

LIFE AFTER LOCK DOWN

PRACTICE TRADING PLAN



HAKIM
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1. What we can expect?

Various organisations have provided initial guidance and recommendations on how UK retail businesses could operate, if measures were to be relaxed over the coming weeks. They are based on the experience of those retailers who have been operating social distancing effectively in stores through the pandemic. These are non-exhaustive and the guidance is very fluid from all relevant organisations, so it is the responsibility of each business to decide the most appropriate methods to implement social distancing for their individual environment, as well as other coronavirus control measures in their business. This can be found here [Social Distancing](#)

This guidance should be implemented in addition to all legal requirements for example the Health and Safety at work regulations. Retailers are encouraged to frequently check the official Government advice which is updated daily. Government guidance for employers can be found here. Guidance for employers and businesses on coronavirus (COVID-19) and retail specific through: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/shops-and-branches> or for the Government of Ireland <https://www.gov.ie/en/news/58bc8b-taoiseach-announces-roadmap-for-reopening-society-and-business-and-u/>

2. How will our independent practices approach this?

We must reiterate the following built into our professional services ethos:

- Make the safety of our patients and team members our primary concern
- Comply with the guidance of our insurers
- Stay up to date with the latest, fast changing guidance on PPE and Infection control

Currently the main recognised sources of guidance we have been following are FODO, AOP, AOI, College of Optometrists, Public Health England and the NHS England, Scotland and Wales.

Our priority is to ensure that our patients and our team members operate safely and effectively, whilst understanding when to use PPE and how it should be applied to each situation based on the guidance available.

As we make decisions that might be under very different circumstances to those which we have been accustomed to, our guiding principles will be:

- Use professional judgement
- Act in the interest of the public
- Act in good conscience

This approach and principles should be adopted across all our practices

3. What are the new guidelines?

SOCIAL DISTANCING IN AND AROUND OUR RETAIL PREMISES

Government advice

The Government has issued guidance for social distancing in retail outlets, which can be read here <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/shops-and-branches> That advice is the basis for the practical guidance below. Or for the Government of Ireland <https://www.gov.ie/en/news/58bc8b-taoiseach-announces-roadmap-for-reopening-society-and-business-and-u/>

All employers are expected to follow social distancing guidance. Where the production environment makes it difficult to do so, employers should consider what measures may be put in place to protect employees. Once staff have left the work areas, social distancing and further hand washing guidance should be adhered to.

Government advice recognises that “the practical implementation of this advice will depend on the local circumstances.” The guideline goes on to acknowledge the need for a local management assessment of measures that can be implemented. Businesses can meet these objectives by implementing social distancing measures.

BRC recommendations on how to implement:

Throughout this document we have used the British Retail Consortium guidelines contained in the social distancing document which was released on the 24th April. You can find the full details here: [Social Distancing](#)

Measures to protect patients and team members

MANAGING THE WORKPLACE – ENSURING YOUR COLLEAGUES ARE PROTECTED

Government Advice

If anyone becomes unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature in the business or workplace they should be sent home and advised to follow the stay at home guidance <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance>. If you or an employee are experiencing symptoms, visit NHS 111 online or call 111 if there is no internet access. In an emergency, call 999 if they are seriously ill or injured, or their life is at risk. Do not visit the GP, pharmacy, urgent care centre or a hospital.

For the UK other than IOM & NI: If you or an employee are experiencing symptoms, visit NHS 111 online or call 111 if there is no internet access. In an emergency, call 999 if they are seriously ill or injured, or their life is at risk. Do not visit the GP, pharmacy, urgent care centre or a hospital.

For ROI: If you have symptoms, self-isolate to protect others and phone your GP. For information and advice and visit hse.ie or phone HSE Live 1850 24 1850

If a member of staff has helped someone who was taken unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, they do not need to go home unless they develop symptoms themselves. They should wash their hands thoroughly for 20 seconds after any contact with someone who is unwell with symptoms consistent with coronavirus infection.

