GUIDELINES FOR RE-OPENING

Hostels

July 2020
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Note:
This is a living document which means as Government restrictions and Public Health guidelines evolve, this document will also evolve to reflect new Government advice and changes to protocols when they emerge. All sectoral guidelines have been developed in line with the Government’s Roadmap for Reopening Society and Business and the Return to Work Safely Protocol, based on the latest health guidance available from the Department of Health and the HSE. The links to latest guidelines will be included throughout the document.

Disclaimer

The information contained within these operational re-opening guideline can change from time to time, it should not by itself be relied upon in determining obligations or other decisions. Users of this document should independently verify any information on which they wish to rely. It is expected that all business owners and management will have familiarised themselves with the Return to Work Safely Protocol prior to re-opening and implemented all relevant requirements.

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1. Introduction: Meeting & Overcoming the COVID-19 Challenge

COVID-19 is an unprecedented challenge for the tourism sector.

Before re-opening, businesses will need to review how they work and introduce new practices and procedures to ensure everyone stays safe. As a result, Fáilte Ireland, in consultation with Sectoral Bodies, has developed operational guidelines in line with the Health and Safety Authority (HSA), the Health Service Executive (HSE) and the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI).

As part of this, Fáilte Ireland has created this set of specific guidelines to help you re-open your hostel. You can be reassured that these recommendations are underpinned by advice made available from the HSA, HSE, FSAI, World Health Organisation (WHO) and other relevant bodies.

Businesses must follow the Return to Work Safety Protocol. The National Protocol has been developed under the aegis of the Safety Health and Welfare Act 2005. The Health and Safety Authority (HSA) is the compliance body and has full powers as set out in this legislation designated in relation to the implementation of the National Protocol. Non-compliance can result in the closure of a business.

The guidelines were developed based on the following considerations:

- **Restructuring operations**
  Tourism businesses of all types need to adapt their operations, review employee practices and consider the design of their business to provide a safe environment for guests and employees and ensure physical distancing and the prevention of the spread of COVID-19.

- **Putting dedicated resources in place**
  Tourism businesses must ensure that they have dedicated personnel to implement and operate a robust system that prevents the spread of COVID-19. Equally importantly, they need to put processes in place that can deal with individual and multiple cases of the disease that may occur.

- **Adapting and enhancing hygiene practices**
  Tourism businesses must adapt and implement enhanced procedures in general cleaning, storage and cleaning of equipment. In particular, they should introduce and implement touchless solutions where possible.

**Food Safety & COVID-19 Safety**

If your business provides food, please review the Re-opening guidelines for Restaurants & Cafés on the Fáilte Ireland website.

Physical distancing of 2 metres* should be maintained between tables. However, if this is not possible, this can be reduced to 1 metre* in controlled environments if the other risk mitigations requirements outlined in Appendix 1 have been met AND pre-booked time limited slots are in place, which are a maximum of 105 minutes duration.

These Guidelines have been created in line with the Government’s Roadmap for Reopening Society and Business. This is a document that will evolve in line with the roadmap, taking into account any changes to the restrictions or physical distancing.

While we have attempted to cover all relevant issues, you must bear in mind that this is a non-exhaustive document and it may not cover all situations that you may encounter. As circumstances change, any procedures you implement must be monitored to ensure they remain up-to-date and in line with international best practice guidance and the Government’s Public Health advice.

For further information on travel advice for international visitors please click [HERE](#).

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*Current physical distancing guidance is in line with Public Health advice. This document will evolve to reflect new Public Health advice and changes to protocols as and when they emerge.
2. Business Response/Action Plan

Creating an Action Plan will help to clarify what needs to be done to overcome the threat of COVID-19 and give your employees and guests confidence that they are safe.

In developing one, the first step that hostel owners, management and/or operators must take is to familiarise themselves with the latest guidelines from the following sources:

- Health Services Executive (HSE)
- Health and Safety Authority (HSA)
- Irish Government Departments
- World Health Organisation (WHO).

Information from these sources will help to shape your plan of action. You must also:

- **Complete a risk assessment** to identify what operational changes you need to make in your business.
- **Review of all standard operating procedures (SOPs)** to define and note what you are changing.
- **Create a communication plan** to inform employees and visitors of what you are changing, what you need them to do and how you expect everyone to act and behave.
- **The HSA provides** templates, checklists and advice on the Return to Work Safely Protocols. Please see HERE for more information.
- **For advice on safe working practices** in a number of activities e.g. workflows, operations, etc. visit the FSAI website HERE.

The plan must reassure employees and guests that safeguarding their health and safety is of the utmost importance. It must also ensure that your operations continue to run in an efficient and safe manner.

A link for the HSA Templates and Checklists can be found HERE.

You must review the plan regularly and amend it as new regulations, guidelines and procedures come into force. Experience and feedback will inform how appropriate and effective the plan is.

For further information on the development of your Action Plan, visit the Fáilte Ireland COVID-19 Business Supports Hub HERE.

