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Journey To Re-Opening Your Social Business



Stage 2: Calculating the best route

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Journey To Re-Opening Your Social Business

Covid-19 has transformed the environment for businesses, with forced closures, social distancing restrictions and new ways of working. Some businesses have been able to continue trading, while others have had to change or reduced what they offer. And some businesses having to mothball all activities and temporarily close.

The prospect of fully re-opening and exploring what the new norm will look like for your business may feel overwhelming. Social Business Wales have developed this guide to help you navigate your individual route to re—opening. It will aid you as a social business to consider the key implications to restarting your business, keeping it open and navigating any bumps along the route. This tool will signpost you to key resources and sources of information at every step.

The tool is split into 3 stages, with a digestible workbook for each stage:

Stage 1: Planning your journey – dealing with the essential things to consider before you are able to re-open such as premises, staffing and new safety requirements. Starts below.



Stage 2: Calculating the best route – considers using new ways of working such as technology and communication techniques that can aid your business as well as financial considerations.

Stage 3: Diversions Ahead – identifies some of the potential road blocks your business may face such as going back into lockdown and mission drift. Helping you to develop strategies to become more resilient and adaptable.

The situation with Covid-19 is ever changing. The toolkit will be updated as new government regulations are announced and updates released. The toolkit is intended to signpost you to useful information and resources. Many of the links in this document are to external websites, we share them in good faith, but we have no control of their content or accuracy.

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STAGE 2: Calculating the best route

Having begun to prepare for re-opening, or having taken the steps of having staff back in and opening your doors may feel like you have reached your goal and are at the final destination



after a long and unprecedented journey. But re-opening is just one of the hurdles businesses will face over the coming weeks and months ahead. Calculating how you can stay open and viable in the long term is the ultimate goal.

We all expect it to take some time until businesses return to their pre-covid levels, so finding ways to rebuild customer confidence and staff resilience will be key to ensuring your organisation is resilient and able to cope with changes and setbacks on the road ahead. Calculating the best route for your social business may involve developing new skills, using new ways of working and possibly sourcing additional finances and resources to allow you to navigate the road ahead.

Within this stage we will break down key considerations, allowing you to work through each topic and build plans and new procedures, developing your 'new normal'. Remember to consider how your day to day delivery, ability to deliver your social outputs and the longer-term financial viability will be affected.

Consumer Confidence

In a nutshell: People's lives have changed as a result of the pandemic. Consequently, the way people consume has changed. This means that the products and services you sold before the



pandemic may not be consumed in the same way they were before. The pandemic has seen a massive rise in online shopping whilst lockdown was in operation. More people are willing to shop online and more people are willing to click and collect. Local businesses have seen the benefit of this and implemented pre-order and delivery systems.

Many people are now doing things at home that they used to have to visit a particular location to do and it's not just work and school! Exercise classes, hobbies and even socialising with friends have all gone online. We won't know which of these trends are permanent and which are temporary until the pandemic subsides and some form of normality returns. As a result,

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you may have to take some difficult decisions on what products and services you offer to which markets.

The pandemic is also affecting the economy of the country and that will have knock on effects on the spending power of consumer markets. Less jobs, mean less money, mean less people buying non-essential items and people taking longer to make purchasing decisions even for essential purchases. Businesses will need to look at the products and services they offer and ascertain which will still have strong demand in a time of likely recession, whether pricing and positioning need to be addressed and whether new products and services could be considered.

Safety is the other main issue that affects consumer confidence. What measures can a business take to ensure that its customers feel safe in the process of buying from them? Things like physical distancing and hygiene are covered elsewhere in this series but communicating the actions that you have taken to your customers will be a major factor in how safe they feel buying from you. If you have spent years building a trusting relationship with your customers, communicating the safety measures you have implemented could mean the difference between retaining those loyal customers and losing them to a competitor who has communicated their approaches better.

The process of rebuilding consumer confidence in what you deliver and how you operate safely is a key step in restarting your businesses and rebuilding your income.