It is not necessary to close the business or workplace or send any staff home, unless government policy changes. You should keep monitoring the government response to coronavirus for further updates <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

Recommendations on how to implement based on [Social Distancing](#):

- Ensure all staff are aware of the social distancing measures that are in place and trained on how they should support these measures being observed. Remind staff that social distancing applies in all areas of the store, including non-customer facing areas
- Regular and visible written or verbal communication of the government messages

Frequent reminders using the following:

- Additional signage to ask staff not to turn up for work if they have symptoms
- Written communication
- Posters and signage
- Daily reminders to all staff via noticeboard and/or intranet

LIMITING SPREAD OF CORONAVIRUS IN THE WORKPLACE

Government Advice

Businesses and employers can help reduce the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) by reminding everyone of the public health advice. Posters, leaflets and other materials are available for the ROI <https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/ee0781-covid-19-posters-for-public-use/> For the rest of the UK <https://coronavirusresources.phe.gov.uk/nhs-resources-facilities/resources/>

Team members and patients should be reminded to wash their hands for 20 seconds more frequently than normal.

Government advice is clear PPE, including facemasks, is only necessary for those working in clinical situations. However, we are aware from the experience of our food retail members that some colleagues remain concerned and good practice is to supply masks or visors, and gloves to those who request them. It is important that these are used correctly to minimise the risk of infection. The use of such PPE does not replace or reduce the need to follow the government guidance in relation to hygiene practices.

Frequently clean and disinfect objects and surfaces that are touched regularly, using your standard cleaning products.

- Wash your hands with soap and water often – do this for at least 20 seconds.
- Use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available
- Wash your hands as soon as you get to work and when you arrive home, after you blow your nose, cough or sneeze, before you eat or handle food
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze
- Put used tissues in the bin immediately and wash your hands afterwards

Recommendations on how to Implement:

- General Considerations
- Regular and visible written/verbal communication of the government messages.

Daily reminders about hand washing and correct coughing etiquette using the following:

- Additional signage
- Written communication
- Posters and signage
- Daily reminders to all staff via notice boards and briefings

Regular review and compliance checking

It is important that any of the measures put in place are regularly checked to ensure patients and team members understanding and compliance.

With regards to customer compliance, retailers should review their in-store and out-of-store security measures and requirements on a regular basis. Patient facing staff could be faced with difficult situations when trying to manage social distancing measures and other requirements (e.g. non-compliance). Team members should be supported when trying to manage and enforce government guidance and it is important that it is made clear to team members to treat staff with respect. This can be done through increased signage and the appropriate action where necessary. We have a duty to protect our team members, and there must be a zero tolerance approach to verbal and physical abuse from patients, with clear measures in place to protect team members and deal with abusive patients.

4. How could we implement these protection guidelines in our practices?

Ensure all practice team members are aware of the social distancing measures that are in place and trained on how they should support these measures whilst being observed. Remind team members that social distancing applies in all areas of the practice, including non-patient facing areas.

Social distancing measures could include:

- 1 Use floor markings inside the practice with the social distancing advice of 2 metres, particularly in the most crowded areas and where queueing is likely to occur in larger practices. Place clear signage outside of the practice explaining the social distancing measures in place that patients should follow. Limit the number of patients in the practice at any time and assess the size of the practice and its layout which will enable you to calculate the number of patients who can reasonably follow 2m social distancing.
- 2 Place clear signage throughout the practice reminding patients of the social distancing measures and asking them to follow these rules.
- 3 Review the layout of the practice to ensure aisles/walkways are as clear as possible to accommodate 2m social distancing, including the removal of promotional fixtures if necessary. Identify choke points and control access to any toilets available to patients.
- 4 Limit the amount of patients into the practice to ensure social distancing is maintained, which could include doors being locked particularly in smaller practices.

Other measures

- Regular and visible written or verbal communication of the government messages
- Telephone script for patients prior to coming into the practice - Delivered by a team member. Reiterate any measures that the patient should be aware of when sending the email or SMS reminder for any booked appointments
- Team members to meet patients, explain the social distancing requirements and control the number of customers entering a practice at any one time. Provide a script for when patients enter into the practice
- Team members to ask patients to minimise anything they touch

Frequent reminders using the following:

- Additional signage to ask team members not to turn up for work if they have symptoms in the staff area.

