Operating and building confidence in a risk-averse world

Best practice: creating a COVID Secure environment for your customers and staff
Introduction

With Covid-19 restrictions easing in the UK, we are urging the sector to remain cautious as we recognise that government guidance, which covers a vast range of event considerations, leaves much to the judgement of business operators.

As the leading association for business meetings and events in the UK as well as the owners and keepers of AIM Secure – the industry’s only accreditation scheme – we continue to champion best practice and encourage venues and organisers to uphold the highest standard to reassure bookers that they mitigate risk to public health, are flexible to the needs of customers and ensure staff welfare.

It is advised that these guidelines should be read in conjunction with your own brand standards and adopted alongside both the latest UK government advice and any specific regional or local restrictions.

Please be aware that as the situation continues to evolve and the UK government – driven by the latest science and medical advice – continues to offer direct guidance, this is designed to be a working document and is therefore subject to change.

Best regards,

Kerrin MacPhie
Chief Executive of the mia

To access the latest supporting information, please visit: https://www.mia-uk.org/Safety-Resources
Business planning

The government is empowering businesses to identify policies and procedures which best suit their own organisation's type of work environment. Businesses should continue to consider infection risks in the workplace and make reasonable adjustments to procedures to ensure they mitigate risk to public health, are flexible to the needs of customers and ensure the welfare of staff.

They acknowledge that Covid-19 has not gone away, so your policies need to be flexible and responsive to any changes that may come as a directive from the UK government and National Institute for Health Protection. Regular reviewing of policies and risk assessments will be important in the future. All AIM Secure venues should upload their risk assessments on miaTouchstone as the platform will remind you when it's time to review. To protect your business in the future, review your booking contracts to ensure they include a pandemic clause and careful consideration should be given to cancellation policies.

Business and department risk assessments

From 1 April, the government will remove the health and safety requirement for employers to explicitly consider Covid-19 in their risk assessments. The intention is to empower businesses to take responsibility for implementing mitigations that are appropriate for their circumstances. Existing working safely for businesses guidance will be consolidated in line with public health advice.

Employers have a legal duty under general health and safety legislation to identify all risks (physical and health) for users of their business as part of the normal risk assessment process and make reasonable adjustments to mitigate risk to public health.

"Through their research, the mia is aware that all business meetings and events organisers remain cautious and are increasingly risk aware. On behalf of their clients, booking agents want to ensure that venues are working safely and securely and may want to view your risk assessment.

"Review and update risk assessments in line with your obligations as a business and employer at least annually or as procedures and guidance change.

"Use the miaTouchstone secure depository through AIM Secure accreditation which will automatically send reminders to review.

"Use the risk assessment to inform venue policies and procedures.

"Review and update department or area risk assessments as different areas will have different potential risk exposure for customers and staff.

"Communicate updated business and department risk assessments to staff and update their training."
Business planning (continued)

The government acknowledge that Covid-19 has not gone away, and it would be best practice to set up an action plan setting out the steps to take if a case is reported in your venue, or there is an outbreak of infection within your venue, regionally or nationally to ensure action is not delayed.

"Identify a point of contact who would liaise with local public health teams.

Create a plan to maintain awareness of national and regional updates.

Event risk assessments

As best practice, the mia has always recommended the use of individual event risk assessments as risks may vary with each event especially those involving large numbers and travel, nationally and internationally. There is further guidance on the use of event risk assessments throughout this document.

Demonstrating your business is infection safe

Accreditations and certifications of cleanliness and safety are highly recommended and should be used in marketing collateral to inspire customer confidence.

"Consider the mia AIM Secure accreditation which is venue specific and includes staying safe criteria.

Also consider using a consumer facing scheme such as VisitBritain's 'We're Good to Go'.

Groups will have their own brand certification and/or will be AIM Secure accredited.

