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July 7th 2020

Coronavirus (COVID-19) NMDC Good Practice Guidelines for Reopening Museums After July 4th 2020

Coronavirus COVID-19 NMDC Good Practice Guidelines on the Reopening of Museums after July 4th, 2020

Introduction

This document is to help employers, employees and the self-employed and volunteers in the museums sector in England understand how to work safely during the COVID-19 pandemic. It should provide the freedom within a practical framework to think about what is needed to continue, or restart, operations during the COVID-19 pandemic and to support the health and wellbeing of workers and visitors.

The following good practice guidelines were developed by the National Museum Directors' Council (NMDC) Planning and Remobilisation Group, with support from the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and with contributions from members of the Museums and Galleries working group. This document has been prepared in consultation with Public Health England (PHE) and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

While this guidance applies to England, you should always consider whether there are local restrictions in place in your area. If so, you should first read the guidance relevant to your area as this may supersede guidance in this document. You can find information on the current lockdown in Leicester [here](#).

The guidelines set out the considerations relevant for making informed decisions about reopening museums to the public. It is a general guide which reflects the fact that every museum may take a different approach based on their needs. It should be read alongside other relevant Covid-19 guidelines published by HM Government, and is intended to enhance - not supplant - existing guidance and regulations. For example:

- BEIS – Offices and Contact Centres;
- BEIS – Labs and research facilities (for example, for specialist functions such as conservation and research functions where applicable);
- BEIS – Construction and other outdoor work (for example, for installation of exhibitions);
- BEIS – Shops and branches (for retail shops inside the museum, but also as an example of environment open to the public);
- DEFRA – Advice on accessing green spaces safely; and
- Department for Education – Covid-19 guidance for education settings.

Museums may also want to refer to other sector-led guidance, for example, guidance produced by Historic England with DCMS. We expect that this document will be updated over time. This version is up to date as of 7th July 2020. Where a premises delivers a mix of services, only those services that are permitted to be open should be available. For example, exhibition or

conference centres must remain closed for events such as exhibitions or conferences, other than for those who work for the business or organisation who run the venue.

This guidance does not supersede any legal obligations relating to health and safety, data protection, employment or equalities and it is important that as a business or an employer you continue to comply with your existing obligations, including those relating to individuals with protected characteristics. It contains non-statutory guidance to take into account when complying with these existing obligations. When considering how to apply this guidance, take into account agency workers, contractors, visitors and other people, as well as your employees.

To help you decide which actions to take, you need to carry out an appropriate COVID-19 risk assessment, just as you would for other health and safety related hazards. As part of this risk assessment, you should understand and take into account the particular circumstances of those with different protected characteristics. This risk assessment must be done in consultation with unions or workers.

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1. Principles for reopening

1.1. Considerations for reopening

NMDC members have identified that the following nine considerations will need to be in place before a museum is ready to reopen:

1. Government has clearly announced that museums and galleries can reopen

If the correct legal framework is not in place, museums cannot reopen. Once Government guidance supports reopening, museums should be confident that:

2. Security of workers, public and sites can be sufficiently maintained in light of any operational changes to account for COVID-19
3. Workforce* safety and wellbeing can be supported
4. Public safety can be assured**
5. Buildings and processes can be adapted to support reopening
6. The business case supports reopening
7. Museums are confident that visitors will return, and they can provide services in keeping with their public purpose
8. Transport systems can support museum visitors, workers' travel and supply chains while noting adaptations to normal practice may be required based on available guidance at the time of reopening
9. Local context, including location, museum offer, constitution and business model permit

*throughout the document where workforce or workers are mentioned, this is taken to include volunteers and other contract workers working in and around museum buildings

**indicating that museums feel confident that risks have reasonably been assessed and mitigated

We consider these to be appropriate general principles, but their application and relative importance will vary depending on factors such as a museum's size, location, type of collection, visitor demographic, and so on.

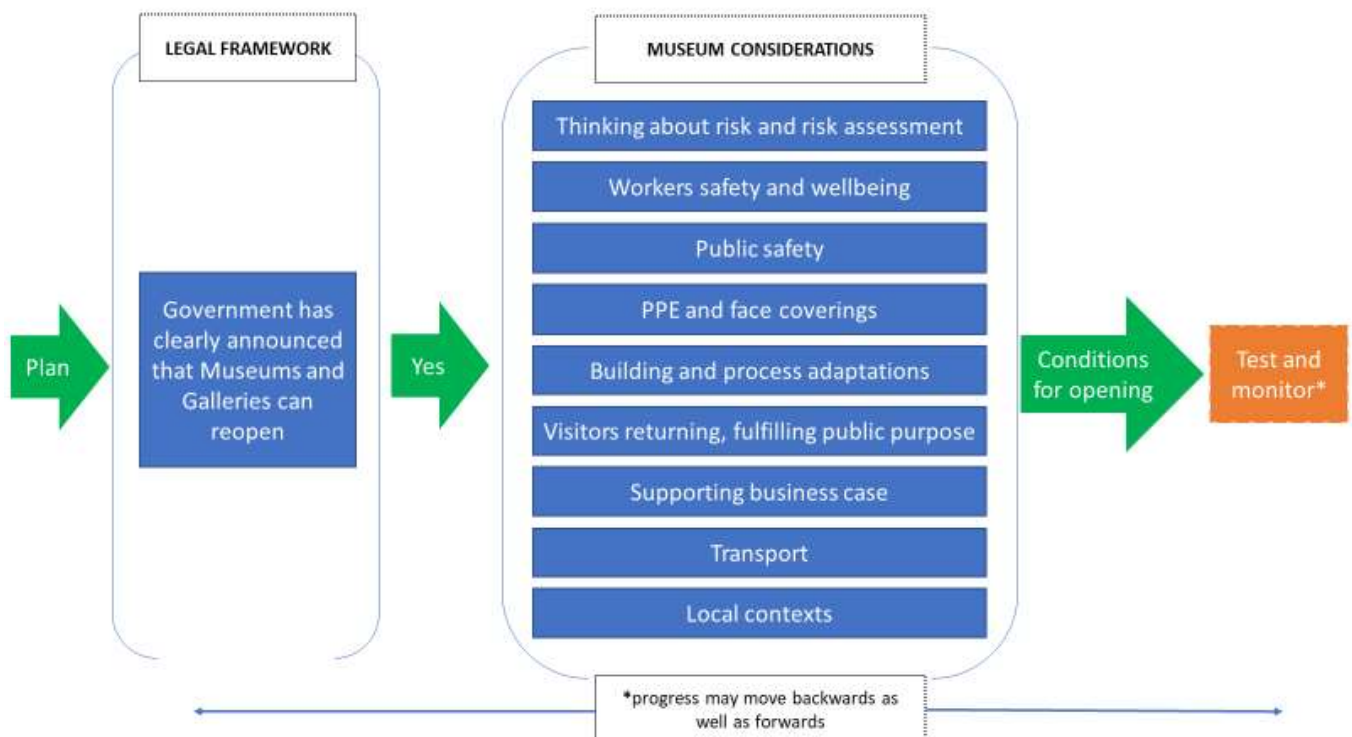
1.2. Museum considerations

Nine museum considerations have been identified:

