Safer Events - A Framework for Action

Managing the risk of COVID-19 in organised meetings and events

Supported by Hire Space

Version 3.0

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Updates

- On 12 July, the Prime Minister confirmed that almost all Covid-19 restrictions would be lifted on 19 July. This means:

    - No restrictions on meetings or events happening for business or social purposes, nor any cap on the total number of attendees
    - No enforcement of social distancing requirements, including the "1m rule"
    - Face coverings no longer required by law (although they are encouraged in crowded spaces)
    - Businesses and events will be encouraged to use Covid-19 certification, particularly for larger gatherings
    - Pubs and restaurants are no longer required to provide table service only

- The Safer Events consultation group - which drafts this white paper - welcomes these measures, but agrees that a cautious approach to event planning in the short and medium term is appropriate. As such, the following recommendations are made:

    - We encourage use of the NHS app by delegates for the purposes of Covid-19 certification (proof of vaccination, immunity or a negative test) for all events.
    - Where Covid-19 certification is impractical, we encourage on-site testing.
    - Face coverings should be worn by delegates, except when seated. Face coverings should be worn at all times by venue staff.
    - Certain social distancing measures (detailed below) should be retained to assuage attendee uncertainty.

- A full breakdown of updated guidance is below.

We have added a new section to this white paper ("Appendix C") which will be updated with practical guidance for holding events as the sector returns post-lockdown.

Background

The UK meeting and events industry provides 700,000 jobs to people in the UK and contributes £84bn to the UK economy. However, there remains a threat to these 700,000 jobs as the supply chain supports itself through the re-opening of organised meetings and events.

While the threat of transmission of COVID-19 at organised meetings and events remains, it is important that we remain cautious in how we plan and execute these events. It is still advised to hold events that put in COVID-secure measures to protect event attendees and the people they may come into contact with.

We recommend that event professionals are able to demonstrate their understanding of safety requirements and inspire confidence in their clients and event attendees.

Objectives

This project is intended to provide a consensus on the measures required to effectively manage the risk of COVID-19 in organised meetings and events. This is expected to help facilitate the re-opening of the meeting and events industry to help protect jobs, while putting public safety first.

We seek to effectively communicate these measures to all stakeholders, including venues, event organisers and delegates, to create trust between all parties and ensure that meetings can be carried out safely. Our strategy to do this is through two independently assessed pieces of guidance, one for venues and for event organisers. Independent venue assessments will be conducted by a fully qualified Chartered Member of the Institute of Occupational Safety and Health, member of the International Institute of Risk and Safety Management, and certified by the Occupational Safety and Health Consultants Register. Event organiser training is CPD-certified, meaning that the learning value has been scrutinised to ensure integrity and quality.

Further than just being a set of guidelines, the objectives of this project are more far reaching and attempt to provide venues and event organisers with the tools and confidence to host organised meetings and events. This will include training and materials to communicate these measures to delegates and other stakeholders, and equipment, such as PPE and sterilisation products.

This project covers a broad range and scale of organised meetings and events, from small business meetings of under ten people, up to medium/large events of 500 people in the UK.

These organised meetings and events are all envisaged to be invitation only, or private events held by an organisation which can take responsibility for the environment and conduct of delegates within the event.

Because a core part of this product involves the communication of specific measures, it is only practical to do this within one jurisdiction and does not seek to provide guidance for events outside of the UK. It also doesn't seek to advise on events of over 500 people.

This project has been supported by Hire Space, who are providing the operational resources to undertake safety assessments and helping to provide publicity through their position in the meeting and events industry.

Research and Data

This project has been produced through a collaboration with venues, event organisers, delegates, health & safety professionals and government guidelines. Information studied can be found in Appendix A.

Further, this project has conducted its own primary research through a survey of 203 delegates. This survey was designed to better understand delegates' attitudes towards different measures so that they are likely to be able to be implemented with high compliance. This approach helped us to understand the appetite of delegates to attend organised meetings and events with safety measures in place.

The survey asked a series of questions about attending events later this year as public health guidelines allow. The key results can be found in Appendix B.