Use of face coverings

The compulsory wearing of face coverings is currently varied across the regions of the UK. In England and Northern Ireland there is no longer a requirement. It is anticipated that Wales and Scotland will lift restrictions by the end of March. However, the government advise that people can reduce the risk of catching and passing on Covid-19 by wearing a face covering in crowded and enclosed spaces, especially where they come into contact with people they do not usually meet and when rates of transmission are high.

a) Businesses may decide to encourage guests and staff to wear face coverings in public areas of a venue if they feel it would reduce infection transmission substantially and mitigate public health risks, particularly at times of high infection levels.

– When deciding your policy take into account: customer and staff confidence; the type of event, indoor or outdoor; size of meeting room or area and size of group; potential movement around the venue; any valid reasons people may have for not wearing a face covering such as a medical condition or disability and protecting the safety of your staff.
Business planning (continued)

Venue entry requirements
Venues are no longer required by law to check the Covid-19 status of their customers or carry out routine contact tracing, however there will be bookers and organisers who will take a cautious approach. Discuss with bookers or organisers any specific requirements they may have. Ensure any procedures put in place comply with all relevant legal obligations and guidance, including data protections and equalities.

Distancing and capacity
The return to full capacity meeting rooms and venues is welcome but businesses should still pay due consideration for the management of numbers, movement of people in a venue, individual concerns and booker/organiser requirements. You may want to take into account:
- Events where overcrowding could easily occur eg: at entrances, registration, at refreshment break times or in public areas.
- Consider applying maximum number limits in public areas.
- If feasible, consider staggering arrival, registration, break and lunch times when multiple events are due to take place to limit crowding.
- Consider allocating a 'safe area' where customers may go to if they are concerned of overcrowding or are clinically vulnerable and require support. This is not the same area as someone would use if they feel unwell with Covid symptoms.

Cleaning and hygiene
Research shows that customers are demanding a higher level of cleaning than before the pandemic. Enhanced protocols based on disinfection processes are effective towards controlling not only bacteria but also viral infections and, as best practice, should remain in place. This will create confidence for bookers/organisers, delegates and visitors and provide some reassurance for customers who are more cautious of returning to venues. The government continues to recommend cleaning surfaces and objects especially those that are touched frequently along with washing hands as a means of reducing risk. The 'Catch it, Bin it, Kill it' advice continues. See section: Cleaning and hygiene.
Ventilation has been identified as a critical control factor to reducing aerosol transmission and infection cross-contamination and the government will continue to promote and support good ventilation.

Consider these actions:

- Identify areas that have poor ventilation and take steps to increase air flow e.g. internal rooms, toilet areas.
- Carbon dioxide (CO2) monitors could be used to help identify where a space is poorly ventilated with businesses encouraged to take steps to improve ventilation if CO2 readings are consistently high.
- It is recommended that ventilation and air conditioning systems that normally run on recirculation mode, are set to run on outside air where possible.
- Operate air conditioning at full speed.
- Change filters regularly and have a planned schedule for this.
- Check windows can be opened easily and are secure.
- Check extractor fans work effectively and are cleaned regularly.
- Check air vents are cleaned regularly.

Staffing and welfare

Businesses have a duty of care for their staff and should continue to consider the needs of employees at greater risk from Covid-19, or other viral infection including those whose immune system means they are at higher risk of serious illness.

See section: Staffing and welfare

Business Insurances

Be proactive and protect your business against losses in the future from any further outbreaks of Covid-19 or other viral infection.

- Check your insurance cover as many companies have changed what they will cover over the last two years.
- Check your business insurance has a pandemic clause for future use.
- The mia has issued guidelines, which include a clause prepared by legal experts Mishcon de Reya, around this. If you prefer to use your own cancellation policy and pandemic clause, then the mia strongly recommends taking legal advice on this.
Business planning (continued)

Review suppliers

As part of your due diligence procedures review suppliers and ensure that they:

- Comply with your policies and procedures for cleaning, disinfection and hygiene.
- As best practice, they should advise you if they are aware of any of staff who have been ill and have been on your premises.

