

Guide for Businesses on

Physical Distancing





Introduction

Aberdeen City Council wishes to support the reopening of all shops and businesses when it is appropriate to do so. This must be delivered in a way that minimises health risks in terms of limiting further transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19).

As such, it is likely that physical distancing will be required for the foreseeable future.

The purpose of this guidance is to provide advice and support to shops, leisure facilities and other businesses likely to experience an upsurge in visitor numbers as lockdown restrictions are eased.

It outlines the steps that both you and the Council are likely to have to make to ensure the safe re-opening of your premises.

Your Responsibilities

Individual shop/business owners and operators will be responsible for controlling and managing access to, egress from and queuing both outside and within their premises in accordance with the most up to date government guidance on physical distancing.

This may involve:

- **Limiting the number of individuals allowed to enter at any one time;**
- **Reorganising premises to enable physical distancing such as, for example introducing a one-way system for entry and exit if possible;**
- **Ensuring that those partaking of activities (shopping, eating and drinking, watching a performance) are appropriately spaced out;**
- **Implementing revised queuing arrangements outside buildings and at tills/toilets/changing rooms.**
- **This may require the use of tape or paint to mark 2m distances on the ground to help people comply with physical distancing regulations. Some premises may need to work together on plans for combined queuing arrangements, such as individual shops within shopping centres;**
- **Recommending the use of contactless payment systems wherever possible;**
- **Enhanced cleaning regimes.**



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Car parking is one potential way of managing demand for certain areas and facilities. For operators of private car parks, it may be necessary to restrict the number of operational spaces in order to ensure only an acceptable number of customers can access your premises at any one time, to enable queuing outside your premises and to ensure physical distancing within car parks themselves.

This could take the form of, for example, blocking off some parking bays, or introducing a system whereby parking is booked and paid for in advance, which could ensure that demand is spread over a longer period of time, and prevent the need to queue at and touch parking meters.

What the Council will do to support you

The Council is responsible for ensuring the safety of the transport network and public spaces to ensure people can access and, where necessary, wait to enter premises safely.

Like other cities, Aberdeen is adapting our streets and public spaces to make it easier and safer for people to access shops, workplaces and other services, whilst maintaining physical distancing.

We are making it easier for people to walk and cycle safely and ensuring there is adequate space to allow them to do so, reflecting advice from the Government that these are the best forms of transport to use for physical distancing. This may take the form of temporary cycle lanes for example.



We are also devoting more space to people in areas of key economic and leisure activity, such as outside shops and cafes. This involves restricting vehicles from certain areas and widening pavements to enable an increase in queuing and safe queuing.

We must respond to these challenges urgently so it may be that some measures are temporary at least to begin with.

Key to the success of any changes and maintaining the health and safety of all our citizens, is the ongoing support, understanding and patience of all.

We therefore ask that businesses refrain from using pavement space unnecessarily (putting out advertising boards and other form of 'street clutter' for example) to ensure adequate space is available for movement and queuing. We ask that any existing or new rules on loading are complied with and options for such activities to take place during quiet periods are investigated. Please also ensure delivery drivers and cyclists comply with all necessary requirements and give due consideration to the need for physical distancing amongst members of the public, such as refraining from parking on pavements which limits the space available to people.

Queuing

As a result of social distancing and the need to control access to public areas, there may be increased queueing in certain areas.

There may be a need for queuing bays to be marked out at 2m intervals along pavements outside busy shops, cafes and at bus stops. If you think this is likely to be necessary outside your premises, please contact us for further information and support at sfpbusiness@aberdeencity.gov.uk

Union Street and nearby streets

Part of Union Street and some nearby streets have been pedestrianised to help local residents and pedestrians. On the affected streets, service vehicles and delivery vehicles are only allowed access from 6pm to 10am, so you may have to change delivery times to accommodate.

Cycle Parking

To support the anticipated increase in cycling we will also be rolling out more cycle parking facilities in key areas. If you know of somewhere this could be beneficial please get in touch. Please get in touch at sfpbusiness@aberdeencity.gov.uk

Overspill Activities

With the capacity of premises being reduced there may be opportunities for activities, particularly eating and drinking, to spill out onto the street or other public areas. Larger venues may require overflow areas and there may be scope for outdoor performances. The Council is supportive of this and will aim to accommodate this where it can be achieved safely.

Guidance on Utilising Outdoor Spaces for Pubs and Restaurants

Phase 2 of the [Scottish Government's COVID 19 Route Map](#) for coming out of Lockdown permits pubs and restaurants to open outdoor spaces with physical distancing and increased hygiene measures in place.

This guidance is intended to provide information for premises seeking to take up this opportunity in Phase 2 and will be reassessed as we move into Phases 3 and 4 of the Scottish Government's COVID 19 Route Map.

The guidance is predominately focused on properties in the City Centre, however the general principles will apply City-wide.

Planning and Street Occupation (Roads)

The Planning and Street Occupation Teams will temporarily relax controls which would normally surround the provision of outdoor tables and chairs and will take a reasonable and proportionate approach in terms of planning and roads enforcement. This is to allow a supportive approach to temporary uses for on-street seating to accommodate physical distancing. We reserve the right to consider enforcement action; for instance, if the Design Principles set out at the end of this Guidance Note are not met.