Consultation Group

The measures that this project advises are all contextual and as the COVID-19 pandemic develops they will be continually updated to meet the requirements of the time. To make sure that they stay relevant not only to the scientific advice, but also to the broader context of the meeting and events industry, a Consultation Group of senior event organisers and venues to help inform the project has been formed.

Current members include senior meeting and events professionals from Hearst UK, Reuters Events, Morningstar, NAVEX Global, Chemical Watch, Vertu Motors plc, Clearview Financial Media and Kennedys.

Measures

The following measures have been created in collaboration with health and safety bodies, venues and event organisers and both national and international public health bodies.

They are intended to standardise our industry approach to managing the risk of COVID-19 transmission at organised meetings and events, such that they can be independently verified and communicated in a coherent way to delegates and other stakeholders.

Further, they are also intended to act as a gold standard for safety and exceed the government guidelines at any given time.

The responsibility for ensuring these measures are met is shared between both venues and event organisers. You can find which party is responsible for which measure in the tables below.

This is a working draft and is subject to change as driven by government guidelines and public appetite for interaction at the time. They have been divided into eight areas to aid communication.

1. Delegate and Staff Screening	
Specific Measure	**Responsibility**
Delegates should be encouraged to use the NHS app to demonstrate proof of vaccination, a negative test or natural antibodies on entrance to the event	Venue / Event Organiser
When the above is impractical, GDPR compliant health verification should be performed on all workers and delegates on entry to the building. Screening can be conducted in one of three ways: ● On site contactless thermometer check. Those with a temperature above 37.8°C / 100°F must not be admitted. A retest can be done after 15 minutes if they show no other symptoms ● Self-declaration of health on the day of the event ● Lateral flow testing	Venue / Event Organiser
Delegates agree to adhere to safety measures while on site	Event Organiser
Delegates or workers who fail on-site testing, or show symptoms during the event, should be rejected from the venue and proceed directly to their primary residence where they should isolate for 14 days	Event Organiser
Venues should create and display a coronavirus NHS QR code prominently by the entrance	Venue
Everyone attending the event, including workers, should scan the	Venue/ Event

coronavirus NHS QR code upon entry. If they are unable to, a written record of their attendance should be taken and stored for 21 days after the event	Organiser
Attendees and workers should be encouraged to use the NHS COVID-19 app close contact function	Venue/ Event Organisers
Any seating plan should be retained by event organisers for 21 days after the event	Event Organiser
Full safety guidelines must be communicated to all delegates at least 24hrs before the start of the event	Event Organiser
Reasonable efforts should be taken to minimise delegate travel	Event Organiser
Venues should keep the contact details of event organisers for at least 21 days after the event	Venue
Venues/Organisers should inform each other, their delegates and their local NHS trust if they become aware that anyone had tested positive within 21 days of the event who didn't scan the coronavirus NHS QR code	Venue/ Event Organiser

2. Staff Training and Policy	
Specific Measure	**Responsibility**
There should be no disincentivization to reveal symptoms for fear of missing out on work or pay. Fully paid sick leave should be provided for all staff so that there is no incentive to work with symptoms. This should apply to both employees and casual workers	Venue / Event Organiser
Any member of venue staff who has been required to self-isolate should be allowed to return to work immediately following any isolation period, with any replacement staff hired only on a temporary basis	Venue / Event Organiser
Venue staff should complete coronavirus training, and records for all staff must be maintained by the venue, or the agency responsible for any casual workers	Venue
All workers should wash hands with soap and water, or hand sanitiser, a minimum of once every three hours	Venue
All on-site Event Organisers should wash hands with soap and water, or hand sanitiser, a minimum of once every three hours.	Event Organiser
Venues should retain a list of all on-site workers, with contact details,	Venue

for 21 days after the event	
At least one fully trained member of venue staff should be on site to take responsibility for all Venue measures	Venue
At least one Event Organiser should be on-site to take responsibility for Event Organiser measures	Event Organiser
Use radios and messaging apps for staff to communicate wherever possible, to avoid unnecessary trips within the venue	Venue / Event Organiser
Have processes established for liaising with relevant Local Authorities and businesses on the implementation and planning of events, and on the management of pre and post event footprint	Venue

