, suppliers and those making deliveries, as if they were employees, ensuring they are offered the same protections and are expected to follow the same rules
- to ensure frequent hand hygiene and regular decontamination of frequently touched environmental and equipment surfaces to help reduce the risk of infection transmission. Under most circumstances, enhanced hand hygiene measures, can mitigate the need for 72 hour quarantine of items/goods.

More information on available steps that will usually be needed to maintain physical distancing and avoid surface transmission when goods enter and leave the site can be found [here](#).

**Early supplier engagement**

Early engagement with suppliers of stock is recommended to understand how well placed suppliers will be to provide inputs at the level required to meet a library services expected demand as they restore services. This should include considering any additional logistical issues associated with the current functioning of supply, delivery and processing networks.

During the COVID-19 pandemic minimising pressures on supply chains is paramount to ensure that suppliers at risk are better able to cope with the current crisis and ensure service continuity and delivery during and after the outbreak. Public library services are encouraged to work with suppliers to understand the specific pressures
they face and identify potential solutions on a case-by-case basis, including providing early clarity on the treatment of existing orders.

Site visitors

Many libraries, especially larger libraries, may normally have a number of visitors at any one time, including service users and contractors. This presents increased risk of virus transmission if people do not adhere to the same interpretation of rules. To address this risk public library services should consider limiting access, ensuring safe working practices and implementing a permit to work system for contractors who need to access.


Careful communication is vital to manage user expectations, explain new procedures and promote safe behaviour. The successful return of libraries will be dependent on positive customer behaviour. We have produced guidance intended to be used by customers and can also help to inform signage. As English may not be the first language for everyone, library services should consider how best to use visual materials to reinforce messages.

Guidance has been produced to support customer and visitor data gathering for businesses and other establishments, including libraries, where the nature of the premises means there may be an increased risk of transmission of COVID-19 due to a higher degree of interaction between unknown individuals. The guidance sets out how to collect individual contact details in a safe and secure manner which is compliant with data protection legislation, to assist NHS Scotland in responding to outbreaks of COVID-19. Collecting contact details will be voluntary, but it is important that both premises and individuals cooperate, as it will be crucial to national efforts to suppress the virus. This measure forms part of enabling premises to open safely, minimising the risk of the number of infections increasing, and will reduce the risk of requiring future restrictions.

The guidance does not apply where services are taken off-site immediately, for example, a library operating a click-and-collect service. If premises offer a mixture of an on-site and collection service, contact information only needs to be collected for customers who remain on-site. Additionally, for safe operation of cafés that may be housed within library buildings, separate guidance for the tourism and hospitality sector is available. For the safe running of workshops within library premises, the guidance for the community learning and development sector should be followed.

Training and compliance
As a minimum we expect:

- training around processes and working environment expectations to be provided for all staff before restarting work
- public library services to establish measures, in collaboration with trade union or workforce representatives to monitor compliance with relevant regulations and processes put in place to enable a safe return to production

**Workforce training**

Every workplace should look and feel substantially different for employees and volunteers. Physical distancing and enhanced hygiene will change how workplaces operate. Training will therefore be essential to build a common understanding of requirements within the new working norm, instilling confidence that changes put in place contribute to a safe workplace.

Training methods should ensure effective delivery of relevant overarching and service-specific measures and expectations of staff while onsite, in a way which maintains physical distancing. Public library services should consider, as part of their risk-based planning, how training can be safely delivered, especially if elements are normally outsourced to third parties. Visual aids may be required as part of the training and for ongoing guidance and communications. Some organisations have initiated a universal induction process covering their new, enhanced, hygiene and physical distancing measures. This induction process can help demonstrate organisations are taking the COVID-19 risks seriously, building confidence amongst the workforce that they are returning to a safe workplace while also reinforcing the importance of individual employee responsibilities.

**Compliance**

Employers should also put in place, with trade union or workforce representatives, robust local arrangements to monitor compliance with new operational arrangements. Remedial actions should flow from that monitoring, and be augmented by advice, guidance and support from external enforcement authorities.

It is vital during restart for workers to have confidence in the steps being taken by their employers. Employers should look to establish processes to allow employee and volunteer feedback on physical distancing and safety protocols, enabling employees and volunteers to input on areas of concern and for employers to act upon these concerns.

A single point of contact has also been established for trade union or workforce to help the Scottish Government understand how all COVID-19 workplace guidance is being implemented, and to help shape and refine that guidance based on the real experience of workers in the workplace. The mailbox can be contacted by email: scottishtradeunioncovidenquiries@gov.scot. This contact is not intended to be a reporting mechanism for potential breaches of legislation.
Under the Health and Safety etc. Act 1974 (HSWA), your Local Authority Environmental Health Service (HSE) will usually be the relevant enforcing authority for how you control the risk of coronavirus in public library services. In some cases, it may be the HSE but, in any case, enforcing authorities will apply the same requirements. HSE can be contacted by phone on 03000 003 1647 or online at HSE contact form.

Local authorities also have powers under public health legislation, for example, covering whether businesses should be operating, the requirement to take all reasonable measures to maintain 2m distancing, or to ensure your workers in the shielded category can follow the NHS advice to self-isolate for the period specified.

