

# Westminster City Council COVID-19 Outdoor Event Guidance

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## **Introduction**

*This document is up to date as of **23/11/2020**. London is currently in a national lockdown and this guidance is applicable for activities that are planned to take place once this is lifted. Prior to the lockdown the London COVID-19 alert level was **TIER 2**. Government and industry guidance, as well as the current COVID-19 alert level, is subject to change and should be reviewed alongside this document.*

This document has been produced to provide COVID-19 specific guidance to organisers planning outdoor events on the streets and in the parks and gardens of Westminster. It has been compiled in line with the Government and industry guidance relating to COVID-19, a list of which is provided on page 14. This document should be read in conjunction with our standard Event Guidelines, as well as the specific Government and industry guidance that applies to your activities.

We understand that planning events safely and in line with the new Government and industry guidance has many additional complexities, therefore this document aims to highlight:

- What we expect and require from you as an organiser;
- Areas of your event that will require additional planning;
- Examples of how these requirements may be applied to your event;
- Risks to consider when deciding to hold an event during COVID-19.

In order to support you to plan and facilitate your event safely, the City Promotions, Events and Filming team may need additional planning time to work with you and to engage relevant colleagues within the Council.

Westminster City Council has certain legal requirements to ensure that your event runs in a safe and COVID-19 secure way. Ultimately, holding your event should not pose a detrimental effect to infection control in Westminster. We will continue to review applications on an individual basis. By providing an overview of your COVID-19 measures, at the point of application, you will help us with this process. This overview should also include any specific measures relating to the current COVID-19 alert level for London (link provided on page 14).

## **Document Checklist**

The twelve core areas in the Operational Planning section of this guidance should be explicitly addressed within your event management documentation. As a minimum, an organiser should provide:

- Event Management Plan – roles and responsibilities should indicate who has on-site responsibility for adherence to COVID-19 measures;
- Risk Assessment – organiser or responsible person must have carried out a risk assessment that meets the specifications of Regulation 3 of the Management of Health and Safety and Work Regulations 1999;
- Public Liability Insurance;
- COVID-19 Specific Risk Assessment;
- COVID-19 Specific Method Statement or Operating Procedures;
- Site Plan – indicating event area, all event infrastructure, queuing systems, COVID-19 distances, ingress/egress points, circulation areas, sanitisation stations, etc.;

- Crowd Management Plan – including attendee journey, signage, communications and signage (if there is no separate communications plan) and stewarding plans.

Event documentation will need to be kept 'live', with revisions to plans included if/when new Government guidance is published. This is essential to ensure documentation is up to date with the current situation.

## **COVID-19 Risk Assessment**

A COVID-19 specific risk assessment will need to be included in the overall event management plan. The HSE have created an example template to assist in this process (link provided on page 14). The risk assessment should demonstrate applicable measures at each stage of the event, as well as the differences for audience, staff and visitors, and their relative location within the event.

In addition to your standard health and safety risk assessment, you will need to detail how you will mitigate the risk of COVID-19 transmission, including the points listed below as a minimum. How these mitigations might apply to your specific event is expanded on in the next section.

- Social Distancing
- Crowd Management
- Event Capacity
- Large Gatherings and Mass Events
- Communication and Signage
- Hygiene and Cleaning Practises
- Food and Non-food Concessions
- Toilets
- PPE
- Medical Provision
- Contact Tracing
- Contingency Plans

## **Operational Planning**

### **1. Social Distancing**

Event plans and documentation will need to reflect how appropriate social distancing will be achieved for both staff and attendees within the event site. Organisers should ensure that the event plan takes into account the latest Government guidance on group size and household mixing.

*For example*, this could be in the format of a site plan indicating achieved distances, as well as a written method statement, which details the measures taken and the attendees' journey.

Areas to include (as necessary):

#### **Queuing:**

- Where will queues be allowed to form, who will manage them, and how will the attendees know where to stand?
- Markers indicating where to stand, or a similar system, should be implemented.



- Consider calculating a queue capacity and planning for what you will do if the queuing area becomes full.