**Monitoring & Supporting**

A COVID-19 Response Team/Coordinator must be appointed to ensure new procedures are adhered to. Adherence to this protocol will only be achieved if employers and workers have a shared responsibility to implement the measures contained in this protocol in their place of work. A collaborative approach to the implementation of the protocol is essential to achieve success and maximum buy in.

Each workplace should appoint at least one lead worker representative charged with ensuring that Covid-19 measures are strictly adhered to in their workplace. The person(s) undertaking the role must receive the necessary training and have a structured framework to follow within the organisation to be effective in preventing the spread of the virus. Employers should have regular and meaningful engagement with their worker representative, workers and/or their recognised Trade Union or other representative (including health and safety committee where it exists) about the measures being put in place to address the occupational exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace. Employers should provide COVID-19 induction training for all workers on their return.

The number of worker representatives for COVID-19 appointed should, ideally, be proportionate to the number of workers in the workplace and this person(s) should be clearly identifiable in the workplace. Employers and worker representatives will work together to ensure that all the actions in this protocol are fully adhered to in order to ensure the suppression of COVID-19 in the workplace.

**Section E** of the National Protocol sets out the steps for employers and workers to reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19.

These provisions include:

- Consulting with the workplace representatives in the development of a COVID-19 response plan.
- Developing/Amending policies and procedures for prompt identification and isolation of workers who may have symptoms of COVID-19.
- Developing, consulting, communicating and implementing workplace changes or policies. Specific reference is made to agreeing with workers any temporary restructuring of work patterns that may be required to implement the COVID-19 prevention measures in the workplace. There is also provision for the lead worker representative to be involved in communicating the health advice around COVID-19 in the workplace.

A link for the HSA Templates and Checklists can be found HERE.
GUIDELINES FOR RE-OPENING HOSTELS

Policies & Processes
Hostel owners and management need to review all business policies and standard operating procedures across each department to reflect operational changes. In particular, this means:
- Defining and documenting a clear plan of action in the event of a suspected case of COVID-19 among guests and/or employees.
- Defining and documenting the correct and appropriate use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). This must be in line with the Government’s Public Health advice.
- Developing/updating current policy for the care of employee uniforms to ensure they are clear on the standards of appearance/dress expected while at work.
- Reviewing and updating cancellation and refund policies in line with business requirements.

Communication
- You must share the plan with all employees prior to them returning to work. If it’s updated at any time, you must make sure everyone knows what has changed.
- Provide guidelines to employees on how they must communicate the Action Plan to guests will ensure everyone gives the same message and there is no inconsistency.
- Make sure an up-to-date list of the contact information of all employees, including emergency telephone numbers, is always readily available across all departments on the site.
- Regularly review all COVID-19 related signage and notices throughout the property to ensure they display the latest Public Health advice from Government. Signs must be placed in prominent and relevant positions, be legible and be offered in multiple languages, as appropriate.

Training
Hostel owners and/or management must inform all employees of the measures being adopted to manage the threat of COVID-19. Use the most appropriate training channels to do this and ensure that staff are aware that they must not attend work if they are displaying any symptoms of COVID-19 such as coughing or shortness of breath. Instead, they must seek medical attention.

There is an obligation on employers to ensure that employees are aware that they must not attend work if they have symptoms. This is essential to ensure that the virus does not spread.

You must organise information briefings to cover all the basic protective measures against COVID-19 and the signs and symptoms of the disease. In particular, make sure you cover:
- Hand and respiratory hygiene and physical distancing measures
- Correct use of PPE
- Cleaning/disinfection protocols
- Employee health and what to do if feeling unwell

- Unwell guest/dealing with suspected cases/liaising with authorities.

If training is needed for specific procedures or if your site has specific requirements, it must be included in the training programme.

Cleaning & Frequency
- Ensure contact/touch surfaces such as table tops, work equipment, door handles and handrails are visibly clean at all times and are cleaned and disinfected at least twice daily.
- Implement modified cleaning intervals for rooms and work areas. This applies especially for washroom facilities and communal spaces. Cleaning must be performed at least twice per day.

Cleaning of work areas must be conducted at regular intervals. Further information on cleaning in non-healthcare settings is available from the ECDC HERE or from the Government HERE.

Resources
Hostel owners/management should review rotas in line with The National Protocol Section E Subsection 3 which provides that full consultation on these matters is required to ensure sufficient employees are available to maintain physical distancing while completing the tasks to the required standards. Employee scheduling must ensure more time is allocated for cleaning and encourage employees to work alone if possible.

To achieve this, you should:
- Implement phased shifts.
- Schedule small teams.
- Keep the same team combinations where possible to limit employee interaction. This will assist should contact tracing be required.

You will also need to plan for the impact of employee absences; this may involve reallocating employees from non-essential tasks.

Where appropriate, cross-training employees will help maintain staffing levels within your site.

If you can’t ensure that employees stay 2 metres* apart at all times, you must apply the Return to Work Safely Protocol. For more information see HERE.

Contact Tracing
Keep contact tracing records for guests. Explain that the reason for keeping these records is to provide them to Public Health for contact tracing in the event that someone becomes ill with COVID-19. Details must be retained for one month.