3. Social Distancing	
Specific Measure	**Responsibility**
Contactless payment should be available for any purchases	Venue
A clearly signposted room, or area, should be designated as a Safe Space for attendees and staff to visit if they are feeling unwell, and should be safely escorted from the building by a manager	Venue
Setup schedules and delivery times should be discussed between Event Organiser and Venue to ensure no clash that will cause overcrowding of loading bays, lifts and key access routes	Venue & Event Organiser
Perspex barriers should be in place where attendees and security staff come into contact, or attendees need to stand closer than 1m, including at checking of tickets and bags, and at registration desks	Venue
"Dropping off" and "Collection" points should be established where possible, rather than passing of items hand to hand	Venue
Room capacities should be clearly marked by entrances to all rooms	Venue
A system should be in place to ensure disabled access is not compromised by queues, for instance by allowing people with disabilities to skip queues	Venue
Doors should be propped open, excluding fire doors, wherever they will be in frequent use to avoid needless contact with door handles	Venue
Ensure that steps are taken to avoid people needing to unduly raise their voices while speaking face to face without wearing a face covering	Venue

Speakers addressing a crowd should either be behind a plexiglass barrier or more than 4 meters away	Event Organiser

4. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Specific Measure	Responsibility
Delegates should wear face coverings unless sitting down, unless the event takes place outside or everyone present is already part of the same bubble	Event Organiser
Workers who are ● in direct contact with delegates, or ● working on catering for delegates Should wear a face covering	Venue/Event Organiser
Delegates should be offered a face covering free of charge on entry if they have not brought their own	Event Organiser
Suitable disposal facilities for used PPE should be provided on exit	Venue

5. Sterilisation and Cleaning

Specific Measure	Responsibility
One contactless hand sanitiser station (minimum 60% alcohol content) should be available for every 30 delegates, positioned throughout the venue and at entrances and exits	Venue
Deliveries and supplies should be sterilised upon entry to the venue	Venue
Door handles, railings, lift buttons, pin pads, keyboards, bathroom fixtures and other high-frequency touchpoints sterilised every 4hrs	Venue
A deep clean should be conducted after every event	Venue
Any fixed seating should be cleaned between two different attendees sitting in it	Venue
There should be no shared attendee touchpoints for any food or beverage dispensers e.g. water jugs / coffee dispensers. Attendees should be encouraged to bring their own reusable cups where possible	Venue / Event Organiser
If you use a centralised ventilation system that removes and circulates	Venue

air to different rooms you should turn off recirculation and use a fresh air supply. Where possible, consider ways to increase the supply of fresh air, for example, by opening windows and doors (unless fire doors).	
Where practical, venues should: ● Increase the existing ventilation rate by fully opening dampers and running fans on full speed ● Operate the ventilation system 24 hours a day ● Increase the frequency of filter changes ● Use outside air, as opposed to recirculation, where possible	Venue
Staff or suppliers should wear gloves when installing AV equipment.	Venue

6. Hybrid Event Provision	
Specific Measure	**Responsibility**
A live streaming option should be available to Event Organisers which can provide ● 4K 60fps camera on site ● Sterile lapel mics for speakers ● Live streaming via an RMTP web stream	Venue
An internet upload speed of 10 Mbps is advised	Venue
Access to a virtual attendance option, which does not unnecessarily disadvantage virtual attendees, should be provided	Event Organiser
Microphones should be sterilised after set up and between uses	Venue

7. Food and Beverage	
Specific Measure	**Responsibility**
A Food Safety Management System (FSMS) that includes existing food hygiene guidance and HACCP processes should be followed.	Venue / Event Organiser
All suppliers wishing to supply must have achieved a BRC Standard Grade B or above (or equivalent ISO, SALSA, NSF International Due Diligence Audit Standard or other GFSI accreditation)	Venue / Event Organiser
Buffets, finger food, or self service, including with utensils, should be avoided. Table service or boxed meals with adequately-spaced seating	Venue / Event Organiser

arrangements should be the only options for catered dining	
All counters and tills should sit behind plexiglass barriers	Venue
If cutlery is required, it should be wrapped and brought directly to tables, rather than provided self-serve	Venue
Condiments and sauces should be individually packaged, or served by venue staff	Venue

