

# **Tourism Business Recovery Guidance**

## **Scope and Purpose of Guidance**

In response to the crisis in the tourism sector presented by COVID-19, this guidance aims to provide a step by step process to assist in the renewal of the sector by informing and advising attractions and accommodation providers on developing recovery and continuity plans to support tourism recovery and renewal. Some information contained within this document will also translate to associated sectors such as food and drink establishments. It is expected that the events sector will be the last to benefit from a lifting of restrictions. Visit Wales are developing guidance for this sector, separate to tourism. Events are therefore not included within the scope of this guidance.

Please note that this guidance does not supersede the sector's responsibility to align strictly with Welsh Government regulations and guidance in relation to COVID-19, nor is it intended to cover every eventuality. It is intended to provide additional information to help businesses to consider their current situation and future resilience. It remains the responsibility of each business to carry out a full risk assessment, to remain fully informed of statutory requirements as they apply in Wales, and to exercise judgement before adopting any changes in its own business. Further help and support can be found on the [Business Wales](#) and [UK Hospitality](#) websites.

## **Considerations when Developing a Business Recovery/Continuity Plan**

When developing a recovery/continuity plan businesses should consider a more scenario-based, "what happens if" approach and focus on the next six months rather than the next three to five years.

As a business owner you will need to consider:

1. The safety of yourselves, staff and visitors
2. Whether you will be able to resume operations fully when restrictions lift and how you will do this as quickly as possible.
3. How can you ensure that your product/service is resilient to disruption from Covid-19
4. Whether your supply chain is reliable and if not how will you mitigate against this
5. How your business will fulfil contractual commitments with customers. E.g. will you offer vouchers to postpone a visit, or cancel bookings?

One of the most important aspects of planning for recovery is understanding the risk involved. Undertaking risk assessments for your business, staff and visitors will help you to understand some of the challenges that you may need to address before being able to re-open your business.

Some considerations for undertaking a risk assessment for staff and visitors include but are not limited to:

- Demonstrating compliance and understanding of the COVID-19 secure guidelines in line with Welsh Government Regulations. The main controls are:
  - Social distancing in accordance with government guidelines (currently 2m)
  - Disinfecting hand contact surfaces
  - Regular hand washing and hand sanitiser stations in key areas
  - Not touching eyes, mouth or nose with contaminated fingers or gloves (if used)
- Undertaking customer and staff journeys in your venue and considering various scenarios and eventualities.
- Highlighting potential risks associated with COVID-19 and the actions needed to mitigate against them. Be realistic. If a control cannot be met, mention this in your assessment.
- Allowing for flexibility, restrictions could be re-imposed at any time, prepare for staff absenteeism due to factors such as sickness, public transport disruption and child care issues.

You will need to develop a procedural plan for Covid-19 infection at your venue. Be clear about the procedures to follow if symptoms show and ensure that staff and visitors are aware of this information. It is recommended that you

involve Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCTCBC) Environmental Health Officers in this process. You may also need to provide training for staff on this issue.

### Steps to Develop a Business Continuity Plan:

#### 1. Identify Key Products/Services and Evaluate short-term Finances

What must you stop doing, what must you start doing? Identify the areas of your business which are most at risk and consider measures to implement which will mitigate against risk. Get your finances in check. Instil a short-term cash flow monitoring discipline that allows you to predict cash flow pressures and intervene in a timely manner. Assess financial and operational risks and respond quickly, maintaining a strict discipline on working capital.

Throughout the crisis, maintain regular contact with any relevant suppliers to identify any potential risks. Be aware of the pressures that may be effecting some of your customers and suppliers. You may need to review overall operating costs and consider slowing down or curtailing all non-essential expenses.

#### 2. Be Clear about the Objective of your Continuity Plan

How will the COVID-19 crisis affect your budget and business plan? What are the possible future scenarios, and which are the most probable given what we know now? If your former budget assumptions and business plans are no longer relevant, revise them. Be flexible to change – restrictions may be re-imposed or rules may be implemented which may incur additional financial and time pressures on your business. If your business is significantly impacted, you will need to consider minimum operating requirements. Make sure you monitor Government regulation changes and support schemes from Business Wales and Visit Wales.

#### 3. Evaluate the Potential Impact of Disruption to your Business and Staff

For many businesses, financial downturn has already taken place. This makes it necessary to rethink what will be required organisationally in order to recover and renew your business. Will you need a new structure? Will you need additional capabilities that you didn't need before? Are your processes appropriate going forward? Allow for considerations such as staff sickness and impacts upon attendance at work due to restricted public transport and school closures/restricted capacity. Can you implement any new innovations which will help your business recover quicker? E.g. investigate virtual options for engagement and sales to boost income.

Consider alternative supply chain options. Are there opportunities to buy local and support businesses in Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT)? If you can provide alternatives to your usual suppliers or wholesalers, this may mitigate against risk and will create a temporary capacity to meet customer obligations. You should consider the initial disruption as well as post-crisis situations and the potential for supply and demand pressures.

