

Event Planning Guidance re. COVID-19 for Event Organisers Updated: 26 March 2021

The Events Industry Forum (EIF) is advising organisers to plan cautiously for events this summer as there are still likely to be some restrictions in place. The final reopening date of 21st June is still a 'not before date' and, for events, very much dependent on the outcome of the Government's Event Research Programme. Furthermore, there is still no certainty over the future of social distancing with this subject to a separate Government review. The best advice currently is to plan events on the basis that some social restrictions may still be in place.

In addition, there is a shortlist of pilot events taking place which will take into account a range of requirements needed to test different science-led criteria, including but not limited to indoor and outdoor settings, small and large venues, seated and standing events, different forms of audience participation, transport to events, duration, and ventilation.

As the results of the pilots are not due to be presented to Ministers until the end of May, it is likely to be early June before new guidance based on the outcomes is available.

Introduction

This document has been produced to provide COVID-19 specific guidance to organisers planning outdoor events within Sandwell. It has been compiled in line with the EIF guidance relating to COVID-19. This document is subject to review and should be read in conjunction with Government Guidelines which apply to your activities.

We understand that planning events safely and in line with the Government guidance has many additional complexities, therefore this document aims to highlight:

- What we expect and require from you as an organiser;
- Areas of your event that will require additional planning;
- Examples of how these requirements may be applied to your event;
- Risks to consider when deciding to hold an event during COVID-19.

Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council has a legal requirement to ensure that your event runs in a safe and COVID-19 secure way. The Events Team and Safety Advisory Group will continue to review applications on an individual basis and by providing an overview of your COVID-19 measures, at the point of application, you will help us with this process. This overview should also include any specific measures relating to the current COVID-19 alert level in Sandwell. The current Government information can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

Document Checklist

The core areas in Event Planning should be clearly addressed within your event management documentation. As a minimum, an organiser should provide:

- Event Management Plan – roles and responsibilities should indicate who has on-site responsibility for adherence to COVID-19 measures;

- Risk Assessment – organiser or responsible person must have carried out a risk assessment in line with the Management of Health and Safety and Work Regulations 1999;
- Public Liability Insurance;
- Landowners approval (if on private land)
- COVID-19 Specific Risk Assessment;
- COVID-19 Specific Method Statement or Operating Procedures;
- Site Plan – indicating event area, all event infrastructure, queuing systems, COVID- 19 distances, ingress/egress points, circulation areas, sanitisation stations, etc.;
- Crowd Management Plan – including attendee journey, signage, communications and signage and stewarding procedures;

Event documentation will need to be kept 'live', with revisions to plans included if/when Government guidance is updated. This is essential to ensure documentation is up to date with the current situation.

COVID-19 Risk Assessment

In addition to your standard health and safety risk assessment, you will need a COVID-19 specific risk assessment detailing how you will mitigate the risk of COVID-19 transmission. The HSE have created an [example template](#) to assist in this process. The risk assessment will need to take into account controls for staff, visitors and any other groups involved in the event, and needs to consider the following:

- Physical Distancing
- Crowd Management
- Event Capacity
- Travelling to, from and around the event
- Large Gatherings and Mass Events
- Communication and Signage
- Hygiene and Cleaning Practises
- Food and Non-food Concessions
- Toilets
- PPE and Face Coverings
- First Aid Provision
- Contact Tracing
- Contingency Plan
- Operational Planning
- Physical Distancing

Event plans and documentation will need to reflect how appropriate physical distancing will be achieved for both your team and attendees within the event site. Organisers should ensure that the event plan takes into account the latest Government guidance on group size and household mixing. For example, this could be in the format of a site plan indicating achieved distances, as well as a written method statement, which details the measures taken and the attendees' journey.

Crowd Management

Arrangements need to be in place to manage any queues which form, including consideration of where queueing is most likely. Signage or markers should be in

place making it clear to the public where they should stand. Consider calculating a queue capacity and planning for what you will do if the queuing area becomes full.

When approaching how to manage your attendees, consider the following:

- Events where the audience is expected to remain static for more than 15 minutes may be required to have a defined and controllable boundary;
- Implementing staggered arrival and departure times, such as giving attendees arrival slots, timed entry/tickets;
- Using screens and barriers to separate people;
- Using back-to-back or side-to-side area set-ups to avoid face-to-face contact;
- Programming of entertainment/activities to prevent a mass gathering, such as staggering performance times, so not all attendees are in one area at the same time.
- Suitable procedures for bag searches, where required, for example place the bag on a table and attendee step back while it is searched, with sanitised, non-gloved, hands.

Raised voices, including cheering, singing and chanting, should be discouraged as it can increase the risk of transmission. Consider how you can discourage your audience from raising their voices, such as lowering the volume of the entertainment or asking performers to encourage the audience to support the measures.