- Thinking about risk and risk assessment
- Workers safety and wellbeing
- Public safety
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and face coverings
- Building and process adaptation
- Visitors returning, fulfilling public purpose
- Supporting business case
- Transport
- Local contexts

This document provides key objectives and potential steps on each of these considerations to support museums as they think about how they can work safely during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition, museums will need to consider the legal implications of reopening and liability.



2. Risk assessment in the workplace

2.1. Thinking about risk

Objective: That all employers carry out a COVID-19 risk assessment.

Everyone needs to assess and manage the risks of COVID-19. As an employer, you also have a legal responsibility to protect workers and others from risk to their health and safety. This means you need to think about the risks they face and do everything reasonably practicable to minimise them, recognising you cannot completely eliminate the risks of COVID-19.

You should make sure that the risk assessment for your business addresses the risks of COVID-19, using this guidance to inform your decisions and control measures. A risk assessment is not about creating huge amounts of paperwork, but rather about identifying sensible measures to control the risks in your workplace. If you have fewer than five workers, or are self-employed, you don't have to write anything down as part of your risk assessment. Your risk assessment will help you decide whether you have done everything you need to. There are interactive tools available to support you from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) at <https://www.hse.gov.uk/risk/assessment.htm>.

Consider the security implications of any changes you intend to make to your operations and practices in response to COVID-19, as any revisions may present new or altered security risks which may need mitigations. Please remember that when a building or space is repurposed - when there is any change in use or type or use or other circumstance - there needs to be a fire risk assessment.

Employers have a duty to consult their workforce on health and safety. You can do this by listening and talking to them about the work and how you will manage the risks of COVID-19. The people who do the work are often the best people to understand the risks in the workplace and will have a view on how to work safely. Involving them in making decisions shows that you take their health and safety seriously. You should consult with the health and safety representative selected by a recognised trade union or, if there isn't one, a representative chosen by workers. As an employer, you cannot decide who the representative will be.

At its most effective, full involvement of your workers creates a culture where relationships between employers and workers are based on collaboration, trust and joint problem solving. As is normal practice, workers should be involved in assessing workplace risks and the development and review of workplace health and safety policies in partnership with the employer.

Employers and workers should always come together to resolve issues. If concerns still cannot be resolved, see below for further steps you can take.

Where the enforcing authority, such as the Health and Safety Executive (the HSE) or your local authority, identifies employers who are not taking action to comply with the relevant public health legislation and guidance to control public health risks, they will consider taking a range of actions to improve control of workplace risks. For example, this would cover employers not taking appropriate action to ensure social distancing, where possible.

Failure to complete a risk assessment which takes account of COVID-19, or completing a risk assessment but failing to put in place sufficient measures to manage the risk of COVID-19, could constitute a breach of health and safety law. The actions the enforcing authority can take include the provision of specific advice to employers to support them to achieve the required standard, through to issuing enforcement notices to help secure improvements. Serious breaches and failure to comply with enforcement notices can constitute a criminal offence, with serious fines and even imprisonment for up to two years. There is also a wider system of enforcement, which includes specific obligations and conditions for licensed premises.

Employers are expected to respond to any advice or notices issued by enforcing authorities rapidly and are required to do so within any timescales imposed by the enforcing authorities. The vast majority of employers are responsible and will join with the UK's fight against COVID-19 by working with the Government and their sector bodies to protect their workers and the public. However, inspectors are carrying out compliance checks nationwide to ensure that employers are taking the necessary steps.

The actions the HSE can take include the provision of specific advice to employers through to issuing enforcement notices to help secure improvements.

How to raise a concern:

- Contact your employee representative.
- Contact your trade union if you have one.
- Use the HSE form available at <https://www.hse.gov.uk/contact/concerns.htm>
- Contact the HSE by phone on 0300 003 1647

Collecting data for NHS Test and Trace

The opening up of the economy following the COVID-19 outbreak is being supported by NHS Test and Trace. You should assist this service by keeping a temporary record of your staff shift patterns, customers and visitors for 21 days, in a way that is manageable for your business, and assist NHS Test and Trace with requests for that data if needed. This could help contain clusters or outbreaks. Many businesses that take bookings already have systems for recording their customers and visitors – including restaurants, hotels, and hair salons. If you do not already do this, you should do so to help fight the virus. We will work with industry and relevant bodies to design this system in line with data protection legislation, and guidance for maintaining records of staff, customers and visitors to support NHS Test and Trace from the Department of Health and Social Care is [available here](#).

2.2. Managing risk

Objective: To reduce risk to the lowest reasonably practicable level by taking preventative measures, in order of priority.

Employers have a duty to reduce workplace risk to the lowest reasonably practicable level by taking preventative measures. Employers should work with any other employers or contractors sharing the workplace so that everybody's health and safety is protected as far as possible. In the context of COVID-19 this means working through these steps in order:

- In every workplace, increasing the frequency of handwashing and surface cleaning
- Businesses and workplaces should make every reasonable effort to enable working from home as a first option. Where working from home is not possible, workplaces should make every reasonable effort to comply with the [social distancing guidelines](#) set out by the government - 2m or 1m with risk mitigation (where 2m is not viable) are acceptable. You should consider and set out the mitigations you will introduce in your risk assessment
- Where the social distancing guidelines cannot be followed in full, in relation to a particular activity, businesses should consider whether that activity needs to continue for the business to operate, and if so, take all the mitigating actions possible to reduce the risk of transmission between their workers
- Those suffering from symptoms of COVID-19 or advised to self-isolate should not enter the workplace
- Further mitigating actions include:
 - Increasing the frequency of hand washing and surface cleaning
 - Keeping the activity time involved as short as possible

- Using screens or barriers to separate people from each other
- Using back-to-back or side-to-side working (rather than face-to-face) whenever possible
- Reducing the number of people each person has contact with by using 'fixed teams or partnering' (so each person works with only a few others)

Finally, if people must work face-to-face for a sustained period with more than a small group of fixed partners, then you will need to assess whether the activity can safely go ahead. No one is obliged to work in an unsafe work environment.

