

BEYOND LEVEL 0 GUIDANCE

Scottish Chambers of Commerce

BEYOND LEVEL 0

On the 9th August Scotland moved beyond level 0 which saw the lifting of most of the remaining legally imposed restrictions – most notably, on physical distancing and limits to the size of social gatherings. It also means that from 9th August, no venues will be legally required to close.

This guidance sets out some of the key changes included in recent Scottish Government updates and brings it together in a short easy to understand guide to help businesses plan in line with the remaining restrictions.

If your business is in a sector for which specific guidance has been published, then you should follow this. There are further links available throughout this guide and other support documents available from Scottish Chambers of Commerce.



SOCIAL DISTANCING AND REOPENING

THE 9TH OF AUGUST MARKED THE END OF SOCIAL DISTANCING RULES IN MOST SETTINGS; THE ONE-METRE PHYSICAL DISTANCING REQUIREMENT HAS BEEN DROPPED AND THE CURRENT LIMITS ON THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO CAN MEET UP WILL HAS BEEN SCRAPPED. THIS MEANS THAT ALL VENUES ARE NOW LEGALLY BE ALLOWED TO REOPEN.

HOSPITALITY SECTOR

- Pubs and restaurants can now operate at greater capacities and return to normal licensing hours.
- Nightclubs are permitted to reopen without restrictions on physical distancing and limits on group sizes.
- Face coverings are not required on the 'dancefloors' of nightclubs.
- Guidance for the hospitality sector can be found [here](#), this includes a FAQ section.

EVENTS SECTOR

- The removal of social distancing rules also enables the return of large sporting events and concerts.
- Organisers of outdoor events with more than 5,000 attendees, and indoor events with more than 2,000 attendees, will still need to apply to local councils for permission first.
- Some protective measures will remain in place to mitigate risk in these settings, such as the use of face coverings and the collection of contact details for Test & Protect.
- Guidance for events can be found [here](#).

ADDITIONAL SECTORS

- The 2m distancing requirement remains in place for health care settings. Hospitals, GP surgeries and dentists will continue to observe this requirement.
- All teachers and secondary school pupils will be required to observe a 1m distancing requirement for the first six weeks of term.



HOMWORKING AND RETURN TO OFFICES



As of 9th August, firms can begin a 'phased' return to the office. The Scottish Government continue to advise 'working from home where possible.'

Employers are therefore being urged to consider a hybrid model – a mix of home and office working.

Each workplace will have its own unique circumstances but some of the issues that they may want to consider when prioritising staff to return include, but not limited to:

- those who would benefit from a return to work on mental health or disability grounds
- those who have less appropriate settings for working at home
- those who need to be in the workplace for priority business reasons
- those who are new to the organisation and require training/mentoring (and those required to support this)
- those who would benefit most from collaborative working in person
- sufficient provision of first aid and fire safety duty holders



HOMWORKING AND RETURN TO OFFICES

In preparation for offices re-opening, employers are required to calculate the maximum number of people who can safely physically distance within their premises using the Physical Distance Based Capacity guidance. This includes the requirement to calculate sufficient toilet provision in safe occupancy levels.

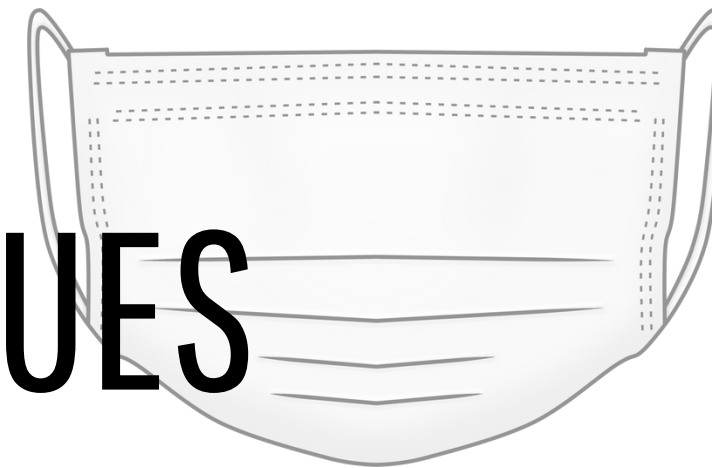
The Scottish Government advise that employers should continue to maintain measures such as:

- Ensuring there is good ventilation, maintaining good hand and respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette
- Wearing face coverings unless exemptions apply
- Continued compliance with Test and Protect, including self-isolation when necessary
- Reflecting outbreak management in workplace plans to manage/mitigate outbreaks in the workplace
- More detail on the government's guidance for the return of offices can be found here:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-returning-to-offices/pages/overview/>



FACE COVERINGS AND OTHER WORKPLACE ISSUES



In Scotland, the requirement to wear a face covering in some public spaces remains in force after 9 August.