Your Team involved in managing your crowd will need to be sufficient in number to do so effectively, meaning you may require more than in a previous running of the event.

Event Capacity

The number of attendees you can have at your event will depend on the space you have available and should reflect the appropriate level of physical distancing. The capacity will relate to specific areas of the event site and the activity within it. For example, people per m² will differ in an area designed for a queue, as opposed to a seated viewing area.

Depending on the event, different event areas could be:

- Seated viewing area;
- Standing viewing areas;
- Queues for concessions;
- Entrances and exits;
- Circulation areas including one-way systems to reduce cross-flow.

Consider any additional impacts to security measures from changes to the size of the event footprint due to COVID-19 measures. While your calculated capacity might be less, your event footprint might expand to accommodate physical distancing, longer barrier lines, and additional security.

Check that you have enough space and are not impacting on neighbouring organisations, or regular paths for pedestrians, which you may not have accounted for. You may also need to confirm that you have the appropriate licensing permissions for the space required.

Travelling to, from and around the event

Public transport may have a reduced capacity, so consider how your attendees will arrive and leave, as well as the impact on local transport.

Consider providing your attendees with details of preferred travel routes to your event that might be less congested.

Staggered finish times will reduce the risk of queueing at nearby public transport locations, such as bus stops.

It should be clear to attendees which route they should follow in and out of the area, and this should be supported and facilitated by your team.

People should be discouraged from gathering immediately upon entering an event site and should avoid stopping as soon as they exit the space.

One-way systems should be designed to minimise 'cross-flow'. For example, the toilet area, you could barrier the space immediately in front of the toilets to avoid 'walk-ups', then manage the flow of people into the toilet area from one end and out through the opposite side.

Event attendees should be managed so that they do not need to 'brush past' someone walking in the opposite direction to them.

When planning the programme and schedule, as well as travel routes, consider the local area and whether the event might cause a cumulative impact. For example, if your event takes place close to a football ground, and both events have attendees leaving at the same time, this will cause a detrimental cumulative impact to the area, potentially causing crowds or queueing for public transport.

Large Gatherings and Mass Events

Organisers should take additional steps to ensure that they prevent large gatherings or mass events taking place outside of the planned activity. These steps should be reflected in the Event Management Plan.

If there is a risk that a large gathering could take place as a result of the event, the arrangements should be reviewed to reduce the risk, such as:

- The show stop/show pause procedure and all emergency procedures should reflect COVID-19 specific crowd management requirements
- Stewarding plans should include measures to prevent an uncontrolled crowd forming and to disperse a crowd.
- Plans should also address the area immediately outside your site, as passers-by may stop to view your event, causing a gathering. This should be complemented by barrier plans, blocks to sight lines (e.g. Heras fencing), and the show stop procedure.
- Programming shorter, more frequent performances could also reduce the risk of a large crowd gathering.

Communication and Signage

The public messaging and advertising methods you deploy are crucial to helping manage expectations. For example, letting your attendees know that they have to pre-book for an activity and cannot just show up on the day.

The level and tone of these communications should be appropriate for the type of event and audience profile. Your attendees will also need to know what measures are in place and what you need them to do – i.e. wear a face covering, ensure Hands, Face, Space guidance is adhered to.

Your plans should consider whether you need to deter non-ticket holders from attending and how you will ensure that a large gathering does not take place as highlighted above.

A COVID-19 specific signage plan should be created to support your crowd management and physical distancing measures, such as indicating one-way systems, areas of no entry, closed areas, and reinforcing other event requirements – i.e. physical distancing, face coverings, travel arrangements.

Upon entry to your event, your signage should include:

- That no one is to enter your event if they have symptoms of COVID-19 and include a reminder of the symptoms. This should reflect the current Government guidance;
- Reminder to maintain physical distancing.

Hygiene and Cleaning Practices

Your event should provide hand washing facilities and/or hand sanitiser for attendees and your team, and this should be located at planned and appropriate locations in your event site. Areas to consider locating hand sanitiser:

- Every entrance/exit point;
- All touch points – i.e. bar, catering and toilets;
- In areas where processes take place, such as bag search or ticket checks;
- Toilet areas.

Arrangements should be in place to reduce the number of touch points across the event site. The level and frequency of cleaning individual areas of your event site should be appropriate for the activity and public contact within it.

Where high-contact touch points cannot be avoided, such as a card reader at a concession, door handles, temporary use equipment such as funfair items, seating areas etc., these items should have an increased cleaning regime. You might also wish to reassure your attendees of the level of cleaning you are undertaking with signage or in pre-event communications.

Suitable arrangements must be in place for disposal of waste, including taking into account the possibility of increased waste products as a result of COVID measures.

