

## Reopening Visitor Experience Induction Conflict Management, problem solving and difficult situation FAQs.

When reopening a site, staff should be provided with updated training regarding guidelines and procedures when facing difficult situations. The training provided should also be in line with Covid-19 regulations. In all the below scenarios always make sure you are at a safe distance of 2m and if you feel uncomfortable call for a manager or supervisor.

Examples of potential difficult visitor questions/situations and solutions:

### **Refunds**

#### ***“Can I have a refund?”***

Follow your usual guidelines when issuing refunds, there is no need to give out refunds unless there are valid reasons. Consider Covid-19 related refunds, provide refunds to visitors who are unable to visit due circumstances such as:

- Isolating due to Covid or exposure to Covid.
- National Lockdown

Make sure you provide information about Refunds and Covid-19 on your website this will help staff to use this resource as guidance and to direct visitors for further information.

### **Booking the wrong ticket**

#### ***“I booked the wrong ticket?”***

When visitors have booked the wrong ticket whether this may be a different time or day it is best to encourage visitors to book tickets for the correct time before providing a refund the wrong tickets. You do not have to provide a refund if they refuse to book another ticket.

Make sure to provide information on your website regarding various booking enquiries and your refund policy.

Response example:

*“If you have booked the wrong ticket that is no problem at all, lets resolve this for you. If you could book tickets for the correct date/time you prefer, once that is confirmed I will process the refund for the wrong tickets.”*

## **Visitors arriving early**

### ***What happens when a visitor arrives too early?***

If a visitor arrives before their allocated time slot it may be to your discretion if you wish to let them enter early for their visit. However, if your site is busy and filled up to its capacity for each time slot you will not be able to let them in until their allocated time.

Simply explain this to your visitor in a positive way, add on a positive at the end. They may be too early for their allocated time slot and may have to wait, however they can stay as long as they like during their visit.

Response example:

*"Unfortunately, I am unable to let you in earlier than your allocated time slot due to full capacity. We must stick to our capacity due to Covid-19 regulations. Sorry about this, however once we reach your time slot you can go straight inside and stay as long as you like in the museum/gallery."*

## **Latecomers**

### ***What happens when we have latecomers?***

There will always be a few late arrivals but not to worry, make sure information is clear on your website about when the cut off time will be for visitors to arrive if they are late. Use your discretion if the visitors arrive past the cut off time, depending on situations and how the visit is designed.

*Can they still visit without any disruptions to the tour/gallery procedures?*

*Can they jump on to the next time slot instead?*

These factors depend on your individual site and the alterations that have been made to procedures regarding capacity, safety and security.

However, if a visitor arrives late, missing their time slot with no other spaces available on the next time slot due to full capacity, the visitor has no option but to either attend a different time slot later in the day if there are any available, or to rebook a ticket for a different day. This may mean you have to turn them away.

Explain to the visitor that due to full capacity and following Covid-19 regulations that the site can have no more than the designated number of visitors allowed in the building for safety purposes.

Response example:

*Unfortunately, due to full capacity there are no more available spaces for the museum/gallery today. There are spaces available throughout the week if you wish to come a different day. I understand your frustration, unfortunately we have to limit the number of visitors we have in museum/gallery due to Covid-19 regulations and cannot make any exceptions."*

## **Closure of parts of the site**

### ***“Why can't I visit the whole museum/gallery?”***

Each site will be different, some spaces will need to be closed due to Covid-19 guidelines to ensure the safety and security of all staff and visitors. If a visitor asks about why they cannot access certain areas of the site, provide the information as to why. Express that this is to follow guidelines and to ensure that their health and safety is the main reason.

When providing this information stay positive, explain the reasons and explain why this must comply with Covid-19 guidelines. Ensure the visitor that they will still receive a full experience at your site, let them know what alterations have been made and what other activities/experiences have been integrated into the visit, an example of this may be providing tours. Make sure to always direct the visitor to use the website for any other additional information they may require as this information should be updated frequently.

