

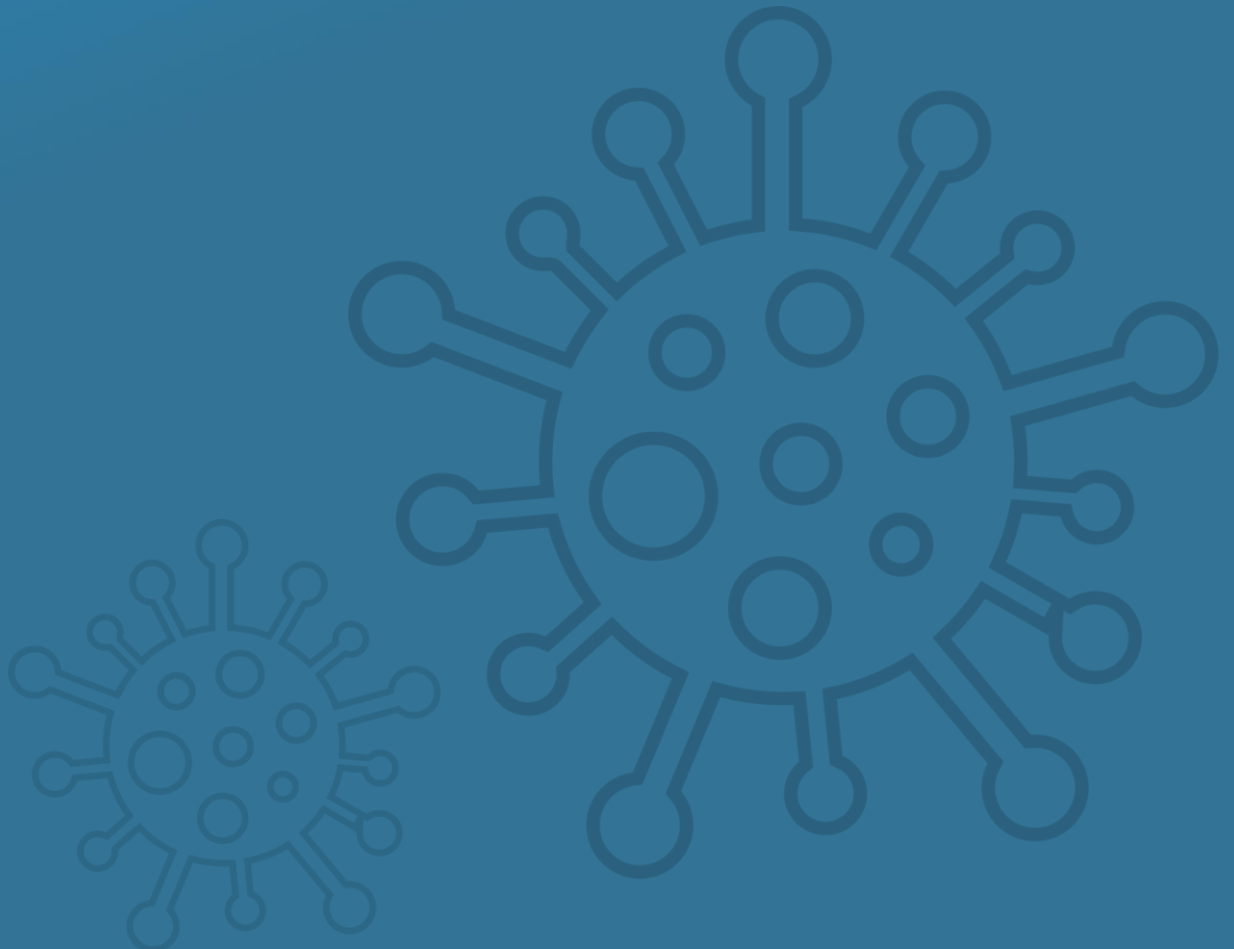


Fáilte Ireland

National Tourism Development Authority

COMMUNICATING YOUR RETURN TO BUSINESS

Restaurants, Cafés, Bars and Gastropubs





Communicating Your Return to Business

Having explored and put into place HSE Covid-19 Operating Guidelines, the next step is how to effectively communicate with your customers and dispel fears about visiting your business.

Restaurants, cafés, bars and gastropubs need to clearly communicate

- Their opening hours
- Their menus
- The Covid-19 measures that are now in place

When communicating with customers, particularly those who may not have heard from you in some time, it's important that you do so in a way that's empathic as well as encouraging and genuine.

While reimagining your service - either sit-in or takeaway - restaurants, cafés, bars and gastropubs should not go too heavy on price point deals in this initial period.

Customers need to feel their safety, security and needs are the priority of the business.

Restaurants, cafés, bars and gastropubs offer a unique service and experience that will have been sorely missed by your customers.

The human connection that happens within the business, both between people dining/drinking together, and with employees and servers, is one that has been acutely missed by many people.