*Current physical distancing guidance is in line with Public Health advice. This document will evolve to reflect new Public Health advice and changes to protocols as and when they emerge.
GUIDELINES FOR RE-OPENING HOSTELS

3. Employee & Guest Health

The health and safety of employees and guests is the number one priority for the owner of the hostel. The following steps will help ensure everyone remains fit and well:

**Physical Distancing**

Physical distancing guidelines (in line with Government Public Health advice) must be incorporated into the Action Plan for each department within the hostel. Specific areas must also comply with mandatory capacity limits.

Guests must be advised to stand at least 2 metres* away from other groups of people who are not from the same household at all times. In a controlled environment, such as pubs, bars, gastropubs, restaurants and cafés, physical distancing of at least 2 metres* is required, unless the requirements outlined in Appendix 1 have been met, in which case a minimum of 1 metre* is sufficient.

Careful consideration needs to be given when using communal areas, while queuing, using elevators, stairs or moving around the property. Ensure there are systems in place to prevent intermingling in communal areas (e.g. entrances, exits and toilet facilities). See Appendix 1.

**Employee Physical Distancing**

As far as reasonably possible, a distance of 2 metres* and a minimum of 1 metre* should be maintained between employees. Where 2 metres* is not possible all other measures to protect employees should be in place. Where the food services environment makes it difficult to physically distance, employers need to consider what measures to put in place to protect employees.

Minimise any direct employee contact and provide hand washing facilities, and other hand hygiene aids such as hand sanitisers, wipes etc. Ensure these are readily accessible so employees can perform hand hygiene as soon as a task is complete. Also, make face masks available to the employee in line with Public Health advice. You must note that wearing masks is not a substitute for the other measures outlined above. However, if masks are worn, they must be clean and must not be shared or handled by other colleagues.

Employers and employees must keep up-to-date with the latest Public Health advice issued in regard to masks by Gov.ie/NPHET.

**Property Signage**

You must display appropriate COVID-19 signage relating to hand and respiratory hygiene and physical distancing measures throughout your site. Where feasible, television screens and monitors can communicate these messages in reception and public areas.

**Employee & Guest Health Concerns**

All employers and employees must follow the Return to Work Safely Protocol. Please see HERE for more information.

When they return to work, employees must be trained on what to do if they or a guest becomes unwell.

If, as a site owner or manager, you are alerted to a suspected case of COVID-19 on your site, a clinician from a local medical centre should be contacted. The clinician will advise on the next steps. Further information is available on the HSE website.

**Note:** Your reception desk needs to have the telephone numbers of the health authorities, medical centres and public and private hospitals readily available in case a guest or employee falls ill. Please see Government advice HERE and HSE HERE for more information.

**Isolation Area**

If possible, identify an area/room on the premises where any guest or employee showing possible COVID-19 symptoms can be isolated from other people. From there, the individual can travel home to seek medical attention elsewhere. It is essential to clean and disinfect this isolation area thoroughly after it has been used.

In the event of a suspected case of COVID-19 among resident(s), the guest room must be removed from service until cleaned and disinfected.

**Providing Hand Sanitisers**

Hand sanitiser dispensers (touchless whenever possible), must be placed at all entry points to a site, at specific points within the public areas of the site where required.

All hand sanitisers must have a minimum alcohol content of 60%.

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4. Owner & Employee Responsibilities

The effective delivery of the Action Plan depends on the professionalism, conduct and behaviour of the hostel owner/management and employees. Paying attention to the following issues is especially important:

**Hand Hygiene**

Good hand hygiene practices are vital to help minimise the spread of infections including COVID-19.

This involves hand washing with soap and water for a minimum of 20 seconds, or the use of hand sanitiser (if hands are visibly clean), as required and frequently.

Hands must be washed as often as necessary and always:
- Before starting work
- Before handling cooked or ready-to-eat food
- Before eating
- After handling or preparing raw food
- After handling waste
- After cleaning duties including sweeping/mopping, etc.
- After using the toilet
- After blowing nose, sneezing or coughing
- After eating, drinking or smoking
- After handling money
- At the end of a shift

This list is not exhaustive.

Please see [HERE](#) for more information from the FSAI.

For additional COVID-19 hand hygiene measures, hands must be washed before putting on or after removing PPE.

Please see [HERE](#) for more information from the HSE.

**Employee Welfare Facilities & Timekeeping**

Employers and employees must follow the Return to Work Safely Protocol. Please see [HERE](#) for more information.

It’s also essential to display prominent signage relating to hand and respiratory hygiene as well as physical distancing Back of House.

Employee welfare facilities (such as employee areas and locker rooms) need to be re-organised to suit physical distancing measures and be frequently cleaned and disinfected. Staggered start times and break times can also be very helpful and you must review the use of clocking-in machines.

Staff meetings should be held online if possible. If physical meetings need to take place, physical distancing measures must be taken.

**COVID-19 Training**

All employees need to receive training on COVID-19 safety and cleaning protocols. You must give more comprehensive training to teams in frequent guest contact; these include the Reception Team, Maintenance & Operations and Hostel Security.

**Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

If required by their roles, appropriate PPE must be worn by employees. You must assess each section of a site to decide what is needed. Training on how to properly use, apply and dispose of all PPE is also essential.

As part of the business risk assessment consideration needs to be given to the level of PPE required for various tasks e.g. power hosing which can cause an aerosol affect.

**Air conditioning (where available)/Ventilation**

- Although COVID-19 is not transmitted by air but from person to person through small droplets from the nose or mouth, the condition of filters must be monitored and the proper replacement rate of indoor air be maintained.

- Increasing the number of air exchanges per hour and supplying as much outdoor air as possible is recommended, either by natural or mechanical ventilation.

- Ensure that air conditioning filters are cleaned regularly according to manufacturer’s instructions.

- When air conditioned air is used for ventilation, minimise recirculation as much as possible.

Please see [HERE](#) for more information.
5. Physical Distancing

The hostel owner or management needs to meet Public Health advice on maintaining physical distancing of 2 metres* between people. Physical distancing of 2 metres* does not apply to members of the same household.

Guests staying at hostels can be generally described as either:

1. **Organised Groups**
   Only individuals who are part of a household, can share a communal sleeping area, otherwise individuals within a group should keep the recommended physical distance from each other.

2. **Individual Guests**
   These guests have travelled to the hostel as individuals and must keep the recommended physical distance from other guests while staying at the hostel.

Queuing

Any area where guests or employees queue must be clearly marked for appropriate physical distancing. This includes reception, public areas and Back of House.

.Reception Area

Employees should be separated from each other at reception workstations.

On-site Shop (Where provided)

Review the operation of your on-site shop and, where possible, eliminate physical interaction between employees and guests by:

■ Making more use of online or phone orders.
■ Introducing contactless deliveries.
■ Managing entry numbers e.g. restricting how many customers can be in the shop.
■ Offer a shopper service where the customer provides a list and your employee gathers the items so the customer doesn’t need to enter the shop.

Install clear markings to ensure that contact between employees and guests is kept to a minimum and to ensure that queues adhere to physical distancing requirements. You must display signage referring to COVID-19 measures in visible locations.

Shared Kitchen & Dining Areas

■ In dining areas, physical distancing of 2 metres* should be maintained between tables. However, if this is not possible, this can be reduced to 1 metre* in controlled environments if the other risk mitigation requirements outlined in Appendix 1 have been met.
■ Pre-booked time limited slots should be in place for guests which are a maximum of 105 minutes duration plus 15 minutes for cleaning.
■ Physical distancing of at least 1 metre* should be maintained between people seated at tables. Physical distancing is required between individuals who are not from the same household. It is not required between members of the same household.
■ Limit the number of guests in the shared kitchen. Where possible, an employee must be assigned to manage the access and dispersion of guests. Where possible, introduction of a roster for use of the kitchen should be considered. Ensure that regular checks and cleaning is carried out in all public areas.
■ Install clear markings to ensure contact between non-household guests is minimised and that queues follow physical distancing requirements. Display signage referring to COVID-19 physical distancing measures in visible locations within the kitchen.
■ Avoid cross contamination through sharing of kitchen utensils. A recommendation is to consider is assigning boxes of specific kitchen utensils to each guest/organised group to minimise this risk.

Toilet & Shower Block(s)

Where practical, provide one-way entry and exit routes to the shower block. To ensure physical distancing, consider the following:

■ Encourage the use of alternate sinks if physical distancing cannot be adhered to.
■ If there are a significant number of showers, close off alternate shower cubicles.
■ Create schedules for smaller blocks and manage these during busy periods.

Laundry Room

■ Limit the number of guests using laundry facilities and ensure that guests don’t congregate in groups.
■ Install clear markings to minimise contact between guests and to ensure that queues follow physical distancing requirements. Install signage in visible locations that refers to COVID-19 physical distancing measures.
■ Create schedules for smaller laundry rooms and manage these during busy periods.

Back of House

Physical distancing protocols also need to apply in employee areas, shared office spaces, employee locker rooms and other relevant facilities for all employees.

Timekeeping Facilities

If you use clocking-in machines, a strenuous cleaning regime must be put in place.
6. The Guest Journey - Arrival & Departure

To follow the Government’s Public Health advice throughout the guest journey, hostels must minimise the number of access points for arriving and departing guests. Each access point must be equipped with hand sanitiser, along with signage instructing all visitors to use it as they enter and leave.

Face Coverings
The Irish Government has recommended wearing face coverings in situations where it is difficult to practice physical distancing. This may help prevent people who do not know they have the virus spreading it to others.

The Return to Work Safely Protocol states:
'Make face masks available to the worker in line with Public Health advice'. If masks are worn they must be clean and they must not be shared or handled by other colleagues. Employers and employees must keep up to date with the latest Public Health advice issued in regard to masks by Gov.ie/NPHET

Please see HERE for more information

Signage
Appropriate COVID-19 signage must also be prominently displayed outlining the physical distancing and hygiene practices that apply throughout the site.