Response example:

*“Unfortunately, due to Covid-19 regulation and the size of our site we are unable to open certain areas as they are not suitable for the one way and social distancing.*

*However, the price of the ticket has been amended to this alteration and other Covid safe activities have been placed for you to still have a full experience of our museum/gallery.”*

## **Pricing**

### ***“Why isn't the ticket discounted?”***

If you are able to keep all areas of your site open for your visitors and have a successful one-way system in place, you will keep your ticket prices the same.

If a visitor asks why the ticket is not cheaper, simply explain that the experience of the visit will be the same despite a one-way system, as the visitor has access to all areas or may even have additional experiences such as a tour.

Response example:

*“The ticket price has stayed the same as visitors have access to all areas of the museum/gallery, the only alteration is the one-way system we have introduced which will not take away any of your experience.”*

## **Wrong information seen online**

### ***“The website has the wrong information”***

If a visitor has seen information that is incorrect online, acknowledge this and apologise for any inconvenience this may have caused. Make sure to then provide the correct information the visitor may require and inform the visitor that actions will be made to up-date information online.

Response example:

*"We are sorry for any inconvenience this has caused. We will make sure that this issue is highlighted to the relevant person as soon as possible. If you need any more information about anything, please let us know."*

## **Ticketing**

### ***"I didn't know I needed to pre-book a ticket"***

Visitors may feel disgruntled when they arrive and the system isn't what they expected. Make sure ticketing information is clear on your website, marketing material and all signage in the queuing area. Explain that the ticketing system is currently different to make it Covid-19 secure. Check if you have any tickets available and if you do work with the visitor to book them.

Response example:

*"We are currently using a pre-booking ticket system so we can control the number of people on site and social distancing and so that we can keep the experience safe and covid secure. I will take a look to see if we have any tickets available for today and if we do, I can get some booked for you".*

## **Ticketing Capacity**

### ***"We could only book 3 tickets but there are 4 of us. Can all 4 of us come in?"***

This scenario is common because the timed slots may have sold out. Check if there are any available tickets left for that slot, if there are you could book one for the additional person. If there aren't any left and you are at capacity for the time slot, then you won't be able to admit the additional person. If your café is open, you could suggest the additional person waits in there or ask if they would like to book onto the next time slot if possible.

Response example:

*"I'm very sorry but it looks like this time slot is sold out which is why it would only let you book 3 tickets. This means we cannot book any more tickets because it would exceed our covid secure capacity. Our capacity is .... per slot to keep a safe and social distanced environment."*

## **Interactives**

### **Request for Family friendly visit or interactives**

If your site has removed all hands-on interactives and content, make sure you are aware of alternatives that have been provided. Do you have trails at the admissions desk, do you have online quizzes or trails? Try to focus on what you do have available instead of what has been removed.

Response example:

*"I'm afraid we have had to remove all hands-on interactives because of risk of transmission but we have trails/quizzes/activity backpacks/online trails available instead".*

## **Test & Trace Data Collection**

### ***"Why do I need to give you my information for test & trace?"***

A visitor may ask why they need to provide their information for test & trace data collection.

Explain to the visitor the purpose of this, due to Covid-19 regulations, data needs to be collected from all visitors for their safety if they were to be in exposed to Covid, the use of test & trace enables them to be informed of this and help prevent the spread of the virus.

Ensure the visitor that the data they provide is secured and is only kept for 21 days and will not be used for any other purpose, ensure that the collection of this data will comply with General Data Protection regulations.

Response example:

*"Due to government guidelines, it is required that when you visit our site, we take some information for test & trace. The information required is your name, postcode and email address/telephone number, this information will be stored securely for 21 days and will not be used for any other purpose. The reason for this data is for the safety of all our visitors and staff with regards to exposure to Covid-19."*

## **COVID-19 regulations**

There may be an occasion where a visitor may not be following Covid regulations, whether this may be not complying with social distancing, not wearing a face mask or refusing to follow the guidelines of the museum/gallery. Ensure staff feel confident and supported with up-to-date step by step guidelines and procedures for your site.