#### **Capacity Calculations (including circulation space):**

- The number of attendees you can have at your event will depend on the space you have available and should reflect the appropriate level of social distancing. This might mean that you need to lower your capacity to ensure there is sufficient space for circulation.

#### **Viewing Areas:**

- When considering a viewing area, you may wish to implement seated sections to ensure social distancing is maintained.
- People may attend in groups and it could help to arrange seats in 2 and/or 4 to accommodate them.

#### **Ingress and Egress:**

- Consider the plans around entering and leaving your event.
- It should be clear to attendees which route they should follow in and out of the area, and this should be supported and facilitated by event staff.
- People should be discouraged from gathering immediately upon entering an event site and should avoid stopping as soon as they exit the space.

#### **One-way Systems:**

- These should be designed to minimise 'cross-flow'. *For example*, if you have a bar area, you could barrier the space immediately in front of the bar to avoid 'walk-ups', then manage the flow of people into the bar area from one end and out through the opposite side.
- Event attendees should be managed so that they do not need to 'brush past' someone walking in the opposite direction to them.

#### **Social Distancing Markers (for queuing and within the site):**

- Consider how you will inform your attendees of the required distances and how these will be maintained.
- You may wish to use markers for people to stand on in a queue, or 2m lines to indicate the required distances in a circulation area.

#### **Raised Voices:**

- Raised voices, including cheering, singing and chanting, should be discouraged as it can increase the risk of transmission.
- If you have performances of amplified sound, consider how you can discourage your audience from raising their voices, such as lowering the volume of the entertainment or asking performers to encourage the audience to support the measures.

#### **Travel Routes to the Activity:**

- Public transport may have a reduced capacity, so consider how your attendees will arrive and leave, as well as the impact on local transport.

- Consider providing your attendees with details of preferred travel routes to your event that might be less congested, or of tube stations that line up with the entrance and exit to your event area.
- Staggered finish times will reduce the risk of queueing at nearby public transport locations, such as bus stops.

#### **Parallel Activity:**

- When planning the programme and schedule, as well as travel routes, consider the local area and whether the event might cause a cumulative impact. *For example*, if your event takes place close to a theatre, and both events have attendees leaving at the same time, this will cause a detrimental cumulative impact to the area, potentially causing crowds or queueing for public transport.
- Other options include staggering the times that people leave, arranging one-way travel routes between transport hubs and venues, and advising attendees to avoid particular forms of transport or routes when arriving at or leaving your event.

#### **Event Staff:**

- The welfare of your staff is as important as that of your attendees, so consider how you protect them. This could include planning around:
  - Detailing clear roles and responsibilities, and including this within the event management plan;
  - Consider who within the team has overall responsibility for COVID-19 guidance compliance;
  - Give briefings to staff to explain their personal responsibility to all COVID-19 measures. This could take the form of a pre-event training plan to assist in ensuring that all staff know the procedures and responsibilities before turning up to work.
- Plans for staff toilets and first aid should be included within the toilet and medical planning, as detailed later in this document.
- Break areas should have a determined capacity and breaks could be staggered to ensure these areas do not become full.
- Shifts can be adapted in several ways to prevent mixing of staff, such as adjusting shift times to avoid commuting when public transport is busiest, identifying whether a member of staff can work from home, and arranging shifts so that the same people work together throughout an event – i.e. fixed teams, partnering, etc.
- Relevant PPE should be supplied to staff working for you.
- Consider your event zones, such as back of house, and if you have staff operating within a specific area who do not need to mix with attendees or staff in other areas. You may wish to manage these as event zones to reduce mixing of people further.
- Third-party contractors should have their own COVID-19 risk assessment, and you should ensure their procedures work within your overall event COVID-19 risk assessment. Briefings on site-specific procedures and measures should be shared with third-party contractors, as well as your own staff.

## 1.a. Required Distances

### Rule of Six:

- To comply with the rule of six, the maximum number of people seating/standing must be limited to six and consideration should also be given to socially distancing those not from the same household or bubble.
- There should be a **2m** space to the next group of six, which can be reduced to 1m, providing there is an additional mitigation in place, such as the wearing of a face covering.

