

COVID- 19 TOURISM CHECKLIST & ACTION PLAN

The impact of CoVid-19 on the tourism sector is unprecedented and what's to come over the next few months is uncertain. With the situation changing on a daily basis, what is very clear is that "businesses as usual" is not an option, so now is the time to be proactively planning for how your business responds.

With so much to consider it can be difficult to know where to start and every business will have its own challenges depending on its own specific circumstances, so there is no "one size fits all" solution. Scottish Enterprise has prepared this document as a tool to help businesses consider what actions they may want to consider in order to prepare for, and mitigate against, the challenges and disruption they may face. Where appropriate, links to the resources and support services that are available have been included.

You can use this document simply as a checklist, or as the basis to create your own tailored Action Plan, but **don't forget to continuously review and update your Coronavirus Action Plan as circumstances change and new information emerges.**

TOP TIPS – remember:

- **Hope is not a strategy** – proactive planning is tough, but essential
- In times of high uncertainty, **flexibility and adaptability are key**
- **Communication is king** – stay touch with your customers, staff, suppliers and your bank
- This is a time for **collaboration, not competition** – so make the most of your existing networks & partnerships
- **There is help out there**, so make sure to make the most of it – the links below are a starting point, but more are included throughout this document:
 - <https://findbusinesssupport.gov.scot/coronavirus-advice/>
 - [Employer Advice](#) - Free Acas Code Based Employment Law Advice for Business Owners and Employers
 - [British Business Bank](#) - At Budget 2020, the Chancellor announced that a 'Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme' (CBILS) will temporarily replace the Enterprise Finance Guarantee (EFG), becoming available over the coming weeks. **Worth noting that this may change and may not be available.**
- **Keep checking in** to <https://www.visitscotland.org/supporting-your-business/advice/coronavirus> and <https://scottishtourismalliance.co.uk/> for the latest news and updates with specific advice for tourism companies
- **It cost nothing to be nice** – be mindful of the fact that everyone is being impacted one way or the other by CoVid-19
- **Be brave and get creative** – Scotland's tourism sector has proven how resilient it can be in the face of global challenges before and we can do it

Note: This document has been developed to provide guidance only. Scottish Enterprise has taken all reasonable steps to confirm that the information and external third-party links are correct, however Scottish Enterprise does not warrant or assume any legal liability for the accuracy of any information disclosed and/or referenced and accepts no responsibility for any error or omission. Last updated 4pm 18/03/2020

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again!

THE BASICS				
ACTION	COMMENTS, SUGGESTIONS & RESOURCES	Consider	Action	Underway
Public Health First	Ensure that you are aware of, and are complying with, all current public health guidance and recommendations that are appropriate to your business.			
Stay Informed	With the situation changing so rapidly, it is important to stay informed, so check regularly for updates. Some useful links include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scottish Government • Scottish Enterprise • VisitScotland • Scottish Tourism Alliance • ETAG • Digital Tourism Think Tank 			
Review & update your Business Continuity Plan	Review your Business Continuity Plan and update it to reflect the specific issues - identify and quantify your exposure to the potential risks of COVID-19 across all areas of your business, including the extent and timing of any impacts and a range of scenarios. If you don't have a Business Continuity Plan, now is the time to create one - Business Gateway and the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) have put together guides on how to create a business continuity plan.			
Map your supply chain	Remember that other businesses are going to be facing their own challenges and disruption, so it is important to stay in touch with your suppliers and put in place contingency plans, including potential alternate suppliers. This Scottish Enterprise guide contains details of key directories that can help you identify and assess alternative suppliers from Scotland, UK and the rest of the world. You can also contact the Scottish Enterprise Research Service who can help you identify and assess potential new suppliers.			

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FINANCE				
ACTION	COMMENTS, SUGGESTIONS & RESOURCES			
Review your financial projections for the year	Identify key risk and dependencies and do some scenario planning – be honest and consider what’s the worst-case scenario and what you can do to mitigate that.			
Chase outstanding payments	Make sure you have recorded and reviewed all your outstanding debtors and chase them for payment as appropriate.			
Cut down/eliminate non-essential expenditure	Cut back/out all non-essential business expenditure. Protect the core of the business and try to create a financial plan that keeps the business alive – cashflow is key and should be your priority.			
Contact your bank	<p>Do not wait until you have a problem, contact your bank now to discuss your finances and how they might be able to help should you need it.</p> <p>Some banks have already announced specific new support services, for example RBS announced the establishment of a UK-wide £5bn Working Capital Support Fund for SME businesses affected by the Coronavirus and will also be offering loan repayment holidays and temporary emergency loans with no fees.</p>			
Contact HMRC	<p>Businesses with outstanding tax liabilities, <u>may be eligible to receive support</u> with their tax affairs through HMRC.</p> <p>These arrangements are agreed on a case-by-case basis. For more info call HMRC’s dedicated helpline on <u>0800 015 9559</u>.</p>			
Review your insurance cover	You should review all your insurance policies to make sure you understand your cover and potential liabilities. Contact your insurance broker/provider for advice if necessary.			