Food and Non-Food Concessions

If food and/or non-food concessions are part of the event, they will need additional measures to protect customers and staff, including:

- Food concession: regular hand washing with water and soap. Non-food concession: regular use of hand sanitiser, as a minimum
- Where possible, encourage contactless payments to reduce the spread of infection;
- There should be no touching of the commodities by shoppers;
- Remove/reduce any self-service aspects – i.e. cutlery and condiments;
- Regular cleaning and sanitising of stalls and high touch points
- Measures to ensure customers are queuing 2m apart. This can be enforced using markers, so people know where to queue;

Toilets

Management of any toilets within the event area, including those for your team, will need detailed planning, which is covered extensively in the Event Industry Forum guidance on 'Keeping Workers and Audiences safe during COVID-19 in the Outdoor Event Industry'.

Key areas to consider include:

- The number of toilet units required. For example, a larger number of toilets may be needed, even with a reduced capacity, in order to reduce queues and facilitate additional cleaning;
- Distance between toilet units;
- How people are managed within and when moving in and out of the area – i.e. with stewards, signage, and/or barriers;
- Reducing people waiting outside a toilet block area for friends or family;
- Space for queuing and overall toilet block footprint;
- Disabled toilet provision;
- What handwashing facilities are available and whether sanitiser is also needed;
- Cleaning and maintenance of any event toilets – i.e. how frequently will they be cleaned? How will public be managed around any units that are closed for cleaning?

PPE and Face Coverings

Personal protective equipment (PPE) protects the user against health or safety risks at work. Where you are already using PPE in your work activity to protect against non-COVID-19 risks, you should continue to do so.

A face covering is something that safely covers the nose and mouth. It is encouraged that face coverings are worn when physical distancing of 2m will be difficult to maintain.

If you require your attendees to wear face coverings, consider how you will communicate this to them, and any additional measures you will take should an attendee arrive without a face covering. If you require your team to wear a face covering, ensure they are aware of what they need to prepare in advance of arrival and consider providing face coverings for your team.

Gloves are not recommended as a COVID-19 protection measure in events settings, regular hand washing or sanitising provides a greater level of protection.

First Aid Provision

First Aid at your event should be informed by your event's medical risk assessment. It is worth noting that a lower capacity for your event may not result in a reduction of medical personnel, as additional measures need to be taken into account.

It is best practice to appoint a good and competent provider, who has completed their own COVID-19 risk assessment in order to inform their medical provision and resourcing. Your first aid provider should have specific plans in place with regards to:

- PPE – including enough stock of appropriate equipment, in line with their risk assessment for all medical personnel;
- Cleaning equipment and vehicles;
- Disposal of clinical waste;
- Hand washing.

If your event has zones where there is no contact between those circulating in each area, then a separate first aid provision for each zone will need to be in place.

Consider creating an isolation/quarantine point, close to the entrance or exit, where anyone found to be unwell or at risk can be taken. If an isolation area is to be provided for patients by the first aid provider, they should be able to offer a split facility or a separate area, which is appropriate to the site plan.

Steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19 should be actively taken by the organiser. Temperature checks upon entry to the event have limited benefit.

Your signage plans upon entry will ensure that attendees are aware they should not attend if they have COVID-19 symptoms.

Contact Tracing

Contact tracing is a process for identifying people who are at risk of coronavirus infection because they have had contact with a person who has tested positive. These people will be advised to isolate and book a test to help reduce the risk of spreading the virus. Recording visitors or attendees' details for Track and Trace may be a requirement for your event.

Contingency Plans

Government guidance may change during planning. As such, the event plan should include contingencies, areas of adaptability and adequate timescales, as well as communications plans for any changes/cancellations.

You should consider any financial risk and insurance ramifications to your event, which may be affected by changes to local restrictions, changes in Government guidance, or legislative changes – i.e. increased restrictions or a local lockdown.

Operational Planning

We request that additional planning time is scheduled in order to safely plan for COVID-19 measures. We require this time to ensure that we are adequately

reviewing your documentation in order to ensure your plans are sufficient for a safe event.

The welfare of your team is as important for your attendees, so consider how you protect them.

Consider who within the team has overall responsibility for COVID-19 guidance compliance and name the person within the risk assessment as being the Covid Coordinator.

Give toolbox talks to your team and volunteers to explain their personal responsibility to all COVID-19 measures. This could take the form of a pre-event meeting to assist in ensuring that everyone knows the procedures and responsibilities before turning up to work.

Relevant PPE should be supplied to your team and volunteers working at the event.

Consider your event zones, and if you have individuals operating within a specific area who do not need to mix with attendees in other areas. You may wish to manage these as event zones to reduce mixing of people further- dependant on the size of the event.

Third-party contractors should have their own COVID-19 risk assessment, and you should ensure their procedures work within your overall event COVID-19 risk assessment.

Briefings on site-specific procedures and measures should be shared with third-party contractors, as well as your own team and volunteers.