COVID-19 SECTOR ADVICE CARD

The Scottish Government

Designed for managers and employees to guide action to prevent the spread of COVID-19; to support workplace communications and training; and take action in the event of an outbreak

Last updated: 09 September 2020

SECTOR

The business sector covered in this card is: Food Retail and Takeaway.

THE KEY GUIDANCE DOCUMENT FOR THIS SECTOR IS FOOD STANDARDS SCOTLAND'S COVID-19 GUIDANCE FOR FOOD BUSINESS OPERATORS AND THEIR EMPLOYEES.

This guidance should be followed **at all times** to reduce the risk of contracting COVID-19 in food retail environments. These businesses should also refer to **Scottish Government's guidance for the retail sector.** It should be used to support, not replace, discussion with your local authority or NHS Board Health Protection Team.

Additional information (Click on the link below to go to the guidance)

- Scottish Government route map- information about easing the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions.
- Scottish Government's Coronavirus (COVID-19) Phase 2: Scotland's route map - physical distancing update.
- Scottish Government guidance on face coverings.
- COVID-19 guidance for non-healthcare settings.
- Food Standards Scotland risk assessment tool for food business operations, and Food Standards Scotland checklist on re-starting food business operations during COVID-19.
- British Retail Consortium.
- Health and Safety: Health and Safety Executive – Working Safely.
- Coronavirus support for businesses in Scotland: Find Business Support.
- The fair work statement and compliance agreement.
- For workplaces without union representation, union health and safety representatives will be available upon request to support the development of workplace risk assessments. For businesses/organisations wishing to use this service, please email safety@stuc.org.uk.
- Scottish COVID-19 Workbook.

Prevent the spread of COVID-19 - Food Retail and Takeaway

General guidance to prevent spread of COVID-19:

- Carry out a **risk assessment** to review existing Food Safety Management System (**FSMS**) and Health and Safety (**H&S**) procedures against Government advice on COVID-19 to identify whether there is a need to implement any additional hygiene, infection prevention and control, and physical distancing measures. Food Standards Scotland Risk Assessment Tool is a useful resource to document measures undertaken.

- Ensure **effective hand hygiene** measures are implemented by staff through the provision of hot water, suitable soap, paper towels and hand sanitiser at every entrance to food shops and communal areas and at appropriate points within these areas.

- Review **cleaning and disinfection procedures** to ensure they are sufficient for controlling the potential spread of COVID-19. Implement additional cleaning and disinfection at all workstations, public/communal areas, common touch points and surfaces at an appropriate frequency.

- Implement measures for maintaining the **default 2 metre physical distancing**, or the permitted move to **1 metre distancing but only where additional risk mitigation measures are in place,** across all areas of the business. Appropriate mitigation measures and further details are outlined in Food Standards Scotland's guidance and in the Scottish Government's physical distancing guidelines.

- Customers should be reminded of the **need to wear a face covering** whilst purchasing or collecting food within premises. In take-aways where food can be eaten within the premises, face coverings should only be removed in designated seating areas provided for customers to eat and drink.

- Ensure appropriate use of **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)** and **face coverings**. **Wearing of face coverings is mandatory for all staff and customers in food retail premises, when the shop is open.** However, there is an exemption for staff where 2 metre physical distancing can be maintained or Perspex screens are in place to separate contact with customers. There are further exceptions for staff undertaking food handling tasks, where it has been identified that face coverings could cause a risk to the hygiene or safety of food.

- Manage **flow of customers** within the premises by calculating the maximum number that can maintain physical distancing. Implement effective **queue management systems** using floor markings to ensure customers are able to maintain physical distancing.

- Introduce **screening** at customer service areas and **contactless payment systems** where possible. Ensure supplies of hand sanitiser are maintained at these areas for customers and staff to use following transactions.

- **Stagger arrival and departure times** of staff and break times to minimise opportunities for people to congregate in communal areas.

- Ensure managers **support employees and do no incentivise staff** to work when they are feeling unwell. Identify and support those who **should not attend** the workplace (e.g. as shielding, other health issues or those who have been advised to stay at home). Determine those who may need to be offered different roles to ensure they are not placed at increased risk.

- Implement procedures to **isolate and remove symptomatic individuals** from the workplace, ensuring employers and managers understand their obligations with respect to **Scotland's Test and Protect Strategy.**

Workplace Communications & Training - Food Retail and Takeaway

All managers and staff should be aware that the following should be addressed to produce a COVID-safe working environment.