General Recommendations
- Before guests book or arrive, your website must explain the guidelines that apply. Details would include that physical distancing must be adhered to on site. This information must also be outlined in public areas on site.
- Physical distancing of 2 metres* does not apply within members of the same household/organised group. Physical distancing is required between tables/seats and individuals that are not from the same household/organised group.
- You should consider requesting the estimated time of arrival of each booking so you can stagger the arrival of guests.
- Review check-in times to allow an extended check-in window. This will help reduce large queues of guests arriving at peak times. Encourage just one representative of each group to approach reception for check-in while the others adhere to physical distancing measures.
- Install clear markings to minimise contact between employees and guests. Queues for reception, shared kitchen, on-site shop, laundry areas and at entrances to toilet and shower blocks must all adhere to physical distancing requirements.
- Each guest should receive a ‘Welcome and Safety Information’ sheet explaining what is expected of them when interacting with employees and other guests. Guests may also find it reassuring to read about the rigorous cleaning procedures on the site.

Carpark, Bicycle Storage & Outdoor Areas
All outdoor areas, grounds, gardens, greens, verges, roads and car parking areas within the site must be kept clean and well maintained.

This means ensuring that lidded bins are available for the disposal of gloves, masks, tissues, etc. that may be contaminated.

You must ensure all rubbish bags are immediately disposed of in an appropriate external facility such as a waste removal skip.

Where possible limit access to all areas of the site to registered guests on the site only. Signs must be displayed advising walkers of the restrictions.

Payment
Guests should be encouraged to use card/contactless payment and pay in advance where possible.

If handling cash, employees should be provided with gloves and observe the Government’s Public Health advice on hand hygiene measures.

Guest Hygiene Amenities
Hand sanitiser must be provided at public entrances and exits and at key locations throughout the site.

Subject to availability, hand sanitiser and wipes also should be provided for guest use. It’s important to ensure that these are stored out of reach of small children.

*Current physical distancing guidance is in line with Public Health advice. This document will evolve to reflect new Public Health advice and changes to protocols as and when they emerge.
7. Cleaning Products & Protocols

Cleaning products and protocols must be suitable and manufacturer approved for use against viruses, bacteria and similar risks.

It’s important to follow manufacturer instructions with regard to dilution, application and duration of use. Hostel owners and managers must review cleaning and disinfection procedures within all departments and update these if any cleaning products are changed.

It’s also important to work with suppliers, vendors, and distribution partners to ensure an uninterrupted supply of cleaning supplies and PPE.

Public Spaces & Communal Areas

Cleaning and disinfection must take place in all public spaces at least twice per day and whenever facilities are visibly dirty. Particular attention must be paid to frequently touched surfaces such as reception desk and counters, door handles, toilet and shower blocks, laundry facilities, self-catering kitchen and other facilities.

Back of House & Employee Areas

Back of House areas must also be cleaned and disinfected at least twice per day and whenever facilities are visibly dirty. Particular attention must be paid to the staff room, locker rooms, employee bathrooms, delivery areas, shared office spaces and other relevant facilities.

Equipment Shared by Employees

- Clean and disinfect shared equipment and tools before, during and after each shift or any time the equipment is transferred to another employee.
- This includes items such as phones, computers and other communication devices, keys, payment terminals, kitchen implements, tools, safety buttons, cleaning equipment, time clocks and all other direct-contact items used.
- Shared food and beverage equipment in Back of House areas (e.g. kettle, microwave, etc.) need to be cleaned and disinfected after each use. The same applies to clocking-in machines which must be accompanied by hand sanitisers and antibacterial wipes.

Guest Accommodation

Cleaning and disinfection protocols must be followed when cleaning guest accommodation. Particular attention must be paid to frequently touched items including light switches, temperature control panels, door and furniture handles, television remote controls, toilet seats and handles, taps, telephones, kitchen appliances and flooring.

Laundry Facilities

Where bed linen is provided for guests, all linen must be washed at a high temperature and in accordance with the Government’s Public Health advice. Dirty linen must be bagged immediately to eliminate excess contact while it’s transported to the site’s laundry facility.

Within guest laundry facilities where multi-use items/shared items (e.g. laundry detergent) are usually provided, these should be removed. Guests should be notified that these items may be requested or purchased.

Cleaning and disinfection must happen at least twice per day and whenever the laundry facilities are visibly dirty, with an emphasis on frequently touched surfaces (e.g. washing machines, dryers, etc.).

Laundry Facilities

Where bed linen is provided for guests, all linen must be washed at a high temperature and in accordance with the Government’s Public Health advice. Dirty linen must be bagged immediately to eliminate excess contact while it’s transported to the site’s laundry facility.

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Cleaning and disinfection must happen at least twice per day and whenever the laundry facilities are visibly dirty, with an emphasis on frequently touched surfaces (e.g. washing machines, dryers, etc.).
8. Suppliers of Goods & Services

Deliveries
- If possible, delivery drivers should not be allowed to enter the site (with the exception of food deliveries which adhere to HACCP delivery protocols). Employees must not come in close contact with the driver.
- HACCP is in the context of food safety and re-opening only, not COVID-19 prevention.
- All food items (where food service is on site) must be checked in by employees with crates and boxes remaining outside the door.
- If your hostel provides food service please refer to the operational re-opening guidelines for restaurants on www.failteireland.ie.