Consider:

- Competitive scanning. Look at your competitors and what they are doing? How have they changed their communication, their products and services, their pricing? If they have made changes, why have they done so?
- Undertake a 5 Forces analysis. This is a commonly used marketing tool that looks at external pressures on a business from competitors, the power that suppliers and customers have over your pricing, the threat of new entry to the market and the threat of substitution of a product. <https://www.smartinsights.com/online-brand-strategy/brand-development/how-to-use-porters-5-forces-model/>
- Consider whether you could be using technology more effectively to be delivering products and services (see the next section).
- Consider your pricing and how you sell your products and services to customers. Can you make it easier for customers to buy whilst still fulfilling what they require?
- Consider your product range – can you reduce or change your product range to better serve your customers?

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- Consider how you communicate with your customers. Can you ease their minds about your hygiene practices, food or care safety measures, physical distancing measures, PPE and protective barrier usage? Can you communicate this in a way that is reassuring but retains your core messages to those customers? For an interesting description of how this could be applied in a retail environment, read this article <https://www.mytotalretail.com/article/were-all-in-it-together-attitude-drives-consumer-confidence-in-covid-19/> and for visitor attractions, read this <https://blooloop.com/visit-attractions-after-covid-19-survey/>. What lessons can you take for your own business?
- Consider how you communicate changes to your staff and volunteers. If they are confident that will be apparent in their interactions with your customers.
- Similarly, consider communicating to the safety measures you have put in place to alleviate concerns over safety, John Lewis have produced a video to explain the steps they have taken: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SNBNKY6S6Hk>
- Consider the channels that you use to communicate with your customers? Can you do more offline promotion? Have more of your customers gone online – where can you reach them?
- Consider a written communication plan that outline what message you want to convey, to whom and how you are going to get that message to them, and when.

Message	Who is it aimed at?	How do I get the message to them (Channel)?	When?
<i>Example: We are back open and we are safe to visit</i>	<i>Previous customers</i>	<i>Email announcement Social media followers Personal ring around to key customers</i>	<i>Tba</i>

Action Points:

- Review your own business and scan your competitors' businesses. Review regularly and make adjustments to your own approach if you need to.
- Look at the technology you use and the technology you could be using. Could you implement online ordering? Room / facility booking software? Better social media presence?

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- Look at your product range and your pricing. Adjust to suit new situation if required and viable.
- Audit the changes you have made to accommodate the safety of your staff, clients and customers.
- Write a communication plan that addresses the changes you have made, designed to reassure your target markets (and stakeholders). Implement it, monitor and review it and adjust as necessary.

Consumer Confidence Checklist:	Completed	Date	By	Planned review date
Review your products, services and pricing				
Carry out a competitor scan				
Identify new tools to communicate with consumers				
Develop and implement a communication plan to inform consumers of the steps taken to be covid safe				

Useful Links & Resources:

The Drum discuss different strategies to rebuild consumer confidence:

<https://www.thedrum.com/opinion/2020/05/07/restoring-consumer-confidence-after-covid-19-spiders-edwina-currie-and-gold>

Communication

In a nutshell: Communication will be at the heart of how you manage your recovery. As discussed in the previous section how you communicate with customers about the safety



measures you have put in place or what products and services you offer and simply when you are open, are key messages which will need to be thought about and communicated at the right time and in the right way. Getting the message and channel right is key.

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Communication also extends to your staff, as you prepare them to return to work, they may be anxious about their own safety and the added duties and responsibilities upon them when they return to a very different workplace. Communicating with staff members before they return about the new safety procedures put in place to protect them, the physical changes to the work environment and procedures can help to reassure anxious staff members, build trust and strengthen engagement. It will also improve continuity and compliance, keeping staff updated about rules and procedures put in place will ensure greater compliance and reduce the chance of potential breaches.

Having an effective and authentic communication plan will be crucial but with a long list of to-do's and actions to achieve as part of your re-opening plan, communications can easily slip down the list. However, understanding the importance of communication and how to use it to your advantage is key. Embedding communication within your re-opening plan and actively communicating with stakeholders over the next 6-12 months will support your journey to re-opening and also enable you to smoothly navigate any bumps ahead in your recovery as you try to find your new norm.

