



## Holding in-person events for Doors Open Days 2021

This document contains our top tips to help your venue hold safe in-person events during ongoing COVID-19 restrictions. At the end of the document we have compiled some relevant industry guidance. As always, we are here to help! If you have any questions about holding in-person events, please email [dod@scottishcivictrust.org.uk](mailto:dod@scottishcivictrust.org.uk).

**Please note:** This is a live document that we will be updating as restrictions change, it was last updated on **18/06/2021**. This is also a collaborative document- if you have any advice to add or comments to share, please contact the email above.

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## 1. Reassure Your Visitors

### 1.1. Show Your Visitors What Precautions You Have Taken

For some visitors, Doors Open Days 2021 may be their first in-person visit to an historical site/museum/gallery since the pandemic began. The easing of restrictions can be accompanied by feelings of both excitement and uncertainty. Communicating what precautions you have taken will reassure visitors that they will be safe in your venue. Updating your website, social media and signage to reflect your new COVID-19 procedures will let visitors know what to expect and will allow them to prepare for their visit with you.

**Example:** The [Gairloch Museum](#) has produced an excellent video highlighting the new procedures they have introduced to keep their visitors safe. It explains their one way system, booking procedures and sanitising stations.

### 1.2. Set Clear Expectations For Your Visitors

Rules for visitors have now expanded beyond 'Please don't touch the exhibits' and 'No flash photography'! Visitors will be expected to adhere to a number of new rules, such as wearing a mask when indoors and maintaining a 2m distance from other visitors.

To avoid any surprises or uncomfortable conversations, let your visitors know what your expectations are. Make sure the guidance/new rules are listed on your website and social media. During their visit you can remind visitors of your rules placing signage throughout the venue, giving tannoy announcements and having staff and volunteers prompt them.

**Example:** Why not get creative and communicate your rules using objects from your collection? The MERL used [this 'absolute unit' of a sheep](#) to reinforce their social distancing standards. Maybe there is something from your collection that could fulfill

the same purpose, or you could put a mask on one of your objects/paintings like the [Fitzwilliam Museum](#).

### 1.3. Show Your Visitors You Are 'Good To Go'

Provide more reassurance to your visitors by completing your 'We're Good To Go' application. This scheme was developed by VisitScotland, in collaboration with VisitEngland, VisitWales and Tourism Northern Ireland and is a UK wide industry standard/consumer mark.

Fulfilling the 'We're Good To Go' standard demonstrates to visitors that you are adhering to the relevant government and public health guidance and have carried out a COVID-19 risk assessment. Completing this risk assessment will prove you have the required protocols and processes in place to keep visitors safe.

The application takes around 20 minutes to complete and is completely free. [Show your visitors 'We're Good To Go' by filling out this application.](#)

## 2. Managing Capacity

### 2.1. Calculate Your New Capacity

Determine the new maximum capacity of your venue under COVID-19 restrictions using a [COVID-19 capacity calculator](#). Placing a member of staff/volunteer at your entrance with a counter will help you keep track of how many people are in the building at any one time. You can also monitor numbers through a booking system.

### 2.2. Implement A Queuing System

It is sometimes difficult to predict how many people will visit your venue at any one time. In the event a large volume of visitors appear at one time, an outdoor queuing system can be a simple yet effective solution to manage the flow of visitors.

Ensure visitors adhere to social distancing by placing stickers or cones on the ground at regular 2 metre intervals along the queue. Place a staff member or volunteer at the queue so they can monitor its progress and check in with visitors.

Being in a queue, especially a slow/long one, can get a little boring! Why not keep your visitors engaged with a mini talk or activity sheet while they wait? This can be a great opportunity to engage visitors before their visit and get them excited for what they are about to see.

### 2.3. Have Visitors Book in Advance

Allowing visitors to pre-book can also help to control visitor numbers. If your venue does not have an internal booking system, you could use [Eventbrite](#).

Eventbrite is free to use and you can set up as many events as you want. We recommend that you split your days into smaller timed booking slots and make an event listing for each slot. This will allow you to accurately forecast your visitor numbers on the day.

[Here is a guide on how you can set up your own Eventbrite listing.](#)

If you want to have some flexibility to allow walk-in visitors, you can limit how many tickets are available per time slot on Eventbrite.

