

The “roadmap out of lockdown” and the reopening of hospitality businesses

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What is the “roadmap out of lockdown”?

The “roadmap out of lockdown” is the name for the plan the Government has made for the gradual easing of coronavirus restrictions, including those that restrict the ability of businesses in the hospitality sector (such as pubs, bars, cafes and restaurants) to be open to the public.

Up to date information on the Government’s “roadmap out of lockdown” can be found online at:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-response-spring-2021/covid-19-response-spring-2021-summary

Will I be able to reopen my business from 12th April 2021?

The Government has confirmed that hospitality businesses including pubs, bars, cafes and restaurants will be able to open to serve customers outdoors when the country is moved to step 2 of their “roadmap out of lockdown”.

The Government has now confirmed that the whole of England will move to step 2 from Monday 12th April 2021.

When will I be allowed to serve customers inside the premises?

In their “roadmap out of lockdown” the Government has indicated that hospitality businesses will be able to open for indoor service from step 3, which will not be before 17th May 2021. However that date is also only indicative at this stage and subject to change depending on a number of factors.

This FAQs document will be further updated as and when it looks likely that the country will be moving to step 3 of the “roadmap out of lockdown”.

The following information is provided in relation to the rules in place for outdoor service from Monday 12th April 2021.

Can I put up marquees or other structures for people to sit under?

Some venues may wish to erect outdoor shelters. However please note that to be considered ‘outdoors’, shelters, marquees and other structures can have a roof but need to have at least 50% of the area of their walls open at all times whilst in use. Please see the attached examples to help illustrate what would be regarded as outdoors.

You may also wish to seek advice from your local Council’s planning department before erecting any structures in external areas.

Do I need to collect contact details from my customers?

Yes – The opening up of the economy is reliant on NHS Test and Trace being used to minimise transmission of the virus.

Therefore you must do all of the following:

1. Display at least one copy of the official NHS QR code poster. Official NHS QR code posters can be generated online here: www.gov.uk/create-coronavirus-qr-poster
2. Ask every customer or visitor aged 16 and over to check in to your venue or provide their contact details. This can be done quickly and easily using the NHS COVID-19 app to scan in the NHS QR code poster.
3. Have an alternative system in place to ensure that you can collect information from your customers and visitors who do not have a smartphone or do not want to use the NHS COVID-19 app. You must keep this data for 21 days and provide it to NHS Test and Trace, if it is requested.

You can check what data you need to collect and how it should be managed here: www.gov.uk/guidance/maintaining-records-of-staff-customers-and-visitors-to-support-nhs-test-and-trace

4. Take reasonable steps to refuse entry to those who refuse to check in or provide contact details.

These requirements do not apply in relation to those customers who are visiting the premises to purchase food and/or drink for consumption away from the premises and its adjacent outside areas.

Are customers allowed to go inside the premises to use the toilets?

Customers are allowed to enter inside of the business premises in order to use the toilet facilities along with any baby changing or breast feeding facilities. However customers should be encouraged not to linger indoors for any longer than is necessary to walk to and make use of these facilities.

Do customers have to wear face coverings?

Unless generally exempt from wearing a face covering, customers will need to wear face coverings whenever they are indoors at the premises (for example when making their way to and from indoor toilet facilities). Face coverings do not need to be worn by customers when they are outdoors.

Do staff have to wear face coverings?

Unless generally exempt from wearing a face covering, staff will need to wear face coverings when they are indoors at the premises (for example when collecting food and drink from inside the premises to be delivered to tables located outside). Face coverings do not need to be worn by staff when they are outdoors.

Will there be any curfew in place?

There is no curfew imposed on the sale of food and drink, but any sales of alcohol must be made in accordance with the permitted hours shown on the relevant premises licence.

In addition the sale of hot food and/or drinks between 11pm and 5am is also a licensable activity and so can only be undertaken in accordance with an authorisation in place under the Licensing Act 2003 (a premise licence or temporary event notice).

Whilst there is no official national curfew being imposed, you may want to consider voluntarily restricting your opening hours particularly where your premises is located in a residential area, to avoid customers causing unreasonable disturbance to nearby residents.

Will I have to sell alcohol only where it is served alongside a table meal?

Unless your premises licence conditions require this, there is no longer a general requirement for alcohol to be sold alongside a table meal.

Will I have to provide table service?