If a delegate/guest becomes ill

Delegates starting to feel ill with Covid-19 symptoms whilst on the premises put people with specific health requirements at high risk. Should the situation arise liaise with organisers to identify further actions they may wish to take. This could include:

- Moving the delegate to an area away from other people.
- Use a space that can be secured and deep cleaned before further use.
- If possible and the delegate is in agreement and tests are available, a lateral flow test will help assess the next action.
- Delegates with a positive result or, if a test is not available, should be asked to leave the venue and be offered support with arrangements if required.
- Deep clean and disinfect the areas the person has been in.
Sales, showrounds, booking and contracts

For some time to come, sales will be built on confidence and a high level of communication with bookers and organisers is vital to achieve this. As your frontline, your sales team will need to be totally conversant with your policies to safeguard delegates including face coverings and hygiene. This will ensure transparency early on in discussions and help instil confidence.

Sales, showrounds, booking and contracts

Venue flexibility

There will still be an element of customers who will not wish to resume face to face events for some time to come and offering different ways to deliver events will attract bookers/organisers to your business and increase sales opportunities. These could include: hybrid events, teleconferencing and increasing outdoor events options. Ensure technology is high quality and provided by an AV partner that can give support. Train staff to ensure they are confident to set up these solutions and discuss with bookers/organisers.

Terms and conditions/contracts

Review current terms and conditions and, to safeguard your business, ensure they reflect your updated policies along with clauses regarding future potential infection increases and pandemics. Use mia recommended terms and conditions including pandemic clauses to safeguard your business. Check cancellation policies reflect emergency situations. Ensure organisers sign agreement to the booking terms and conditions.
Sales, showrounds, booking and contracts (continued)

Event risk assessments

Carrying out a specific event risk assessment has always been best practice. Many organisers will be cautious for some time to come and to build confidence this process will identify the additional concerns of individual organisers. Considerations could include:

- Identifying specific infection risks e.g: large numbers in the space or individuals with specific health requirements.
- Discussing with organisers and together deciding on actions to minimise risk.
- Showing organisers your business risk assessment as a base for discussion.

Showrounds

A personal showround is an opportunity to demonstrate to potential bookers that their personal safety is a priority and to communicate your safe procedures.

- Ask bookers if they have any personal safe preferences or needs.
- Ensure sales staff are fully aware of updated policies and procedures to discuss with bookers/organisers.
- Many clients may not want to travel if it is unnecessary, so virtual show rounds should still be offered.
- Consider ways to develop virtual tours from simple videos to using rapidly advancing immersive experience technology.
- Holding meetings via one of the digital platforms such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams.
- Have clear visuals on your website displaying meeting areas along with options.
- For bookers/organisers of smaller meetings and events, or those who have used the venue previously, consider adding live availability to your website to enhance work processes.
Sales, showrounds, booking and contracts (continued)

If sales staff have been working from home, as many have, progress their transition back into the workplace with due care for individuals.

Discuss with sales staff how they feel being in full contact with customers. Are they comfortable using public transport to go to external meetings?

Are they comfortable travelling to other areas of the UK and internationally?

Are they comfortable to attend exhibitions?

Support individual concerns and consider appropriate adjustments including the provision of face coverings if requested.

Be flexible and consider maintaining some days working from home in the short-term or even long-term, if it has been a positive and productive work procedure.
Disinfection and cleaning planning

It is clear from research that customers are demanding a higher level of cleaning than even before the pandemic, and we are now operating in an environment where every element of your venue will be under scrutiny by visitors, particularly high traffic areas. Your venue should demonstrate first-class cleaning protocols throughout and your procedures may be driven by an overall company cleaning programme. Referring to your protocols in discussions and highlighting your adherence to them in marketing materials will increase booker/organiser confidence. Visible procedures and cleaning activity will continue to give confidence to your customers. It's especially important to clean surfaces that people touch a lot and businesses should encourage staff and customers to use hand sanitiser and to clean and wash their hands frequently.

