



Guidance for Queue Management with Social Distancing



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1. Overview

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 guidance released up to the 28 May 2020.

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. Where Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) are in existence, they are encouraged to take the lead in ensuring effective collaboration.

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. This document is not exhaustive and focuses on key considerations for external queuing systems and social distancing. It does not cover internal queuing measures required within premises.

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. A queue management plan and full risk assessment of all elements should be undertaken.

Capacity

- Firstly, 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.

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.

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 the Business Improvement District (BID) or, where not in existence, 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' below).
- 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.
- Where appropriate, consideration should be given as to whether it is possible to successfully operate external tables and chairs (whether licensed or on private forecourts) and a queue simultaneously. Similar consideration should be given to forecourt trading.
- 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. Also 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. Footway markings should be no more than 40sq cm in area.

- 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. Any such requests should be emailed to movementstrategy@westminster.gov.uk for consideration.

5. How to manage a queue

- 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 closing.

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 stewards 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 seasonal heat will affect people's behaviour.

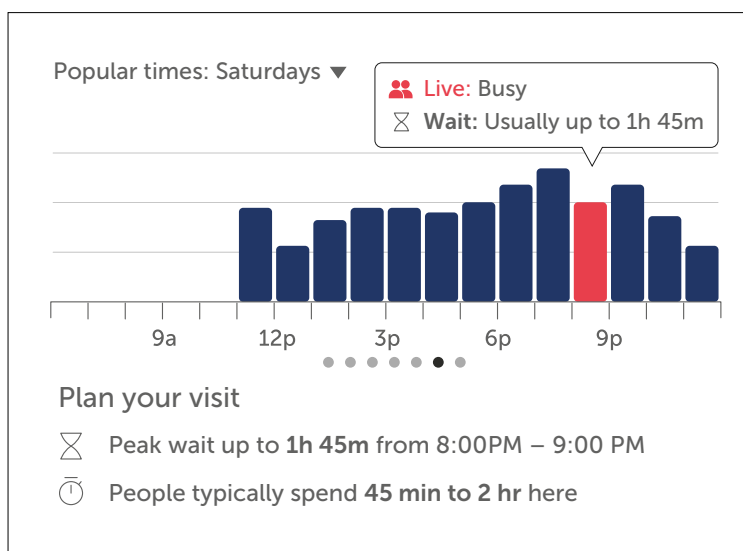
Recommendations

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.
- Monitor for begging and take action to ensure this behaviour does not establish itself. If a problem persists or person becomes aggressive, call 999. 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.
- Keep an eye out for individuals loitering nearby or other suspicious activity.

7. Technology

- Use existing digital communication methods to update customers on new opening procedures.
- Could 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. Further support

The City Council is looking to work up some practical examples over the coming weeks that may support your plans going forward. These will be shared as they become available.

10. Contact us

Should you have any queries, please contact us on: **movementstrategy@westminster.gov.uk**

If you have any queries regarding business crime reduction, please contact: **businesscrime.mailbox@met.pnn.police.uk**

11. Further reading

Government Guidance

The UK COVID-19 Recovery Strategy: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/our-plan-to-rebuild-the-uk-governments-covid-19-recovery-strategy>

Shops and Branches – Working Safely During Coronavirus: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/shops-and-branches>

Guidance for Employers and Businesses: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/guidance-for-employers-and-businesses-on-coronavirus-covid-19>

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

Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure

CPNI Advice Note – Protecting pedestrian queues from Vehicle As a Weapon Attack: <https://www.cpni.gov.uk/system/files/documents/9f/8f/CPNI%20and%20NaCTSO%20Advice%20Note%20-%20Protecting%20pedestrian%20queues%20from%20Vehicle%20As%20a%20Weapon%20Attack%2014%20May%202020.pdf>

Highways Guidance

Safety at Street Works and Road Works – A Code of Practice: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/321056/safety-at-streetworks.pdf

The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016: <https://tsrgd.co.uk/pdf/tsrgd/tsrgd2016.pdf>

Chapter 8 of the Traffic Signs Manual: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/203669/traffic-signs-manual-chapter-08-part-01.pdf

Other

The Purple Guide: <https://www.thepurpleguide.co.uk>

Health and Safety Executive Coronavirus: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/working-safely-during-coronavirus-outbreak.htm>

Social Distancing Website information: <https://www.socialdistancingplanner.com>

12. Resources

You may wish to consider approaching companies to assist in formulating your plans. We are aware of the following companies that are assisting businesses (this list is not exhaustive):

Stewarding and Security

- McKenzie Arnold Group
- SFM Security Consultants
- Show and Event (SES Group)
- Showsec

Site Plan Design

- OnePlan Events

Disclaimer: The City Council is not recommending or advising that you have to use these companies, but we are aware that they are offering support should you feel you need.



City of Westminster