Dealing with Drivers
- Delivery personnel must use hand sanitiser if required to exit their vehicle and enter the premises. Signage must make drivers aware of 1) physical distancing when picking up deliveries and passing deliveries to employees, 2) the need to maintain a high degree of personal cleanliness and 3) the need to wear clean protective clothing.
- An alcohol-based hand sanitiser must be available in the delivery area. Drivers must clean their hands before passing delivery documents or goods to employees. They must also be made aware of the potential risks involved in contact transmission of COVID-19.
- Hand hygiene, in conjunction with physical distancing, is also of paramount importance.
- Disposable containers and packaging should be used to avoid the need to clean any returns. In the case of reusable containers, appropriate hygiene and cleaning protocols must be followed by employees.

9. Locations for Distribution of PPE

If required, PPE should be distributed at the following locations:
- Entry and exit points
- Office area (if applicable)
- Cleaning and Maintenance

Note: Hand sanitiser should be provided in all entry and exit points of the site including reception, laundry facilities, self-catering kitchen, toilet and shower blocks, etc.

Hand sanitiser must only be used on visibly clean hands.

*Current physical distancing guidance is in line with Public Health advice. This document will evolve to reflect new Public Health advice and changes to protocols as and when they emerge.*
10. Employee Uniforms

**Cleaning & Disinfection Protocol**
Consider the use of a disposable apron for employees with cleaning responsibilities in line with the Government’s Public Health advice. The policy on the care of uniforms must be updated to ensure every employee is clear on the standards of appearance and dress expected while at work.

**Physical Distancing Protocol**
Where a locker/changing room is provided, mark floors to indicate available and unavailable spaces that should be used when changing into work attire/PPE. It may be necessary to roster access times for access to these rooms so physical distancing takes place.

11. Reception Area & General Offices

Appropriate COVID-19 signage must be prominently displayed outlining current physical distancing and hygiene practices in use throughout the hostel.

**Cleaning & Disinfection Protocol**
Cleaning and disinfection of the Reception Area must take place at least twice per day and whenever facilities are visibly dirty. This must place particular emphasis on frequently touched surfaces especially counters, desks, equipment, communication devices, door release buttons, etc.

Where appropriate, the sharing of office equipment should be avoided and each workstation must be self-sufficient with an individual computer, telephone and all ancillary equipment. Where shared equipment is necessary, it must be cleaned and disinfected before, during and after each shift or any time the equipment is transferred to another employee.

**Physical Distancing Protocol**
Employees sharing workspaces should be grouped in fixed teams that are as small as is reasonably practicable.

- In all shared office spaces, the physical distancing protocol must be strictly adhered to. Where necessary, station dividers must be installed.
- A designated employee should be stationed, where possible, during busy periods to control physical distancing measures.
- In offices where meetings/consultations take place, the physical distancing protocol is to be adhered to and entry numbers limited.

**Guest Considerations**
Debit/credit card machines should be moved to the front of the counter and cleaned and disinfected after each use. The use of cashless/contactless payment systems is recommended. Online payment should also be considered.

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12. Public Areas

**Cleaning & Disinfection Protocol**

The frequency of cleaning and disinfection must be increased in all public areas to at least twice daily. Particular attention must be paid to frequently touched surfaces which must be visibly clean at all times. These include reception desk and counters, door handles, toilet and shower block(s), laundry facilities, shared kitchen, shop and other facilities where appropriate.

The following areas must be cleaned and disinfected at least twice per day:

- Internal and external doors (e.g. door plates, handles, releases)
- Hard surfaces (e.g. tables, countertops, light switches)
- Stair handrails
- Interior seating (e.g. arms of chairs)
- Exterior seating/benches
- Public toilets
- Smoking areas
- Public amenities (e.g. internet station, ATM machine, cigarette machine, vending machine)

Interior and exterior refuse bins must also be emptied, cleaned and disinfected at regular intervals.

**Physical Distancing Protocol**

- You must place clear markings to ensure that contact between guests and employees is kept to a minimum and to ensure that guests adhere to physical distancing requirements in all public areas.
- Display signage referring to COVID-19 physical distancing measures in visible locations (e.g. on notice boards).
- A strict queuing system and limitations on number of users within public toilets should be put in place to ensure that physical distancing takes place.

*Current physical distancing guidance is in line with Public Health advice. This document will evolve to reflect new Public Health advice and changes to protocols as and when they emerge.*
13. Accommodation Services

All guest accommodation must be cleaned, disinfected and serviced after guest departure. Hostels should remove the additional items and amenities they feel pose a risk, at their own discretion.

