

### Situation

Consumers will want to return to the shops and spend time, and money, with family and friends but in **safe environment**.

It is hard to predict whether footfall will reach pre Covid-19 levels but shopping destinations need to create a **welcoming experience** for all those who return over the coming weeks and months.

There will be mixture of emotions, including fear and concerns regarding **personal safety** competing with the desire to be released from lockdown restrictions.

### In Centre

Occupiers will look to Centre Management for **clear and confident communication** to protect shoppers and occupiers alike. Mall teams will be at the forefront of occupier and shopper contact and questions.

Centre Teams must be **fully briefed and able to explain all steps** being taken to reopen safely and in accordance with Government instructions.

It is important to build **trust** with accurate and helpful information so there may be a need to **repeat and develop messages** as further lockdown restrictions are lifted.

Without fully understanding any future Government health advisories surrounding a partial or complete re-opening we can only present a series of **recommendations** that would meet the needs of a shopping destination. There will be differences between open and enclosed developments.

It is anticipated that a level of **social distancing** will be in place for an unspecified period of time.

Unique circumstances like the **etiquette of using escalators and lifts** will have to be explained.

The **provision of more cleansing products**, even gloves or masks may be expected by shoppers.

There may be a need to **encourage off-peak shopping to avoid crowds**.

### How, where and when to communicate?

Ensure that the **occupiers are clear** regarding opening arrangements **before consumer** announcements are made public. Understand and be able to **amplify occupier/tenant policies** regarding hygiene and distancing. Explain store/mall queuing systems and instore number restrictions.

**In advance** – social media channels and web site; local media channels (on-line and printed). Radio if local provided as public service information. Provide adequate notice for opening to avoid last minute confusion or unwanted congestion.

**When open** – information to be in centre through posters, digital screens, door decals, lift lobbies, pedestrian and car park entrances, existing notice boards, information desks, management office. Regularly update digital and social channels. Make it clear information is updated regularly.

Consider staff presence on the malls – clearly identifiable as ‘here to help’. Consider ‘hygiene and distancing’ ambassadors. If appropriate provide printed information easily collected from dispensers by individual – not handed out.

**Collate agreed and checked statements** that comply with any Govt/NHS/Council advice. Provide information on opening hours, reduced level of stores open, restrictions on cafes, restaurants or leisure facilities. Explain access points and car parking arrangements, use of public toilets and click & collect arrangements. Clarify any reduced/free parking arrangements for key workers. **Confirm** if parking costs have changed – will payments machines be card only and constantly cleaned?. Collate and distribute **FAQ’s on health and safety advice to all centre staff for consistency.**

**Personalise** the information to the centre ensure local accuracy and authenticity. Consider a high **impact but consistent creative route** to engage shoppers quickly and effectively. The re-opening process is a first of its’ kind exercise and needs to have stand out from previous management or statutory signage.

**Cascade** internal information carefully and **prioritise centre staff, occupiers, shoppers, third parties (Council/BIDs), media.**

Provide **centre staff with means to communicate** all safety and hygiene steps being taken. Visible posters/decals/ how to access to websites/ signage/ management offices.

**Content and tone of voice** tailored to audiences. Practical and confident whilst welcoming and authoritative. It will be essential to **build trust and empathy** with shoppers.

Audience	Content	Timing
Centre staff	All practical instructions and information to convey clear and confident message. Briefings, communications collateral, web/social links/ accessible issues/ FAQ ‘s on cleaning and hygiene routines. Own personal safety measures including use of radios, phones, keys, pc’s, security key pads.	Allow sufficient time to bring staff up to date on new procedures and make familiar with all shopper and occupier messaging. Weekly or regular updates as phased opening become clearer. Ensure furloughed staff are briefed on return.
Occupiers	Health & Safety /systems and processes to reactivate building / occupier FAQ’s /fire testing etc/ copies of any shopper communications/ ask for cleaning regime information to share/ hold small group briefings. Confirm method of updating as may have to be immediate.	Provide details as far as possible before an opening date including a briefing on what shoppers are being provided with. Explain any marketing or comms initiatives to support their businesses. Update all database contacts.
Customers/Shoppers	In centre/POS/posters and digital screens / door decals/	Use full range of channels – digital, print and broadcast.

	car park/lift lobbies/car park tickets. A clear Welcome Back message backed by practical information.	Not expecting to spend any media budget for this stage as more informative and confidence building information. Plan ahead with key messages over 2/3 weeks
Third Parties (BID, Council)	Seek collaboration with all groups to accommodate any town wide information. Focus on physical benefits of shopping and supporting local businesses.	Manage own communications and messaging first for occupiers and shoppers then involve third parties when critical mass of town business becomes beneficial.
Media	Accurate details of all steps being taken to reopen safely. Create media releases with Centre Management quotes for key points. Manage the expectations of those excited to return. Be clear this is a phased approach. Seek endorsement through joint release/comments from Council, BID or anchor stores.	Ensure media has timely warning of reopening and the detail – avoid criticism by keeping away over-zealous ‘opening’ statements and keep all comms factual and helpful. Use the media to amplify positive and authoritative messages. Offer feedback and follow up on shopper reactions and successes.

Centres will have their own methods of cascading information whether through MallComm or other channels as well as a range of in centre opportunities or points of sale where information can be prominently displayed. The key is consistency of message.

Shoppers need to be reassured that shopping destinations are giving them timely and accurate information to make their return to the retail environment enjoyable **and** safe.

Provide sources of further information such as Revo, NHS, Government, Retail Trust for occupiers and staff.