• It is essential for food business operators to **communicate effectively** with all employees, customers and visitors on measures needed to prevent the spread of COVID-19 throughout their business. Ensure **staff policies and procedures** include COVID-19 considerations.

• **Put in place training programmes which will ensure that all employees understand the measures needed to control the spread of COVID-19.** Training should cover effective hand washing technique and respiratory hygiene, physical distancing and proper wearing of PPE/face coverings. Staff should understand their own obligations with regard to the wearing of face coverings and the situations where exceptions apply for example where it is identified that it may be a risk to effective food safety management.

• **Ensure staff training is carried out regularly to ensure there is an up to date awareness of the measures needed to control the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace, and to update on any procedural/regulatory changes**. Managers should also implement procedures for monitoring adherence and refreshing training where needed. Ensure COVID-19 policies and procedures enable managers to engage appropriately with ethnic minority employees on their health status, circumstances and support needs.

• **Ensure customers are made aware of the requirement to wear face coverings, and adhere to physical distancing and hygiene requirements on arrival**, for example, using signage/posters in prominent positions on the premises, or informing them in advance by phone, on your website or by email.

• As appropriate, ensure clear signage is in place to advise customers that they are **entering a 1 metre zone** so that people are aware both of the potentially increased transmission risk in such areas and that mitigations should be in place.

• **Communicate a clearly defined flow system**, e.g. arrows and signage for one-way systems which allow staff and customers to move through the premises maintaining physical distancing.

• Ask customers to **avoid handling products and objects** wherever possible, and to **apply effective hand hygiene practice** on arrival and at appropriate points throughout the premises. Provide hand sanitation facilities at entry and exit points and common areas.

• Ensure all **staff are aware of their responsibility** to control the spread of COVID-19 in their workplace, and are aware of their responsibility to **stay at home** and follow government advice one self-isolation if they are unwell or any of their household are symptomatic. Identify and support those who **should not attend** the workplace (e.g. as shielding, other health issues or those who have been advised to stay at home).

• Ensure **managers and staff understand their obligations** with respect to Scotland's Test and Protect Strategy, that they are monitoring the health of their staff in relation to COVID-19 and are maintaining records of shift workers to support contact tracing. Ensure staff are clear on how to access testing. Measures to ensure all staff comply with the requirements of Test and Protect and are encouraged to report to their managers when they are experiencing symptoms.

Action in the Event of an Outbreak – Food Retail and Takeaway

Immediate action

If there is **any** suspicion that there may be a cluster of cases in your workplace or setting, the most important thing you can do is to contact your local NHS Board Health Protection Team (HPT) early.

Do not spend time trying to work out what you should do yourself. Your HPT will be happy to advise you on what to do.

It is very important that the expert HPT be advised as early as possible of a possible problem so they can assess the situation and offer you advice.

When should I suspect an outbreak?

An outbreak should be SUSPECTED if there are:

- Two or more confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the setting within 14 days
  or
- Increase in background rate of absence due to suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19

A suspected outbreak should be reported to the local HPT who will undertake a public health risk assessment to determine whether there is an outbreak.

Note that settings with increased rates of respiratory illness should also be alert to the possibility that this could be due to COVID-19 and contact their local HPT for further advice.

How do I contact the local HPT if I suspect an outbreak?
- **Immediately** inform your local NHS board HPT, using the local contact details found here (click on link for relevant no.): _____
- Ensure the workplace has a nominated point of contact to liaise with the Health Protection Team

What else should I do if I suspect an outbreak?

- Continue to follow the measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

- Implement your COVID Business Continuity Plan (if available).

- Your local Health Protection Team will conduct a rapid investigation and undertake a risk assessment. You will need to work with them to do this. The HPT will advise on the most appropriate actions to take.

- Cooperate with your local Health Protection Team who will undertake a risk assessment and conduct a rapid investigation. They will advise on the most appropriate action to take.

- Depending on the risk assessment outcome, the Health Protection Team may establish an Incident Management Team (IMT) to help manage the situation.

- The IMT will lead the Public Health response and investigations, and will work with you to put appropriate interventions in place and advise/support communication processes.

What interventions might be put in place to control the outbreak?
Your Health Protection Team and Incident Management Team will work with you to identify the appropriate measures. The first step is to review implementation of core standard preventive measures and to ensure that they are in place and effective.