Cleaning & Disinfection Protocol
- Accommodation Services/Housekeeping employees must wash their hands with soap and water or use hand sanitiser (if hands are visibly clean), for a minimum of 20 seconds prior to servicing each private/shared accommodation bedroom.
- To ensure effectiveness, manufacturer instructions must be followed when using cleaning products. This especially applies to their dilution, method of application and duration of use.
- Cleaning equipment must be disinfected at the end of every shift.
- Update cleaning check-lists to include high-risk and frequently touched surfaces. These include door handles, handrails, frequently touched switches and buttons, telephone handsets, television remote controls, kitchen appliances and air conditioning controls.
- Windows in rooms and other closed areas must be opened during routine cleaning.

When cleaning accommodation areas, particular emphasis must be placed on frequently touched surfaces which must be visibly clean at all times, such as:
- Desks, counter tops, tables and chairs
- Phones, tablets and remotes
- Thermostats
- Cabinets, cupboards, shelving
- Doors, door handles and doorplates
- Windows, mirrors and frame
- Lights and lighting control
- Closets, lockers, hangers and other amenities

Unnecessary bed throws and cushions should be removed from beds. Extra pillows and blankets should only be made available only upon guest request.

Bin waste from each room must be placed in a plastic bag and tied.

All reusable information material should be removed; place critical information on single-use leaflets and/or email it.

Physical Distancing Protocol for Shared Accommodation

Guests staying at hostels can be generally described as either:

1. Organised Groups
   Only individuals who are part of a household, can share a communal sleeping area, otherwise individuals within a group should keep the recommended physical distance from each other.

2. Individual Guests
   These guests have travelled to the hostel as individuals and must keep the recommended physical distance from other guests while staying at the hostel.

To aid physical distancing, take the following steps if possible:

Limit the number of guests using shared accommodation to avoid overcrowding and ensure that facilities don’t exceed their recommended capacity.

*Current physical distancing guidance is in line with Public Health advice. This document will evolve to reflect new Public Health advice and changes to protocols as and when they emerge.*
Install clear markings to minimise contact between guests from separate groups and to ensure that queues follow physical distancing requirements.

For shared accommodation, ensure adherence to physical distancing by reviewing the allocation of beds to ensure physical distancing is adhered to.

Where bunkbeds don’t allow for physical distancing, one bed should only be allocated.

### Bathrooms/Ensuite

- When cleaning and disinfecting bathrooms, particular emphasis must be placed on frequently touched surfaces, taking care to avoid splashes. These include:
  - Doors, door handles and doorknobs
  - Taps, plugs and sinks
  - Toilets and toilet handles
  - Grab rails
  - Tiles and flooring
  - Shower cubicles and bath
  - Bathroom vanities and accessories
  - Bathroom fixtures and hardware

- Soap and shampoo dispensers (where provided) must be cleaned and disinfected thoroughly during the room cleaning process.

### Cleaning & Disinfection Protocol

- The frequency of cleaning and disinfection must be increased in toilet and shower blocks to at least twice daily. Place special emphasis on frequently touched surfaces such as doors, taps, plugs, sinks, toilets and urinals, grabrails, tiles, flooring, shower cubicles. You must ensure splashes are avoided during cleaning.

- Hand sanitiser dispensers (touchless whenever possible) must be placed at toilet and shower block entry points as required. These must have a minimum alcohol content of 60%.

### Physical Distancing Protocol for Blocks

To aid physical distancing, take the following steps if possible:

- Limit the number of guests using toilet and shower blocks to avoid overcrowding and ensure that facilities don’t exceed their recommended capacity.

- Install clear markings to minimise contact between guests and to ensure that queues follow physical distancing requirements.

- Where practical, provide one-way entry and exit routes to the shower block to avoid overcrowding.

- Encourage the use of alternate sinks.

- If there are a significant number of showers, close off alternate shower cubicles.

- Create schedules for smaller blocks and manage these during busy periods.

### Guest Considerations

Display information signage referring to COVID-19 physical distancing and hygiene measures in visible locations.

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*Current physical distancing guidance is in line with Public Health advice. This document will evolve to reflect new Public Health advice and changes to protocols as and when they emerge.*
14. Common Areas

Hostels provide common areas such as games rooms, TV rooms, external recreational areas, etc.

Cleaning & Disinfection Protocol

- Common areas must be cleaned and disinfected at least twice per day. Particular emphasis must be placed on frequently touched surfaces such as remote controls, board games, sports equipment, etc.

- Hand sanitiser dispensers (touchless whenever possible) must be placed at all entry points. Ensure that all hand sanitisers have a minimum alcohol content of 60%.

- Seating areas to be cleaned and disinfected at least twice daily and when visibly dirty.

Guest Considerations

- All common areas need to be reviewed to ensure hand and respiratory hygiene and adherence to physical distancing measures.

- Employees must assist in guest movement and flow to ensure physical distancing protocols are followed within all common areas.

- Signage referring to COVID-19 physical distancing and hygiene measures must be displayed in visible locations.

Physical Distancing Protocol

The capacity of common areas needs to be managed by hostel owners and management to allow appropriate physical distancing between groups of guests based on Government Public Health advice.

