

Guide to Social Distancing on Re-opening For Bookshops

Extract from BRC-USDAW Recommended implementation practices for Non-Food Retail Stores

A guide for retailers on how to implement Government advice

Bookshops Open For Business

The journey to re-opening bookshops on our high streets is going to be a long and challenging one and the BA is here to help you prepare for that process.

This Guide has been adapted from a Guide created by the British Retail Consortium and USDAW, the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers, and we thank them for the work in pulling it together.

We have adapted it for booksellers, and we hope it is a useful starting point for you. It is, however, just that – a starting point. We will be adding to it over the coming days and weeks, and specifically are working on a list of resources and suppliers of materials for you to get ready for safe re-opening.

We are also continuing to liaise with suppliers, other retail bodies, other trade organisations and other Booksellers Associations around the world to gather best practise and share it with you, making sure that you have all you need to safely re-open, when you decide that is what is best for your business.

The BA is lobbying the government to allow bookshops to be in the first wave of safe re-opening but in order for that to happen, we all need to take seriously the ramifications and implications of the work required to keep staff and customers safe. And to gradually put in place commercial, practical and health and safety measures which will maximise the potential for effective bookselling for you all.

As we gather information from the government, from suppliers, from other retailer bodies and from other retailers who are already open and implementing the guidelines, we will share this information with you.

In the meantime, I hope these generic guidelines from the BRC, our leading trade body for retail, are a useful starting point.

Meryl

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Social Distancing in Retail Stores

On 23 March, the Government stepped up measures to prevent the spread of coronavirus, to protect the NHS and save lives. Some businesses including food retailers, takeaways and pharmacies were permitted to remain open and all non-essential premises were closed.

It is not clear when the non-food retail sector will re-open for business and the final decision on this will be made by Government and the public health experts. However, we need to be ready and as we start to prepare for the re-opening of stores it is likely that some virus control restrictions will continue to be necessary to limit transmission.

The safety and wellbeing of every retailers' staff and customers is a top priority. Retailers welcome continued government support and clarification to assist managing their workforces.

The following outlines recommendations businesses may wish to consider to facilitate implementation of social distancing in retail stores. They are based on the experience of our food retail members who have been operating social distancing effectively in stores for a number of weeks. These are non-exhaustive and it is the responsibility of each business to decide the most appropriate methods to implement social distancing and other coronavirus control measures in their business. Over and above these specific recommendations there should be open dialogue with colleagues to reassure them and discuss any concerns about the safety of their role.

This document has been prepared by the BRC based on input from across the membership and USDAW and will be regularly updated

This guidance should be implemented in addition to all legal requirements for example the Health and Safety at work regulations. Retailers are encouraged to frequently check the official Government advice which is updated daily. Government guidance for employers can be found [here](#) and retail specific [here](#). Links within the document take the reader to information published by the government in England. Additional information specific to other UK Governments can be obtained through those pages.

1. Social distancing in and around stores

Government advice

The Government has issued guidance for social distancing in retail outlets, which can be read [here](#) That advice is the basis for the practical guidance below.

All employers are expected to follow social distancing guidance. Where the production environment makes it difficult to do so, employers should consider what measures may be put in place to protect employees. Once staff have left the work areas, social distancing and further hand washing guidance should be adhered to.

Government advice recognises that "the practical implementation of this advice will depend on the local circumstances." The guideline goes on to acknowledge the need for a local management assessment of measures that can be implemented. Businesses can meet these objectives by implementing the following measures.

BRC recommendations on how to implement:

Outside store

- **Limit the number of customers in the store at any time. Assess the size of the store and its layout, this will enable you to calculate the number of customers who can reasonably follow 2m social distancing.**
- **Use a colleague to meet customers, explain the social distancing requirements and control the number of customers entering store at any one time.**
- **Consider whether temporary barriers should be available in case it is necessary to stop people joining a queue.**
- **Place clear signage outside of the store explaining the social distancing measures in place that customers should follow.**
- **Place markings outside the store to assist correct queue spacings.**
- **Speak to nearby premises to work together to manage possible shared queuing areas.**
- **Encourage customers to shop alone wherever possible. Please bear in mind that this is not always possible.**
- **Schedule deliveries to avoid crowding in delivery areas.**
- **Consider non-contact stock deliveries.**
- **Businesses in shopping centres should discuss queue management with centre management to determine the best way to avoid congestion.**
- **Consider whether additional security staff may be required to support staff.**

Inside Store

Hygiene and cleaning

- **Provision of cleaning stations at front of store including:**
 - **Hand sanitiser, if available and**
 - **Protective gloves**
- **Identify and regularly clean key touch points eg. door handles, lift buttons, keypads, stair/escalator hand rails.**

Social Distancing

General

- **Consider what steps will be taken by managers and staff where customers are not following social distancing measures.**

Shop Floor and Till Areas

- **Use floor markings inside to facilitate compliance with the social distancing advice of 2 metres, particularly in the most crowded areas and where queueing is likely.**
- **Place clear signage throughout the store reminding customers of the social distancing measures and asking them to follow these rules.**
- **Review the layout of the store to ensure aisles/walkways are as clear as possible to accommodate 2m social distancing, including the removal of promotional fixtures if necessary.**
- **Consider one-way systems using floor markings and signage to highlight system and direction.**