Written communication to each team member, to highlight the new ways of working arrangements if returning to the practice which could include:

- Frequently clean and disinfect objects and surfaces that are touched regularly, using your standard cleaning products
- Clean frames used after each patient and all work areas [Coronavirus: How to disinfect optical equipment and premises](#)
- Wash your hands with soap and water often – do this for at least 20 seconds
- Use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available
- Wash your hands as soon as you get to work and when you arrive home, after you blow your nose, cough or sneeze, before you eat or handle food
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze
- Put used tissues in the bin immediately and wash your hands afterwards
- Provide hand sanitisers for the practice in each area, reception, testing room and dispensing area
- Introduce frequent deep cleaning of work areas, with attention to multi contact points. For example, between shifts, staff change overs and/or during breaks. Practices to conduct a thorough deep clean at the end of each day, whilst maintaining light touch targeted cleaning at points of frequent patient contact
- Encourage use of disinfectant wipes to clean all equipment before and after each use
- Have available sufficient gloves, masks and/or visors for those team members who require them. If you supply reusable visors ensure team members are reminded to clean them regularly during use, and before and after each use. If visors are being worn these can be sessional between cleaning unless contaminated
- Remind staff not to share items for example, pens. If using same pen, wipe down between patients

To increase protection in the practice environment, we will be encouraging patients to wear face masks at all times. We will be actively requesting patients to bring their own facemasks, or we will offer to provide them with a paper mask before entering the practice.

All team members to follow the latest PPE guidance issued by our governing bodies. If correct levels and type of PPE are not available then you will not be able to accept patients in your practice in line with current regulations

Approach based on size of each practice:

- Very small practice which could make it impossible to achieve >2m - Reception staff need IIR surgical masks and need to operate allowing one patient at a time in practice who are wearing a paper mask
- Small practice but reception staff can maintain >2m – Treat as very small and all patients and team members to wear masks
- Medium to large practice – Treat as small, but staffing determined by patient volume and any staff <2m wearing PPE. Number of patients in practice at one time determined by number of 2m “safe zones”

We will continue to monitor the use of safety guards and glass screens, in line with regulatory recommendations

What would the practice team set up look like?

Each practice is different and alterations to the layout may be required, which could include the removal of chairs, seating, furniture etc to meet the social distancing rules of 2m> in line with BRC and Gov.uk guidelines.

Restriction of patients being allowed to touch and handle all frames. Team members to accompany the patient with a tray and select frame options through the process.

- For smaller practices a team could comprise of an Optom and a DO
- For medium size practices the team could comprise of an Optom, DO and a Receptionist
- For larger practices a variation of the above based on patient demand - Discussion on whether to bring additional team members back from Furlough as long as the practice can sustain this. Please hold initial discussions with your practice buddy

5. What will we do to support our practices?

- Provide a guidance and support pack for each practice
- We will create the required checklists and scripts
- Support each practice with access to PPE, whilst communicating and adhering to government and regulatory requirements

6. What could our revised patient journey look like?

Each practice is unique and alterations to the layout could include the removal of chairs, seating, furniture etc to meet the social distancing rules of 2m>. Shark to produce a workable plan and brief this to the other team members who will be operating in the practice.

- 1 Set up an 45-60 min appointment schedule and allow one patient only in your practice at any one time
- 2 In larger practices based on space permitting within safe zones, allow up to 2-3 patients based on the 2m social distancing rules
- 3 Every patient to receive a phone call from a team member to highlight what to expect when they come into the practice which will be supported by a script and checklist
- 4 Before the patient enters the practice - A reminder of what to expect will be supported with a script and checklist
- 5 Always abide by the social distancing measures when a patient is in the practice
- 6 Manage walk-ins based on capability and within the social distancing rules - Refer patients to the external notices as reference and try to accommodate their need if it is safe and responsible to do so

