



NABMA
the voice of markets

FIGHTING FOR THE FUTURE OF MARKETS

GUIDE FOR MARKET HALLS & SOCIAL DISTANCING

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MAIN GOVERNMENT ADVICE
[gov.uk/coronavirus](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus)

NHS INFORMATION
[nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/)



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INTRODUCTION

The future of many markets, and that of thousands of small businesses, are being placed at risk as the government and scientists fight against the destructive impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

At the date of this publication, only 15% of the 1,120 traditional markets in the UK were understood to be still operating with the vast majority being closed since 23 March. The markets still trading, primarily for food, were experiencing an approximate 80% drop in daily footfall. Over 90% of markets were operating without charging trader rents, or had suspended all rental payments.

The markets that continue to trade with food and essential goods have demonstrated strong partnerships between operator, traders and customers with some wonderful examples of innovation and success on our [website](#).

Good practice can be found with markets turning to click and collect, delivery services and online sales. Underpinning the continuation of trading has been the strict compliance with social distancing.



WE ARE STRONGER THAN EVER!

As thoughts look towards when markets can reopen again, then fundamental changes will need to be made to market layouts and their infrastructure, market facilities, customer access and pedestrian flow etc to satisfy social distancing. In some markets this may be easily achieved, but in others it will be more difficult. As supermarkets have met the challenge then markets must also adapt and change.

Based on the earliest experiences of market managers that have kept their markets trading during the lockdown, NABMA has produced a Social Distancing Guide for Market Halls. This offers a practical tick box of measures that markets may need to address when government guidance allows trading to recommence. As well as the practical implications, there are significant staffing and resource matters to consider.

It is hoped that this guide will promote the in-house discussion needed to help market managers put a strategy in place, so that when the lockdown is lifted, trading can start again in some form. With expert views that social distancing maybe in place for the rest of this year then urgent preparation by market teams is essential.



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THE NABMA SUPPORT PLAN FOR MARKETS 2020

The Cities and Local Growth Unit is a joint unit between the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).

As a result of the impact of COVID-19, NABMA has been discussing with its Town Centre and High Streets Policy Team, Cities and Local Growth Unit, support measures to markets, and market traders, and as a result compiled a list of the essential support that we believe is needed to support, sustain and relaunch the markets industry.

NABMA has urged that a business rescue package is provided by government for its membership, that of the National Market Traders Federation and the wider markets industry.

Five key points would need to be incorporated:

- Support for Traders and Small Businesses
- A Business Interruption Compensation Scheme – reflecting “lost rents”
- Market Start Back Grant Scheme – to get markets back up and running again
- Business Rates – 100% relief for all markets
- A national support programme to restore markets and market trading

During April 2020, NABMA has been seeking evidence from its membership of the financial impact of COVID-19 and the risks and threats facing the markets industry, present and future. That evidence, along with case studies from certain markets, will be presented to government to demonstrate the fragile position of markets.

NABMA is also campaigning that markets, particularly indoor markets, must be treated the same as shopping centres and be permitted to re-open at the same time, subject to their strict adherence with government guidelines and social distancing.

Markets are part of the fabric of towns and cities across the UK. They are the breeding grounds for low risk business start-up and will have a major role to play in the aftermath of COVID-19 in their historic settings. Sadly, they are now at the crossroads and for the majority to even survive, and then have a future, they need support, investment and encouragement. NABMA looks to government to now give that investment and confidence to an industry that that has been part of community and commerce for many centuries.

“
What is evident is that social distancing will continue to be an influencing factor as to whether, and how, markets can resume some form of trading in the weeks and months ahead.

SOCIAL DISTANCING

What Is Social Distancing?

Social distancing measures are steps you can take to reduce social interaction between people. This will help reduce the transmission of COVID-19. Detailed information from Public Health England is available [here](#).

As a reminder the measures are to:

- Avoid contact with someone who is displaying symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19). These symptoms include high temperature and/or new and continuous cough
- Avoid non-essential use of public transport when possible
- Work from home, where possible. Your employer should support you to do this. Please refer to employer guidance for more information.
- Avoid large and small gatherings in public spaces, noting that pubs, restaurants, leisure centres and similar venues are currently shut as infections spread easily in closed spaces where people gather.
- Avoid gatherings with friends and family. Keep in touch using remote technology such as phone, internet, and social media.
- Use telephone or online services to contact your GP or other essential services.

The NABMA Guide to Social Distancing

Why Indoor Markets?

In the first instance, NABMA provides this information, primarily for indoor market halls, as it is likely that they will be the first type of markets to be permitted to open for trade.

NABMA has been making representations to government that market halls must be treated in the same way as indoor shopping centres in terms of being permitted to re-open. This measure, of course, is subject to the support of operators and traders alike, and their shared responsibility to meet all government guidelines, and social distancing. Ultimately, of course, the responsibility for all compliance will be with the operator.

Due to logistics, the operators of sizeable open markets will have little or no ability to install control measures so therefore it is believed that open markets will start trading at a more appropriate later time.

Market Hall operators will appreciate that some markets are large, some small, that design and use systems differ across the UK and that local circumstances – including the availability of human resources – will impact upon how management creates a safe and workable system for their own market. The following issues are, therefore, for consideration by local market management.

NABMA is grateful to members of its consultancy team for preparing the below good practice, and questions to address, based on their experiences and discussions in the first month of restrictions. This has created unprecedented change and challenge for market operators, traders and customers.

