

Queue Management Guidance with Social Distancing

**Please
keep your
distance**

6 feet
↔
2 metres

**Thank you for
practising
social distancing**

**Please
keep your
distance**

6 feet
↔
2 metres

**Thank you for
practising
social distancing**

Contents	Page
1. Introduction	1
2. How to plan a queueing area	1
2.1 Capacity	1
2.2 Entry/exit Points	2
2.3 External queueing space	2
3. Queueing within premises curtilage or utilising pavement	2
4. Queueing areas on the road	3
5. How to manage a queue	3
5.1 Queueing behaviours	4
6. Security	4
6.1 Recommendations	5
7. Technology	5
8. Other considerations	6
9. Advice and guidance	6
 Appendix I	
Queue management checklist	7

1. Introduction

This document has been produced to support businesses reviewing queuing arrangements for their respective premises, taking into account social distancing measures. The document will be reviewed in line with the release of any further Government guidance and as best practice is developed and will be reissued as and when required. The document is based on published government guidance.

It should be noted that whilst the council will make best efforts to support businesses with external queuing requirements, it will not be feasible in all locations.

Queuing arrangements will need to consider a number of factors and as such cannot be designed or implemented in isolation. A collaborative approach between neighbouring shops, offices and other organisations will be required to ensure a safe and well managed environment.

When designing a queuing strategy, consideration should be given to the nature of the area, the immediate streetscape, and neighbouring premises including residential, retail, businesses, schools, health establishments and transport hubs, amongst others.

Well managed customer queues outside the premises relies on efficient internal queuing and customer flow control measures.

This document is not exhaustive and focuses on the key considerations.

For further advice email Environmental Health at Newcastle City Council: psr@newcastle.gov.uk

2. How to plan a queuing area

We would expect businesses to continually review their position as the situation develops and as people adapt to the new measures being implemented. Ongoing feedback is welcome to assist in updating this document.

As a minimum, for a set queuing space to be agreed a location will need to have sufficient space for a queue and an additional 2.5m of pavement space for passing pedestrians.

Consider identifying staff to act as 'Covid Champions' for the business; inside and outside your premises. Allocating staff to such a role enables ongoing feedback for monitoring and review purposes.

A queue management plan and full risk assessment of all elements should be undertaken and control measures updated should make changes to your plan.

2.1 Capacity

Calculate the store capacity with social distancing measures in mind. Instead of working back from the existing store capacity, start from zero. Consider how many people can safely fit inside the business with a 2m distance between each person along with a

spacious distance for circulation. Then consider how the business has previously operated taking into account pinch points, dwell spaces, customer behaviour and the position of any infrastructure.

2.2 Entry/Exit Points

Review the entry and exits to the premises. Is it possible to introduce a one-way system to minimise cross flow of people at entrances? Where possible, allocate different doors for entry and exit, deploying staff at each door to monitor numbers within the store at any given time.

If it is not possible to allocate separate doors for entry and exit, consider marking a line on the floor or signage within the premises to separate entry and exit by a 2m distance.

If the door is not wide enough, staff or stewards will need to manage the entry and exit of people to ensure social distancing is managed.

If there is a high volume of persons leaving the premises, there may need to be consideration for a holding area with social distancing enforced inside the exit for people to queue as they exit.

Ensure emergency exits remain accessible at all times.

2.3 External Queuing Space

Each premises should review its business operation, anticipated footfall and dwell time to make an assessment as to how much queuing space they would aim to create.

Measure the queuing space by firstly delineating 2.5m of pavement for public access and reviewing how much remaining width there is outside the premises. Divide this space into 2m spaces to allow for social distancing within the queue. The queuing time can be calculated by reviewing the difference between the anticipated arrival rate and the departure rate.

Remember that arrival rates are not constant, depending on the type of business, some people will arrive in clusters of family or household groups. For retail outlets in particular, service rates are not constant and the dwell time in store will vary.

3. Queuing within premises Curtilage or utilising pavement

Individual premises will need to assess what space is available to implement appropriate and proportionate queuing within their curtilage.

Ensure 2.5m width of pavement is free for pedestrian access at all times. If the pavement is less than 3m then there may be insufficient space to safely manage a queue.

Queue spaces should not be positioned near live traffic where possible. When this is

unavoidable, they should be positioned away from the kerb edge.

If additional pavement space is required to create a safe queue, businesses must in the first instance liaise with neighbouring premises on the street subsection to ensure that their plans are fully coordinated. These plans must ensure that proposed queues do not overlap.

A staffing or stewarding plan should be implemented for the queue space to ensure sufficient resource is allocated to manage and monitor the queue space (for further information see 'How to manage a queue' and Checklist at the end of this document).

Consideration needs to be given to existing street furniture in the vicinity of a premises as well as bus stops or waste collection routes. Plans must ensure that a pinch point for public access isn't created.

If required, utilise floor markings to show waiting points in the queue. This could be achieved with anti-slip vinyl stickers. Consideration should be given to the size of stickers based on the groups anticipated to queue – for example, are they mostly individuals or family groups? This should be included in the risk assessment. When using floor markings, consider that customers may need guidance on whether to stand 'on' the marking or 'between' the markings.

Consider utilising window displays to place markers at height. For the avoidance of doubt, unless otherwise agreed by the council, the use of signage should be limited to communicate COVID-19 related information only, namely social distancing measures and queuing procedures.

Where there is management of multiple queues for different businesses, ensure there is clear signage and the use of staff or stewards as appropriate.

4. Queuing areas on the road

It is never acceptable to allow queues to form in the live traffic lane of a road.

It is acknowledged that in some areas, where the useable pavement is below 3m wide, there may be a desire to create additional space by utilising the road. Liaison with all neighbouring premises within the same street or sub-section is required to coordinate plans prior to approaching the council with proposals for a traffic management solution. There will be very limited locations where this would be deemed suitable.