7. Proposed patient journey framework

Framework: Steps along the customer journey pathway

- 1 Before arrival
- 2 Welcome and Waiting
- 3 Pre-screening and examination
- 4 Dispensing
- 5 Transaction and Departure

Additional Content:

- 1 Clinic management
- 2 Focussed clinics
- 3 PPE
- 4 Social Distancing
- 5 Infection control

The information below is intended to provide some guidance and recommendations on the customer journey through your practice when lockdown measures are relaxed and is based on guidance to date from several sources including FODO, COO, NHS, AOP and PHE to help you successfully apply the principles of infection control and social distancing during a patients visit to your practice.

It is the responsibility of each Shark to implement social distancing and other coronavirus control measures in their practice. We will provide a support pack to help us achieve this.

Framework

Before arrival

Remote consultation platforms and processes used prior to patients visiting the practice are the most powerful tools we have to mitigate the impact of social distancing and infection control in practice on the patient journey. They also represent the biggest opportunity to transform the way we work in the future.

- Creating new pathways for patient triage and consultation
- Reduce chair time
- Enable the capture of lifestyle needs and challenges prior to the eye examination and dispensing
- Provide a new channel for marketing messages, customer interaction and commerce
- Improve clinic efficiency and management

Platforms must meet the following requirements:

- GDPR compliant
- Access to patient records and PMS
- Offer choice to patient - video or voice

The following actions must be incorporated into remote, pre-visit triage and consultation:

- Confirmation of patient details, email, phone, mobile
- Explanation of patient journey when visiting the practice - scripted by site
- Introduction - Colleague role and qualifications
- Remote triage – Risk assess if patient has CV-19 (include in a script) – determine appointment type (remote or face to face) – determine symptoms – book remote consultation and face to face appointment in appropriate clinic – will need to use Optix or PMS/Diary to book appointment and have access to notes to record triage results - **Use the patient script and checklist provided**
- Remote consultation – Need access to Optix or PMS, video or telephone (Px dependent)
- Remote consultation CUES/MECS - refer or book a face to face appointment dependent on severity of symptoms
- Remote consultation as part of a hybrid examination – Need access to Optix, PMS or record card, history and symptoms, lifestyle questions, make an appointment during this call for the face to consultation – explain the revised procedures when visiting the practice
- Remote triage and consultation for routine eye examinations can take place up to 6 days ahead of the face to face appointment. For essential and emergency appointments face to face consultations should take place within 24-48 hours depending on the severity of symptoms or degree of urgency or as specified by CUES / local protocol.
- Call the patient ahead of the face to face appointment to explain the new practice procedures, email or message out a document that reinforces the message – potential to carry offers/marketing messages

Preparing to trade

Full guidance on social distancing can be found in the life after lockdown practice plan section 3. Many elements of the typical practice meet and greet routine will have been covered off during the remote triage and consultation process. The patient will have been briefed on what to expect when arriving at the practice so there should be no surprises in store for them.

- Welcome the patient and invite them to sanitise their hands and don a face covering if they haven't got their own
- Point out the social distancing measures in the space around them
- Check their details whilst maintaining social distancing
- Avoid loud conversations about personal details to comply with GDPR, all personal details should be checked ahead of the visit during the remote triage and appointment booking - any amendments can be made in the privacy of the consulting room
- Check that they have understood the new patient journey and be prepared to run through it again if they need a reminder
- The patient may feel nervous about infection or may not have left their house for some time
- Explain how long they will have to wait (if applicable) and show them to the waiting area pointing out the social distancing measures and signage, remind them not to touch anything
- Ask them to make you aware of any issue they may have while they are waiting to avoid unnecessary movement around the practice

Pre Screening and Consultation

The need to work within close proximity to the patient means that social distancing guidance of 2m cannot be adhered to during pre-screening. With the need for full PPE all pre-screening activity (if possible) should be carried out by the Optometrist to best facilitate the sessional use of PPE, or a colleague who is wearing PPE.