In your assessment you should have particular regard to whether the people doing the work are especially vulnerable to COVID-19.

The recommendations in the rest of this document are ones you should consider as you go through this process. You could also consider any advice that has been produced specifically for your sector, for example by trade associations or trades unions.

If you have not already done so, you should carry out an assessment of the risks posed by COVID-19 in your workplace as soon as possible. If you are currently operating, you are likely to have gone through a lot of this thinking already. We recommend that you use this document to identify any further improvements you should make.

2.3. Sharing the results of your risk assessment

You should share the results of your risk assessment with your workforce. If possible, you should consider publishing the results on your website (and we would expect all employers with over 50 workers to do so). Below you will find [a notice](#) you should display in your workplace to show you have followed this guidance.

Staying COVID-19 Secure in 2020

We confirm we have complied with the government's guidance on managing the risk of COVID-19

• FIVE STEPS TO SAFER WORKING TOGETHER •

- ✓ We have carried out a [COVID-19 risk assessment](#) and shared the results with the people who work here
- ✓ We have [cleaning, handwashing and hygiene procedures](#) in line with guidance
- ✓ We have taken all reasonable steps to [help people work from home](#)
- ✓ We have taken all reasonable steps to [maintain a 2m distance](#) in the workplace
- ✓ Where people cannot keep 2m apart we have ensured at least a 1m distance and taken all the mitigating actions possible to [manage transmission risk](#)

Signed on behalf of employer _____ Employer representative signature

Employer _____ Employer name Date _____

Who to contact: _____ Your Health and Safety Representative
(or the Health and Safety Executive at www.hse.gov.uk or 0300 003 1647)

3. Workforce safety and wellbeing

3.1. Who should go to work

Objective: That everyone should work from home, unless they cannot work from home. Nobody should go to work if your business is closed under current government regulations.

Steps that will usually be needed:

- Considering who is essential to be on the premises; for example, back of house workers should work from home if at all possible
- Planning for the minimum number of people needed on site to operate safely and effectively
- Monitoring the wellbeing of people who are working from home and helping them stay connected to the rest of the workforce, especially if the majority of their colleagues are on-site
- Keeping in touch with off-site workers on their working arrangements including their welfare, mental and physical health and personal security
- Providing equipment for people to work from home safely and effectively, for example, remote access to work systems
- You may also consider the following:
 - Supporting staff who have been redeployed or seconded through change
 - Monitoring wellbeing of staff in the workplace and putting robust processes in place in case members of staff become ill
 - Supporting mental wellbeing; counselling training or support may be necessary
 - Providing pre-returning to work materials and information well in advance so the new protocols are communicated in an accessible way to all staff so that they understand logistical changes and have access to emotional/wellbeing support
- Museums will need to review volunteer capacity as volunteer availability may be essential for the safe operation of the museum; some volunteers may be clinically vulnerable, for example due to age:
 - many people are keen to return to or contribute to volunteering. Organisations have a duty of care to volunteers to ensure as far as reasonably practicable they are not

exposed to risks to their health and safety. This guidance around working safely during COVID-19 should ensure that volunteers are afforded the same level of protection to their health and safety as employees and the self-employed

Protecting people who are at higher risk

Objective: To protect clinically vulnerable and clinically extremely vulnerable individuals.

- Clinically extremely vulnerable individuals (see definition in Appendix) have been strongly advised not to work outside the home. People who are shielding (see definition in Appendix) remain vulnerable and should continue to take precautions but can now leave their home if they wish, as long as they are able to maintain strict social distancing. From 6 July, the Government will be advising that the clinically extremely vulnerable individuals may meet in a group of up to 6 people outdoors; no longer need to observe social distancing with members of their household; and may form a support bubble. From 1 August, the government will be advising that shielding will be paused. People in this category can go to work, if they cannot work from home, as long as the business is COVID-safe
- Clinically vulnerable individuals, who are at higher risk of severe illness (for example, people with some pre-existing conditions, see definition in Appendix), have been asked to take extra care in observing social distancing and should be helped to work from home, either in their current role or in an alternative role
- If clinically vulnerable (but not extremely clinically vulnerable) individuals cannot work from home, they should be offered the option of the safest available on-site roles, enabling them to stay socially distanced from others. If there are times they can't be socially distanced from others, you should carefully assess whether this involves an acceptable level of risk. As for any workplace risk you should take into account specific duties to those with protected characteristics, including, for example, expectant mothers who are, as always, entitled to suspension on full pay if suitable roles cannot be found. Particular attention should also be paid to people who live with clinically extremely vulnerable individuals

Steps that will usually be needed:

- Providing support for workers around mental health and wellbeing. This could include advice or telephone support and relevant training
- See current guidance for advice on who is in the clinically extremely vulnerable and clinically vulnerable groups

3.2. People who need to self-isolate

Objective: To make sure individuals who are advised to stay at home under [existing government guidance](#) and those who are advised to stay at home under the government's [Test & Trace](#) programme do not physically come to work. This includes individuals who have symptoms of COVID-19 as well as those who live in a household with someone who has symptoms and those who are advised to self-isolate as part of the government's Test & Trace programme.

Steps that will usually be needed:

- Enabling workers to work from home while self-isolating if appropriate
- See current guidance for [employees](#) and [employers](#) relating to statutory sick pay due to COVID-19
- See [current guidance](#) for people who have symptoms and those who live with others who have symptoms:
 - Providing pre-returning to work materials and information well in advance so the new protocols are communicated in an accessible way to all workers so that they understand logistical changes and have access to emotional/wellbeing support

3.3. Equality in the workplace

Objective: To treat everyone in your workplace equally.

- In applying this guidance, employers should be mindful of the particular needs of different groups of workers or individuals.
- It is against the law to discriminate, directly or indirectly, against anyone because of a protected characteristic such as gender, race, disability, religion, nationality, sexual orientation or age. Employers also have particular responsibilities towards disabled workers and those who are new or expectant mothers

Steps that will usually be needed:

- Understanding and taking into account the particular circumstances of those with different protected characteristics
- Involving and communicating appropriately with workers whose protected characteristics might either expose them to a different degree of risk, or might make any steps you are thinking about inappropriate or challenging for them

- Considering whether you need to put in place any particular measures or adjustments to take account of your duties under the equalities legislation
- Making reasonable adjustments to avoid disabled workers being put at a disadvantage and assessing the health and safety risks for new or expectant mothers
- Museums should consider the concerns expressed by any staff who consider themselves to be at higher risk, which may include those from vulnerable groups or those from ethnic minorities, and continue to pay special attention to and support all with protected characteristics

Making sure that the steps you take do not have an unjustifiable negative impact on some groups compared to others, for example those with caring responsibilities or those with religious commitments.