Disinfection and cleaning planning

Many of the cleaning procedures before the pandemic focussed on bacteria control and making things look 'clean'. The enhanced protocols added disinfection through the use of specific products or heat which breaks the chain of viral infections. Viruses are seen to be the concern of the future and the enhanced protocols have become best practice. These could include:

- Maintaining enhanced cleaning and deep cleaning procedures.
- The use of electrostatic disinfectant sprays in deep clean procedures.
- Selecting cleaning products that are proven to be effective on viruses not just bacteria.
- Using signed schedules in key areas, not only as a check for managers but also as a visible signal to customers that cleaning is a priority.
Disinfection and cleaning planning (continued)

The procedure of disinfecting high touch points has become best practice and is highly visible to customers. The procedure sends a clear message that cleanliness standards are important to the venue and therefore raising customer confidence.

Decide on how often disinfection of high touch points should be carried out based on the number of people using an area or item. This may vary at different periods of time e.g. peak times of the day or week.

Hand washing and 'Catch it, Bin it, Kill it' advice

The government continues to recommend washing hands as a means of reducing risk and the 'Catch it, Bin it, Kill it' advice continues. Your procedures could include:

- Providing hand sanitiser points throughout the venue particularly at high-traffic and high-risk areas.
- Touchless dispensers are preferred and check regularly to ensure they are not empty.
- Using visual reminders e.g. posters or cards to remind and encourage customers and staff to wash/sanitise their hands regularly along with reminders to 'Catch it and bin it', or to sneeze/cough into the crook of their arm.
Disinfection and cleaning planning (continued)

**Public toilet areas**
Customers often use the cleanliness of toilet areas as a measure of a venue’s attention to cleaning. Consider if any of these actions would enhance your procedures:

- Keeping facilities well ventilated.
- Increasing frequency of cleaning if there are a large number of delegates using the facilities.
- Making sure there is an effective means of disposing of waste quickly.
- Providing bags for the collection of waste at the end of the day.
- Having a wash basin for guests to wash hands with soap and water available.
- Encouraging soap and water to be used throughout the day.
- Ensuring that waste bin lids are available for use and that bins are emptied when full.
- Providing a separate waste bin for used face coverings and gloves.
- Providing an extra waste bin in high risk areas.
- Providing hand sanitiser or alcohol gel in each public toilet.

**Venues with bedrooms – Policy**
Decide your policy on the frequency of cleaning occupied rooms. Your considerations could include:

- The recent policy of not cleaning occupied rooms considered the increased risk to staff. Whilst many businesses are now deciding to return to full daily cleaning, there are some that will continue not to clean occupied rooms for the foreseeable future.

- Complete a risk assessment and discuss with staff any concerns they may have. Be flexible to provide face coverings and gloves on request from staff.

- If bedrooms are not cleaned during a guest stay, this should be communicated clearly to guests.

- There may also be guests who would prefer not to have staff entering their bedrooms so, as a minimum, offer full or partial cleaning on request that is carried out when guests are not present.

- Consider placing sanitiser in each room to encourage guest hand hygiene.
Departure rooms
Many businesses will continue to use deep cleaning procedures for departure rooms in order to increase customer confidence.

Best practice includes:

- Use of electrostatic sprays or equivalent.
- Ventilating rooms during the cleaning process.
- The use of hygiene wraps on items in rooms and 'disinfection stickers' which are broken on entry will increase guest confidence, or place a card in the room outlining the cleaning procedures that have been taken for guest safety.

Cleaning rooms and areas
where a guest / delegate has reported Covid-19 symptoms

Follow the recommendations of Public Health UK:

Use this link to ensure you follow up to date guidance: Scroll through to Principles of Cleaning After an Individual with symptoms of, or confirmed, Covid-19 has left the setting or area.