This will lead to a greater level of care for your patients as they will see the same clinician for all face to face elements of the clinical steps in the customer journey.

- Avoid prescreening unless clinically necessary based on patient H&S
- For Hybrid consultations where the history and symptoms have been carried out remotely in advance of the face to face episode, Time should be taken to briefly review the answer given during the remote H&S to ensure that nothing has changed in the intervening period
- Aerosol generating procedures such as non contact tonometry should be omitted from the routine until further guidance
- Three way handover of the patient from the Optometrist to the Dispenser should happen away from the waiting area to maintain privacy and include a full review of recommendations made during the consultation
- We will provide guidance on light touch sight testing in the practice support pack page 159

Dispensing

The need to implement infection control measures means that dispensing has to become a controlled process. Patients will no longer be able to handle and try on frames at will to avoid potential transmittance of Coronavirus. All frames that are handled by the dispenser and/or the patient will need to be cleaned and disinfected before they can be handled again. Challenging as this may seem taking a consultative approach to dispensing will enable the dispenser to positively control the handling of frames and enhance the customer experience at the same time potentially resulting in a better outcome.

- Seat the patient comfortably in the dispensing area
- Ask them not to handle the frames and point out the signage on the frame display
- How does the patient feel? Do they recognise the risk of transmittance from trying on a frame that somebody else has also worn?
- Explain to the patient that every frame taken from the display is thoroughly cleaned and disinfected between patients
- Explain that you will remove the frames from the display for them to minimise risk and ensure their safety
- Ensure that hand sanitiser is accessible to the patient to use after handling frames
- Review the lifestyle questions from the remote triage along with the recommendation from the eye examination
- Use open questions to establish how the patient feels about their current vision correction (what problems do they have) and what they are looking for from their new spectacles (how to solve them)
- Use open questions to establish what kind of frame and styles the patient is interested in and what they don't like.
- When shapes, sizes, materials and colours have been identified, select frames from the display that meet the patients requirements. Place these frames on a wipe clean tray within easy reach of the patient
- Wipe every frame before and after the patient tries it on, ask the patient to place the frame back on the tray after trying it on
- When the dispense is finished, every frame left on the tray should be cleaned and disinfected before returning them to the display
- All frames, rulers and tools to be disinfected between dispenses. [Guidance through Coronavirus: How to disinfect optical equipment and premises](#)

Transaction and Departure

See Practice Support pack – [Preparing to trade](#)

Clinic Management

The need to implement social distancing and infection control significantly impacts the flow of customers through your practice. A new approach to clinic management will enable you to efficiently and safely adapt your routine to life after lockdown. Social distancing and infection control measures will reduce the volume of customers who are able to visit your practice on a daily basis, so great clinic management will enable you to optimise the time you spend with your patient and maximise every opportunity.

- Face to face appointment times increased to one hour (includes pre-screen and consultation)
- Dedicate time in the diary for remote consultation sessions, these could include MECS, CUES and Hybrid consultations
- Dedicate time in the diary for face to face consultation sessions to optimise the sessional use of PPE
- Offer dedicated clinic time to key workers requiring essential care
- Set aside time in each clinic for emergency or essential appointments
- Offset clinic start and finish times to offer early or late appointments
- Schedule collections and adjustment clinics to run concurrently with remote clinics to optimise use of practice space and time (Front of house team able to work face to face while clinician works in consulting room)
- Schedule dedicated remote contact lens clinics with existing wearers
- Factor time into diary for home deliveries
- Complete triage, history and symptoms and lifestyle questions during remote clinics to optimise patient time during the face to face customer journey
- Set aside time in the day for repairs and adjustments to ensure other appointments are not interrupted

Patient Wellbeing

The regulatory requirement to implement infection control and social distancing measures will significantly impact the experience of your patients when they visit the practice. Additional measures should be taken to ensure the wellbeing and comfort of patients during their visit. These measures may not be quantifiably measured by science but will have significant value in making the patient feel safer and cared for. When applying these measures it is important to clearly demonstrate that the infection control and social distancing measures are there to ensure their safety and wellbeing is front of mind.