Consider:

- How have you communicated with staff members during the pandemic? Can you improve how you communicate with them, is there technology out there which you could use to improve your communications? Check our guide for a list of video conferencing and collaboration tools <https://wales.coop/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Technology-factsheet-English.pdf>
- Consider setting up chat groups or communication channels on software such as Microsoft Teams or Slack for internal conversations to keep staff up to date.
- Can you produce a short video of the new safety procedures in place for staff and customers? You could try a mobile video editing app or online with a platform like Adobe Spark to put it together and post it on your social media channels.
- Clearly display signage or posters for staff and customers on physical distance, wearing of masks or waiting to enter premises and maximum people allowed in.
- Try Instagram stories to stay 'front of mind'.
- Know your new normal and communicate it! Think about the new customer experience and detail it step by step, including new booking procedures, maximum number of people allowed in your premises, use of face masks, if it is card only payments.

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Communicate these to customers along with any changes to operating hours ahead of re-opening.

- Make sure your website and social media channels are up to date with your current operating procedures. Add any Covid policy or Risk Assessment to show stakeholders the steps you are taking to operate safely.
- Check your key selling points so you are ready with the right message when it's time to target your audience
- Survey customers as to their current or new needs or preferred channels.
- Check GDPR if you are contacting customers to ensure you are compliant with regulations.
- Keep in touch with your customers via a newsletter using a platform such as Mail Chimp.
- Have new partnerships evolved? Write a new list of stakeholders and potential partners or funding bodies and be sure to include them on relevant communications.
- Communicate your value - share your social impact. As well as showing your value, are there any new initiatives you've been part of during the crisis you can demonstrate? For future planning, work out what to measure or record and plan how you will use it. You could use numbers, photos or testimonies. Plan when to gather them and in what format, ensuring you have the right permission.

Actions:

- Develop a communication plan for internal and external uses.
- Know your new normal, plan how you will operate and devise how you will inform and train staff.
- Communicate your new normal to customers and stakeholders.
- Be proactive with your communication - keep customers and staff updated of any changes or closures if local or national lockdowns occur.
- Get your operating information up to date on your website, social media and add your Covid policy and risk assessment.
- Display any distancing requirements or behaviour signage in physical locations.
- Keep in touch with your stakeholders through social media, newsletters etc.
- Check your key message and channel are ready for action.
- Decide what impacts are you going to measure and how you will communicate them.

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Communication Checklist	Completed	Date	By
Develop a communication plan for the next 6 months.			
Update staff on new procedures and safety measures within the workplace.			
Detail the new customer experience through videos, posts and communications.			
Update your website and social media channels to ensure they are current.			
Survey customers and stakeholders			
Keep in touch with customers and stakeholders through mailouts and social media.			
Check GDPR requirements.			
Plan how to measure and communicate your impact.			

Useful Links & Resources:

GDPR <https://ico.org.uk>

Video editing apps <https://www.creativebloq.com/features/6-great-video-editing-apps-for-mobile>

Measuring social impact <https://www.goodfinance.org.uk/measuring-social-impact>

National Council For Voluntary Action have guides to writing a communications plan and developing a social media strategy:

<https://knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/campaigns/communications/communications-strategy>

<https://knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/campaigns/communications/social-media>

Social Media toolkit <https://www.skillsplatform.org/charitysocialmediatoolkit/>

PR Academy <https://pracademy.co.uk/insights/how-to-develop-and-write-a-communication-strategy/>

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Technology

In a nutshell: Many businesses have been forced into using technology more during lockdown than at any other time. From using Facebook to keep in touch with stakeholders, to running



board meetings via Zoom, to working collaboratively on Teams and taking orders and payments online through e-commerce sites. Technology has become the lifeline to most businesses during lockdown. It has enabled businesses to stay in touch with stakeholders, customers and staff and allowed customers to purchase products and consume services remotely in a completely different way.