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LOOK AFTER YOUR CUSTOMERS				
ACTION	COMMENTS, SUGGESTIONS & RESOURCES			
Take care of your current customers	<p>With so much going on, it could be easy to take your current customers for granted, but now is the time to really focus on them and make sure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They know you are putting their health and welfare front & centre by informing them of any/all actions you have put in place in response to CoVid-19 • Your frontline staff have the info to respond effectively to customer enquiries relating to the impact of CoVid-19 or signpost them to where they can source information • Visitors know how much you appreciate their business and support – consider how you might demonstrate that through some value-add offer or service • Encourage them to post reviews, spread the word that you are still open for business and offering a great experience/service • You review your product offer and if appropriate, make adjustments to suit the customers that are still coming • and focus on opportunities to increase revenue via upselling 			
Establish a clear cancellation policy	<p>Unfortunately, many businesses are already seeing the cancellation of forward bookings and this is likely to escalate. Make sure you review and update your cancellation policy in relation to the current situation and that your staff are aware of what it is.</p> <p>Remember that how your business deals with cancellations will reflect on your reputation and likelihood of securing future business.</p>			
Maintain future bookings	While significant cancellations are unavoidable, wherever			

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	<p>possible look for ways to reduce them by staying in touch with customers and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reassuring them that you are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Interested in their future business – putting their health and welfare front & centre via all actions you have put in place in response to CoVid-19 • Providing them with information and links about the wider situation in the UK & Scotland 			
#Postpone, don't cancel	Where possible and appropriate for your business, consider putting a “post, don't cancel” policy in place to retain income and secure business longer term by providing credit notes, rebooking options, vouchers etc.			
Recommend Alternatives	It may seem counter-intuitive to redirect business to others but considering suggesting alternative options to customers in the event that they do have to cancel – it will enhance your reputation for customer care and chances of securing a future booking further down the line.			
Stay in touch with your customers	If you regularly stay in touch with your previous customers, then make sure to stay in touch with them now. Remember that everyone is likely to be facing challenges from CoVid-19, so let your customers know you are thinking about them – and of course use the opportunity to push sales....			
Make sure to keep your website, social media channels up to date	Post the all the latest news and info to provide your visitors with information – focus on your business, but you may also want to provide links to advisory sites as well. With the situation changing so quickly, make sure to review and update the information regularly.			
Provide the Personal Touch	Consider what you can do to make your customer interactions as personal as possible – consider creating a			

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	<p>dedicated “named” email address for customer enquiries for example.</p> <p>Also consider setting an “auto-reply” for incoming emails, being clear on the timeline for responses and providing alternative information links etc.</p> <p>Unless you have the resource to manage telephone enquiries quickly and effectively, it is probably best not to go down this route. Make sure voice mail messages are updated to clearly set out closure and cancellation policy information</p>			
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STAFF				
ACTION	COMMENTS, SUGGESTIONS & RESOURCES			
<p>Keep your staff informed</p>	<p>Taking care of your staff is going to be one of the most important and difficult challenges and businesses will need to consider this across a whole number of fronts. Staff are going to have concerns about their job security, personal health concerns and family wellbeing to deal with.</p> <p>Do what you can to make sure that your staff are kept as informed and up to date as possible. Even if you don’t have all the answers, make sure that they know you are aware of their concerns and doing everything you can to address them.</p> <p>Provide clear guidance for them in relation to your HR policies around sick leave etc. – some use info is available via:</p>			

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	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/guidance-for-employers-and-businesses-on-covid-19			
Consider alternative/flexible working arrangements	<p>Consider what your business policies will be in relation to working from home, alternative working hours, reduced working hours & unpaid leave etc</p> <p>Make sure you are clear on, and complying with, existing staff contracts and wider employment laws. If in any doubt, seek professional HR Legal advice asap.</p>			
Plan for the impact of employee absences	<p>Put in place contingency plans for employee absences – consider how/who might cover their roles and make sure other staff are aware of your plans.</p> <p>Consider what training you could put in place now to ensure that staff are ready to step into new roles at short notice.</p>			
Acas Code Base Employment Law Advice	<p>Read up on this free Acas Code Based Employment Law Advice for Business Owners and Employers from Employers Advice.</p>			
Refund of Statutory Sick Pay	<p>The government has announced that small and medium-sized businesses will be able to reclaim a refund on Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) for employees affected by Coronavirus.</p>			

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	The latest info and eligibility criteria for the scheme are available via: https://www.enterprisenation.com/learn-something/small-business-coronavirus-support-budget/			
Look for Opportunities	<p>There's no hiding the fact that life is going to be tough for tourism staff over the next few months, but it may also create some opportunities for staff to step into new roles, take on wider responsibilities or make use of hidden skills.</p> <p>Alternatively, some staff may have free time that could be productively used for training opportunities that will have longer term benefits for them and the business – there's a wide range of online training tools available for example.</p>			

MARKETING				
ACTION	COMMENTS, SUGGESTIONS & RESOURCES			
Review your marketing activity	<p>Review all of your current marketing activity and make sure that it is fit for purpose in the current circumstances. If/where you can, renegotiate or postpone paid-for marketing activities that target markets in “lock down” and refocus on domestic UK, Scotland and local visitors.</p> <p>Ensure that you review and focus messaging appropriate to these markets.</p>			
Make the most of free/low cost marketing routes	<p>Ensure that you are fully exploiting the free opportunities provided by 3rd parties. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and update your listing on VisitScotland.com, TripAdvisor, Expedia etc. 			

