



OUR COLCHESTER

*A BID to make new history*

# COLCHESTER REOPENING

Ensuring a safe return  
for everyone





Upon reopening, we welcome our colleagues and customers back to Colchester as COVID-19 has been controlled. Our Colchester has created a safe, secure and sustainable reopening and recovery period for the town.

- 1 GOVERNMENT & INDUSTRY GUIDANCE ON OPERATING SAFELY**
- 2 OUR COLCHESTER OPERATIONS AND COMMUNICATION PLANS**
- 3 RECOMMENDATIONS TO OUR MEMBERS**

# 1

## GOVERNMENT & INDUSTRY GUIDANCE ON OPERATING SAFELY

Upon reopening of stores and businesses, hygiene measures and social distancing restrictions will continue to be necessary to limit transmission. The below links offer guidance on reopening and operating your business safely.

Please see below industry specific guidance:

### **World Health Organisation**

<https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/advice-for-workplace-clean-19-03-2020.pdf>

### **Public Health England guidance**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/guidance-for-employers-and-businesses-on-coronavirus-covid-19#what-to-do-if-an-employee-needs-time-off-work-to-look-after-someone>

### **Colchester Borough Council guidance for businesses**

<https://www.colchester.gov.uk/coronavirus/businesses/>

### **South East Business Hub**

<https://southeastbusiness.org.uk/essex-southend-thurrock/coronavirus-guidance-for-employers/business-recovery/>

### **Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy**

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

### **HSE guidance**

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/guidance/index.htm>

### **MIND support**

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus/>

### **British Retail Consortium guidance**

<https://brc.org.uk/news/corporate-affairs/social-distancing-in-retail-stores-and-warehouses/>

### **Federation of Small Businesses**

<https://www.fsb.org.uk/campaign/covid19.html>

### **Institute of Hospitality**

<https://www.instituteofhospitality.org/guidance-and-support-during-the-coronavirus-crisis/>

# 2

## OUR COLCHESTER OPERATIONS AND COMMUNICATION PLANS

Our top priority is to provide a safe and secure place for our customers and colleagues, and to restore confidence in the destination. To support a safe re-opening and sustainable recovery, we have focused on our street operations and effective communications and advocacy.

### Cleanliness

Deep clean of public realm areas in the town centre will take place prior to re-opening of our businesses. Following this, the Neighbourhood cleaning team will continue to operate there high level cleaning schedule throughout the town centre providing reassurance for our customers, residents and workers.

### Consistency in messaging

Our Resource Portal is now live. We have collated a selection of discounts for our BID members for a wide variety of products from floor vinyls to PPE. The BID has facilitated all design work and simplified the ordering process for our members, a one stop shop for all you need.

### Social distancing

We are working closely with Colchester Borough Council and Essex Highways to ensure social distancing is achieved with confidence in all areas of our town centre. We are taking actions to ensure this by installing floor installations to control the flow of foot traffic in certain areas of the town.

### Security

We have extended our night time security patrol to monitor all members premises between 2000hrs and 0600 hrs.

### Town users help and support

Our Street Ambassadors will be there to support our members and town centre pedestrians with guidance on social distancing and any help needed. We are working closely with Essex Police and the councils Neighbourhood team to work under the same support mechanism.

We have installed hand sanitizer stations at key points across the town providing easy access to visitors. Locations will include car parks and bus stops.

### Public Space & Transport

We are working with Colchester Borough Council, Essex Highways and landowners to explore the possibility of road closures and traffic reduction to enable government social distancing practise.



# BID RECOVERY PLAN

Overview of our plans and progress.



## Crisis

**Acting right now** - Throughout lockdown, we have been quick to react and adjust accordingly continuing to provide the best support and guidance for businesses. When planning we have needed to be vigilant and put the position of businesses first in each step.

**Reacting** - We launched a night time security patrol to monitor our members premises during lockdown. We had zero reported attempted break-ins or actual break-ins to our members premises.