SOCIAL DISTANCING SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Social Distancing - The Expert Viewpoint

Social distancing will be needed until at least the end of the year to prevent fresh outbreaks of coronavirus even though the UK has reached the peak of the current epidemic, the government's chief medical officer said on 23 April 2020.

Prof Chris Whitty, the UK's most senior medic, said it was important to be realistic that "highly disruptive" social distancing would need to be in place for "really quite a long period of time". He said there was only an "incredibly small" chance of a vaccine or treatments being ready for use this year, and social distancing would have to stay in place to suppress outbreaks until then.

"We have to be very realistic," he said. "If people are hoping it's suddenly going to move from where we are in lockdown to where suddenly into everything is gone, that is a wholly unrealistic expectation."

"We are going to have to do a lot of things for really quite a long period of time, the question is what is the best package and this is what we're trying to work out."

"If you release more on one area, you have to keep on board more of another area so there's a proper trade-off and this is what ministers are having to consider."

The Health and Safety Executive - Guidance

In these extraordinary times, HSE is constantly reviewing the fast-moving situation with their partners across government to support the national effort to tackle COVID-19.

While social distancing is fundamentally a public health measure introduced to reduce the spread of infection, they recognise the concerns raised on social distancing within the workplace and are in contact with trade unions.

Where HSE identifies employers who are not taking action to comply with the relevant PHE guidance to control public health risks, e.g. employers not taking appropriate action to socially distance or ensure workers in the shielded category can follow the NHS advice to self-isolate for the period specified, they will consider taking a range of actions to improve control of workplace risks. These actions include the provision of specific advice to employers through to issuing enforcement notices to help secure improvements with the PHE guidance.

Further information can be found [here](#).

The NABMA Support Plan for Markets

The five-point plan, prepared by NABMA, and endorsed by the NMTF can be read [here](#).

NABMA MARKET HALLS SOCIAL DISTANCING GUIDELINES

1

Consider having one main entrance, where circumstances and health and safety permit, and control access which is likely to mean the provision of additional staffing to manage the queuing and count numbers. Set an appropriate number of customers to be allowed in – depending on your local circumstances.

2

It is unlikely that a one-way customer system would work so this will mean customers queuing outside regardless of the products they want – surface spacing marking for social distancing will then be required.

3

Use in house announcement systems (where available) to frequently remind customers of the need for distancing.

4

While queuing is likely to be required, some people might be reluctant to accept this essential measure, so it is important that adequate resources are available through the market to assist as required.

5

Close market public toilets and keep open trader toilets only.

6

Consider restricted shopping hours for NHS/essential workers/older people/ vulnerable groups but only implement if you can effectively manage such an arrangement. You will not need to check everyone's ID but access will have to be carefully managed.

7

In addition to traditional customer service, to accelerate 'click and collect'/ online ordering and the introduction of a shopper permit system to enable customers to book time slots.

8

Encourage and support traders to develop online businesses.

9

Introduction of some personal responsibility measures like masks and or gloves – customers/traders? Depending on the issue of further government advice it might be necessary to provide a supply of face masks for both traders and shoppers using the market.

10

Provide at main entrance, and elsewhere in the market, sanitisers for the public use. Provide signs to encourage people to use them.

11

Ensure enhanced cleaning regimes can be provided.

12

Supervision staff to clean door handles every time used.

13

You will need to consider whether you can operate any cafes as takeaway service only, or a normal cafe facility. If cafes are permitted to open, they will need to operate within the guidelines issued by the government on cafes and restaurants. This is likely to mean seating adaptations, removal of menus and shared condiments. You will need to be satisfied that cafe operators can meet the necessary requirements.

14

If cafes are open, they would have to enforce seating in their premises - should this be permitted? Could some empty units, if available, be used to create temporary pop up seating areas?

15

Consider reduced market opening times, particularly for general goods, but particularly to ensure you have the resources to implement these guidelines effectively.

16

Consider whether it is necessary to rotate traders so that everyone has an equal opportunity of trading within the resources and space that you have available.

17

Suggest as part of your announcement about the opening of the market that you encourage as few members of a family as possible to shop, but recognise the difficulty you are likely to face of limiting access to only one family member at the entrance to the market.

18

Prevent the use of all general seating and opportunities for shoppers to dwell.

19

Increase ventilation indoors to help ensure that infectious aerosols are diluted and flushed out. Avoid recirculating air to reduce concentration of infectious aerosols within a system.

20

Remove objects requiring physical contact – door handles etc and prop open doors where practical.

21

Encourage, whenever possible, card payments by traders and seek to minimise cash transactions.

22

Increase number of litter bins to encourage customers to carry tissues and place in bin after coughing or sneezing.

23

Stalls be realigned to create wider alleyway.

24

Training be provided for traders on social distancing and their responsibilities.

SUMMARY

The list as provided is certainly not exhaustive and NABMA will update it as further government guidance is produced, and lessons continue to be learnt.

Clearly, it is up to each NABMA member to consider the guidelines as suggested, but alongside their local circumstances, and to take professional advice as appropriate.

The majority of the initial NABMA guidance relates to indoor markets but the same principles for layout, access and egress, facilities, safety, cleansing and supervision can be related to outdoor and other market activities.

What is important is to begin early discussion of the measures needed to meet the strict requirements of social distancing and to assess whether each market activity can achieve that compliance for the safety of its market staff, market traders and shoppers.

NABMA THANKS

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