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take full advantage of the support available via https://www.visitscotland.org/supporting-your-business • Claim your business listing and POI on Google • Provide content to channels that have an extensive reach into local audiences e.g. your local destination group 			
Use, reuse and repurpose existing content	<p>Look back over your own marketing activity and look for opportunities to use, reuse or repurpose existing content. Many partners in Edinburgh have a wealth of existing & freely available digital content your business can use, for example via http://www.uncoveredinburgh.org/ Does your local destination group have similar resources</p> <p>https://www.digitaltourismscotland.com/ has lots of free marketing resources and links to other guidance which will help you sell your products to customers when they once again want to be tourists</p>			

Tech and Digital				
ACTION	COMMENTS, SUGGESTIONS & RESOURCES			
Review your cyber security	<p>Reports are already coming in about increased incidents of cyber scamming, security breaches etc. – so make sure that you review your cyber security.</p> <p>There's lots of useful free info and advice available via: https://www.sbrcentre.co.uk/services/cyber-services/ https://www.youtube.com/watch?edufilter=NULL&v=i_1cOtVKd0Y</p>			
Upskill the Business	<p>It make be that some of your staff have time to spare – make the most of this opportunity via online training tools such as those available via https://www.digitaltourismscotland.com/ or</p>			

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	https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/data-in-tourism Work with others locally to do some joint online/video training – e.g. could one digital marketing expert train a small group online? Use https://zoom.us/ a free video meeting tool			
Funding Support	Now might be the time to consider investing in your business to upgrade your tech/digital capacity – support is available for eligible businesses via: https://application.digitaldevelopmentloan.org/applicant-login.aspx			

Other Useful Resources/Links:

- **Winter Fuel Grant - Hospitality Action**

If you have any staff earning under £16,000 or under £25,000 as a family, please encourage them to apply for the £150 grant. They have until 31st March to get their applications in and the form seems simple enough

https://www.hospitalityaction.org.uk/media/1913/working-age-wfg_281019.pdf

- **Unemployment or low income**

As most businesses are suffering and letting go of staff already bare in mind that there is no other jobs out there and it could take up to 6 weeks for Universal Credits to kick in, therefore it's best to communicate your thoughts ASAP so they can make their own plans and start trying to work out how they will manage without an income. They will likely need to apply for benefits so please encourage them to do this now as they could potentially be without a payment for 2 months

- **Universal Credit:** <https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit>
- **Job Seekers Allowance:** <https://www.apply-for-new-style-isa.service.gov.uk/form/nino>
- **Advance Payment - Universal Credit**

If their application is successful but they can't wait they may be able to request an advance by calling: 0800 328 5644

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- **Utilise Existing Skills**

Hospitality workers have a unique set of skills that could come in handy during a crisis. Our industry is suffering now but others are soon to be crippled by shortages of staff. Could there be support needed in the care sector that your staff could provide? Local agencies specialising in care may be able to offer some temporary work, cooking, cleaning and care support to cover sickness? Amazon for example are in the process of mass recruitment to cope with the new rush of home shopping.

- **Extreme Financial Hardship - The BEN**

Stephen McGowan Chairman has sent this message to share, many of you will have given to the charity over the years and they're set up and ready to help:

'The Ben is here as a safety net for anyone who works in our trade and is facing extreme financial hardship as a result of the virus, and we may be in a position to offer one-off financial assistance on a case by case basis'

If this applies to you or any colleagues please contact chris@bensoc.org.uk or call our office on [0141 353 3596](tel:01413533596)

- **Mortgage/rent/homelessness**

I imagine most people will struggle to pay their bills without income but some young people may not have a clue how to manage this situation. It might be worth advising them to contact landlords/lenders ASAP, ask for a break in rent until they get work or are able to get housing benefit. Or encouraging them to reach out their parents and move home if they can.

In the worst-case scenario, you may have staff or whole families facing homelessness and in this case they may ask you to support them. Advise them to contact the council first for emergency housing and there are hundreds of other charities that can support. One we've used before is Rock Trust who were great and found a young chef a bed the same day and took him there. He had not lost his job he had just not been paid on time, homelessness can happen fast and you may not see it coming for your staff so think about how you could avoid this.

Temporary Accommodation

- <https://www.mygov.scot/emergency-housing/>
- <https://www.rocktrust.org>