**Signposted** - We launched the Shop Local in Colchester campaign to promote our businesses stories on how they were adapting their delivery model through lockdown. The ethos of the campaign was for residents of the Borough to grasp that everything they needed was right on their door steps, literally, through deliveries and collections.

**Listening** - Our one-to-one phone calls and emails with our Independent sector members were delivered to ensure our members concerns and worries were listened to. Guidance and support was offered to tailor individual needs.

**Coordinating** - Our designated Covid-19 page was regularly updated to include the most relevant guidance and support information on government guidelines and financial support for businesses.

**Educating** - Our BID to Business campaign delivered an array of webinars, Q&A sessions and podcasts on topics requested by our members. Topics including financial planning, financial support such as the CBILS scheme, adapting your marketing strategy and business strategies. These sessions are still available on the BID to Business web page.

**Reassuring** - Our team was focused on providing reassurance to our members through delivering the best and most detailed information on how our members could be supported with information and financially.

**Digitalisation** - We guided our members in making the short-term transition in digitalising from a brick and mortar business to a business that could operate and rely on online trade. This was essential in supporting our members cashflow during times where footfall for non-essential businesses was at zero.

# BID RECOVERY PLAN

Overview exemplifying our plans and the progress.

## Recovery

Overview of our plans and progress

### Working together

- The BID was the lead in developing and forming a Town Centre Covid-19 Recovery Task Force. We brought together the stakeholders for the town centre including local authorities, landowners and large businesses. By forming this group, we were able to streamline every stakeholders plans to achieve consistency across all locations and deliver the safest town centre possible for our returning customers and workers.
- We have partnered with the team at COLBEA for a webinar on 'things to consider when re-opening your business'. This can be found on our BID to Business web page.

### Preparing our town centre for reopening

- As part of our Task Force working group, we highlighted the 'pinch points' within the town centre where social distancing may be more challenging. We knew that our residents, consumers and workers needed to return to a town centre that they felt safe in any area they walked through.
- Developing a Queueing Brief (<https://ourcolchester.co.uk/reopening/>) that all town centre businesses should reference and follow closely. The strategy achieves a safe and organised process for those consumers waiting to enter our premises and avoids any conflict with neighbouring businesses social distancing processes.

### Telling the story

- We ripped up our marketing strategy and re-wrote it. We set key objectives on telling those in the borough how safe, clean and ready the town centre is.
- By installing confidence in those who usually use the town centre, they can visit knowing that all is being done to make their visit a safe one.

### Driving the right footfall

- Having cancelled and postponed all BID activities until September, we set our sights on driving footfall back to our businesses. Our plans are now focused on driving footfall across the town centre avoiding any large gatherings.
- Our BID in Bloom campaign will ensure our 120 planters are ready to brighten the streets with beautiful flowers.
- Working closely with our Borough and County Councils to support our consumers, residents and workers journey into the town centre is the safest and affordable it can be.

### Being reactive

- Our 'Help us to help you' campaign will launch from the 1<sup>st</sup> June focused on our Street Ambassador and other stakeholder patrols supporting businesses with their queue management and social distancing around the town centre. By doing this, we can react when certain areas in the town centre raise logistical issues and resolve by working closely with Colchester Borough Council and Essex Highways.

### Understanding and using data

- Through observing our members re-opening plans, we are able to understand trends that occur across sectors and locations through the town centre. We are using this data to forecast challenges and opportunities that will arise.
- We are closely monitoring european towns and city trends to see how their reopening plans were implemented and effectively developed. By doing so, we can adopt a variety of tried and tested practises for the town centre.

# #WelcomeBackColchester



# 3

## OUR COLCHESTER COMMUNICATIONS

We are working with key stakeholders across the town to deliver a joint message for the reopening of the town. Our aim is to support our BID business and build consistent communication to the public, reassuring their safety when visiting.

We are regularly communicating with BID members ensuring updates regarding any Government and Council announcements are shared quickly and effectively. The Our Colchester website and social media pages will hold this information.