HSE and LAs Environmental Health Services have agreed to maintain the way they allocate different businesses for enforcement according to existing health and safety law for the purposes of workers’ health and safety.

Where the enforcing authority identifies employers who are not taking action to comply with public health guidance to control COVID-19 health risks to workers, they will consider a range of actions to improve control of workplace risks including the provision of specific advice to employers through to issuing enforcement notices or even prosecution.

Next steps

Review and future development

This guidance extends until further notice. It sets out both our current advice and guidance for public libraries in helping to handle COVID-19, as well as beginning to develop a route map towards restarting activities within overarching public health considerations.

Our next step is to continue to develop plans to address the wider issues needed to get public library services restarted again.

Easing restrictions will not mean returning to how things were before the virus. Physical distancing, hand hygiene, and other critical behaviours will be essential in each area to ensure public and workforce confidence.

This guidance will be updated and reviewed as required in consultation with the sector’s employers and unions. Please ensure you use the latest version.

It is for individual public library services in conjunction with trade union or workforce representatives to decide how best to successfully adopt and adapt guidance for their individual circumstances.

Related information
Scottish Government advice and support

Summary of COVID-19 developments in Scotland

Coronavirus (COVID-19): framework for decision making

Coronavirus (COVID-19): framework for decision making – Scotland’s route map through and out of the crisis

Coronavirus (COVID-19): business and physical distancing guidance

Further guidance on physical distancing can be found on NHS inform.

Advice on substantive support packages available for business and their employees


Guidance for key workers can be found at: https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-guide-schools-early-learning-closures/

Guidance on organised activities for children can be found at: https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-organised-activities-for-children/


COVID-19 information and guidance for general (non-healthcare) settings

A list of Scottish Procurement Policy Notes (SPPNs) can be found on gov.scot.


SPPN 5/2020 sets out guidance for public bodies on options for payment to their suppliers to ensure service continuity during the current COVID-19 outbreak.

Legislation

Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020

Fair Work during the COVID-19 crisis
Please see our Joint Statement with the STUC

Other sources of COVID-19 information
UK Government guidance on working safely during COVID-19 in different workplaces

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) have provided advice related to COVID-19


To contact Police Scotland for Protective Security advice, please contact your local Counter Terrorism Security Adviser:

- North: SCDCTSAAberdeen@Scotland.pnn.police.uk
- East: SCDCTSAEdinburgh@Scotland.pnn.police.uk
- West: SCDCTSAglasgow@Scotland.pnn.police.uk
ANNEX A

Public Library Safe Reopening Checklist

Actions to take – for library managers/staff

General guidance

☐ Must complete and implement full COVID-19 risk assessment before opening and when moving between levels in particular level 0/1 to 2/3. This must include full consultation with trade unions.

☐ Ensure clear instruction and guidance is in place for each level to allow staff to have clear plans in place for any changes in levels for their Local Authority.

☐ Ensure ample supplies of PPE, hand sanitiser, public signage and guidance is in place on site prior to re-opening.

☐ Consider face coverings required for workforce and customers, in line with this guidance and ensure relevant clear communication and signage is available before entering and on the premises.

☐ Ensure Test and Protect recording system is in place and staff trained in its use prior to re-opening.

☐ Ensure enhanced hygiene measures, that can mitigate the need for 72 hour quarantine for items, are in place.

☐ Consider extending/changing opening hours to reduce peak hour demand. Consider specific times for at risk groups.

☐ Consider whether all library venues and services can restart at once or whether a staggered approach is needed. Where a staggered approach is...
needed, prioritisation will be required and risks assessed incrementally in line with the recommended stages to re-opening.

- Use active travel as much as possible to get to and from library venues.

- Provide active travel facilities, such as bike stands (to be regularly cleaned), to encourage staff and library users to walk or cycle to premises, where possible.

**Communication**

- Provide clear and accessible communication of the latest guidelines to library staff and library users inside and outside the premises, emphasising the shared responsibility of managing risk.

- Build in time to ensure staff are appropriately trained in the new procedures and safe systems of work.

- Consider amending the code of conduct to set out expectations of shared responsibilities between library staff and library users.

- Signage should be used to communicate key health and safety points, such as hygiene, physical distancing, use of PPE and that there is no unintended impacts on disabled people, those with caring responsibilities or minority ethnic groups. Messages should be clear, easy to understand and provided in languages other than English if required.

**Managing space**

- Define the number of people who can safely be in the building and can reasonably follow 2m physical distancing. The number should consider staff, children and adults. Take into account total floor-space as well as likely pinch points. Display this and other access policies around the library.
Consider options to temporarily repurpose space to reduce physical contact
eg. move or remove chairs, tables, workstations etc.

Review layouts for opportunities to increase distance between library users.

Review layouts for book displays to minimise contact with books by the public
where possible.

Use floor tape or paint to mark areas to help people keep a 2m distance.

Consider use of physical distance marking for other common areas such as
shared study space, toilets, staff rooms, and in any other areas where queues
typically form.

Limit the number of people in certain areas at one time.