Covid-19 has reduced but not disappeared, so although there is no longer a mandated requirement for distancing, you may find that bookers and organisers remain risk aware and request extra space between delegates. It will be a balance between business revenues and building booker/organiser confidence for the future.
Meeting rooms (continued)

- While the lifting of distancing regulations allows for meeting rooms to return to full capacity, bookers and organisers may still have a cautious approach. 
- Be flexible to individual needs to offer reduced capacities where availability allows.
- Consider the level of risk that different events may have and carry out an event risk assessment taking into account the numbers of people, individual delegate needs and the size of the meeting room or area.
- These should be discussed with the organiser and actions put in place to reduce risk together.
- Provide a small bottle of sanitiser at lecterns.
- Ensure meeting rooms are well ventilated against the number of people and no cross ventilation is necessary.
- Use the section; Business Planning: Review ventilation - for further points.
- On a daily basis:
  - Check ventilation systems are working effectively.
  - Set air conditioning to run on outside air where possible.
  - Check filters have been changed in line with maintenance schedules.
  - Check air vents are fully open.
  - Check extractor fans work effectively.
  - Check windows can be opened easily.
  - Open doors and windows and air vents during breaks.
  - Inform organisers of the checks that have been made for their own and their delegate's safety.
  - Ventilate rooms at break times and at the end of each day.
  - If possible, ventilate refreshment areas and access to meeting rooms once delegates are in rooms.
Meeting rooms (continued)

General room set up and breakdown

The process of setting up equipment or breaking a room down has a potential risk of droplet contamination and transmission. Your considerations could include:

- If baize or other cloths are used, change these at the end of each day.
- If external suppliers are used to set up and break down rooms, ensure they comply with your policies. See Business planning: Review suppliers.
- It is advisable that staff wear gloves when removing food and drink items at the end of a meeting for normal hygiene reasons.
- Informing on the day organisers of your safe cleaning will help reduce any concerns they may have.

Delegate table set up

Simplifying delegate table set ups will help minimise infection risks:

You may like to consider these actions in your procedures:

- Discuss with organisers if delegate stationery packs are required.
- Simplify delegate place settings and reduce as far as possible additional items put onto tables.
- Consider the use of hygiene wrapped glasses or stan caps.
- All glasses should be run through the dishwasher at the end of each day even if they have not been used.
- Individual bottles of water for each delegate is recommended rather than shared bottles or jugs.
- If venues have their own bottling system, ensure bottles are heat disinfected before refilling.
- If you supply sweets for delegates, use individual packets or tubes which can be laid at each place.
- Provide access to sanitiser.
Organiser/delegate arrivals

Carefully managed entrance areas, made clear to the organiser in advance, will give confidence to all attendees and guests.

The government recommends that people continue to wear face coverings in crowded and enclosed spaces where they may come into contact with people they do not normally meet and at times of high levels of infection. Use this arrival period as an opportunity to influence delegate behaviour with the provision of hand sanitisers and hygiene signage.

Organiser arrival

"The 'on the day' organiser may not be your pre-event contact, so ensure they know what the policies are that have been agreed with the booker."

As far as possible, if organisers require assistance with equipment, it should be taken directly to the meeting room.

Delegate arrivals

– entry to venue

There will be delegates who feel wary at attending face to face meetings especially those people with a specific health need and therefore a higher risk level.

Consider if any of these actions would help you to mitigate risk:

- Leave front doors open during key arrival time if they are not automated. Doing this will also keep the area ventilated.
- Ensure entry areas are effectively ventilated apart from having open doors.
- Identify any additional entry points of the building that could be used to reduced congestion.
- Encourage, through signage, for delegates and guests to use hand sanitisers prior to entering.
Organiser/delegate arrivals (continued)

- If you have a specific venue policy, or if organisers have decided on specific policies for face coverings and safety, ensure delegates are given a copy on arrival. This may be provided on a delegate app in larger venues.

- If you identify in your risk assessment that managing distancing on arrival would be advantageous e.g. large numbers of people arriving at one time, continue to use one way and in/out systems, flow barriers and security/doormen to manage overcrowding and queues and if possible, stagger arrival times for multiple or larger meetings to minimise overcrowding.

- Using pre-registration, QR check in codes and/or badge-less events with digital credentials.