3.4.Social distancing and safe working

Objective: To maintain social distancing wherever possible, including while arriving at and departing from work, while in work and when travelling between sites, and to enable people to work safely.

Steps that will usually be needed

- Follow the official guidance for social distancing at work, which includes:
 - further increasing the frequency of hand washing and surface cleaning
 - keeping the activity time involved as short as possible
 - using screens or barriers to separate people from each other
 - using back-to-back or side-to-side working (rather than face-to-face) whenever possible
 - reducing the number of people each person has contact with by using 'fixed teams or partnering' (so each person works with only a few others)
- Consider other measures to adapt and encourage safe workspaces, for example:
 - Installing extra handwashing and hand sanitizer points throughout the building

- Providing spaces to store bags /clothes, tools / equipment away from the workspace, reduce sharing of equipment e.g. in kitchens
- Clearing of workspaces and waste at the end of each shift or if necessary during shifts
- Using more entry routes to workspaces or one-way flow systems to reduce congestion, floor markings demarking spacing – while ensuring that any new arrangements are made known to those with visual impairments
- Reducing unnecessary movement around buildings, reducing job and location rotation, reduced hot-desking
- Shared workstations need to be cleaned between each use: workstations should be positioned to allow social distancing to be maintained
- Reducing maximum occupancy for lifts, providing hand sanitiser for the operation of lifts and encouraging use of stairs wherever possible
- Making sure that people with disabilities are able to access lifts
- Regulating use of high traffic areas including corridors, lifts, turnstiles and walkways to maintain social distancing
- Maintaining use of security access devices, such as keypads or passes, and adjusting processes at entry/exit points to reduce risk of transmission. For example, cleaning pass readers regularly and asking staff to hold their passes next to pass readers rather than touching them
- Encouraging use of telephone and radio communication, or use of video conference in place of in person meetings
- Staggering break times to reduce pressure on shared spaces
- Installing Perspex screens may be considered in some areas of the building to shield workers in frequent contact with the public
- Consider accessibility in making these decisions, for example ensuring any changes to entries, exit, queue management and other onsite facilities take into account reasonable adjustments for those who need them, including disabled visitors
- Consider new working patterns such as remote working, shifts extended or reduced hours, teams working together

- In an emergency, for example, an accident, provision of first aid, fire or break-in, people do not have to stay socially distanced if it would be unsafe to do so
- First aiders should follow COVID-19 [guidance for first responders](#). First aiders should undertake COVID-19 updates to their first aid training from an appropriate provider. Useful advice and guidance is published in the UK by the NHS and Public Health bodies in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. Museums need to be aware that it is possible some first aiders may no longer wish to fulfil this role. If minimum numbers of first aiders cannot be met, it may be necessary to contract support from an external provider

3.5. Training and communication

Objective: to make sure all workers understand COVID-19 related safety procedures and are kept up to date with how safety measures are being implemented or updated.

Steps that will usually be needed:

- Ensure all members of the workforce have access to and are trained to use any health and safety equipment necessary to their role, to make them safe at work
- Consider that the workforce will also need time to adapt to new arrangements, and effective communication systems need to be implemented
- Consider training needs for workers and volunteers:
 - To understand how any new measures work, to use any new equipment and to adapt to new arrangements
 - Retraining may be needed in other areas of work and operations
 - Specific training needs may need to be addressed for Front of House workers and those in audience facing roles who will have a role in managing visitors safely in the new operating conditions. Including how to manage different spaces such as parks, gardens and open spaces
 - To support the mental wellbeing of workers and visitors, including training for mental health first aid

- Consideration will need to be given to how collections and conservation, archive, library, learning, community and engagement and other specialist functions that are visitor focused can be carried out safely, applying existing best practice to the current context
- Best practice processes will need to be in place when receiving or delivering loans outside of the organisation to ensure standards from one museum are mirrored by partners
- New processes and training for roles where it may be difficult to maintain social distancing e.g. art handlers, guides or live/costumed interpretation
- For guides/costumed interpreters additional consideration will need to be given to how to maintain social distancing, especially where engagement may cause groups to gather around a focal point, and whether further adaptations can be made to provide alternative or additional interpretation such as take away guides, use of own devices or web content
- Training and support for effective remote working
- Action required to manage any potential COVID-related incidents
- Safety measures and communication with contractors, freelancers and other service providers who are outside of the museums' permanent workforce will need to be considered:
 - Museums will need to ensure that contractors are well briefed on the safety measures in place and that external individuals or companies can meet the same standards. Evidence of compliance should be proportionate, with sole trader freelancers supported for example by the museum providing a template risk assessment to help the freelancer know what is expected and what they can do to comply with it
 - Museums may need to update internal systems for Contractor Management on site, including to devise schedules for essential services and contractors that reduce interaction and overlap. Rotas may need to include a quarantine period of 72 hours after each use of rooms or storage of items that are difficult to clean, e.g. art materials in the learning space

3.6. Accidents, security and other incidents

- Considering the security implications of any changes you intend to make to your operations and practices in response to COVID-19, as

any revisions may present new or altered security risks which may need mitigations

- Considering whether you have enough appropriately trained staff to keep people safe. For example, having dedicated staff to encourage social distancing or to manage security
- For organisations who conduct physical searches of people, considering how to ensure safety of those conducting searches while maintaining security standards
- Following [government guidance](#) on managing security risks

4. Public safety

Objective: Support public safety and be confident that they have put in place appropriate adaptations for visitors returning to the museum

Steps that will usually be needed:

- Managing visitor capacity:
 - Museums need to create the conditions where visitors can stay alert, practice social distancing etiquette, and follow good personal hygiene guidance, such as handwashing
 - Museums will need to work within the [social distancing guidance](#), taking into account that the many visitors will attend in small groups from whom they are not social distancing. Household groups or social support bubbles do not need to maintain social distancing amongst themselves
 - Making visitors aware of, and encouraging compliance with, limits on gatherings, for example, on arrival or when booking. Indoor gatherings are limited to members of any two households (or support bubbles), while outdoor gatherings are limited to members of any two households (or support bubbles), or a group of at most six people from any number of households
 - Where calculating exact floor space of spaces is complex, museums may find a more logical approach is to carefully manage the flow of visitors