Our BID to Business webpage on [ourcolchester.co.uk](http://ourcolchester.co.uk) has a range of webinars and online portals which can help you when reopening your business.

We are working on a collection of campaigns targeted towards safely bringing footfall back into the town. BIG LUNCH, is a campaign targeted at supporting the hospitality and leisure industry when they reopen. This will link to the launch of the new Round app, which makes ordering table serves and takeaway easier for both the business and customer. More information about this campaign will launch soon.

Our resource portal provides you with a range of different Covid products ready to purchase from a list of preferred local suppliers. We want to provide businesses with a simple guide to what should be implemented across the town and how it will impact the town. More information can be found at <https://ourcolchester.co.uk/resourceportal>

We have designed a booklet demonstrating the adaptations Colchester town centre has made which will be delivered to over 40,000 households. This booklet is an opportunity to build consumer confidence and demonstrate our town is a safe place to visit.

From the 15<sup>th</sup> June, all campaigns and social media posts will use **#WelcomeBackColchester**. We encourage all businesses to use this hashtag, share their stories with us and build a community for our town centre. Over the last 8 weeks, we have been supporting the Shop Local in Colchester message and we continue to grow this message throughout this reopening stage.



More information can be found at [ourcolchester.co.uk/resourceportal](https://ourcolchester.co.uk/resourceportal)

# STEPS BUSINESSES CAN TAKE

Overview exemplifying our plans and the progress.

## Trading hours

- Please consider your opening and closing hours to allow phases traveling times for both customers and employees.
- We also recommend specific hours for returns and refunds as other cities have experienced an increase in this during the first few weeks of reopening.

## Queueing Strategy

- We would recommend implementing and adopting plans for our Queueing Brief document. Please email [hello@ourcolchester.co.uk](mailto:hello@ourcolchester.co.uk) if you have any questions around this document.

## Social Distancing

- We recommend that your store has sufficient social distancing measures in place by managing your capacity in your premises.
- We recommend that the capacity of your premises **mirrors one person per four square metres**. (i.e. if your premises customer floor space is 40m<sup>2</sup>, your capacity should be 10 people at one time). It is essential that you deduct unit space from this.
- For more information, visit <https://brc.org.uk/news/corporate-affairs/social-distancing-in-retail-stores-and-warehouses/> for the British Retail Consortium's recommendations for retail stores.

## Security & Safety

- All Town Centre businesses are recommended to participate in the TownLink radio scheme. The scheme allows you to participate in radio-based communications with other town centre businesses, sharing key information around security and safety of yourselves and your customers. To get involved, please talk to one of our Street Ambassadors or contact [info@colbac.org](mailto:info@colbac.org).
- Following the closure of businesses because of COVID-19, many will need to consider the increased risk posed by waterborne bacteria such as Legionella. For advice and guidance on avoiding this upon reopening your business, please refer to Government guidance (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-organisations-on-supplying-safe-water-supplies>)

## Communicating your measures to the public

- We recommend that you complete the Covid Secure five step document, sign and place in your premises window to demonstrate what you're doing to your customers. This can be found on the Government website.

## Sales and Discounts

- We advise that businesses do not host large sales and discounts in store, but keep them online through your website or our 'My-Shop' partnership with local radio station, Colne Radio.

## Staff Training & Wellbeing

- We recommend that the appropriate training measures are put in place around new rules, regulations and guidance that your business and the government have in place. These may include:
  1. Personal Hygiene guidance and assurance on what personal protective equipment (PPE) will be provided for staff.
  2. New processes around cleaning surfaces and contact points alongside payment methods.
  3. Recommendations of the safest ways to travel to and from work e.g. guides to safe walking, cycle routes/parking.
  4. Implementing flexible working hours where possible to avoid transport issues.
  5. Recommendations for staff wellbeing during working hours and break times, such as promoting open spaces and parks near your business. We recommend that each premises should designate at least one Wellbeing Ambassador, for more information on training for this, please get in touch with us.



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