- Staff should be fully informed of specific event venue entry requirements and how to manage delegate questions or if they refuse to comply with the agreed event policy.

Staff safety

Venues have a duty of care for the safety of their staff and must ensure staff feel comfortable and confident to carry out their duties when delegates arrive, especially when dealing with large numbers.

You might consider some of these actions:

- Identify staff with specific health requirements and discuss appropriate adjustments to meet their concerns.

- Be flexible with staff who may prefer to wear face coverings.

- Provide hand sanitisers and encourage staff to sanitise their hands regularly.

- Keep entry areas well ventilated.

- If valet parking or airport/station pick up is offered, ensure staff feel comfortable providing this service and, if they prefer to wear a face covering, they should be able to do so. Identify any potential risks in your risk assessment particularly at times of high infection levels or if picking up customers from countries or areas of the UK with a higher infection level.

- Encourage staff to open windows and ventilations systems when carrying passengers.

- Clean and disinfect vehicles after each pick up.

- Using digital check in/out with email billing.

- Provide information electronically where possible.

- Use contactless payment systems.

- Place disinfecting wipes or bottles next to PDQ's and pen pots for people to use if they prefer.
Organiser/delegate arrivals (continued)

Venues are generally re-opening storage and cloakroom areas, but you may decide not to offer these facilities at this time. If you do decide to offer these facilities, consider these procedures:

- Clear screens between staff and customers if appropriate to the venue environment.
- Be flexible with staff who may prefer to wear a face covering.
- Use place and pick up routines and drop off collection points.
- Disinfect surfaces as much as possible during the time the area is open.
- Provide sanitiser points for staff and customers.
- Ventilate the area.

If you re-instate luggage storage areas these actions may help you to minimise risk:

- Restrict the amount of luggage and other items stored to enable spacing between cases and boxes.
- Ventilate areas if possible.
- Disinfect floors and shelving regularly and carry out regular deep cleaning.
- Consider the risk to staff of taking luggage into rooms when guests are present and implement knock and step back routines if staff prefer.
- Be flexible with staff who may prefer to wear gloves when handling luggage.
- Provide a sanitiser point for use when leaving the room.
Organiser/delegate arrivals (continued)

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What you offer is for you as the venue operator to decide. You may feel that for the safety of your staff and your delegates that you only want to offer set catering e.g: a seated lunch. Whatever you decide, risk assess carefully and ensure the space is never overcrowded by managing queues carefully.

With all preparations, consider speed of service, minimising risk, delegate comfort and staff and delegate safety.

You may find this updated guidance useful:

**F&B**

Due care must still be taken and a thorough risk assessment carried out to mitigate public health infection risks and keep staff safe from possible infection. The requirements of your FSMS risk assessment will also support this process and the use of gloves in food preparation and service to reduce cross contamination is already bedded into general food safety requirements.

Many customers will still be cautious when eating and drinking in venues and the highest standards of food safety and personal hygiene should be applied to all food and beverage service. Training should be updated and ongoing.

Identify in your risk assessment if staff should wear face coverings and/or gloves, be flexible to booker/organiser requirements on face coverings and individual staff concerns especially when infection levels are high.
F&B (continued)

To show due care, consider if these actions would enhance your procedures:

**Discuss with organisers what their concerns may be and how you may accommodate those.**

- Allocating set refreshment spaces for each meeting.
- Identifying maximum capacities in each area.
- Identifying potential pinch points.
- Having disposable cups and spoons available on request.
- Washing all crockery at the end of a refreshment break even if it hasn’t been used.
- Offering cold refreshments in sealed individual bottles and pre-wrapped additional products e.g. cakes.
- Placing hand sanitiser at entrances and counter points.

**Food service**

Some customers may be particularly cautious using a buffet or being in a restaurant or function room, especially those customers with specific health risks and may feel uncomfortable being seated close to people they do not know.