Where a premises is open and serving alcohol, customers must order, be served and consume any food and drink whilst seated outdoors.

Can I allow customers to enter the premises to pay their bill?

The latest government guidance states that for those premises serving alcohol, wherever possible payments must be taken at the table outdoors where food and/or drink is ordered from and served to.

Where it is not possible for customers to make payments outdoors, for example due to connectivity issues with card payment machines, customers may enter the premises to make payments. However queues need to be managed to ensure social distancing, face coverings will need to be worn and customers must not be allowed to stay indoors longer than is necessary for them to pay their bills.

Can customers pass through the inside of the premises to access the outdoor seating area?

If customers are not able to access outdoor seating areas without passing through the inside of the premises, then they may walk through the premises to reach those outdoor seating areas. However you will need to consider how to ensure people are able to maintain social distancing, such as by putting in place one-way systems.

Customers should also be encouraged to not to linger inside the premises and must wear a face covering whenever they are passing through the indoor areas.

If I am not serving alcohol, for example in a coffee shop, can I allow customers into the premises to order and pay for food and non-alcoholic drink?

Yes, however they cannot remain inside the premises to consume food and drink. They must either take their food / drinks away or consume them whilst outdoors.

How far apart should the tables / chairs be?

You should ensure that an appropriate distance is maintained between tables occupied by different groups.

An appropriate distance” means a distance between tables of at least two metres, or at least one metre, if:

- there are barriers or screens between tables;
- the tables are arranged with back to back seating, or otherwise arranged to ensure that persons sitting at one table do not face any person sitting at another table at a distance of less than two metres; or
- other measures are taken to limit the risk of transmission of the coronavirus between people sitting at different tables;

Can I put tables and chairs on the car park or any other outdoor space at the premises that is not normally used for people to consume food and drink?

You are able to make use of any outdoor spaces at the premises to increase your capacity to serve customers seated outdoors. However you should be mindful of health and safety implications and should conduct a suitable risk assessment before putting furniture in any outdoor areas not normally set aside for customers to eat and / or drink.

When deciding where to position any tables and chairs, you should also consider the potential impact on neighbouring residents, particularly when putting furniture near to residential property boundaries.

You may also wish to consider the possible impact on local residents if there is going to be a reduction in space available on-site at the premises for your customers to park their cars.

What if I want to put tables and chairs on the pavement or road outside the premises?

If you wish to put removable furniture on any highway (road or pavement) adjacent to the premises, you can apply to your local authority for a pavement licence under the Business and Planning Act 2020. Further information is available here:

www.worcsregservices.gov.uk/licensing/pavement-licences

How many people are allowed to sit at a table?

There are still restrictions in place on social gatherings. Outdoors the number of people that can therefore sit together at a table is a maximum of 6 individual people or a maximum of 2 households (consisting of any number of people).

Am I responsible for making sure people do not mix with others outside of their group?

You have a legal duty to take all reasonable steps to ensure no person joins another group or otherwise acts in a way which would contravene the wider restrictions in place on social gatherings (the rule of 6 or 2 households).

Do customers need to pre-book their tables?

No, this is not a legal requirement. However having such a system in place may help you to managing the entry of customers, and the number of customers at a venue, so that all customers are seated with appropriate distancing. This will help ensure that the venue does not become overcrowded.

What happens if there are conditions on the premises licence that restrict the use of outdoor drinking areas?

Any conditions that are attached to a premises licence will still apply and will need to be complied with unless the licence is successfully varied to remove those conditions.

Can I set up a bar outside to serve alcohol from?

This will depend on whether the location where you want to position the bar is within the area authorised by the premises licence to be used for the sale of alcohol. You can check this by looking at the plans attached at Annex 4 of the relevant premises licence.

If an outside bar is set up, it is still important to remember that customers have to be provided full table service and cannot order or be served any drinks unless seated outdoors.

Where can I get further advice and guidance on reopening my business safely?

The Government continues to provide updated “working safely” guidance for restaurants, pubs, bars and takeaway services online here: www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/restaurants-offering-takeaway-or-delivery

UK Hospitality, the British Beer and Pub Association and the British Institute of Innkeeping have also collaborated to provide free guidance and frequently asked questions for businesses, which can be found online here: www.ukhospitality.org.uk/page/FAQs

Contact us by emailing enquiries@worcsregservices.gov.uk