



OUR COLCHESTER

A BID to make new history



COLCHESTER REOPENING

Ensuring a safe return
for everyone





We welcome our colleagues and customers back to Colchester as restrictions are lifted. Our Colchester is continuously working with stakeholders and businesses to create a safe environment for all who use the town.

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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/health-topics/coronavirus>

Public Health England guidance

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

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/coronavirus/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/>

Essex County Council

<https://www.essex.gov.uk/getting-tested-for-covid-19/workplace-testing>

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OUR COLCHESTER OPERATIONS AND COMMUNICATION PLANS

Our priority is to ensure a safe and secure environment for our colleagues and customers to visit. Although most members have experienced reopening before, the BID is here to provide support and guidance to all town centre businesses at any time.

We are confident that consumers are eager to reenter the town centre and so as a BID we are committed to making sure that all safety measures are in place to ensure a safe return for our customers and colleagues. The BID is here to provide advice, support, and guidance to all businesses looking at their reopening strategies.

Stencilling and Covid Signage

The BID will be refreshing the floor stencilling in pinch points throughout the town to ensure clear covid communications with visitors. We are reviewing our current Covid-19 information installations, including social distancing signs and bollards to make sure all areas of the town have clear instructions for visitors, helping to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience.

Resource Portal

The BID is providing free floor vinyls for businesses who require them. It is important that all businesses have a queuing strategy in place, it is recommended that you review your current strategy to ensure all staff understand your store policy on this. You can access the BID queuing guidance here <https://ourcolchester.co.uk/resources/> along with other covid information.

Social distancing

We are working closely with the local authorities to ensure social distancing government guidelines are adhered to. Actions have been taken to ensure this and will be continued throughout the reopening period. Precautions are in place throughout the town along with specific installations to control help the flow of foot traffic in certain areas of the town.

Support and Safety

Ambassadors are present in town to help with any queries and ensure visitors to the town are abiding by social distancing regulations. The BID continues to offer a series of informative webinars for businesses looking to stay up to date with the projects and campaigns in place to help the town thrive.

Public Space and Transport

We are liaising closely with local authorities on parking schemes to help visitors visiting the town centre by car, alongside promoting offers from public transport providers to ensure all visitors have ease of access to the town centre.



BID RECOVERY PLAN

An overview of how the BID continues to support you.



Initiatives

Acting right now - Throughout all three lockdowns and restrictions, the BID has been quick to react and adjust accordingly to continue to provide the best support and guidance possible for businesses.

Reacting - The BID is poised to react quickly to the changing situations, our team are dedicated to staying up to date with the news to help inform you of the best course of action as and when it's needed.

Signposted - Our campaigns have emphasised the importance of shopping local in Colchester. We have continued to promote and support businesses in the town centre that have adjusted their offering model to provide a click and collect and delivery service. The ethos of this campaign is to highlight to borough residents that they can grasp everything they need from the town centre from their homes.

Coordinating - Our designated Covid-19 page has been continuously updated to include the most relevant guidance, support, and information on government guidelines and financial support for businesses. Our businesses have also been kept up to date on events concerning the pandemic through our social media channels.

Educating - Following on from our BID to business campaign, the BID continues to hold regularly scheduled webinars to help businesses stay informed on the latest information and actions of the BID. Topics have included; financial support, HR guidance, adapting your marketing strategy, and business strategies.

Reassuring - Our team is dedicated to providing reassurance to businesses, directing them to tailored information and advice to help them feel supported and up to date. If you ever have any questions please don't hesitate to contact the team.

Digitalisation - We have guided our members in making transitions to digitalising their brick and mortar offerings online. This is a significant step to make whilst footfall to non-essential businesses has been halted. The BID continues to support shops in altering their trading options, through projects and promotion on consumer channels.

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 know that our residents, consumers, and workers need to return to a town centre where they feel safe to walk through any area.
- 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

- We are preparing the town centre for the expected increased footfall. A full audit is being carried out around the town to ensure that the correct precautionary measures are in place and all businesses have everything they need to welcome customers safely back to their premises.
- 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

- As guidelines and restrictions begin to be revealed the BID is continuously adapting its approach to ensure we can provide the best possible advice and guidance to businesses. This includes the continued use of webinars and meetings to effectively relay key information and advise on the next steps.
- Our Street Ambassadors and other stakeholder patrols can support businesses with their queue management and social distancing around the town centre. By doing this, we can react when certain areas of the town centre raise logistical issues and work to resolve these 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.

#WelcomeBackColchester



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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 businesses and build consistent communication with 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 has a range of webinars and online portals which can help you when reopening your business.

The BID continues to work on campaigns targeted to bring footfall safely back into the town centre. Information on the BIDS current campaigns can be found on the Our Colchester website. We welcome contributions from our members, if you have something you would like to communicate with our consumer audience please get in touch and we can help you with this.

Our resource portal provides you with a range of different Covid products ready to purchase at a discounted price 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/resources>

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.

During reopening all campaigns and social media posts will use #WelcomeBackColchester. We encourage businesses to use this hashtag, share their stories with us and build a community for our town centre. Throughout the pandemic, we have been supporting the Shop Local in Colchester message and this will continue to be emphasised throughout the recovery period.



More information can be found at ourcolchester.co.uk/resources

STEPS BUSINESSES CAN TAKE

Overview exemplifying our plans and the progress.

Trading hours

- Please consider your opening and closing hours to allow phased travelling 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 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 40m², 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.
- 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 businesses do not host large sales and discounts in store to avoid overcrowding and social distancing difficulties.

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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