Access to common areas must be limited to ensure adequate cleaning can take place.

*Current physical distancing guidance is in line with Public Health advice. This document will evolve to reflect new Public Health advice and changes to protocols as and when they emerge.*
15. Technical & Maintenance Services

Water Disinfection
Maintain the concentration of disinfectant in water for consumption within the limits recommended according to international norms and standards. Preferably this should be at the upper limits of the range.

Dishwashing & Laundry Equipment
Dishwashing and laundry equipment must be checked to ensure it is operating properly. You must pay particular attention to operating temperatures, as well as using the correct dosage of cleaning and disinfection chemicals.

Dispensers
Soap and hand sanitiser dispensers, disposable tissue dispensers, and other similar devices must be regularly checked, cleaned and maintained. Defective units must be rapidly repaired or replaced.

The Action Plan should include installing units to dispense hand sanitiser as required throughout the site, paying particular attention to public areas, employee areas, etc. These include entrances/exits to the hostel, common areas, laundry room, self-catering kitchen, etc.

Additional Recommendations
It is the responsibility of each individual business to provide sufficient facilities throughout the site and ensure these facilities are appropriately maintained to minimise the risk of infection.

*Current physical distancing guidance is in line with Public Health advice. This document will evolve to reflect new Public Health advice and changes to protocols as and when they emerge.
Appendix 1

Source: COVID-19: Guidance for Food Service Businesses, V0.3 15.06.2020 (HSE Health Protection Surveillance Centre)

Controlled and Uncontrolled Environments

Controlled environments

Public and private venues or workplaces are considered controlled environments. Examples are workplaces, schools, museums, swimming pools, galleries, cinemas, stadiums, conference facilities and casinos. Food businesses are considered controlled environments, which includes restaurants and cafes.

Requirements (for food businesses) in controlled environments

■ Use additional signage to ask customers not to enter if they have symptoms.
■ Regulate entry so that the premises do not become overcrowded. Encourage pre-booking as much as possible. A text may be sent to remind the guest to stay away if unwell.
■ Use floor markings inside the premises to facilitate compliance with the social distancing advice of 2 metres, particularly in the most crowded areas, such as serving counters and tills.
■ Use vertical signage to direct customers to facilitate movement within the premises while maintaining 2 metre distance.
■ Make regular announcements to remind customers to follow social distancing advice and clean their hands regularly.
■ Place sneeze guards/plexiglass at tills and counters if feasible, as an additional element of protection for workers and customers.
■ Adequate hand hygiene and toilet facilities. Provide additional pop-up hand hygiene stations or facilities if possible, providing soap, water and hand sanitiser.
■ Establish and supervise a schedule of frequent cleaning of bathrooms and frequently touched surfaces.
■ Customers should be seated at a table except when using the toilet, paying and departing.
■ Clear signage should indicate the location of and route to the bathrooms.
■ Limit the number of servers per group of guests to the smallest number that is practical.
■ There is a limit of on the number of people gathering in a venue at one time in line with NPHET guidance on indoor gatherings. This limit excludes workers***. Multiple gatherings are allowed in venue facilities provided they are in separate defined spaces and there are systems to prevent intermingling in common spaces (e.g. entrances, exits and toilet facilities).
■ Keep contact tracing records for everyone. Explain that the reason for keeping these records is to provide them to Public Health for contact tracing in the event that someone becomes ill with COVID-19.
■ Physical distancing of 2-metres should be maintained between tables. However, if this is not possible, this can be reduced to 1 metre in controlled environments if all of the other risk mitigations requirements outlined in this appendix have been met AND pre-booked time-limited slots are in place, which are a maximum of 90 minutes duration**.
■ Physical distancing of at least 1 metre should be maintained between people seated at tables.
■ Encourage the use of contactless payments where possible, without disadvantaging older or vulnerable customers.
■ Use disposable menus or laminated menus that can be adequately cleaned after each use. Unnecessary items should be removed from tables and single use rather than shared condiments should be provided.

Considerations:

■ Where at all practical, workers should provide services to only 1 gathering and should not move between multiple gatherings in different venue locations (e.g. two different function rooms).
■ Where possible, facilities such as toilets should not be used simultaneously by multiple gatherings. However if they are cleaned in between usage, they may be used separately by different gatherings, within the same time period.

Uncontrolled environments

These are settings where people have open access to the premises and generally don’t know each other and are unlikely to be in close contact with each other for an extended period of time. Examples are supermarkets, retail stores, shopping malls, and takeaway-only food outlets.

Requirements:

■ Physical distancing of 2 metres for customers (who are not close friends or family).
■ As far as reasonably possible, physical distancing of 2 metres and a minimum of 1 metre - should be maintained between workers.
■ Keep contact tracing records for workers.

Considerations:

As much as possible use contactless payment systems to limit physical contact.

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** Definition of time limited slots amended on 17-06-2020 from "maximum of 90 minutes duration" to "105 minutes duration plus 15 minutes to allow for cleaning".

*** Guidance from NPHET on gatherings on 19-6-2020 advised that service personnel should be included in the capacity limits.
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