

16 July 2021

J D WETHERSPOON PLC

Further COVID-19 Update announcement

The Government has said that most legal restrictions to control COVID-19 will be lifted on 19 July 2021.

Since uncertainty remains as to the future impact of COVID-19, Wetherspoon has decided to revert to the successful measures which were agreed between local authorities, health authorities, licensing authorities and other parties, when pubs reopened in England, after the first lockdown, in July 2020.

The company will therefore:

- retain floor screens between tables in pubs and till-surround screens on bar serveries.
- retain hand sanitizers at the entrance and at various locations around the customer area of the pub, as well as in staff areas.
- maintain increased cleaning of contact points.
- maintain directional signage for entrances and exits etc.
- continue to encourage pubs to increase natural ventilation by keeping doors and windows open as much as possible.
- continue to complete a short questionnaire for each employee before the start of a shift to check temperature and for symptoms.
- encourage customers to use the order and pay apps to reduce contact at the bar, although, they will be able to order at the bar.
- maintain internal capacity in pubs at the same levels as today, limiting the numbers of customers to the number of seats.
- maintain current reduced capacity limits for employees in staff rooms and “back-of-house” areas.
- continue to use “single-use” mustard, ketchup etc. sachets instead of larger containers.
- continue to use disposable food menus.
- continue to prop open internal doors, including main doors to lavatories, where possible, to minimise contact points.

Modifications to current restrictions

The following restrictions will be modified:

- face masks, will be made available for employees, and customers and employees will be able to wear them at their discretion.
- group sizes will not be limited to six, as currently applies.
- the NHS Test & Trace system, or paper forms, will be retained for customers who wish to record visits, on a voluntary basis.

Wetherspoon chairman Tim Martin said:

“When pubs reopened after the first lockdown, in July last year, a sensible set of measures, as outlined above, was agreed between the hospitality industry, the health authorities and other interested parties, which kept transmission in hospitality venues at low levels.

“Wetherspoon had over 50 million customer visits, recorded through the Test and Trace system, in the second half of 2020 without a single reported example of an “outbreak” among customers, as defined by the health authorities.

“As UK Hospitality, the British Institute of Innkeepers and the British Beer and Pub Association said in October last year, “of 22,500 hospitality venues surveyed, just 1% said they were linked by NHS test and trace to an incident”.

“While risks from COVID-19 cannot be eliminated completely, we believe that the July 2020 guidelines are a sensible backstop for the industry and strike a fair balance between health, employment and the economy.

“It is hoped that arbitrary and capricious government rules, which have been a regular feature in recent months, such as the requirement for substantial meals, curfews and table service, which have no scientific provenance, can be avoided in future. These sorts of rules damage the economy, are extraordinarily difficult for pub staff to implement and are invariably regarded by customers as absurd.”

Ends.