With more adults than ever being online right now and becoming more competent with technology, attitudes and consumer behaviour have shifted. These developments may present opportunities for your business going forward. So, as we prepare to re-open and find our new norm, it may be time to review how you operate and consider fully integrating technology into your day to day operations. Technology can support your trading, communication and operational activities.

Implementing new systems and products can be costly and time consuming and some businesses may have previously perceived the barriers to be too great, but the pandemic has disrupted how we all live, work and consume, so now may be the ideal time to reconsider preconceptions and barriers and consider utilising technology more fully to gain business advantage and to keep up with trends.

Consider:

- Think about how you operated before lockdown and what technologies you used. Compare that with how you have operated during lockdown, list the advantages and disadvantages as well as the lessons learnt.
- Plan how you can use more or new technologies in your business. Think about how it can help you in terms of trading, communication, collaboration and business operations.
- For each consider the training requirements, resources needed including staff time, money and technical support.

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Trading:

- Review what products and services you currently offer, what activities, services or products you could sell online?
- Could you offer any new services to bring in income such as vouchers for advance purchases or Pay it forward? Services can also be sold online through video conferencing platforms. Could you offer gym, counselling or even dance sessions remotely?
- Can you offer an online resource to support your community – develop something useful for parents with children at home, a community growing calendar or recipe?
- Keep the customer journey as simple as possible for the online shopper, think about what platform is required to sell products online. Decide if you want to just sell through social media, add an ecommerce function to your website or sell through a third-party platform.
- If you are able to sell products you can consider an online payment method to suit the scale of your business.
- Research payment gateways (such as PayPal) or card machines and the different rates providers charge.
- Work out how you are going to physically deliver. Do you need a delivery service, or can you deliver yourself? Bear in mind any industry requirements, e.g. temperature controls for food temperature. Make sure you update any processes and check your insurance for a new service.
- Who will be responsible for this aspect of the business? Will you need staff training – and are there any associated costs.

Communication:

- Consider how you have been communicating with your customers, staff and stakeholders during the pandemic – has it been effective? Keeping your audience up to date with regular posts on social media or your website is very important to re-build consumer confidence and loyalty. You could also appeal for support if needed or even run a crowdfunding campaign.
- Could you make a film with mobile footage and a video platform to update stakeholders?
- Developing a newsletter, for example with mailchimp can be an easy and effective method of getting information out and you could consider researching customers preferences for future products or services or communication styles. You could use a system such as Survey Monkey or an online poll.

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- Learn My Way has a free online tutorial on using Facebook:
<https://www.learnmyway.com/courses/using-facebook/>
- Is your website and social media channels up to date?
- Developing your online presence could also help attract volunteers or board members.

Collaboration:

- Have you utilised video conferencing for team meetings and board meetings? If you are still weighing up video conferencing options for your team, such as Zoom, look at our guide for more info on this <https://www.learnmyway.com/subjects/more-internet-skills/#resources>
- If you need to collaborate with your team online you could use products such as Microsoft Teams, Slack, Trello, Basecamp, G Suite (or Google Suite) and Whatsapp for workplace collaboration. They all allow for communication between your teams, direct messaging and sharing information and documents across your organisation. All are available to use on a computer or on a mobile device. Are you aware of the full functionality? Research which tools will work better for your organisation and ensure staff are confident in using it.
- Whatsapp is a free app for mobile devices is great for sending text messages. You can create a Whatsapp group for your Board or your staff team and communicate quickly with the whole group at the same time. Download it from your mobile app store.
- Utilising video conferencing for board members integrates flexibility, reduces costs and time commitment associated with holding physical meetings. It can also attract new board members who may be based in other areas who are no longer held back by travel and time considerations.

Business Operations:

- Consider what software and tools you have used during the lockdown period to run your business. Think about accountancy software, CRM's, filing systems, cloud storage, payrolls. What has worked well and what hasn't? Research if there are alternative software packages and programmes out there and associated costs.
- With more and more staff working from home, is there a requirement to invest in more equipment or products to support the new way of working?
- Do you need additional licenses or training? Are there any additional costs?
- Will you need to train staff on new systems?