8. Event Security	
Specific Measure	**Responsibility**
A security risk assessment should be conducted for all events	Venue
Security manager or department should be consulted on and involved with all changes made to the venue for health and safety purposes	Venue
Information that could help a hostile entity identify an attractive target and carry out an attack should not be included in detailed risk assessments published on public websites	Event Organiser
Removal of security features such as street furniture or bollards should not be undertaken without due consideration of security implications and unless approved by qualified venue or event security	Event Organiser
Restricted access entry points, such as those facilitated by keypad, biometrics and/or pass should remain fully in operation. They should not be deactivated and should be sterilised between uses.	Venue
Existing search and screening processes should be adapted to take account of physical distancing according to guidance from the Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure (CPNI)	Venue

Accreditation Process

The accreditation process for venues and event organisers is now open. Each venue accreditation is independently assessed by a fully qualified Chartered Member of the Institute of Occupational Safety and Health, member of the International Institute of Risk and Safety Management, and certified by the Occupational Safety and Health Consultants Register. Event organiser training is CPD-certified, meaning that the learning value has been scrutinised to ensure integrity and quality.

Accreditation Process for Venues

Stage	Description
1. Submit Interest	Venues can sign up for a free consultation at https://hirespace.com/c/safer-events/venues/#form/
2. Consultation	Before the consultation call, venues will be asked to fill out a short survey to find out more about your venue and the measures you are already/planning on taking.
3. Recommendations	An assessor will then respond with a set of recommendations which should be completed in order for the venue to be accredited.
4. Assessment	Venues can either perform a remote assessment where they upload photographic evidence of all the measures taken and then conduct a Zoom call with an assessor **or** venues can opt for an in-person assessment from an assessor.
5. Venue Certification	When an assessor has verified that the venue has fulfilled all the requirements, the venue will be notified. At this point they will be issued with: ● Physical and digital certificate with unique assessment number ● Access to CPD- certified online staff training for safer events Their name will also be added to the online record of accredited venues at https://hirespace.com/c/safer-events with their unique assessment number. The accreditation will also be shown on their Hire Space profile, if applicable.

Accreditation Process for Event Organisers

Stage	Description
1. Book Training	Organisers can book CPD -Certified online training at https://hirespace.com/c/safer-events/event-organisers A certification fee of £95 per organiser applies and a 5% discount is available for each additional team mate you book for.
2. Training	Once you have booked training for yourself and your colleagues you will be sent login details to a CPD-Certified online learning hub, complete with all the learning materials required for your

	assessment. You should allocate 2 hours to review the training materials before any assessment.
3. Assessment	On your chosen date, you will be sent a link which allows you to complete your assessment online. You will be given until 5pm that day to complete your online assessment at a time of your convenience. Your assessment will then be processed the following business day.
4. Organiser Certification	On successful completion of the assessment the Event Organiser will be sent: ● Digital certificate with unique assessment number ● CPD Certification certificate ● Digital Safer Event design assets to communicate accreditation to stakeholders ● Safer Event risk assessment template ● Their name will be added to the record of accredited Event Organisers at https://hirespace.com/c/safer-events with their unique assessment number

Review Process for Specific Events

Stage	Description
1. Submit Brief	A Certified Organiser may submit an event to be reviewed by sending a completed risk assessment, and their unique assessment number (UAN), by email to safer-risk@hirespace.com. An Organiser may request additional guidance on how to submit a successful risk assessment in advance of submitting. Once submitted, a fee of £95+VAT will be payable for the risk assessment to be reviewed. Organisers should submit their brief no later than 21 days before the event start date.
2. Assessment	A qualified safety professional will review the risk assessment and offer a "Pass" or "Fail With Feedback" based on the information provided, and provide feedback on the reasons for the adjudication. Should the event receive "Fail With Feedback" in its initial assessment, the Organiser will have an opportunity to re-submit the information based on the feedback provided. Should the risk assessment not receive a "Pass" after its second submission, a further £95+VAT fee will be payable, should the Organiser wish to submit a third time. Further bespoke guidance

	can be purchased for complex programmes where compliance is proving difficult to achieve.
3. Event Certification	When an assessor has verified that the event has fulfilled all the requirements the event organiser will be notified the event has been approved. At this point they will be issued with their Digital certificate with their unique assessment number. This event certification can be re-used for 6 months for the same, or similar, events held at the same location, as long as the proposed risk assessment is adhered to.