You must, by law, wear a face covering in the following places:

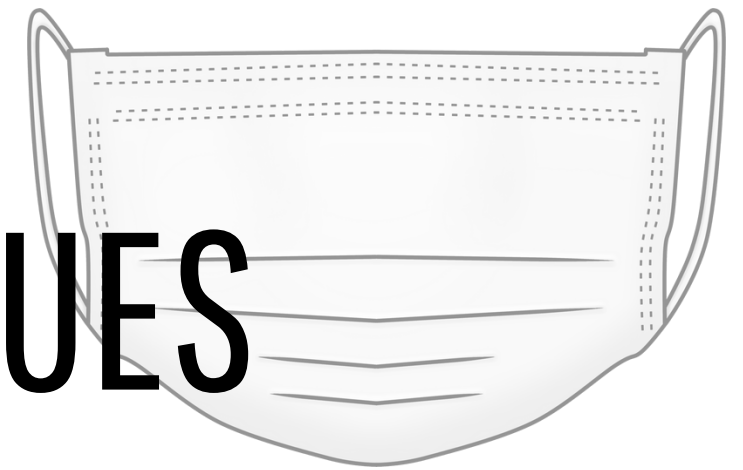
- Workplaces (other than early learning or school settings)
- Any premises open to members of the public and used for the retail sale or hire of goods or services, such as shops
- Hospitality premises such as bars, pubs and cafes and restaurants, and canteens (including workplace canteens)
- Banks, building societies, credit unions and post offices
- Courts and tribunal buildings
- Places of worship
- Sports stadiums

A full list of settings where a face covering is required and qualifying exemptions can be found here:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-public-use-of-face-coverings/pages/where-face-coverings-should-be-worn/>



FACE COVERINGS AND OTHER WORKPLACE ISSUES



For general workplaces: Unless there are measures in place to keep staff separated by either a safety partition or distancing of at least 1m, staff members and visitors will be required to wear a face covering in any indoor communal area unless there is an exemption for specific circumstances.

For business events: Face coverings are not required for the duration of business events taking place in a hospitality setting, however it's important to note that if a face covering is removed, maintaining physical distancing as a precautionary measure is advised

The Scottish Government also strongly encourage the following:

- Taking steps to minimise crowding in certain areas of premises (such as table service or staggering break times)
- Maximising fresh air and good ventilation into premises (there is a specific requirement related to ventilation for early years childcare settings)
- Ensuring good hand hygiene for staff and customers and regular surface / “touch point” cleaning

While the situation will be kept under review, Scottish Chambers of Commerce are in ongoing discussions with the Scottish Government to get greater clarity on a clear end date for the law on face coverings.



SELF-ISOLATION AND CONTACT TRACING



From 9 August, those who are fully vaccinated will no longer be required to self-isolate if identified as a close contact of a positive COVID case, provided that:

- Two weeks has passed since they received their second dose;
- They have no symptoms; and
- They take a PCR test as soon as possible and it comes back negative.

The same conditions will also apply to anyone aged between five and 17 years old, even if they have not been vaccinated.

Despite this, indoor hospitality venues will still be required to collect customers' contact details to assist Test and Protect.

Businesses can find advice for employers on Test & Protect here:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-test-and-protect/pages/advice-for-employers/>



EXEMPTIONS

Critical industry exemptions

If you are an essential worker in a critical industry, you may be able to choose not to self-isolate if you are a close contact of a coronavirus case if:

- your employer has been granted an exemption under the critical worker exemption scheme
- you have volunteered not to self-isolate following a risk assessment of your personal circumstances

See a list of critical industry sectors on the Centre for the Protection of National Industry website.



EXEMPTIONS

There are strict conditions that you must meet before you can return to work. You must:

- have had your second COVID-19 vaccination more than 14 days before
- have a vaccine certificate to show you are fully vaccinated (you can request a copy of your vaccination status at the NHS Inform website)
- not have symptoms of COVID-19
- have evidence of a negative PCR test
- take daily lateral flow tests for up to 10 days after being exposed to the virus
- fully comply with any PPE requirements, hand hygiene and other infection control measures

More details on the Test and Protect guidelines can be found here:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-test-and-protect/pages/summary/>



COVID-19 TESTING



- Organisations with ten or more employees can now sign up for asymptomatic workplace testing as part of an enhanced drive to identify emerging coronavirus (COVID-19) cases and break chains of transmission.
- The workplace testing offer will initially be until the end of September 2021, in line with the universal testing offer.
- Eligible Scottish organisations can find information on how to apply by visiting:
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested/pages/workplace-testing/>
- Organisations with less than 10 employees can direct their workforce to collect LFD test kits from a local pharmacy or COVID-19 test site, or order online for home delivery.



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Scottish government has indicated that it is still ‘considering very carefully’ whether people will need to prove their vaccination status in order to access certain “higher-risk” events and venues.

The First Minister has confirmed that a “COVID status certification” app is under development, mainly aimed for international travel but it will also be able to flex to certification for domestic settings if necessary.

With Scottish schools now reopening and English schools from September, any response from government will be dependent on the efficiency of the vaccine in suppressing the link between COVID cases and hospitalisations and deaths due to COVID.



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