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Action points:

- Review the technologies you have been using and scan the market for new or additional products or systems.
- Plan how you can use more or new technologies in your business to support trading, communication, collaboration and business functions. Use the table below as a starting point:

Method	Action	Help
Sell via social media Customers contact you directly e.g. via Facebook Messenger or other.	Set up a payment gateway account so customers can pay you securely. Provider include PayPal, World Pay, Amazon Pay, Stripe or Shopify. Check the rates and functions. You will typically pay a monthly fee or pay as you go 2-3% plus 20p per transaction.	https://startups.co.uk/best-payment-gateways/
Sell via your website	Add an ecommerce function to a website such as WooCommerce (this is a good option for WordPress sites) or use a platform such as Shopify. You will need to integrate this with a payment gateway (such as PayPal).	Guide to comparing platforms https://www.wpbeginner.com/plugins/best-wordpress-ecommerce-plugins-compared/
Use a web-builder platform	A template website such as SquareSpace is quick and easy to set up and sell through. You will pay a monthly fee around £20 and may have limited personalisation options. Other web hosting companies also offer readymade web-builder websites with ecommerce functions.	https://www.squarespace.com/
Use an industry platform	Joining a platform website where the tech is already set up, is an easy option and will give you exposure to other audiences. Eg for food JustEat or Slurp.	If you want to develop a platform for your industry where the workers control it, this is also possible! https://www.uk.coop/unfounded

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	However, you may pay a hefty % so compare rates	
Sell on premises or at events with a card reader machine and reduce taking cash payments. This may help with your Covid physical distancing requirements and <u>Risk Assessment</u> (link section)	Consider the best options for a payment machine such as iZettle also Square, SumUp, World Pay. You buy the card reader and take payments via an app; you will need a Bluetooth connection. Transaction fees are around 1.7% and the money goes straight into your account.	Guide to payment machines https://www.mobiletransaction.org/card-machine-small-business-uk/
Invoicing	Look at Sagepage from about £5 a month and may also be compatible with phone payments. World Pay iZettle offer an invoicing feature in their app at around 2.5% per transaction.	https://www.sagepay.co.uk/our-payment-solutions/get-paid-faster
Accounting	Look at Quick Books as well as Sagepay and Xero. Quick Books starts at £5 a month currently with invoicing, cashflow and payroll options. Allows you to photograph receipts and upload.	https://www.techradar.com/uk/best/best-accounting-software

- Investigate the training requirements, resources needed including staff time, money and technical support required for implementing new technology.
- Carry out a staff survey on IT competencies and training needs. Also get feedback on what improvements can be made to the current systems and gaps.
- Check your online security

<https://businesswales.gov.wales/superfastbusinesswales/information-hub>

Technology Checklist	Completed	Date	By
Carry out a review of your current use of technology			
Conduct a staff survey on IT skills and competencies and organisational needs			

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Research your options and costings			
Develop a plan to use technology more within your business			
Deliver training on software / products			
Ensure all information on websites and social media is current			
Check your online security			

Useful Links & Resources:

Superfast courses <https://businesswales.gov.wales/superfastbusinesswales/events>

Webinars by DCW <https://www.digitalcommunities.gov.wales/>

Zoom tutorial <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/206618765-Zoom-Video-Tutorials>

SBW Tech guide <https://wales.coop/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Technology-factsheet-English.pdf>

Payment Gateways <https://startups.co.uk/best-payment-gateways/>

Managing Finances

In a nutshell: Economists anticipate that consumer confidence levels and spending will take some time to return to pre-covid levels, especially with a predicted recession on the horizon.



So, businesses will face challenging times on top of coming out of lockdown.

From the onset of the pandemic cashflow has been a priority for businesses, but as the specialist financial support packages such as the job retention scheme and covid grants come to an end, it is important that businesses consider their longer-term

financial position. Being realistic and prepared will be key. Reviewing where you are and how you expect to trading levels to be over the coming year will enable you to find your optimal financial and operating model to guide you through the next few years. For some businesses this may mean stripping back costs and taking hard decisions about products and services you will offer going forward, it may also mean reviewing staff levels and overheads. For other businesses it may have a different focus and they may have diversified what they offer due to

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the pandemic, so reviewing the resources needed and profitability of the new products/services may become a focus of this exercise.