How to get involved

There are two ways to get involved with the Safer Events project.

1. Join the Consultation Group

To request to join the Safer Events Consultation Group please email ed@hirespace.com

2. Get your venue accredited for Safer Events

To get your venue accredited, please visit https://hirespace.com/c/safer-events/venues and request a consultation.

Appendix A

- BECTU (1 June 2020) "Health and safety and returning to workplaces" [Link](#)
- Convene (13 May 2020) "Updated Operating Standards" [Link](#)
- Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (11 May 2020) "Working safely during coronavirus" [Link](#)
- Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs (1 June 2020) "Guidance for food businesses on coronavirus (COVID-19)" [Link](#)
- Hilton (27 April 27 2020) "Hilton Working with RB/Lysol and Mayo Clinic to Elevate Hygiene Practices" [Link](#)
- HM Government (May 2020) "The UK Government's COVID-19 recovery strategy" [Link](#)
- Hong Kong Wedding Show 2020 (22 May 2020) "Safety Precautions Measures" [Link](#)
- Mark Bannister (24 May 2020) "Covid Event Planning" [Link](#)
- Meetings Industry Association (1 May 2020) "Social Distancing Survey" [Link](#)
- Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (13 May 2020) "Closing certain businesses and venues in England" [Link](#)
- World Health Organisation (29 April 2020) "Coronavirus disease advice for the public" [Link](#)
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 [Link](#)
- How to use WHO risk assessment and mitigation checklist for Mass Gatherings in the context of COVID-19 [Link](#)
- MIA (24 June 2020) Roadmap to Reopening and Operating Safely [Link](#)
- Cabinet Office (24 June 2020) What you can and can't do after 4 July [Link](#)
- Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (24 June 2020) Working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19) - Offices and Contact Centres [Link](#)
- HM Government (24 June 2020) Keeping workers and customers safe during COVID-19 in restaurants, pubs, bars and takeaway services [Link](#)
- Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (24 June 2020) Working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19) - The Visitor Economy [Link](#)
- NDML (24 June 2020) Coronavirus Reopening Handbook [Link](#)

Appendix B

Would you attend an in-person event with safety measures in place if invited?

Yes	54.3%
Don't know	24.7%
No	21.0%

Would you attend an in-person event with safety measures in place, if it was requested by your work?

Yes	94.0%
Don't know	4.6%
No	1.4%

"Would you attend this event if invited?" vs "How much would you enjoy the event?"

		How much would you enjoy the event?		
		Negative	**Neutral**	**Positive**
Would you attend this event if invited?	**Yes**	33.3%	88.6%	98.4%
	Don't know	34.4%	10.3%	0.0%
	No	32.3%	1.1%	1.6%

"Would you attend this event if invited?" vs "How safe would you feel at the event?"

		How safe would you feel at the event?		
		Negative	**Neutral**	**Positive**
Would you attend this event if invited?	**Yes**	24.4%	74.7%	90.8%
	Don't know	38.9%	16.6%	4.6%

No	36.7%	8.7%	4.6%

"Would you attend this event if invited?" by gender

		Gender		
		Female	**Male**	**Rather not say**
Would you attend this event if invited?	**Yes**	52.9%	57.6%	62.5%
	Don't know	26.9%	19.6%	12.5%
	No	20.2%	22.8%	25.0%

"Would you attend this event if invited?" by age group

		Age Group				
		18-24 years old	**25-34 years old**	**35-44 years old**	**45-54 years old**	**55-64 years old**
Would you attend this event if invited?	**Yes**	85.7%	53.7%	59.3%	46.7%	42.9%
	Don't know	3.6%	26.0%	21.5%	30.0%	26.8%
	No	10.7%	20.3%	19.2%	23.3%	30.4%

"Would you attend this event if invited?" by seniority

		Seniority				
		Entry	**Senior**	**Manager**	**Director**	**CXO / Partner / Owner**
Would you attend this event if invited?	**Yes**	72.2%	41.7%	50.3%	51.0%	68.5%
	Don't know	16.7%	31.5%	28.8%	24.0%	13.0%
	No	11.1%	26.9%	20.8%	25.0%	18.5%

The original survey can be seen here.