Any business which does wish to apply for planning permission and / or Pavement Café Permit (for example for a permanent rather than temporary proposal) can do so here:

- **Planning Applications:**
<https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/planning-and-building/planning-applications/apply-planning-permission>

- **Pavement Café Permit Applications:**
<https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2018-05/Pavement%20Cafe%20Application%20Form%202018.pdf>

Licensing

If alcohol is to be sold in an outdoor area, then it must be licensed for on-sale consumption. If the outdoor area already forms part of a Premises Licence, then the area can be utilised under the current terms of that Premises Licence. In those cases, however, licence holders should have written policies and procedures regarding physical distancing and hygiene measures that can be demonstrated to Police Scotland or Licensing Standards Officers if necessary.

If the outdoor area is not currently part of a Premises Licence, then the Licensing Board will permit the use of Occasional Licences as a temporary measure. The prohibition against a series of Occasional Licences will be relaxed, as will the requirement to submit applications four weeks in advance. All attempts will be made to process applications as quickly as possible, however turnaround times cannot be guaranteed.

In order to assist applicants for Occasional Licences of this nature the Board will consult the Council's Street Occupation and Planning teams to ensure all aspects are covered. With this in mind, the Board will require the following additional information to be provided as part of any application:

- **A location plan (e.g. scaled at 1:1250 or 1:500) indicating the area to be licensed**
- **A plan which clearly shows the proposed layout of the area to be licensed (e.g. access points, building lines, dimensions of seating area, table, chair and other furniture arrangements, plus any barriers or enclosure)**
- **Details of procedures designed to ensure physical distancing and hygiene measures.**
- **Toilet facilities, including any procedures relating to physical distancing and hygiene.**
- **The usual details of licensed hours, access for children and young persons, and any activities to be carried out in the licensed area.**

An Occasional Licence has a maximum duration of 14 days in terms of the legislation and that is not something that the Board can extend or alter. For pubs and restaurants, a series of Occasional Licences can be submitted at the same time. Members' Clubs should note that they are restricted to four applications for Occasional Licences lasting four days or more in any calendar year. Again, this is stipulated by legislation and is not something over which the Board has any discretion.

Should a premise wish to make an outdoor area permanent then this should be the subject of a formal application to vary the Premises Licence. Applications forms are available via:

<https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/business-and-licensing/licences-and-permits/pavement-cafe-permit-application>

Applications should be submitted by e-mail to

licensing@aberdeencity.gov.uk,
and online payment via:

<https://www.civicaepay.co.uk/AbderdeenCityEstore/estore/default/Catalog/Index?newSearch=False>

Design Principles

- **Be a good neighbour.** Outdoor seating areas should be visible from your existing premises and kept under supervision. Residential amenity should be respected.
- **If seating areas extend beyond the frontage of your own property, then you should have the consent of any neighbouring property(s) to extend in front of their frontage.**
- **The needs of other footway users to maintain physical distancing must be respected. This includes ensuring sufficient space for possible queuing.**
- **Where extended or widened footpaths have been created by the City Council to allow for physical distancing, seating areas should be located in these areas rather than immediately adjacent to the frontage of a premises, particularly if queuing is expected. This is to ensure safe pedestrian flow.**
- **A clear route (eg of around 3 metres) must be maintained to allow other footway users to pass the outdoor seating area without obstruction. Staff should be suitably trained in crossing the footway to serve customers, particularly those carrying hot food or beverages.**
- **Emergency exit routes from your own or a neighbouring property must never be obstructed.**
- **The location of permanent street furniture should be considered in any design (e.g. bins, benches, bus stops).**
- **Any perimeter enclosures over 1 metre should be partially ‘see-through’ in order to maintain visibility of activity.**
- **Seating and tables should be of a reasonable quality, and continuity of design with any surrounding premises is encouraged. Appropriate landscaping and “greening” is also encouraged.**

- **All furniture and fixtures must be removed and stored inside each evening, and not be fixed into the street or pavement surface.**
- **Furniture (including any umbrellas) must be “weather proof” and able to withstand high winds and uneven surfaces.**
- **Suitable arrangements for the storage and collection of refuse must be made.**
- **Heaters and additional external lighting are discouraged unless a formal risk assessment has been undertaken and submitted to the Council for approval.**
- **External public address systems or amplified music will not be acceptable.**
- **Marquees, tents or freestanding canopies will not be acceptable. Parasols should not be attached to any building.**
- **All notices required in terms of Consumer Protection / Environmental Health legislation must be displayed.**

Any proposals which do not align with the above may risk enforcement action being taken

Please be aware that utilising an outdoor space on the pavement or street does not imply an exclusive right to the area, and the Council reserves the right to gain access to the area, e.g. for cleaning, maintenance, repairs or for city events. This also applies to organisations such as Statutory Undertakers.

Further Information, Guidance and How To Contact Us

Aberdeen City Council

[https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/
covid19](https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/covid19)

The Scottish Government:

Retail Sector Guidance

[https://www.gov.scot/publications/
coronavirus-covid-19-retail-sector
-guidance/](https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-retail-sector-guidance/)

Business and Physical
Distancing Guidance

[https://www.gov.scot/publications/
coronavirus-covid-19-phase-1-retur
ning-to-work/](https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-phase-1-returning-to-work/)

Contact Details

For further information and
guidance please contact:

sfpbusiness@aberdeencity.gov.uk