### Seated Events:

- Space between blocks of seats should be **2m**.
- Space between rows to be **2m**, though this may be reduced to 1m if there is an additional mitigation in place, such as the wearing of a face covering.

### Standing Events:

- Space between blocks of standing areas should be **2m**.
- Space between rows to be **2m**, though this may be reduced to 1m if there is an additional mitigation in place, such as the wearing of a face covering.

### Face Coverings:

- Attendees and staff should wear face coverings when within **2m** of another person, if there is no other mitigation in place, such as a plastic screen.
- Additional mitigation is not required in areas where 2m distance is achievable between staff and attendees.

## 2. Crowd Management

Appropriate management of your crowd is key to a COVID-19 Secure event.

Crowds can be managed with stewards, signage, and pre-event information, such as advertising and mailouts.

When approaching how to manage your attendees, consider the following:

- Events where the audience is expected to remain static for more than 15 minutes may be required to have a defined and controllable boundary;
- Implementing staggered arrival and departure times, such as giving attendees arrival slots, timed entry/tickets;
- Using screens and barriers to separate people;
- Using back-to-back or side-to-side area set-ups to avoid face-to-face contact;
- Programming of entertainment/activities to prevent a mass gathering, such as staggering performance times, so not all attendees are in one area at the same time. Programming shorter, more frequent performances could also reduce the risk of a large crowd gathering;
- The show stop/show pause procedure and all emergency procedures should reflect COVID-19 specific crowd management requirements.

## 2.a. Security and Stewarding

### Bag and security searches:

- If you require bag searches, carefully consider how this can be implemented with the safety of your staff and attendees in mind. *For example*, placing a bag on a table and having the attendee step away, allowing security to inspect the bag.
- Gloves are not recommended for bag searching, it is more effective to regularly sanitise hands between each search.

### Uncontrolled crowds:

- Stewarding plans should include measures to prevent an uncontrolled crowd forming and to disperse a crowd.
- Plans should also address the area immediately outside your site, as passers-by may stop to view your event, causing a gathering. This should be complemented by barrier plans, blocks to sight lines (e.g. Heras fencing with “scrim”), and the show stop procedure.

### Spectators in the vicinity:

- The attendees within your event space can be managed and communicated with. However, if your event activity is visible from outside of your event space, there may be a risk that people outside of your area of control could gather and form a crowd.
- Consider how you can block sight lines into your event, or how you might move people along from viewing outside your site.

### Increased staffing levels:

- Staff involved in managing your crowd will need to be sufficient in number to do so effectively, meaning you may require more than in a previous iteration of the event.

## 3. Event Capacity

When calculating your capacity, relevant social distancing should be taken into account, relating to specific areas of the event site and the activity within it. *For example*, people per square metre will differ in an area designed for a queue, as opposed to a seated viewing area.

Depending on the event, different event areas could be:

- Seated viewing area;
- Standing viewing areas;
- Queues for concessions;
- Entrances and exits;
- Circulation areas including one-way systems to reduce cross-flow.

Consider any additional impacts to security measures from changes to the size of the event footprint due to COVID-19 measures. While your calculated capacity might be less, your event footprint might expand to accommodate social distancing, longer barrier lines, and additional security.

Check that you have enough space and are not impacting on neighbouring organisations, or regular paths for pedestrians, which you may not have accounted for. You may also need to confirm that you have the appropriate licensing permissions for the space required.

#### **4. Large Gatherings and Mass Events**

Organisers should take additional steps to ensure that they prevent large gatherings or mass events taking place outside of the planned activity. These steps should be reflected in the Event Management Plan.

If there is a risk that a large gathering could take place as a result of the event, the activity should be revised to mitigate that risk.

Mitigations should include and address:

##### **Crowd Management:**

- Stewarding plans should include measures to prevent an uncontrolled crowd forming and to disperse a crowd.
- The deployment of a show stop procedure could also be considered.

##### **Barrier Plans:**

- Crowd Management plans should be complemented by barrier plans and blocks to sight lines.
- *For example*, your event may include a performance with a high-profile artist, which passing pedestrians may try to view. In this instance, you should manage your footprint to ensure there is no view of the artist from outside the event area and deploy stewards to outside the perimeter to monitor any gatherings that build up.