Whatever your situation and reaction to the outbreak and subsequent lockdown, all businesses will need to consider their financial position going forward and will have to sit down with their board to review their projections and adjust them in-light of the current and expected operating environment. The process of reviewing and revising the finances of the business will enable you to see any gaps and consider how you can cover those, through funding or loans or through cutting costs. Being prepared and having contingency plans in place may be the deciding factor on if you can withstand the tough economic times ahead.

Consider:

- Consider your income: how has your finances been affected over the last four months? How do the actuals compare against what you forecasted? And consider how it differs against the same period from previous years?
- Consider how you generate your income, what ongoing Service Level Agreements (SLAs) or grant payments will come in? Operating a reduced service level may affect your income from SLAs, so speak with contractors to find out how this will affect your income.
- Have you accessed covid funding or loans? Will there be a gap in your finances once this funding comes to an end?
- Think about what your income is likely be over the next few months. Be realistic and prudent when compiling your projected income.
- If there will be a shortfall, can you identify how much? Have you considered cash injections to finance the gap? This could be through accessing grants or loans, releasing some reserves into your business or stripping back your costs. Consider what is the best option for your business and what is available.
- Consider your costs, are there any ways you could strip back your costs? This may be an uncomfortable process, but you will need to consider your new business model and will have to adjust your costs accordingly if you are going to survive.
- For the majority of businesses, staffing may be their greatest costs, so reducing hours or laying off staff may be inevitable. Businesses will need to prepare for the end of the Job Retention Scheme in October and plan for how they will cover wages or redundancy costs after this period.

<https://www.accountingweb.co.uk/business/finance-strategy/redundancies-and-furlough-get-the-details-right>

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- There are a range of other ways to reduce costs including changing suppliers, looking at premises and overheads. We have developed a guidance note to help with this: <https://wales.coop/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/COVID-19-guidance-note-Stripping-Back-Your-Cashflow-Eng-v4.pdf>
- Monitoring your cashflow and being able to react, adapt and be flexible to changes in your businesses finance will be a key component of navigating through the next few months and years. Managing cashflow was discussed in stage 1 of this series and can be accessed here: <https://wales.coop/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Journey-To-Reopening-Stage-1-v1.1-final-eng.pdf>

Action Points:

- Review your income and expenditure, forecasts and cashflow comparing actual performance to predicted.
- Revise your income projections accordingly for the next 6-12 months.
- Identify if there will be a shortfall and ways of filling the gap in income.
- Look at your costs and consider ways of stripping out or reducing costs.
- Speak with funders, banks and investors about accessing short term borrowing or extending existing credit.
- Speak with suppliers and creditors about new arrangements.
- Consider introducing cash injections into the business or reserves.

Managing Finances Checklist	Completed	Date	By
Review your income and expenditure for the last 6 months.			
Compare actuals against forecasted and against the same period for previous years.			
Identify any financial shortfalls once the government support schemes and other sources of funding stop.			
Review your costs and identify potential ways of reducing costs.			
Research your options to plug the gap			
Develop or revise your financial forecasts for the next 12 months			

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Useful Links & Resources:

Business Wales have useful information on understanding your costs:

<https://businesswales.gov.wales/starting-up/finance/understanding-costs#guides-tabs--1>

And a step by step guide to cash flow forecasts: <https://businesswales.gov.wales/starting-up/managing-your-finances/cashflow-forecast#guides-tabs--0>

Deloitte have developed a guide to managing cashflow during the pandemic:

<https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/global/Documents/About-Deloitte/gx-COVID-19-managing-cash-flow-in-crisis.pdf>

Good Finance has easy to understand guides and resources on how to access social investment as well as links to over 25 social investors:

<https://www.goodfinance.org.uk/covid-19-resource-hub-charities-social-enterprises>

Funding.Cymru contains an easy to use funder finder tool <https://funding.cymru/>

Grants Online contain information on local and regional funds

<https://www.grantsonline.org.uk/coronavirus.html>

Workplace Wellbeing

In a nutshell: The pandemic has brought many businesses challenges, but it has also brought personal and professional challenges to employees and leaders alike. Coping with significant



changes to how we work, where we work and the restrictions of lockdown, the Covid pandemic has had serious implications upon work life balance and wellbeing for most of us. Many of us have had to quickly adapt to new working environments, working from home or even being furloughed. Added to that general anxieties around the disease and added caring

responsibilities and pressures from home schooling, juggling work and life has seen a significant shift in priorities and resulted in more of a disconnect from work and colleagues.