5. How to manage a queue

A checklist is included at the end of this document for your use. Key points are set out below.

Identify an agreed queuing capacity.

Ensure there are sufficient numbers and suitably trained staff and/or stewarding resources to manage the queuing area.

Ensure signage is visible and displayed in appropriate locations including at the end of the queue.

Clear lines of communication are crucial to ensure staff and customers are provided with accurate information.

Queues need to be monitored to ensure they do not exceed capacity.

At the end of the trading day, only allow customers in the queue who will be able to enter the premises before closing⁴

5.1 Queuing Behaviours

During this pandemic there is a likelihood that customers will have a heightened anxiety around social distancing measures. Create reassurance that there is compliance with Government advice and guidelines to create trust with customers.

Ensure that staff are briefed to show empathy and understanding.

People may become frustrated with long wait times. To help with this, give customers information about queuing times to manage their expectations when they join the queue.

Consider mechanisms to enhance the queuing experience for customers. For example, in-window displays or directing people to visit a website or mobile phone app to view the new store layout.

Consider the type of demographic visiting the premises and how their behaviour is likely to affect their queuing. Studies have shown that family groups or groups of friends prefer to move together as a unit rather than as individuals. Mobility should also be considered.

Place hand sanitiser stations at entry and exit points (considering pedestrian flows).

6. Security

Where possible, appoint a queue manager to monitor behaviours in and around the queue. This should include monitoring for people loitering so they know they have been seen and noted.

Those staff involved in managing the queue should engage the public using tact and good humour. People in queues may become increasingly intolerant of other people's behaviour at social distancing queues.

The time waiting in the queue and weather conditions will affect people's behaviour.

6.1 Recommendations

Utilise a 'meet and greet' philosophy at entrances – you can control numbers, convey any instructions, etc. whilst imparting a subliminal message of regulation: control the door, control the crime.

Have a qualified first aider in the vicinity to administer basic first aid should someone faint in a queue.

The personal safety of the queue manager and people in the queue is the primary importance.

Engage in positive crime prevention measures. It will be harder for offences such as pickpocketing to be committed with social distancing in place. However, those managing the queue should remind those queuing to keep bags closed and valuables out of sight.

7. Technology

Use existing digital communication methods to update customers on new opening procedures.

Consider the use of online technology such as popular times graphs, live visit data and wait time estimates be used to inform customers how long the wait time is before they visit? If the data is not currently collected by the business, it may be collected by Google from users that have opted in to sharing their location history.

Learn more here – <https://support.google.com/business/answer/6263531?hl=en>

Consider a virtual queuing solution to allocate shopping time slots.

8. Other considerations

Provide clear guidance on social distancing and hygiene to people on arrival – signage and visual aids, for example.

Give consideration to the size of groups allowed and the impact on queue space required (as well as inside).

Review opening hours when considering how to manage deliveries to deconflict where possible.

Ensure any changes to entries, exit and queue management take into account reasonable adjustments for those who need them, including those with accessibility requirements.

Consider support that may be required for those with hidden disabilities such as deafness and visual impairments when following instructions and queueing.

Always maintain emergency access.

All employers must carry out a COVID-19 risk assessment which should take into account internal management of the premises, staff and visitor welfare as well as external plans. The HSE has guidance on how to manage risk and risk assessment at work along with specific advice to help control the risk of coronavirus in workplaces.

9. Advice and Guidance

Should you have any queries, please contact us on: psr@newcastle.gov.uk

The Government has published detailed guidance on working safely to ensure your premises is COVID-19 Secure – follow this link to access tailored advice for your business sector - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) guidance on what you need to consider when undertaking your risk assessment can be accessed here - <https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/working-safely/risk-assessment.htm>

Information and advice to support Safer Public Places, Urban Centres and Green Spaces - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safer-public-places-urban-centres-and-green-spaces-covid-19>

Checklist for Queue Management with Social Distancing

1. Internal management

- ✓ Identify and remove pinch points; introduce clearly marked one way systems, where possible ensuring reasonable adjustments for customers with accessibility requirements. This could include a separate queueing system inside your store for click and collect customers.
- ✓ Calculate the maximum number of customers allowed inside to maintain 2m social distancing throughout. Display this in your window clearly.
- ✓ Use in store signage as visual cues to customers with frequent voice over announcements to reinforce the 2m message.
- ✓ Use your website and social media to keep your customers informed about quieter/busier times.
- ✓ Allocate staff to be in-store Covid Champions to prevent areas becoming congested. Keep staff managing the queue outside updated.

2. Outside – managing queues

- ✓ Make a plan and discuss this with neighbouring businesses and your landlord, where located in a retail centre. You may want to write this down.
- ✓ Prominent placement of hand sanitiser at the entrance will encourage use by queueing customers.
- ✓ Station a Covid Champion at the entrance to keep count of customer numbers entering and leaving the store.
- ✓ If necessary and you have the space use a Disney style 2m queueing system.
- ✓ Your customers must not cause congestion by queueing outside neighbouring businesses
- ✓ Do not let your customers queue on the highway.
- ✓ Where the only available area for queueing is the pavement you must ensure sufficient distance is maintained to allow the public to pass.
- ✓ Always maintain an emergency access.

3. Information and training

- ✓ Share your plan with your staff
- ✓ Update your COVID-19 Secure Working Safely Risk Assessment
- ✓ Train your staff to manage queue flow effectively.
- ✓ Review your procedures regularly.

4. Other Resources

- ✓ **To request advice from Environmental Health email**
psr@newcastle.gov.uk
- ✓ **To make your workplace Covid-19 Secure**
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19>
- ✓ **For Sector specific guidance**
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/shops-and-branches>