A human approach to your communications is a heartfelt way to acknowledge this and to show that, while customers have been missing their favourite venues, the employees and owners have been missing them too.

Regular, frequent communication with customers is key to set their minds at ease and encourage their return to you.

The style of the communication needs to be both personal and reassuring.

Reopening Announcement

- The tone and content of the reopening announcement should be positive, encouraging, personal and reassuring.
- It should include the date from when you will reopen and available for customer orders or bookings. Initial opening hours should be stated along with a note to ask customers to check back regularly for updates on opening hours and changes to menus.
- State that your business is compliant fully with HSE Covid-19 Operating Guidelines and what customers can expect when they visit.
- Describe how customers can order or buy i.e. through online ordering only, telephone bookings etc.

Reopening Announcement Example:

"We are delighted to reopen for business at 6pm on Tuesday 30th June. The world has changed since we last welcomed you to Le Petit Bistro. We have been missing our brilliant team and we have missed meeting and serving our wonderful customers.

We will open 3 days a week from 4pm until last orders at 9pm. These hours may change as things evolve, so please check our social media pages for updates. Booking slots are available now to pre-book through our website (insert a link to your website here).

While we have kept the menu in the unique style of Le Petit Bistro there will be some changes; our menus may change weekly or even daily.

Our highest priority is your safety. We have health and safety systems in place to ensure your comfort and security. Please help us by following the physical and social distancing and best practice measures we have carefully put in place. Physical and social distancing, sanitation units on entry, contactless payments, as well as strict cleaning processes of tables and chairs after each customer, are among some of what you can expect. Our employees and suppliers are adhering to strict guidelines and we carefully monitor the health of our team. For more details on our Covid-19 operational systems in place please see our website.

Thank you in advance for working with us to ensure your safety and that of our team. We can't wait to welcome you back to Le Petit Bistro and we are very much looking forward to serving you again."

Steps to Communicating Your Reopening

Developing a **communications plan** pre-reopening will help control the flow of information and assist with the smooth and successful reopening of your business.

While some businesses would have relied heavily on passing trade as the main source of communicating with customers by means of shop front signage, in Covid-19 times customers will be more likely to search online for information in order to inform themselves in advance and will have made a conscious decision of where they will visit before leaving their homes so a proactive marketing approach is crucial.

Here is a checklist to assist in making sure you have all bases covered:

	Actions	Who will do it	When it will be done
1.	Share your plans to reopen on your social media channels.		
2.	<p>Add a dedicated page to your website where you can direct people to read more about the Covid-19 safety processes that are in place when you reopen.</p> <p>Main areas to cover are:</p> <p>Customers - what measures in place for customers visiting your premises.</p> <p>Employees - detail the measures that are in place for employee welfare, employee hygiene and PPE equipment in use by employees.</p> <p>Suppliers - what measures are in place to ensure suppliers are adhering to safety standards, for example how deliveries are received.</p> <p>Other - other measures that have been implemented or are a daily practice place i.e. cleaning and sanitisation.</p>		



Reopening Checklist (cont.)

Actions		Who will do it	When it will be done
3.	Post a Reopening Announcement on your website and social media channels.		
4.	Record a video walking your customer through your new set-up so customers are aware of what to expect when they arrive on the premises.		
5.	Add a sign to your windows / door to tell customers you are open and how to book.		
6.	Change your voicemail message to let people know when you are due to reopen and that they can reserve a table through your website.		
7.	Update your Google Business listing and other profiles with new opening hours.		
8.	Refresh the bios on your social media sites to ensure the information is still relevant and correct.		
9.	Make sure the images on your website and on your future social media posts are an accurate reflection of your current service offering.		
10.	Create Instagram and Facebook Stories in advance of reopening to showcase what measures you are putting in place and how you are preparing for reopening.		
11.	Reinforce the measures you are taking through recording videos showcasing procedures i.e. supplier and deliveries processes, employee hygiene practice.		
12.	Create a direct email, in line with GDPR, to customers who have visited you in the past to announce the reopening, your new menus, your opening hours and the safety and physical distancing measures in place.		

Reopening Checklist (cont.)

Actions		Who will do it	When it will be done
13.	On booking confirmation emails or on telephone confirmations, tell customers about the measures in place once they arrive at the venue.		
14.	Send a booking reminder 24 hours in advance of booking, or on the day of booking, reminding customers again what measures they will need to follow when arriving at the business.		
15.	Create daily social media posts to relay the new offering with imagery.		
16.	Remind customers that purchasing a gift voucher makes a thoughtful gift and can be used now or in the future.		
17.	Engage with your customer reviews and comments online. Show you care by replying to customers comments and feedback. Building loyalty and showing you are responsive and thereby responsible is important to re-enforce security and trust.		

For further advice on communications, see [Managing Your Communications \(Online & Offline\) through the Covid-19 Crisis](#)