You may like to consider some of these actions:

**Buffet service:**

- Use staff served buffets to minimise customer risk through shared serving spoons and handling plates.
- Adding sneezeguards to mobile display units where possible.
- Flexible individual offerings such as Bento boxes.
- Using multiple buffet points to avoid pinch points.
- Managing queues by restricting which tables go to the buffet counter.
“Placing a few tables in a quieter area with reduced capacity.”

“Offering disposable cutlery and individual condiments on request.”

“Placing sanitiser at the start point of the buffet.”

Table service:

“Encouraging pre-booking to manage potential pinch points.”

“Setting capacity limits.”

“Encouraging delegates and guests to pre-order food either simply by phone or through the use of online ordering portals and digital table apps.”

“Use full plate service or a combination with family service to reduce staff being in close contact with guests.”

“Staff should place plates and dishes directly on tables and not hand to guests, especially if they intend to pass the plates along to others.”

“Use cloche covers to protect food between the kitchen to the customer.”

“Simplify table lay ups to minimise handling of crockery and napkins.”

Banqueting:

“Bookers and organisers may still request reduced covers on tables to take into account that people may not want to be seated in close proximity to people they don’t know. Try to accommodate requests as much as possible to increase confidence.”
F&B (continued)

Bar service
Venues may decide to maintain table service particularly at times of high demand.

You may like to consider some of these actions:
- Use individually wrapped single-use straws or metal straws that can be disinfected in the glass washer.
- Provide sanitiser points.
- Disinfect bar tops regularly throughout service.
- Use contactless payment where possible.

Room service/In-house dining
Identify in your risk assessment whether it is appropriate for staff to enter bedrooms where guests are present or continue the use of knock and step back procedures.

You may like to consider some of these actions:
- The whole tray should be covered for delivery to rooms.
- If your policy is for staff not to enter guest rooms, use knock and stand back procedures, using a butler tray or light table to place items outside the guest room for guests to take the tray themselves.
- Ask guests to leave their completed meal tray outside the room. These should be picked up promptly.
- Trays or butler trolleys must be disinfected after use and before next use.
Staff safety and welfare

Bringing teams back to the workplace is good news. However, many will have concerns for their safety and businesses need to build confidence by talking with their staff and supporting them, offering training programmes and creating a work environment where all, regardless of any disability or health concern, feel safe.

Ensure staff areas and working procedures are considered in your risk assessment along with consideration for any staff facing mental and physical health difficulties. Ensure your staff understand all of the protocols you have in place and are confident to communicate with guests and answer any questions they may have.

Staff returning to work after working from home

Businesses have a duty of care for their staff and due regard should be paid to how they may be feeling returning to work. Full support should be given to ease staff back into the work environment.

"Talk with staff to agree arrangements to return to work."

"Be flexible to consider, if appropriate to the role, flexible working arrangements that might include maintaining some periods of time for working from home."

"Be aware of staff with pre-existing health conditions or who are clinically vulnerable or have mental and physical health difficulties, and discuss reasonable adjustments."

Staff wellbeing is important, and businesses should consider offering an EAP, or equivalent, that staff can use if they have concerns of how their health is impacting their ability to work.
Staff safety and welfare (continued)

Managing Covid-19 for staff

Be aware that self-isolation requirements in Wales may not be lifted until late March. Scotland have not confirmed when self-isolation rules will be lifted and free testing is still available. Northern Ireland has no plans at this stage to change current guidance.

In England, staff who have any of the main symptoms of Covid-19, or a positive test result, should follow the public health advice to stay at home and avoid contact with other people. They should not attend work.

From 1 April, the government will update guidance setting out the ongoing steps that people with Covid-19 should take to minimise contact with other people and the mia will update this guidance accordingly.

Each business must define their own policy on managing staff welfare. Policies will vary according to the size of the business, risk assessments and preferences.

Take these considerations into account:

"That it is advisory that people stay at home and avoid contact with other people if they test positive for Covid-19 for at least 5 days and then follow testing guidance. You should not ask people with Covid-19 to come into work."

