

Click to see the [Quality Assurance guidance and criteria](#) notes for Taste Our Best.

Click to view the current [Scottish Government guidelines](#) for reopening and operating your business, from [Food Standards Scotland](#) and [UK Hospitality](#).

Considerations from the VisitScotland Quality Assurance Grading Scheme for Taste Our Best businesses

*The following guidance refers to additional considerations for Taste Our Best businesses, **specifically** with regards to achieving high standards within the Quality Assurance Scheme for this designator whilst implementing temporary Covid19 measures. Please remember to advertise your [Quality Assurance](#) logo and [We're Good to Go](#) mark – both are ways to reassure the visitor and show that you adhere to national standards.*

Hospitality & Service

- Try to balance all interactions by communicating the appropriate health & safety information (including offering to show risk assessments), whilst retaining your business character and warm hospitality that makes the experience special for your customers
- Encourage customers to book in advance, providing personal details required for 'Test and Protect'. At booking stage, encourage customers to visit your website and/or social media platforms to familiarise themselves with all information on temporary Covid-19 procedures or changes to normal operation. Set guest expectations whilst still offering a welcoming first impression. A follow up email prior to customer arrival reiterating your new procedures, commitment to guest health & safety, and a personalised warm pre-welcome is advised
- Set expectations when customers are asked to queue. This is now becoming the norm and yet, welcoming hospitality & proactive service standards can still be exercised. Audio visual equipment could help with communication and keeping customers informed. Consideration could also be given to one-way system for optimum customer flow
- Consider measures to reduce contact time, whilst making the experience easy to navigate for customers. This could include (but not limited to): automatic doors; online food order via an app or your own website; take-away option available; exclusion of buffet area; contactless payment with the offer of emailed professional invoice provided; additional communication with customers via phone or messaging app on-site
- Current [Scottish Government Local Protection levels guidance](#) explains the various restrictions at each Tier Level, including closing times and how many people from different households can meet. Please also be aware of the rules regarding social gathering in public places and perform due diligence when taking bookings for groups. Staff members must wear face coverings when serving customers. In addition, all F&B outlets must provide table service only. Staff will need to bring food & drink to customers' tables on a tray, stand back and wait for the customer to lift it from the tray.

- Scottish Government Guidance also advises no customer gatherings (e.g. pre-meal drink offering) in public places where physical distancing is compromised. Once inside, customers should stay at least 1 metre apart from anyone outside their household and stay seated – no standing, queueing at bars or dancing. To avoid the spread of COVID-19, customers should be wearing a face covering when not eating or drinking, and refrain from singing or shouting. For further information on most up to date advice please refer to the [Scottish Government's Operational guide & checklist](#).

Dispensation/Allowances

*In order to comply with Government Guidance, some temporary Covid-19 measures will appear to be contrary to certain criteria elements and quality scoring considerations under normal operation of the Quality Assurance (QA) Scheme. Please note that **dispensation will be given for any QA elements which would be out-with Government guidance, and these elements will be obsolete until such time that normal operation can resume.** The main aspects which will be affected are:*

Menu Provision

Government advice is to provide menus digitally where possible or by using 'single use' recyclable paper to reduce Covid-19 virus spread. As such, the normal suggestions for menus to be provided will currently be considered obsolete. Variety and range of dishes being offered has also been given a dispensation so that kitchens can work within Government Guidance. However, greater consideration should be given to the quality of information on dishes and Scottish produce provenance.

Offering to take coats, hats, umbrellas and prams

Government advice is to avoid handling customer belongings. Ensure that expectations are set, and this is communicated to guests.

Table setup

Glass screens should be considered to help segregate customers and support physical distancing. Additional screens to sit across the table could also be made available to provide additional segregation. Reducing linen, such as tablecloths, and pre-setting tables should also be considered. The advice is to avoid any other clutter/decorative elements on tables.

Sundries and additional courses

Consider reducing to a minimum the number of back and forth staff journeys from bar/kitchen to tables. Customers should be expected to pour their own water, and any other drinks, together with receiving sundries at the same time as the food already ordered.

Staff Product Knowledge

The requirement of staff having to explain food sourcing and menu content has been given dispensation so that interaction between customer & staff is minimised. However, information on provenance in websites/menus/boards/screens, and other suitable formats, will need to be kept up to date on a regular basis to ensure that this information is always clear and accurate.

If you have any questions about Quality Assurance, or would like to speak to one of our expert Quality & Tourism Advisors, please make contact via business.advice@visitscotland.com