- Mass gatherings:
 - People should continue to socially distance from those they do not live with wherever possible. Social interactions should be limited to a group of no more than two households (indoors and out) or up to six people from different households (if outdoors). It is against the law for gatherings of more than 30 people to take place in private homes (including gardens and other outdoor spaces).
 - Businesses and venues following COVID-19 Secure guidelines can host larger groups. This is also the case for events in public outdoor spaces that are organised by businesses, charitable or political organisations, and public bodies, provided they take reasonable steps to mitigate the risk of transmission, in line with COVID-19 Secure guidance and including completion of a risk assessment. Any other gathering in an outdoor space must not be any larger than 30 people. In particular, those operating venues or running events following COVID-19 Secure guidelines should take additional steps to ensure the safety of the public and prevent large gatherings or mass events from taking place. At this time, venues should not permit live performances, including drama, comedy and music, to take place in front of a live audience.
 - This is important to mitigate the risks of droplets and aerosol transmission - from either the performer(s) or their audience. There will be further guidance setting out how performing arts activity can be managed safely in other settings, for instance rehearsing or broadcast without an audience
 - Individual businesses or venues should consider the cumulative impact of many venues re-opening in a small area. This means working with local authorities, neighbouring businesses and travel operators to assess this risk and applying additional mitigations. These could include:
 - Further lowering capacity - even if it is possible to safely seat a number of people inside a venue, it may not be safe for them all to travel or enter that venue
 - Staggering entry times with other venues and taking steps to avoid queues building up in surrounding areas
 - Arranging one-way travel routes between transport hubs and venues
 - Advising patrons to avoid particular forms of transport or routes and to avoid crowded areas when in transit to the venue

- Local authorities should avoid issuing licenses for events that could lead to larger gatherings forming and provide advice to businesses on how to manage events of this type. If appropriate, the Government has powers under [schedule 22](#) of the Coronavirus Act [2020](#) to close venues hosting large gatherings or prohibit certain events (or types of event) from taking place
- Making changes to visitor experience. For example:
 - Specific invigilation to encourage safety measures
 - Spaced queuing systems
 - Timed ticketing, pre-booking
 - One-way systems
 - Some spaces limited in the number of people moving in and out at one time
 - Using 'wait' or 'stop' signs in busy areas
 - Use of foyers and assembly areas for queuing and circulation will need to be considered
 - Whether there is access to a café or restaurant on site
 - Reducing or preventing use of interactives may be necessary, or adapting if possible, e.g. including a robust cleaning regime aligned with visitor use, using a personal stylus or other technology to interact with digital interactives, or quarantining handling collections could be an option
 - Different use of outdoor spaces, which may be opened before buildings, or after, and new rules may be needed for accessing them and activities permitted within them
- Talking to other local organisations or similar institutions about the approach, in order to provide a degree of consistency for visitors
- Clearly communicating with audiences, setting out what they are doing to manage risk, and what advice they are giving to individuals to do likewise. For example:
 - Museums may want to publish details of how they plan to re-open safely and the steps they are taking to avoid confusion
 - Museums should communicate clearly opening times and how people can safely access a facility, if relevant, for example through a booking or queuing system

- Very clear and accessible signage should be used to communicate new operations
- It is more important than ever to consider inclusive guidance for people who need support and organisations should consider this as part of their work to encourage people to return
- Museums will need to consider other languages including BSL to ensure communication is clear and accessible to all
- If implementing new systems, and communicating this via websites, museums need to ensure they are providing reasonable adjustments so disabled people aren't put under a disadvantage in comparison to non-disabled people, and to meet wider requirements of the [Equality Act 2010](#) where applicable
- Reviewing external messaging to visitors and customers to make sure it does not provide information that may present a security risk, such as the location of queues or the number of people permitted in a queue, and wet weather arrangements
- Museums should develop a checklist of essential information that needs to be provided to visitors e.g. about pre-booking, spacing, what visitors might experience, facilities available, the use of cashless transactions, spaced queuing, etiquette, one way systems and lack or alteration to visitor experience such as cafés, whether visitors are allowed to bring in their own food and drink
- Managing visitor facing facilities differently and monitor or minimise their use, while ensuring that any visitors with accessibility needs are supported. This may include:
 - Restricting use of lifts to those with mobility issues / pushchairs
 - Monitoring use of stairs and escalators to avoid crowding
 - Set clear use and cleaning guidance for toilets to ensure they are kept clean and social distancing is achieved as much as possible; for example, by limiting the number of people entering toilet facilities at one time
 - Accessible toilet facilities should remain open to relevant members of the public, with access ensured for individuals and their carers or people they visit with, as required
 - Consider social distance marking for common areas such as toilets, showers, lockers and changing rooms and in any other areas where queues typically form

- Managing outside queues to ensure they do not cause a risk to individuals, other businesses or additional security risks, for example by introducing queuing systems, having staff direct customers and protecting queues from traffic by routing them behind permanent physical structures such as street furniture, bike racks, bollards or putting up barriers
- Some educational activities will be able to be delivered, but some may be complicated to deliver in early stages of opening, thinking innovatively with audiences about how to deliver and work with schools, families and community groups, including:
 - Using alternative spaces and blended learning
 - Outdoor activities where possible
 - A mix of on-site and distance learning
 - Off-site activities or supplies / handling objects provided to schools or groups with appropriate cleaning regimes. Ensuring risk assessments are readily available to schools and groups
 - Smaller groups, or bookable activities
- Learning spaces should be assessed in line with standards and guidance outlined for social distancing and cleaned in accordance with relevant guidance and in discussion with the relevant stakeholders, e.g. the Department for Education guidance for schools

5. Personal Protective Equipment and Face Covering

PPE protects the user against health or safety risks at work. It can include items such as safety helmets, gloves, eye protection, high-visibility clothing, safety footwear and safety harnesses. It also includes respiratory protective equipment, such as face masks.

Where you are already using PPE in your work activity to protect against non-COVID-19 risks, you should continue to do so.

At the start of this document we described the steps you need to take to manage COVID-19 risk in the workplace. This includes working from home and staying the recommended social distance away from each other in the workplace if at all possible. When managing the risk of COVID-19, additional PPE beyond what you usually wear is not beneficial. This is because COVID-19 is a different type of risk to the risks you normally face in a workplace, and

needs to be managed through social distancing, hygiene and fixed teams or partnering, not through the use of PPE.

Workplaces should not encourage the precautionary use of extra PPE to protect against COVID-19 outside clinical settings or when responding to a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19.