##### **Communication Plans:**

- See section 5 below.

#### **5. Communication and Signage**

##### **Communication Plans:**

This should cover pre-event messaging aimed at attendees and the general public, as well as information given on-street during the activity.

The public messaging and advertising methods you deploy are crucial to helping manage expectations. *For example*, letting your attendees know that they have to pre-book for an activity and cannot just show up on the day.

The level and tone of these communications should be appropriate for the type of event and audience profile. Your attendees will also need to know what measures are in place and what you need them to do – i.e. wear a face covering.

Your plans should consider whether you need to deter non-ticket holders from attending and how you will ensure that a large gathering does not take place as in section 4.

For major events we can support this messaging on the Westminster website.



### **Signage:**

A COVID-19 specific signage plan should be created to support your crowd management and social distancing measures, such as indicating 1-way systems, areas of no entry, closed areas, and reinforcing other event requirements – i.e. social distancing, face coverings, travel arrangements, health messages, etc. Public health declaration, information and reassurance should also be included as per the guidance (link provided on page 14).

Upon entry to your event, your signage should include:

- That no one is to enter your event if they have symptoms of COVID-19 and include a reminder of the symptoms. This should reflect the current Government guidance;
- A health disclaimer that by entering the event your attendees confirm they do not have COVID-19 symptoms. This should reflect the current Government guidance;
- Advice on limiting the spread of germs, such as 'Catch It, Bin It, Kill It', or 'Hands, Face, Space' signage;
- Reminder to maintain social distancing.

## **6. Hygiene and Cleaning Practices**

Ideally handwashing will be achieved with water and soap, though the sole use of hand sanitiser points can be considered.

Your event should provide hand sanitiser for attendees and for staff, and this should be located at planned and appropriate locations in your event site, such as upon entry or when exiting a toilet area.

There are a range of products and stands available, so consider what works best within your event site, including how visible they are and how you can reduce touch points.

Areas to consider locating hand sanitiser:

- Every entrance/exit point;
- All touch points – i.e. bar, catering and toilets;
- In areas where processes take place, such as bag search or ticket checks. Hands should be sanitised prior to a process taking place and again afterwards;
- Toilet areas – see section 8.

The level and frequency of cleaning individual areas of your event site should be appropriate for the activity and public contact within it.

*For example*, if your attendees or staff need to use a door handle to enter an area, this handle will need to be cleaned regularly.

Further information can be found in the Government guidance on 'Decontamination in Non-Healthcare Settings' (link on page 14).

Where high-contact touch points cannot be avoided, such as a contactless card reader at a concession, these items should have an increased cleaning regime.

Contact areas to consider:

- Temporary use items – i.e. headphones for a silent disco will need to be cleaned between each use;
- Seating areas – seats and tables should be cleaned after a group leaves, ready for the next use;
- High contact touch points – reducing the number of high-contact touch points, such as door handles, is an option to address this additional cleaning requirement. (N.B. Do not compromise fire safety compartmentation);
- Medical areas – ensure you understand any cleaning regimes and requirements from your medical provider;

The disposal of waste is also a cleaning matter, so review these plans to ensure they are appropriate. Waste disposal is also included in the Government guidance on 'Decontamination in Non-Healthcare Settings' (link on page 14).

You might also wish to reassure your attendees of the level of cleaning you are undertaking with signage or in pre-event communications.

## **7. Food and Non-Food Concessions**

If food and/or non-food concessions are part of the event, then social distancing will apply to this activity.

These concession areas will need additional measures to manage how people queue and view items, protect staff working and minimise contact points, such as by using cashless payment methods.