Individuals do not have a legal obligation to inform employers when they are required to self-isolate.

"Those who test positive should avoid contact with anyone in an ‘at risk’ group."

People testing positive for Covid-19 will be encouraged to inform their close contacts so that they can follow guidance.

"No longer ask fully vaccinated close contacts and those under the age of 18 to test daily for 7 days."

The legal requirement is removed for close contacts who are not fully vaccinated to self-isolate.

Actions might include:

"Encouraging staff members who are unwell with Covid-19 symptoms and other illnesses to stay at home and follow guidance, especially if venues have smaller work areas or large numbers of events taking place."

"Enabling staff to work from home, if appropriate."

"Communicating to staff the procedures for reporting symptoms emphasising the importance of doing this to reduce infection and safeguard colleagues and customers especially those at higher risk."

"Discussing policies with staff."
Staff safety and welfare (continued)

If staff are unable to work from home, inform them of their sick pay options.

Identifying staff who may be more at risk of infection, and discuss with them how you might be able to adjust procedures to support them.

Maintaining contact with staff who are self-isolating, especially those who live by themselves or have specific needs, to ensure their wellbeing.

Free testing will no longer be available. Businesses may consider investing in supplying workplace tests especially at times of high infection risk or using an approved provider.

You should inform your local authority public health team if there is an outbreak at your workplace i.e.: two or more cases. Use this link to find contact details. https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council

If your local UKHSA health protection team declares an outbreak, you will be asked to record details of staff with symptoms of Covid-19 and assist with identifying contacts so ensure all employment records are up to date.

You will be provided with information about the outbreak management process. This will help you to implement control measures, assist with communications to staff and reinforce prevention messages.
Staff safety and welfare (continued)

As with bookers, organisers and customers, communication needs to reassure the public about the safety and security of the environment. As with other stakeholder groups, ensuring clear communication is fundamental to maintaining trust and confidence. When dealing with staff, it is essential to ensure they are aware of the policies in place and understand their role in implementing them. This could include:

- Creating confidence by ensuring staff are fully aware of your policies and give them guidelines on how to respond positively to guest questions or handling refusals to comply with policies.
- Operational staff should not be expected to handle aggressive or violent customers without training or feeling confident, nor should they be forced to make customers leave the premises.
- Communicating your updated risk assessments and providing training on new procedures and ensuring staff have an understanding of why the procedures are in place.
- Ensuring supervisors and managers understand their responsibilities to train staff and the importance of checking standards along with their role with maintaining staff wellbeing.
- Keeping records of training.
- Considering cross-training staff to create flexibility and to increase available staffing if staff are ill.
Staff safety and welfare (continued)

Consider in your risk assessment:

"Allowing staff to wear face coverings/gloves if they feel more comfortable or have a specific health risk. These should be supplied by the business."

"Discuss with staff that have disabilities or specific health needs any reasonable adjustments that could be made."

"Consider flexible working patterns."

"If staff have health concerns, discuss the possibility of transferring to other roles and duties."

"Promoting regular hand washing/sanitising through posters and the provision of sanitisers in key areas such as the staff entrance, canteen, locker rooms and offices."

"Ensure staff areas are well ventilated."

"Consider maintaining the use of work systems such as fixed teams or partnering and where space allows, back-to-back or side-to-side working."

"Provide disinfectant wipes at shared desks and workstations and encourage regular use of these for shared items such as phones and keyboards."

"If possible, continue to stagger staff start times to avoid overcrowding at the staff entrance and locker rooms."

"If possible, stagger staff breaks to reduce overcrowding in canteen/rest areas."

"Disinfect the canteen, rest areas and locker rooms daily and deep clean regularly."

To access the latest supporting information, please visit: https://www.mia-uk.org/Safety-Resources
To access the latest supporting information, please visit:

Carrying out COVID-19 status checks at your venue or event – GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-covid-19/events-and-attractions#facility-3 - ventilation
https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-covid-19/events-and-attractions
Find your local authority to report an outbreak: https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council