Unless you are in a situation where the risk of COVID-19 transmission is very high, your risk assessment should reflect the fact that the role of PPE in providing additional protection is extremely limited. However, if your risk assessment does show that PPE is required, then you must provide this PPE free of charge to workers who need it. Any PPE provided should fit properly.

There are some circumstances when wearing a face covering may be marginally beneficial as a precautionary measure. The evidence suggests that wearing a face covering does not protect you, but it may protect others if you are infected but have not developed symptoms.

A face covering can be very simple and may be worn in enclosed spaces where social distancing isn't possible. It just needs to cover your mouth and nose. It is not the same as a face mask, such as the surgical masks or respirators used by health and care workers. Similarly, face coverings are not the same as the PPE used to manage risks like dust and spray in an industrial context. Supplies of PPE, including face masks, must continue to be reserved for those who need them to protect against risks in their workplace, such as health and care workers, and those in industrial settings like those exposed to dust hazards.

It is important to know that the evidence of the benefit of using a face covering to protect others is weak and the effect is likely to be small, therefore face coverings are not a replacement for the other ways of managing risk, including minimising time spent in contact, using fixed teams and partnering for close-up work, and increasing hand and surface washing. These other measures remain the best ways of managing risk in the workplace and government would therefore not expect to see employers relying on face coverings as risk management for the purpose of their health and safety assessments.

Wearing a face covering is optional and is not required by law, including in the workplace, with the exception of public transport. If you choose to wear one, it is important to use face coverings properly and wash your hands before putting them on and taking them off. You should be prepared to remove your face covering if asked to do so by police officers and workers for the purposes of identification.

Employers should support their workers in using face coverings safely if they choose to wear one. This means telling workers:

- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser before putting a face covering on, and after removing it
- When wearing a face covering, avoid touching your face or face covering, as you could contaminate them with germs from your hands
- Change your face covering if it becomes damp or if you've touched it
- Continue to wash your hands regularly
- Change and wash your face covering daily
- If the material is washable, wash in line with Manufacturer's instructions. If it's not washable, dispose of it carefully in your usual waste
- Practise social distancing wherever possible
- Please be mindful that the wearing of a face covering may inhibit communication with people who rely on lip reading, facial expressions and clear sound.

You can make face-coverings at home and can find guidance on how to do this and use them safely on GOV.UK.

Employers may need also need to consider accessibility, for example to support members of staff or visitors who rely on lip reading to communicate

6. Adapting buildings and processes

Objective: ensure that museum buildings and business processes can be adapted appropriately to work effectively within the new conditions. Visitors will expect to be presented with well-maintained buildings and environments with necessary enabling of social distancing.

Steps that will usually be needed:

- As part of this planning process, museums should consider any changes in the security risks associated with their venue and the current national threat context. This should include consideration of the venue's security risk assessment and appropriate security and safety mitigation measures for workers and visitors, venues and collection
- Museums will need to consider a schedule of work to reach a sensible opening date, including consideration of:
 - Building works or modifications to complete before reopening, particular care will be needed where heritage buildings have confined or complicated layouts

- Establishing new cleaning regimes for the property and determining how they can be delivered effectively with the planned hours of operation, e.g. on a daily basis, with some surfaces cleaned regularly throughout
- Determining how to create and manage space despite restrictions
- Handling maintenance issues that may have built up
- Implementing new visitor experience and operations, and testing before opening to avoid issues
- Carrying out essential machinery testing
- Consideration of when 'switch on' can begin in advance of opening and the time it will take to reboot the museum and staffing requirements for this, and how to safely manage
- Availability of necessary equipment, such as ticket scanners, contactless payment machines
- Some buildings may have been repurposed during lockdown, bringing these back into their original function may take time
- For multi-site museums, some may be more suited to opening earlier than others, local contexts will influence this
- Considering the impact of workers redeployment or secondment that may delay reopening; some workers may remain seconded to other organisations or parts of the museum or parent body, meaning activities cannot be resumed immediately
- If workers and volunteer availability are likely to be impacted on a continual basis, identifying measures to ensure smooth running of operations
- It may not be possible to adapt all sites within a family of museums or all parts of a single museum simultaneously: museums will need to consider whether parts of a building or buildings need to remain shut while others open that are more easily adapted
- Alterations to the fabric or the flow of the building may be needed to enable social distancing:
 - use of barriers, banners, signage or use of alternative entrances/exits
 - Calculation of capacities and flow rates of visitors

- Modifications to office spaces
- Appropriate mobility and accessibility measures, and ensuring that any changes are communicated effectively to those with visual impairments
- Museum will need to review whether and how they operate cloakrooms:
 - Considering very carefully whether cloakrooms should be open, given the challenges in operating them safely
 - Cleaning them very frequently
 - Considering using no contact procedures where applicable e.g. lockers
 - Recommending to visitors that they limit the items brought with them when visiting the museum
 - Considering what easing of restrictions around carrying of backpacks, bringing in buggies and prams will be required.
- Museum will need to review whether and how they use handling collections and interpretation materials e.g. large print labels, ear defenders
 - Considering if it is practical to quarantine resources for 72 hours between uses
 - Considering a robust cleaning regime aligned with visitor use
 - Considering other methods of sharing information or delivering activities
- Museums will need to review whether and how they operate audioguides:
 - Considering very carefully whether audioguides should be offered and how widely, given the challenges in operating them safely, taking into considerations visitors for whom they are the primary way of experiencing and interpreting the museum
 - Considering ways to limit contact e.g. apps, use your own headphones, etc
 - Considering having a 72 hours quarantine period post usage if the audioguides cannot be wiped down with alcohol-based wipes between users
 - Providing hand washing options and cleaning the device before each usage