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Addressing workplace wellbeing and taking positive steps is crucial right now as many businesses begin to bring their staff back into their offices and premises and it is equally important for businesses who plan on continuing to operate with their staff based at home. Ensuring you have a team of resilient and adaptable staff able to cope with the new norm and the challenges ahead will strengthen your business and its ability to navigate through the challenges ahead.

Workplace wellbeing may have understandably become less of a business priority in the last few months, but re-prioritising it can have positive impacts upon your business. Investing time and resources into wellbeing initiatives and strategies is vitally important in the current times. It can improve productivity and motivation, increase innovation, communication and team work ultimately raising staff morale as well as contributing to lower levels of absenteeism and better staff retention. From an employees' perspective it can decrease work related stress and foster better working relationships and contribute to staff satisfaction levels.

Consider:

- How you currently promote wellbeing within your organisation, have your strategies, policies and tools been adapted in light of covid and the changes to the business?
- Think about how you communicate with staff in terms of wellbeing and mental health. Can you remind them of any tools, resources or sources of support available to them through work? Sending out a message from the Chief Executive can show that your organisation values workplace wellbeing at all levels.
- Also think about how you communicate changes with your team, especially around the pandemic and working conditions. Keeping employees updated and involving them in decision making where possible can reduce anxiety and work-related stress levels, increase employee engagement and productivity.
- Consider developing Wellness Action Plan for employees, even employees who are working from home during the pandemic can benefit: https://www.mind.org.uk/media-a/6020/22078_work-from-home-wap.pdf
- Consider running staff surveys to gauge how people are doing. This could be repeated every few months and the results shared with staff. Surveys can be run quickly and free through free tools such as survey monkey.

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- Ensure line managers have regular 'check ins' with their team members to find out how they are doing and if there are any identifiable causes of stress which can be supported through revised workloads, changing hours or reasonable adjustments. It is also important to consider training and support given to line managers to equip them with the skills and confidence needed to have open discussions with staff members around mental health. Consider your training policy and resources to support this.
- Consider implementing a buddy system or peer support initiative in your workplace is a way of supporting staff members but also promotes positive working relationships and engagement. Given that a lot of staff members may be feeling isolated and disconnected from work, this could be a beneficial initiative.
- Given the added pressures to deliver during these times, some staff may have been working additional hours and feeling compelled to get tasks completed. In the short term this might seem manageable but sustained pressure and a poor work life balance can lead to stress and burnout. Promoting a better work-life balance can help with this, encouraging staff to work sensible hours, taking proper lunch breaks, using annual leave and not accruing excess toil are simple steps which can help readdress the balance.
- Employees who are furloughed or working from home may feel isolated and disconnected from their colleagues and workplace and missing the social side of work and interaction with colleagues. In addition to the formal team meetings consider scheduling team lunches or virtual cuppas and quizzes as a way of staff re-engaging with each other and allowing colleagues to socialise and provide the informal support networks which would normally happen in the workplace during lunch breaks and office catch ups.
- Think about how you will bring staff back into work. If they have been furloughed or working from home for a considerable time, the prospect of returning to offices and premises may be overwhelming. Mind, Acas, The School Of Occupational Medicine and Business In The Community have collaborated to develop a returning to work toolkit https://www.som.org.uk/Returning_to_the_workplace_COVID-19_toolkit_FINAL.pdf

Action Points:

- Review how you currently promote wellbeing within your organisation and if they have been effective during lockdown and the pandemic. Adjust appropriately.
- Get the CEO to draft a communication to staff reiterating the importance of wellbeing within your workplace and detail initiatives and supports available to employees.