#### 2.4. Implement A One Way System

If your venue is small, or has narrow corridors, you may be concerned about holding an in person event while maintaining social distancing. A one way system can help avoid a dense build up of visitors in one area. Take a tour of your building and identify any pinch points or bottlenecks where you predict people will gather. You may decide to keep certain areas closed as they are too confined to maintain social distancing. You can indicate a one way system using arrows on posters or stickers on the floor.

### 3. Enhance Your Hygiene Protocols

It is important to position hand sanitising stations in high risk areas, such as; entrances/exits, toilets, interactive devices, object handling stations etc. Enhanced cleaning should also be implemented in these frequent touch point areas.

### 4. Reassure Your Staff/Volunteers

Reassuring your staff/volunteers is just as important as reassuring your visitors. Keep your staff/volunteers in the loop about all of your COVID-19 precautions, and offer them opportunities to ask questions and communicate their concerns with you. Ensure everyone is aware of the appropriate procedures and make sure they have received the necessary training/instructions. It is essential that your staff/volunteers are comfortable with the procedures so they can inspire confidence in your visitors and accurately convey important information.

Staff should be provided with the appropriate PPE and supplied with the necessary additional sanitisation materials to fulfil their roles. Protective screens at till points/receptions/service desks can make your staff feel more comfortable and safe within the workplace.

Not all visitors will be willing to comply with your COVID-19 precautions. If a visitor is putting staff/volunteers and other visitors at risk, the situation should be escalated to enforcement agencies and staff should disengage.

## 5. Re-engage your volunteers

Ongoing COVID-19 restrictions have limited the role of volunteers in heritage sites/museums/galleries and many volunteers have not been on site since lockdown began. Due to other pressing issues, you may not have even spoken to your volunteer team since the pandemic began. A great first step would be sending an email or giving your volunteers a call to see how they have been in the past year. From there you can get an idea of if they would be comfortable coming on-site or learn about any reservations they may have.

If you want to welcome back volunteers but do not know where to start, you should consult Historic Environment Scotland's re-induction checklist which can be downloaded from their [Minimum Operating Standards for Property Management and Visitor Operations](#) document. Make Your Mark have also compiled a [helpful list of resources](#) to help organisations welcome back volunteers after COVID-19.

## 6. Use your space creatively

### 6.1. Make Use of Outdoor Spaces

If you have access to an outdoor space, such as a courtyard or garden, you may want to utilise this space for your in-person event. Lots of events that you might typically hold indoors can be moved outside, such as talks, object handling sessions or arts and crafts activities.

### 6.2 Offer Self Guided Experiences

If you want to limit interaction between staff and visitors, a self guided tour or activity may be more suitable. A tour of your gardens or outdoor space can be made more engaging with a wee challenge or game.

**Example:** This scavenger hunt from the [National Botanic Gardens](#) in Dublin focuses on nature, but your scavenger hunt could focus on the unique architectural details of your building's facade or you could hide replica objects from your collection amongst the flowers.

### 6.3. Partner with other local venues

If your venue does not have any outdoor space, why not link up with other local venues to make a heritage walking trail! You could even station a member of staff at each location to give a talk or create a treasure hunt to make the experience more interactive.

**Example:** Last year, [Wick Museum](#) organised a self-guided [Heritage Walking Trail](#) that took visitors to 19 locations! Collaborative walking trails that take in multiple venues are a great way to strengthen existing relationships and foster new community during the pandemic.

## 7. Follow Government Guidance and Industry Standards

Below we have compiled a list of useful resources that we recommend you consult as you plan your in-person events for Doors Open Days 2021.

### 7.1. Scottish Government

As the pandemic unfolds and restrictions begin to ease, it is important to regularly consult the Government's guidance. Their guidance for [museums, galleries and heritage attractions](#) is comprehensive and covers; risk assessment, operations, staffing, training etc.

Their [operations checklist](#) is particularly useful and maps out all the necessary steps you should be taking when reopening your venue.

### 7.2. Test and Protect

As part of the national Test and Protect scheme museums, galleries and heritage sites will be expected to gather visitor information. [Learn more about how to comply with the Test and Protect scheme.](#)

### 7.3. Historic Environment Scotland (HES)

HES have developed an extensive document outlining the [Minimum Operating Standards for Property Management and Visitor Operations](#). Although this document was developed specifically for HES venues, the guidance can easily be transferred to your own venue and be used as an example of good practice.

### 7.4. Go Industrial

If you have yet to open your venue, you can take advantage of the [checklists and templates](#) Go Industrial have published. They have a reopening action plan, a template for risk assessment and a checklist for reopening.