- Museums will need to review how café and retail areas can be adapted and whether an adapted offer is required:
 - Museums will need to work in close coordination with contracting companies if these offers are outsourced
 - Museum cafes and gift shops [can reopen from 15 June](#), provided (a) the premises are self-contained and can be accessed separately from the museum; (b) relevant social distancing guidance is implemented, including completing a COVID-19 specific risk assessment, and safe working measures can be put in place; and (c) in the case of cafes, only a takeaway service is offered until 4 July
 - Guidance that should be followed for [food businesses](#)
 - Guidance that should be followed for [shops and branches](#)
- In preparing the building for opening, systems will need to be tested, spaces prepared, and safety assured. This may include:
 - Fire system testing
 - Legionella testing for air conditioning
 - Drill/testing to ensure capacities work and the building functions effectively with the modifications
- A review of supplies and supply chains will be needed e.g. for new or increased supplies of cleaning products and plexiglass, ropes, barriers, ticket scanners for timed entry if needed, and of existing supply needs
- Rigorous cleaning schedules will need to be developed, including:
 - Thorough cleaning of visitor spaces every day
 - Frequent cleaning of some areas, such as those more frequently used or common areas such as toilets
 - Regular deep cleans where appropriate
- To ensure that toilets are kept open and to ensure/promote good hygiene, social distancing, and cleanliness in toilet facilities. Public toilets, portable toilets and toilets inside premises should be kept open and carefully managed to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19. Steps that will usually be needed:
 - Using signs and posters to build awareness of good handwashing technique, the need to increase handwashing frequency and to avoid touching your face, and to cough or sneeze into a tissue

which is binned safely, or into your arm if a tissue is not available

- Consider the use of social distancing marking in areas where queues normally form, and the adoption of a limited entry approach, with one in, one out (whilst avoiding the creation of additional bottlenecks)
- To enable good hand hygiene consider making hand sanitiser available on entry to toilets where safe and practical, and ensure suitable handwashing facilities including running water and liquid soap and suitable options for drying (either paper towels or hand driers) are available
- Setting clear use and cleaning guidance for toilets, with increased frequency of cleaning in line with usage. Use normal cleaning products, paying attention to frequently hand touched surfaces, and consider use of disposable cloths or paper roll to clean all hard surfaces
- Keep the facilities well ventilated, for example by fixing doors open where appropriate
- Special care should be taken for cleaning of portable toilets and larger toilet blocks
- Putting up a visible cleaning schedule can keep it up to date and visible
- Providing more waste facilities and more frequent rubbish collection
- Collections care and management should continue, working within existing rigorous collections care standards
- Museums will need to consider exhibition and loan schedules and content:
 - Exhibitions and interpretation may need to be adapted to prepare for visitors
 - Extra time may be needed to prepare exhibitions, especially if some loans are due to move on as timing issues mean exhibitions are now out of sync
 - Some exhibitions may no longer be viable and alternatives may need to be developed

- Delays may impact the repatriation or availability of loans for exhibitions
- Museums should refer to up to date information on the [Government Indemnity Scheme](#)
- Information and IT systems may need to be adapted to the circumstances, for example:
 - If remote working is extended and increased as a standard business practice
 - Where timed ticket systems need to be introduced
- Museums will need to
-
- and monitor the implementation of new processes and procedures, and learn from the experiences of other similar institutions
- There will be opportunities to learn from other businesses that have already opened, other museums and international experiences
- Museums may want to test visitor experience with select groups initially, such as members or season ticket holders, and continue to review measures, including through asking visitors about the experience to ensure appropriate measures are in place and different accessibility needs are catered for
- Reopening may not be a linear process; museums may need to move backwards as well as forwards as they adapt to the new conditions
- If a further period of lockdown is announced, museums will need to be prepared to adapt again quickly, using applied learning
 - In the event of a stop/start opening museums will need a plan for how to close down quickly and efficiently
 - Museums should closely monitor measures in place and review on a regular basis, aware to the fact the alert levels may change

7. Business Case

Objectives: Museums need to be confident that reopening is supported by their business case, based on each individual set of circumstances.

Steps that will usually be needed:

Financial modelling will be needed to understand the costs of reopening, and early identification of what is needed will be essential to informing decisions, considerations could include:

- Impact of reduced visitor numbers on direct income and secondary spend – many museums are working to an assumption of reduced capacity initially with the existing guidance on distancing
- Assessment of whether it will be possible open before ‘normal’ operations can return without additional support
- Other considerations for reopening such as supporting audiences and local communities, in some cases where financial stability may not be guaranteed in the short term but there are other imperatives
- Potential to reduce opening hours or reduced days of operation
- The limited opportunities for generating commercial income which may impact finances for the foreseeable future
- Other sources of finance aside from commercial income may fall, for example, philanthropy will be severely diminished for many
- For those using it, determining when to exit the Job Retention Scheme, and whether a phased approach may be sensible to bring workers back
- The impact of: ongoing worker or volunteer sickness/isolation, those who are in vulnerable categories, with caring responsibilities, childcare or other conditions, meaning they are unable to return to work
- Shipping and transport costs, availability and capacity, and impact of new logistical challenges
- Additional spend on equipment, such as contactless payment methods and health and safety measures, including where specific safety wear or protection is needed for essential workers working in the museum before reopening
- Reflect on and strategically address potential new ways of working, i.e. if more remote working becomes the norm:
 - investment in more equipment such as computer equipment, home office furniture, software, mobile phones needed to extend and support this
 - Undertaking remote working workplace assessments
 - whether remote working may further enable cost reduction and reduce environmental impacts

- Additional costs for workforce, such as electricity, heating and broadband
- Additional cost of training needs to manage new processes
- Cost of invigilation if more members of workers are needed to support the new building and environmental adaptations
- Offering key facilities and visitor services (i.e. toilets; lifts; cafés; shops; cloakrooms; audio guides; first aid etc.) whilst maintaining social distancing, with highly uncertain demand
- Content and scope of exhibitions may be affected and incur costs
- Content and scope of learning, community and engagement activities which may be affected and incur further costs
- Production of digital content to ensure continued visitor engagement and associated costs
- Extending hours for popular exhibitions may mitigate some lost income, though income would need to be offset against operating costs
- Member benefits will be reduced while the museum offer is basic, so alternatives may need to be developed
- Marketing spend may increase in the short to medium term
- Assessment of ongoing or planned capital projects and feasibility of delivery
- Museums may want to consider other partners to work with to collectively make purchases in order to make savings

8. Fulfilling public purpose

Objective: Museums should be confident that their visitors will return to reopen. Museums should also be confident that they can provide the services and charitable objectives in keeping with their public purpose.