Limit the number of people using workstations at any one time, ensure this is
reflected in the PC booking system.

Lifts to be used only by disabled people, for essential purposes, or on a one-
person per life basis where possible.

Emergency, evacuation and accident response processes need to be
considered to ensure effective arrangements are still in place. Everyone on
site should be familiar with new processes.

If your premises have more than one access point, introduce a one-way flow
at entry and exit points if possible.

Stagger arrival and departure times to reduce crowding into and out of the
facilities if this is an issue.
Reduce congestion, for example, by having more entry points into the building or a queue management system.

Identify high risk areas, where close physical contact is likely and/or obstructions force close physical contact. Take measures to reduce risk, including using drop-off points or transfer zones.

Where possible, encourage work to take place in outside areas.

Reduce the number of touch-based security devices such as keypads to enter the premises or controlled areas by seeking alternatives or implementing cleaning and diversification arrangements.

Cleaning and hygiene

Ensure deep cleaning of premises before opening.

Ensure clear and accessible communication around expectations and responsibilities for cleaning.

Use signage and any other relevant communication tools to remind library users to maintain hygiene standards, eg. hand washing and coughing etiquette.

Encourage anyone accessing the building to clean their hands by providing hand sanitation facilities for example at entry and exit points and in common areas.

Frequent cleaning and disinfecting of objects, surfaces, work areas and equipment between uses, including clear communication to library users regarding cleaning of shared equipment and making sure there are adequate disposal arrangements.
UPDATED 16 JUNE 2021

☐ Set clear use and cleaning guidance for toilets and other common areas to ensure they are kept clean.

☐ Ensure you have a procedure in place to quarantine books for a 72 hour period.

☐ Ensure area for holding library materials in quarantine has clear signage and is not accessible by staff and/or public.

☐ Clear workspaces and remove waste and belongings from the work areas regularly.

☐ Provide more waste facilities and more frequent rubbish collection.

☐ Where staff changing facilities are required, set clear use and cleaning guidance to ensure they are cleaned between uses, clear of personal items.

☐ Ensure library users and staff have access to and are able to regularly wash their hands. Provide hand sanitiser for library users to use where handwashing is not practical. These need to be cleaned and restocked regularly.

☐ Increase ventilation where possible.

Working together

☐ Reasonable steps should be taken to ensure that disabled people are able to use the services offered safely, eg. handwashing facilities at wheelchair height, verbal direction for those unable to see floor markings or signage etc.

☐ Stagger break times and make use of outdoor space for breaks where possible.
Use remote working tools to avoid in-person meetings.

Where technicians/other works on site are involved in work, consider how their work can be done maintaining the 2m distance and if this is not possible, consider the use of other measures such as screens or PPE.

Encourage establishment of a rota system for shared equipment.

Where facilities are booked in time-slots, consider staggering these to avoid congestion between slots.

Consider contactless payment options instead of handling cash if taking payments. Alternatively suspend payments to avoid cash handling.

**Actions to take – for library users**

Library services should consider producing and displaying appropriate signage for library users to emphasise the below actions.

**General guidance**

Familiarise yourself with the building’s COVID-19 risk assessment.

Make sure you are aware of all physical distancing and hygiene measures and procedures put in place for everyone’s safety.

Where possible make sure you are aware of the current protection level of your Local Authority and the services which are available to you at your local library.

Recognise the shared responsibility of managing risk within the library venue.

Consider making use of facilities at off peak times.
Respect the fact that the full range of library services will not be available for some time and that library staff are following Health and Safety guidance to ensure available services are safe.

Respect restrictions on activity put in place as a result of the risk assessment.

Use active travel as much as possible to get to and from the library.

Using space

Observe new guidance of use of library space – this is likely to be significantly different from previous use of space in library venues.

Respect advice and guidance issued by library staff.

Be patient and respect to library staff.

Follow new guidance to return of library materials.

Adhere to the 2m distance rule, using markings or floor tape that have been put in place.

Respect limits to the number of people in certain areas at one time.

Follow any signposting/direction of traffic through the venue.

Lifts to be used only be disabled people, for essential purposes, or on a one person per lift basis where possible.

Leave the venue in a timeous manner to avoid any unnecessary social contact.

Cleaning and hygiene
Adhere to use and cleaning guidance for toilets, changing facilities and other common areas to ensure they are kept clean.

Wash your hands more often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use a hand sanitizer, especially before and after handling books or other items. Make use of hand sanitation facilities at entry and exit points and in any common areas.

Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces, including equipment. Library services are expected to have thoroughly cleaned all buildings and have reinforced regular cleaning in all buildings, focussing on high contact objects, such as door handles, and entry and exit points.

Clean shared equipment before and after every use.

Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands; should you need to, cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in a bin and wash your hands.

Clear workspaces and remove waste and belongings from the work areas after use.

**Working together**

Adhere to any one-way route signage in the buildings.

Do not gather in corridors, common areas or open spaces.

Respect limits on the number of people using workbenches or banks of desks at any one time.

Respect the rota system for shared equipment.
☐ Consider contactless payment options instead of handling cash if making payments.