Appendix C

This section will be updated frequently with practical guidance for holding events as the industry returns post-lockdown.

Learnings come from our own events, from those of our clients, and from feedback from the businesses following this white paper. You can [read our case study](#) of Hire Space's own Safer Event. If you'd like to contribute to this section, please email covid@hirespace.com

Note, this is advice, and does not form part of compulsory measures required for accreditation.

Communication

- Consistent, in-depth communication is fundamentally important. Attendees are reassured by overt displays of safety. Consider what opportunities you have to re-enforce messaging.
- Explain safety measures by email in advance of the event. Not everyone will read these, but people will feel comfortable seeing that they have been considered.
- Have large screens on entry, saying "This is a Safer Event" and explaining the safety measures you've taken.
- Have strong safety measures present at the entrance to the event. Take people's temperature, give them a brass key, give them hand sanitiser. First impressions are important.
- Use staff taking temperature checks / doing registration / doing security to communicate safety measures up front, or point people towards large screens.
- Do a full safety briefing once everyone has arrived. It's easy for safety instructions to be missed by a few people, especially when arrivals are staggered.

Safety measures

- As with communication, nothing is too much. Some attendees may think certain safety measures are unnecessary, but the majority will be reassured that you are taking their safety and health seriously.
- Perspex barriers are appreciated by attendees and staff, and are mitigation to reduce transmission from 2m social distancing.
- Hand sanitiser is an easy win. Have lots everywhere.
- Be ultra alert to people removing masks. It's easy to undermine the messaging if a few people disregard the measures. Have someone watching out for this and calling on people to comply with the safety measures
- Have a system for attendees to call out safety lapses, including from other attendees. This might seem overbearing, but it will reassure people that their concerns are being taken seriously.
- One-way systems can be confusing. Signpost them heavily and consider having a member of staff on hand to aid in directing delegates.

- Train all staff working the event on the safety measures, and the science behind them. This will allow them to explain them to attendees with confidence, and spot when situations could put attendees at risk.

Technology and content

- Hybrid technology is inclusive and is a worthwhile investment to ensure attendance is safe and fair. Multi shot camera angles work well to include remote attendees.
- Virtual attendees need lots of preparation in advance about how to use technology, and when they are expected to engage with it - for instance asking or answering questions. As an organiser, you need to understand it properly in order to communicate it. Don't leave it all to the technicians: advice and instructions for event organisers on virtual technology can be found easily, and will make your job easier on the day. For a refresh on hybrid and virtual technology, Hire Space provides [complete guides](#) which are free to access.
- Virtual Q&A encourages people who don't usually speak out. It adds a sense of equal participation and keeps the conversation flowing. .
- Event hosts should engage virtual attendees early in the event agenda, to get them feeling comfortable about taking part.
- Refer back to the event agenda frequently on slides. It is easier for virtual attendees to keep pace.
- Keep content short and snappy - this is especially important for hybrid events, as the length of sessions catering to in-person attendees can lead to screen fatigue for remote viewers.
- Collaborative work between in-person and virtual attendees is challenging. Plan this thoroughly, and make everyone aware in advance what's expected of them in terms of participation. Be conscious of audio challenges when in-person and virtual are collaborating.

Catering

- Food service and eating is an especially important area to consider for keeping attendees safe. Signage and communication of safety measures should be extremely prominent in areas where attendees will eat and drink.
- Perspex barriers are appreciated, consider using them between attendees as well as at food service areas.
- Bento box style catering works well for both in-person and remote attendees if you choose to deliver to virtual delegates.
- Don't have a drinks reception. People won't miss out, it's too risky in the short term, and there's always the option of the pub afterwards for smaller groups who can make the decision themselves.
- Use compostable materials for catering, e.g. wooden utensils, wherever possible. Attendees are conscious of the environmental impact of event safety post-Covid.