Museums and sector bodies indicate that the current working assumptions are being used in planning processes:

- Capacities will be reduced significantly, on average down to 25-30% initially, though there will be differences across museums
- Audiences cultural appetites and 'intent to visit' will be altered, some research shows that many visitors are likely to 'wait and see' how organisations handle reopening

- Dwell times and museum flow may need to be altered, providing a different experience of the museum
- Visitors may meet a visibly different experience of the museum with measures such as more prominent invigilation, ropes, partitions and hand sanitising stations in place

Steps that will usually be needed:

- Review whether the museum can meet its public purpose with new measures in place:
 - Discussions with workers and trustees may be needed to identify how the museum will deliver its objectives
 - Museums will want to consider how they continue to offer sanctuary to vulnerable people or groups, space for enjoyment and contemplation and education
 - Museums will want to consider how any new measures support people with protected characteristics to ensure there are no unfair impacts
- Consider the visitor experience and how adaptations will alter this:
 - Different opening hours may suit different museums, such as reducing core hours for general public in order to accommodate special groups (families with children who are not going to school, elderly/more at risk, donors, etc) outside of these hours
 - Alternatively museums may want to extend opening hours to enable more visits while enabling distancing measures, but this will impact on costs
- Museums will need to consider potential audiences, review evidence where available, work with local stakeholders and consult audiences and communities:
 - There may be opportunities to engage more diverse audiences or those who have not traditionally visited in the past
 - Increased visits from the local community may be a focus
- If it is not possible to provide the usual museum offer, experience or 'day out' with cafés and other amenities closed, alternatives may need to be considered such as:
 - alternative offers to a sit-down café

- spaces in the museum where visitors can bring picnics
 - working with other local organisations to expand visitor offer
- Museums will need to manage expectations so visits are not affected by lack of advance information
- Museums will need to ensure that physical changes to the environment and experience support a wide range of visitors, paying particular attention to those with accessibility needs or visual impairment to ensure new routes, signs etc are understood and manageable
- Museums will also need to consider how changes are communicated to visitors in relation to pricing. For example if the museum admission price remains the same with a reduced offer this will need to be clear
- For museums where the visitor experience is predominantly guided, or where live / costumed elements are essential and expected, consideration will need to be given to how these can be adapted
- For museums offering public access to stored collections for research purposes, particularly those funded by Research England, consideration will need to be given to how to provide this, and whether changes to access will be needed
- Consider how to effectively manage events and activities in future, some continuation of digital activities may be adopted into delivery models, such as use of virtual events and tours
- Museums may want to work with partners to encourage inbound tourism and local audiences as national travel and international tourism will be slower to return

8. Transport to support visits, workers travel and supply chains

Objective: Museums are reliant on transport links to support visitors, workers travel to work and supply chains. Museums need to be confident that transport links and infrastructure will support reopening.

Based on the current Government guidance on non-essential travel, many museums are working to the following assumptions:

- Large scale non-essential travel will be slow to return
- Museums will need to work within the limits of local infrastructure
- Many visits may be local rather than national until transport system capacities are greatly increased

Steps that will usually be needed:

- Museums may need to consider the health risks associated with travel for workers, volunteers and visitors and communicate appropriate information or advice
- Museums need to review transport links and potential ongoing disruptions
- Museums may need to engage with local stakeholders and transport providers to understand the capacity available for public transport
- Workers may be restricted in their ability to reach the workplace, alternatives should be discussed, and home-working may need to be extended.
- Museums should continue to refer to Government guidance on non-essential travel, which is to avoid using public transport, and aim to walk, cycle or drive instead. If using public transport is necessary, wearing a face covering is mandatory, unless you are exempt for health, disability or other reasons.
- Later or earlier opening of buildings may need to be considered to enable workers to travel outside of peak hours
- Museums will need to review any business disruption or financial implications for supply chains and shipping from restricted travel
- Exhibition schedules are likely to be affected by ongoing travel reductions, these will need to be monitored and planned for

9. Local Contexts

Objectives: All museums operate within a unique set of circumstances based on their location, offer, constitution and business model. Museums will need to respond to local contexts and work in coordination with others to support local economies and communities.

Steps that will usually be needed:

- Museums should discuss reopening plans with funder/s and parent bodies as there may be certain circumstances in which the museum can or cannot open, for example:
 - University museums may open with campus, or in line with those elsewhere in the museum sector where possible

- Local authority museums will need to work together with and respond to the authority's wider plans for other services
- Many museums, particularly civic museums, are intrinsically linked to local and tourist economies so may want to work together with local councils, Local Enterprise Partnerships, Business Improvement Districts, schools, transport providers and tourist bodies to take a coordinated approach:
 - A unified approach to reopening local areas or high streets may provide confidence and certainty to communities and visitors
 - Where museums are concentrated in one area or district, coordination or a staggered approach may be required to prevent exceeding transport capacities or distancing requirements
 - Due to transport restrictions, engagement of local audiences may increase and be a primary focus for short term
 - Museums may want to work in together with local schools to support learning
 - Museums will want to engage local communities in their plans as well as other community partners
- Museum plans may look very different regionally dependent on transport links and local context

Appendix - Definition and links

Common Areas	The term 'common area' refers to areas and amenities which are provided for the common use of more than one person including canteens, reception areas, meeting rooms, areas of worship, toilets, gardens, fire escapes, kitchens, fitness facilities, store rooms, laundry facilities.
Clinically extremely vulnerable	Clinically extremely vulnerable people will have received a letter telling them they are in this group, or they will have been told by their GP. Guidance on who is in this group can be found here: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19
Clinically vulnerable people	Clinically vulnerable people include those aged 70 or over and those with some underlying health conditions, all members of this group are listed in the 'clinically vulnerable' section here: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing#clinically-vulnerable-people

Links to other organisations producing relevant guidance and resources, for:

[Scottish Government Guidance for museums, galleries and heritage attractions](#)

[Wales](#)

[Northern Ireland](#)

[The National Archives](#)

[Libraries](#)

[Association for Independent Museums](#)

[Museums Association](#)

[Museum Development South East Toolkit](#)

[Ireland, reopening of arts centres](#)

[NaCTSO advice General Security advice](#)

NMDC Planning and Remobilisation Group members:

Chair: Maria Balshaw, Director, Tate

Bryan Robertson, Chief Operating Officer, National Galleries Scotland

Colin Catney, Chief Operating Officer, National Museums Northern Ireland

Tony Park / Stephanie Donaldson, Executive Director, National Museums Liverpool

Jonathan Newby, Managing Director, Science Museum Group

Vicky Cheetham, Chief Operating Officer, Tate

Carol King, Director of Programmes, Black Country Living Museum

Amanda Wallace, Deputy Director, Manchester Art Gallery

Caroline McDonald, Executive Manager, Great North Museum

Janine Derbyshire, Head of Visitor Experience, Derby Museums Trust

Museums and Galleries working group

National Museum Directors' Council

Association of Independent Museums

Museums Association

Arts Council England

University Museums Group

English Civic Museums Network

Local Government Association

Yorkshire Sculpture Park

Tate Gallery

ICOM UK

Art UK

PCS

Prospect



www.nationalmuseums.org.uk