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- Consider extending the support to new schemes and initiatives. Research best practice and what is available including costs.
- Communicate how employees can achieve a better work life balance.
- Run a staff survey to gauge wellbeing within your organisation and ask for feedback on improvements.
- Train line managers on mental health and improve their skills, abilities and confidence to be able to have open conversations with their staff.
- Schedule regular 'check-ins' between managers and staff.
- Schedule social events, these could be virtual events or socially distanced get togethers which allow employees to provide peer support to others.

Workplace Wellbeing Checklist	Completed	Date	By
Review your current workplace wellbeing strategies and initiatives			
Carry out a staff survey			
Send out a message from the chief executive promoting the importance of wellbeing and support/initiatives available in your workplace			
Deliver mental health training to line managers			
Promote ways to achieve a better work life balance to your employees including working sensible hours and taking lunch breaks.			
Arrange virtual social catch ups such as coffee breaks, quizzes and events.			

Useful Links & Resources:

Mind <https://www.mind.org.uk/workplace/coronavirus-and-work/>

Mental Health Foundation: <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/coronavirus/looking-after-your-mental-health-during-coronavirus-outbreak-while-working>

Acas <https://www.acas.org.uk/health-and-wellbeing>

CIPD <https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/culture/well-being/factsheet>

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Deloitte Monitor – Mental Health And Employers: Refreshing The Case For Investment: <https://www2.deloitte.com/uk/en/pages/consulting/articles/mental-health-and-employers-refreshing-the-case-for-investment.html>

British Safety Council – Not Just Free Fruit 2018: <https://www.britsafe.org/campaigns-policy/not-just-free-fruit-wellbeing-at-work/>

You are another step closer to re-opening and remaining open, the second phase of preparation and planning has been completed. Continue onto the next workbook:

Stage 3: Diversions Ahead

You can also review the steps taken under **Stage 1: Planning Your Journey** in this series here:

<https://wales.coop/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Journey-To-Reopening-Stage-1-v1.1-final-eng.pdf>

Need more help? Speak to one of our business advisors on 0300 111 5050 or visit our website for further information, resources and guides:

<https://wales.coop/covid-19-hub/>

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APPENDIX 1: Checklist Tool

Consumer Confidence Checklist:	Completed	Date	By
Review products, services and pricing			
Carry out a competitor scan			
Identify new tools to communicate with consumers			
Develop and implement a communication plan to inform consumers of the steps taken to be covid safe			
Communication Checklist	Completed	Date	By
Develop a communication plan for the next 6 months.			
Update staff on new procedures and safety measures within the workplace.			
Detail the new customer experience through videos, posts and communications.			
Update the website and social media channels to ensure they are current.			
Survey customers and stakeholders			
Keep in touch with customers and stakeholders through mailouts and social media.			
Check GDPR requirements.			
Plan how to measure and communicate your impact.			
Technology Checklist	Completed	Date	By
Carry out a review of your current use of technology			
Conduct a staff survey on IT skills and competencies and organisational needs			
Research options and costings			
Develop a plan to use technology more within your business			

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Deliver training on software / products			
Ensure all information on websites and social media is current			
Check your online security			
Managing Finances Checklist	Completed	Date	By
Review your income and expenditure for the last 6 months.			
Compare actuals against forecasted and against the same period for previous years.			
Identify any financial shortfalls once the government support schemes and other sources of funding stop.			
Review your costs and identify potential ways of reducing costs.			
Research your options to plug the gap			
Develop or revise your financial forecasts for the next 12 months			
Workplace Wellbeing Checklist	Completed	Date	By
Review your current workplace wellbeing strategies and initiatives			
Carry out a staff survey			
Send out a message from the chief executive promoting the importance of wellbeing and support/initiatives available in your workplace			
Deliver mental health training to line managers			
Promote ways to achieve a better work life balance to your employees including working sensible hours and taking lunch breaks.			
Arrange virtual social catch ups such as coffee breaks, quizzes and events.			