- Limit any essential patient companion to a parent, guardian or essential carer
- Offer patient a face covering if not already wearing their own
- Complete all aspects of patient registration online prior to their visit
- Ask patients to wait in their car rather than in the practice and text them when ready (if suitable)
- Increase the use of contactless payment
- Offer direct to patient or home delivery whenever possible
- Greet with a wave or friendly gesture rather than handshaking
- Clearly explain the customer journey and the measures in place prior to the patient attending the practice

PPE

For tasks which require close proximity to the patient or when maintaining social distancing of at least 2m is not possible, PPE should be used. Full guidance on PPE compliance can be found within the Practice Pack. PPE should be worn at the following stages of the customer journey and for the following tasks:

- Welcome and Waiting: A face mask should be worn if it is not possible to maintain the social distancing requirements of 2m
- Pre-screen and Consultation: For all clinical tasks carried out at less than a distance of 2m full PPE consisting of gloves, apron, face mask and eye protection must be worn. It is recommended that pre-screening tests are carried out by clinicians on a sessional basis rather than being delegated to practice team members
- Dispensing: Full PPE should be worn by the Dispenser if it is necessary to work within 2m of the patient and carry out tasks such as facial measurements and adjustments
- Transaction and Departure: A face mask should be worn if it is not possible to maintain the social distancing requirements of 2m
- Collections and Adjustments: Full PPE should also be worn for non-clinical patient episodes where it is necessary to work in close proximity to or touch the patient
- Additional protection including plastic screens and guards for practices will need to be considered

Social Distancing

Guidance for social distancing in the practice is outlined in the Life after lockdown practice plan. For the customer journey consideration needs to given to the following elements of the journey:

NB. Ensure furniture has been repositioned to enable safe, 2m social distancing whenever possible

- Welcome and Waiting - only one patient per time in any 2m zone
- Dispensing: Only when it is not necessary to work in close proximity of the patient e.g. to arrange a reglaze or repeat pair
- Transaction and Departure

Infection control

Full guidance on infection control can be found here, scrupulous adherence to hand washing and the cleaning and disinfection of any contact points or items used during the customer journey is essential: Infection control is paramount at the following stages of the customer journey and for the following tasks.

NB: Prior to re-opening ensure that the practice has had a deep clean before team members return and check if any windows that can be opened to ensure circulation of fresh air

Welcome and Waiting:

- Patient to sanitise hands on arrival
- Offer patient a face covering if not already wearing their own
- Sanitise door handles, grab rails and any contact points that are touched during welcome and waiting

Pre-screen and Consultation

- Cleaning and disinfection of all instruments and contact points touched during consultation
- Chin and head rests
- Cough guards
- Chair arms, grab rails and door handles
- Trial frames and trial lenses
- Reading charts
- Hand held test units e.g. Mallett, stereopsis tests
- Patches and occluders (avoid fabric patches)
- Cleaning of PPE between patients
- Clean face shield, replace gloves and wash hands between patients
- Worktop surfaces
- Changing of contaminated PPE if it becomes soiled
- Patient to sanitise hands after handling anything during the consultation

Dispensing

- Cleaning and disinfection of all instruments, frames and contact points touched during consultation
- All frames handled and worn by the patient
- Frame rulers and Pupilometers
- Chair arms, grab rails and door handles
- Hand held mirrors
- Reading charts
- All worktop surfaces
- Cleaning of PPE between patients
- Washing or use hand sanitiser on gloves and face shields
- If PPE becomes soiled, dispose single use items and disinfect reusable items i.e. face shields
- Patient to sanitise hands after handling anything during the dispense
- Only the Dispenser removes and replaces frames from the display
- Frames disinfected before being returned to the display

Transaction and Departure

Patient has the opportunity to sanitise hands on departure

- Clean and disinfect PDQ machine and keypad
- Clean and disinfect any pens used for signatures
- Sanitise door handles, grab rails and any contact points that are touched during transaction and departure
- A full decontamination routine and process checklist should be completed after every patient episode