- **Erect physical barriers at till points using flexiplastic to provide a barrier for those working on the tills. These should be regularly cleaned**
- **Where till points are close together, consider closing every other till point.**
- **Consider customer self-scanning**
- **To limit congestion, consider restocking/replenishing only outside of store opening hours.**
- **Encourage cashless purchases.**

Customer Seating and Special Assistance

- **Where customers require specialist advice/assistance in store, ensure colleagues giving the advice have a clearly designated position, ideally with a secure barrier as provided at till points.**
- **Remove or limit customer seating in store. If seating is provided, space out appropriately.**

Cafes and Toilets

- **Consider whether it is safe to keep customer toilets open or if these should be available on request. If open, regular cleaning should include manual multi-person touch points such as door handles, flushes, taps. etc.**
- **Baby changing facilities should be available but consider frequency of cleaning.**
- **Cafes and restaurants are closed until further notice and should be securely closed off to ensure customers do not use them for seating.**

2. MANAGING THE WORKPLACE – ENSURING YOUR COLLEAGUES ARE PROTECTED

Government Advice

If anyone becomes unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature in the business or workplace they should be sent home and advised to follow the [stay at home guidance](#). If you or an employee are experiencing symptoms, visit NHS 111 online or call 111 if there is no internet access. In an emergency, call 999 if they are seriously ill or injured, or their life is at risk. Do not visit the GP, pharmacy, urgent care centre or a hospital.

If a member of staff has helped someone who was taken unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, they do not need to go home unless they develop symptoms themselves. They should wash their hands thoroughly for 20 seconds after any contact with someone who is unwell with symptoms consistent with coronavirus infection.

It is not necessary to close the business or workplace or send any staff home, unless government policy changes. You should keep monitoring the [government response to coronavirus](#) for further updates.

BRC recommendations on how to implement:

- **Ensure all staff are aware of the social distancing measures that are in place and trained on how they should support these measures being observed. Remind staff that social distancing applies in all areas of the store, including non-customer facing areas.**
- **Regular and visible written or verbal communication of the government messages.**

- **Frequent reminders using the following:**
 - **Additional signage to ask staff not to turn up for work if they have symptoms.**
 - **Written communication.**
 - **Posters and signage.**
 - **Daily reminders to all staff via noticeboard and/or intranet.**

2.1 LIMITING SPREAD OF CORONAVIRUS IN THE WORKPLACE

Government Advice

Businesses and employers can help reduce the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) by reminding everyone of the public health advice. [Posters, leaflets and other materials](#) are available.

Employees and customers should be reminded to wash their hands for 20 seconds more frequently than normal.

Government advice is clear; PPE, including facemasks, is only necessary for those working in clinical situations. However, we are aware from the experience of our food retail members that some colleagues remain concerned and good practice is to supply masks or visors, and gloves to those who request them. It is important that these are used correctly to minimise the risk of infection. The use of such PPE does not replace or reduce the need to follow the government guidance in relation to hygiene practices. Frequently clean and disinfect objects and surfaces that are touched regularly, using your standard cleaning products.

- *Wash your hands with soap and water often – do this for at least 20 seconds.*
- *Use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available.*
- *Wash your hands as soon as you get to work and when you arrive home, after you blow your nose, cough or sneeze, before you eat or handle food.*
- *Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze.*
- *Put used tissues in the bin immediately and wash your hands afterwards.*

BRC Recommendations on how to Implement:

General Considerations

- **Regular and visible written/verbal communication of the government messages.**
- **Daily reminders about hand washing and correct coughing etiquette using the following:**
 - **Additional signage**
 - **Written communication**
 - **Posters and signage.**
 - **Daily reminders to all staff via noticeboards and/or intranets**
- **Provision of hand sanitiser in high traffic/customer interaction areas such as:**
 - **Till points**
 - **Staff rooms**
 - **Backdoor for staff and delivery drivers**
- **Regular cleaning of multi-person contact points including door handles, keypads.**

- **Provide additional pop-up handwashing stations or facilities if possible. Provide soap, water and hand sanitiser, if available.**
- **Facilitate regular handwashing breaks for all staff.**
- **Introduce frequent deep cleaning of work areas, with attention to multi contact points. For example, between shifts, staff change overs and/or during breaks.**
- **Encourage use of disinfectant wipes to clean all equipment before and after each use.**
- **Stagger staff shift start, end and break times to avoid crowding.**
- **Arrange shifts to maintain same staff working together, where possible.**
- **Offer staff alternative tasks if concerns are raised.**
- **Have available sufficient gloves, masks and/or visors for those colleagues who require them. If you supply re-useable visors ensure colleagues are reminded to clean them regularly during use, and before and after each use.**
- **Remind staff not to share items for example, pens when signing in or out.**
- **Consider how staff security checks can be managed while maintaining social distancing.**

3. Regular review and compliance checking

It is important that any of the measures put in place are regularly checked to ensure customer and colleagues' understanding and compliance.

With regards to customer compliance, retailers should review their in-store and out-of-store security measures and requirements on a regular basis. Public facing retail staff could be faced with difficult situations when trying to manage social distancing measures and other requirements (e.g. non-compliance). Staff should be supported when trying to manage and enforce government guidance and it is important that it is made clear to customers to treat staff with respect. This can be done through increased signage and the appropriate action where necessary. Retailers and government have a duty to protect shop workers, and there must be a zero tolerance approach to verbal and physical abuse from customers, with clear measures in place to protect staff and deal with abusive customers.