#### 4. List Actions to Protect your Business (see table below)

What, exactly, do you intend to recover? Back to normal—whatever that was—may not be a realistic option. Think about building resilience in preparation for a new way of working. Take time to get clear on what recovery actually means for your business given the size and scale of the impact you're experiencing. Do your current business plans still make sense? Can you compete in the same way in the future?

You may wish to divide these considerations into stages at the outset of developing your plan.

**Stage 1:** How deeply is this situation impacting the sector? How will you deal with this challenge and continue to provide a service?

**Stage 2:** How will your business readjust once back open? How long will it take to re-open? How will you re-establish some of your connections? How are you using research and data?

**Stage 3:** What is your initial Recovery plan? What has your research revealed for new opportunities?

**Stage 4:** What are you adding to your initial recovery plan? How will you implement it?

**Stage 5:** What information will you use to adjust? How will you communicate to involve others?

**Stage 6:** Are any adjustments are needed? What is your plan to prepare for the possibility of restrictions/lockdown being re-introduced in the future? Expect the unexpected and be flexible to change

## 5. Establish a Contacts List

This should include stakeholders and partners who contribute to the delivery of your business e.g. suppliers, organisations with whom you share referrals and develop packages with and organisations who can support you in the future. Do you have a customer distribution list which you can use for communication purposes to re-engage with a loyal client base and provide them with updates?

Clear, transparent, authentic and timely communications are necessary to secure ongoing support from customers and employees. Do not use ambiguous messages which could be misinterpreted. In the current situation, building consumer relationships matter. For further advice on communication please see the [Business Wales website](#)

## 6. Maintain Your Plan (check, re-evaluate and change if necessary)

Once the COVID-19 outbreak is controlled, you will need to review your business continuity plan. You will need to identify the root causes of any shortfall e.g. timeliness of action, lack of infrastructure, staff shortages, finance issues. Consider developing contingency plans based on lessons learnt to build resilience and enable a more informed response to any future crisis.

## **Schemes which Support the Sector**

If you are interested in financial support, accessing the Support Finder Tool on the Business Wales website <https://www.gov.uk/business-coronavirus-support-finder> should be the first priority. You will need to complete a questionnaire find out what financial support you might be eligible for. Also, information can be found on the home page of RCTCBC's website (Guidance and Support for businesses) [www.rctcbc.gov.uk](http://www.rctcbc.gov.uk).

## **Summary of Best Practice Guidance**

The below are suggestions and may require financial investment and staff time to maintain. The below list is not exhaustive. Generally, the following guidance could be instigated across the Sector:

- Be aware of the routes of transmission, social distancing requirements and work out what actions are best in your business. You will have identified potential scenarios by undertaking the potential staff and visitor journeys in your risk assessments.
- Install hand sanitiser dispensers at arrival points and provide welcome packs which include sanitiser.
- Offer the flexibility of postponing rather than cancelling bookings
- Allow customers the opportunity to book stays without deposits and allow cancellations without charge. This will build your client relationship in the future
- Provide contactless check-ins and check outs e.g. key safes, online payments (perhaps incentivised, pre-visit) and contactless payments on site. Stagger arrival and departure times.
- Publish information on websites, social media pages and clearly display information on site in relation to cleanliness and distancing measures ensuring visitors know what this is and what procedures to undertake if they fall ill whilst on the premises.
- Incorporate COVID-19 procedural information into your booking agreement with visitors so that they are aware of all mutual obligations e.g. The handling of keys, disposal of rubbish, social distancing in public areas
- Put together a checklist of all touch points which should be disinfected on a regular basis.

- Provide training for staff on “the new normal” and what they need to do if they display symptoms. Provide staff with protective wear and advise them on issues such as handwashing and safe laundry routines for uniforms/work wear.
- Implement floor markings, screens or other physical indicators, which can be used to act as visible reminders of current distancing requirements.
- Consider the option of room service meals for guests rather than visiting the restaurant area.
- Consider whether you will need a longer turn-around time for bookings to enable cleaning and follow Welsh Government guidance if there has been a suspected infection on your premises.
- Identify realistic capacities for your attraction based on queue length, waiting areas, cafes and gift shop capacity, adjusted to allow for 2 metres of physical distancing between individuals. Monitor guest flow and consider whether you need to implement closures or a traffic light system at certain times of the day. Consider downloadable audio guides for tours and one way systems around exhibits.

## References

Five Steps to Consider as you create your COVID-19 recovery plan - [www.forbes.com](http://www.forbes.com)

COVID-19 Business Continuity Plan – Five ways to reshape [www.ey.com](http://www.ey.com)

Develop a 6 step COVID-19 Business Continuity Plan – International Labour Organisation

COVID-19 Re-opening Guidance – Considerations for the Global Attractions Industry, IAAPA The Global Association for the Attractions Industry, May 2020