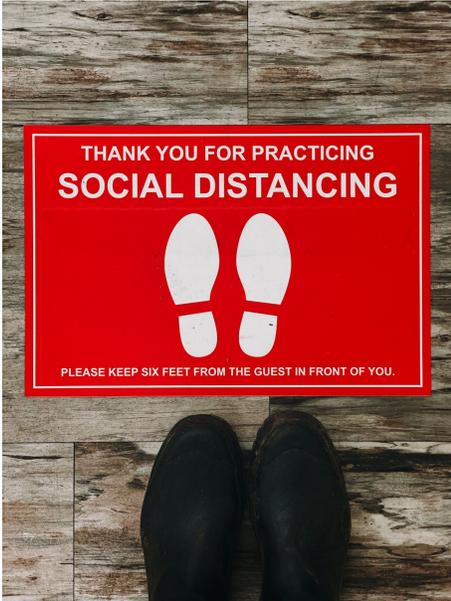


# Re-opening venues for indoor activities

July 2020

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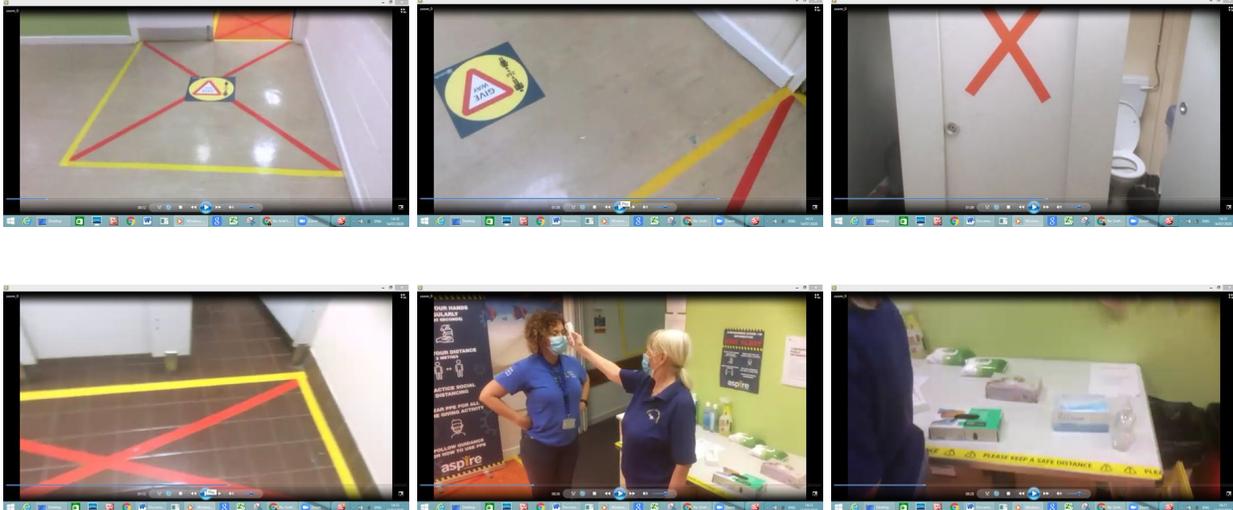
This short report is based on the experiences of staff in 10 different organisations, all of which are delivering Time to Shine projects. The majority have not yet re-opened their indoor activities - they rent space from external venues, don't have premises suitable for social distancing or operate from a narrowboat - but all are planning to do so whilst following the government's [COVID-19: Guidance for the safe use of multi-purpose community facilities](#). Armley Helping Hands is a community hub and staff have already made significant changes to ensure the safety of everyone who uses their building.

## **Concerns from partners about re-opening venues and re-starting indoor activities:**

- Understanding the current requirements and adapting as the requirements change.
  - Logistics of using the space, particularly entrances and other small or narrow areas.
  - Increased costs (room hire, sessional workers, equipment, insurance) which haven't been budgeted for. Fewer participants means fewer contributions to cover costs.
  - Making sure that participants feel confident, willing and able to return to the venue.
  - Handling situations in which people don't, won't or can't follow the new rules.
  - Transporting people safely to the venue if public or private transport isn't available.
  - Having adequate staff and volunteer resources at the venue to provide additional support for people living with dementia, older people with learning disabilities, or people whose mental or physical health has deteriorated significantly during lockdown.
  - Having the space to provide socially-distant meals whilst people aren't wearing masks.
  - Creating opportunities for informal socialising as people can't congregate in the kitchen.
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## Learning from Armley Helping Hands:



- A red cross on the floor indicates a 'no waiting' zone; yellow boxes show social distance.
- Only two toilets can be used, all other toilet cubicles are locked.
- Digital thermometers are used and temperature is recorded before a person enters.
- Contact details are taken for a 'track and trace' system in case a member becomes ill.
- Masks are provided free to staff and participants and hand sanitiser is freely available.
- Some minibus seats have been removed and people spend less time on the minibus.
- Signage is clear, easy to read and information is communicated regularly, particularly about the new rules and enhanced cleaning regime for the venue and minibuses.

## Ideas from other organisations to supplement the government guidance:

- Complete a risk assessment whilst bearing in mind that there may be contraindications as, for example, wedging a door open reduces the risk of virus transmission on door handles but increases the risk of a fire spreading.
- Invite people in to test run the new safety measures as they explore the building.
- Require people to use hand sanitiser as they enter a bathroom, close the toilet lid before flushing and wash their hands before they exit the bathroom.
- Use indoor and outdoor spaces at the venue, if possible
- Ask people to bring their own refreshments or use disposable cups.

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- Easy-read signs and instructions are good practice generally and vital for people with learning disabilities, people living with dementia, people with low levels of literacy or people for whom English is a second language.
  - Create two 30 minute sessions instead of a one hour session to limit face-to-face contact time, reduce group sizes and enable two groups to take part.
  - Include chair-based participation in exercise sessions to help people regain their fitness.
  - Produce an information pack for staff, volunteers and sessional workers so that they have the same brief and can work together to ensure that everyone follows the rules.
  - Make phone calls to participants to explain the new requirements before they arrive.
  - Create a short film to show the changes at your venue and how you'll keep people safe.
  - Produce a document to sign to show that the changes have been explained clearly, all questions have been answered and there is agreement to follow the rules at the venue.
  - Provide a variety of masks for staff and volunteers to use depending on the situation, for example see-through visors for people who need to lip-read, reusable cloth masks, disposable masks, surgical-grade masks for people who are clinically vulnerable.
  - Consider how to prioritise who takes part in indoor activities based on, for example, need, geographical location, existing friendship groups, existing support bubbles.
  - Check insurance cover relating to Covid-19 for your venue, activities and transport.

### **What are partners learning that can enable the longer-term recovery of our communities?**

- We're all in this together: sharing information, risk assessment forms, sample documents, supplier details and resources helps organisations to adapt more easily.
- Small community groups which involve Time to Shine participants also need our help.
- The majority of Time to Shine projects use external venues for activities so it's important to collaborate with the provider and understand the specific rules for each venue.
- Creating 'bubbles' for participants and staff may reduce the spread of Covid-19.
- Information about the new requirements needs to be clear and regularly repeated. **Bee Together** has produced [a very useful booklet on how to include accessible information](#).