Concessions are also required to adhere to the following:

- Food concession staff are to wash their hands regularly with water and soap. Non-food concession staff would require hand-sanitiser to be used regularly, at a minimum;
- Where possible, encourage contactless payments to reduce the spread of infection;
- There should be no touching of the commodities by shoppers;
- Remove/reduce any self-service aspects – i.e. cutlery and condiments;
- All concessions to keep their stall clean and sanitise on a regular basis;
- All concession workers to ensure customers are queuing 2m apart. This can be enforced using markers, so people know where to queue;
- All concession workers with symptoms (as outlined by the Government) should cease trading immediately, in order to reduce the risk of infecting others. The concession should then follow the notification procedure to the event organiser.

## **8. Toilets**

Management of any toilets within the event area, including those for staff, will need detailed planning, which is covered extensively in both the Government guidance on 'Performing Arts' and the Event Industry Forum guidance on 'Keeping Workers and Audiences safe during COVID-19 in the Outdoor Event Industry' (links on page 14).

Key areas to consider include:

- The number of toilet units required. For example, a larger number of toilets may be needed, even with a reduced capacity, in order to reduce queues and facilitate additional cleaning;
- Distance between toilet units;
- How people are managed in and out of the area – i.e. with stewards, signage, and/or barriers;
- How people are managed within a toilet block area;
- Reducing people waiting outside a toilet block area for friends or family;
- Queuing systems;
- Space for queuing and overall toilet block footprint;
- Disabled toilet provision;
- Hand-sanitising points;
- What handwashing facilities are available;
- Cleaning and maintenance of any event toilets – i.e. how frequently will they be cleaned? How will public be managed around any units that are closed for cleaning?

## 9. PPE and Face Coverings

PPE (personal protective equipment) can refer to a range of requirements and preferences, so it is important to ensure you understand what level of PPE is appropriate and necessary for the job or role.

PPE protects the user against health or safety risks at work. Where you are already using PPE in your work activity to protect against non-COVID-19 risks, you should continue to do so.

### General (public and staff):

- **Face coverings:** A face covering is something that safely covers the nose and mouth. They are intended to protect others, not the wearer, against the spread of infection. There is currently no national guidance about wearing a face covering at outdoor venues, but it is encouraged that they are worn when social distancing of **2m** will be difficult to maintain.
- **Distance:** As above, attendees and staff should wear these when within **2m** of another person and there is no other mitigation in place, such as a plastic screen. Additional mitigation is not required in areas where 2m distance is achievable between staff and attendees.
- **Communication and signage:** If you require your attendees to wear face coverings, consider how you will communicate this to them, and any additional measures you will take should an attendee arrive without a face covering. If you require your staff to wear a face covering, ensure they are aware of what they need to prepare in advance of arrival and consider providing face coverings for staff.

### Staff:

COVID-19 is a different risk to other workplace risks requiring PPE. It needs to be managed through social distancing, hygiene, fixed teams or partnering, and not solely through the use of PPE. The exception is in a clinical setting, such as for a first aider, for which there is extensive guidance that your first aid provider should be familiar with.

- **Face shields:** There is currently not enough evidence to support the effectiveness of face shields for infection control. Therefore, face shields are not recommended as a substitute for face coverings.
- **Face masks with valves:** These allow expelled air out of the mask and do not prevent the mask wearer from potentially transmitting infection to others.
- **Gloves:** Gloves have limited benefit, because cross-contamination is still a risk. The regular use of hand sanitiser, as detailed in section 6, is recommended.

## 10. Medical Provision

The medical provision (first aid) at your event should be informed by your event's medical risk assessment.

It is best practice to appoint a good and competent provider, who has completed their own COVID-19 risk assessment in order to inform their medical provision and resourcing.

It is worth noting that a lower capacity for your event may not result in a reduction of medical personnel, as additional measures need to be taken into account.

Your medical provider should have specific plans in place with regards to:

- PPE – including enough stock of appropriate equipment, in line with their risk assessment for all medical personnel;
- Cleaning equipment and vehicles;
- Disposal of clinical waste;
- Hand washing.

If your event has zones where there is no contact between those circulating in each area, then a separate medical provision for each zone will need to be in place – i.e. front of house and back of house areas.

Consider creating an isolation/quarantine point, close to the entrance or exit, where anyone found to be unwell or at risk can be taken. If an isolation area is to be provided for patients by the medical provider, they should be able to offer a split facility or a separate area, which is appropriate to the site plan.

Steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19 should be actively taken by the organiser. Temperature checks upon entry to the event have limited benefit. Consider sending health questionnaires to your attendees in advance, if this is available to you. Otherwise, consider your signage plans upon entry to ensure that attendees are aware they should not attend if they have COVID-19 symptoms.

## 11. Contact Tracing

It is mandatory ([Government guidance on Test and Trace](#)) to have a system in place to collect contact tracing data for your staff and volunteers and retain it for 21 days. For certain businesses, this will be required for attendees also.

Collecting this data is a requirement when a crowd is expected to be **static for more than 15 minutes**.

As an organiser you should familiarise yourself with your responsibilities to *NHS Test and Trace* (links on page 14). A process for the reporting of illness amongst staff and

contractors should also be within your staff briefing, so that all are aware of what to do if a worker reports having COVID-19 symptoms.

As a minimum, if a crowd is expected to be static for more than 15 minutes at your event, you will be required to implement an appropriate system. You should consider how best to collect this data within your event set up.

*For example*, operating a ticketing or booking system may provide a simple way to capture this data in advance of the event taking place.

You are required to create a Government Test and Trace QR Code and display this prominently at the entrances to your site, as an alternative to attendees providing their contact details to you directly. This should be provided in addition to your own measures, such as a ticketing system or database.

There are resources available on the Government website, including how to generate your own Test and Trace QR code (resources and links on page 14).

All data should be stored in accordance with GDPR.

## **12. Contingency Plans**

UK Government guidance may change during planning. As such, the event plan should include contingencies, areas of adaptability and adequate timescales, as well as communications plans for any changes/cancellations.

You should consider any financial risk and insurance ramifications to your event, which may be affected by changes to London or local restrictions, changes in Government guidance, or legislative changes – i.e. increased restrictions or a local lockdown.

## **Timescales**

Our timescales for event planning, including operational deadlines for parking suspensions, temporary traffic orders, street trading licences, etc., remain as publicised online.

We request that additional planning time is scheduled in order to safely plan for COVID-19 measures. We require this time to ensure that we are adequately reviewing your documentation, including liaising internally with Westminster's Public Health team, in order to ensure your plans are sufficient for a safe event.

## **Resources**

If there is government or industry guidance to address a specific activity that is due to take place within the event footprint, such as food stalls, funfair rides or performances, then the guidance in place for the 'fixed facility' version of the activity can also be applied to a temporary event.

**Always check you are following the current guidance.**

The following is not an exhaustive list of resources, but will signpost you to key pieces of government and industry guidance relating to the events industry:

### **Guidance:**

- 1 [UK Government Guidance Working Safely During Coronavirus – Performing Arts](#)
- 2 [Event Industry Forum Guidance – Keeping Workers and Audiences safe during COVID-19 in the Outdoor Event Industry in England](#)
- 3 [The Purple Guide – Music Festivals COVID-19 Supplementary Guidance](#)
- 4 [GLA Guidance for events during COVID-19 Events Checklist](#)
- 5 [Food Standards Agency guidance for food businesses](#)
- 6 [Westminster City Council Queuing Guidance for businesses](#)
- 7 [Showmen's Guild COVID-19 Guidance and Risk Assessment for Funfairs](#)
- 8 [Government Guidance on construction work including CDM](#)
- 9 [Government Guidance on visitor economy](#)
- 10 [Government Guidance on decontamination in non-healthcare settings](#)
- 11 [Government Guidance on face coverings](#)
- 12 [Government Guidance on current area alert level](#)

### **Test and Trace:**

- 13 [Maintaining records of staff, customers and visitors to support NHS Test and Trace](#)
- 14 [NHS Test and Trace: How it works](#)
- 15 [Create a coronavirus NHS QR code for your venue](#)
- 16 [COVID-19 early outbreak management action cards](#)

### **Templates and Resources:**

- 17 [HSE COVID-19 Risk assessment template](#)
- 18 COVID-19 Signage
  - a. [UK Government](#)
  - b. [Westminster City Council Signage Toolkit for businesses](#)