- **Social Distancing**

Step 1: Approach the visitor at a safe distance and use a friendly approach, make it positive!

Response example:

*"Excuse me, Sorry to disturb you there but if you could please make sure you stick to social distancing in the building that would be great, thank you! Enjoy the rest of your visit!"*

Step 2: If a visitor is confrontational about social distancing, the next step is to acknowledge the visitor's frustrations and to explain that social distancing is a guideline in place to ensure the safety of the visitors and staff within the building. You may wish to follow up with additional information about social distancing from government guidelines.

Response example:

*"I understand your frustrations, however due to government guidelines it is necessary that social distancing is in place to ensure the safety of our visitors and staff in the museum/gallery."*

Step 3: If the situation has not been resolved but this point, if the member of staff feels comfortable doing so, they can warn the visitor that they will have to ask them to leave the premises if they refuse to follow Covid guidelines.

If the member of staff does not feel comfortable in this situation and things escalate, call for a manager who will take over the situation.

Make sure that all staff are made aware of a visitor entering the building with a face mask exemption, this way there won't be any misunderstanding between visitors and staff.

- **Face coverings**

A visitor refusing to wear a face mask can be a very difficult and uncomfortable situation for staff to deal with. Set some guidelines and a procedure in place for staff to refer to so that they feel secure if the situation were to arise.

- Provide information about face masks and exemptions on your website and booking confirmation where possible so visitors are provided with this information before they come for their visit. Make sure to express that if visitors turn up to the site without a facemask and are not exempt that they will not be allowed to enter.

- If visitors have turned up without a facemask but will comply, provide a facemask for them where possible.

- If a visitor keeps removing their facemask or refusing to wear it properly whilst on site, consider using a 3 warnings approach. Ask the visitor in a positive manner to keep their facemask on and express that this is for the safety of others whilst in the building. If you have asked the visitor up to 3 times to do so, then this situation should be referred to a supervisor/manager who will then handle the situation. This may result in a final warning before asking a visitor to leave.

Make sure staff feel supported in these types of situations, they may not happen often, but it is best practice to discuss the procedures for such circumstances.

- **Anti-social behaviour**

Handling difficult situations such as Anti-Social behaviour is an area that all members of staff should feel prepared and supported with. Make sure you provide staff with up-to-date procedures and guidelines, so staff feel confident in handling situations.

Example: A group of people come in and are messing about and touching objects.

Approach the group/person, if you feel comfortable to do so. Ask another member of staff to come with you or call for a manager if you feel uncomfortable. Be polite and ask if the person/group would like any help at all. Politely let them know that they shouldn't touch the objects as they are old and fragile. Explain that the objects also can't be touched at the moment due to Covid-19 regulations. Do not be rude or raise your voice as this could escalate the situation. Remain calm and polite, try to re-focus their attention on something else they may be interested in. Use humour if appropriate or try to find something that they can touch instead. Could you find something silly in the collection or something with a gory history that they may be interested in that you could explain to them?

If the situation does escalate, call a manager for assistance. Remain calm.

- **Security**

Example: A visitor appears to be acting suspiciously (this could be for example: only paying attention to room fixtures and cases instead of displays, moving quickly into quiet areas, trying to access staff or private areas, paying a lot of attention to CCTV cameras or paying particular attention to site security systems.)

- Follow the National Counter Terrorism Training advice and approach the visitor at a safe distance to greet them and ask them politely if you can help with anything. This works very well as a polite deterrent and make the visitor aware that you have noticed them and their behaviour without referencing it at all or escalating the situation.
- Report to a manager if you feel that something isn't right/needs reporting further.

Response example: *"Hi, can I help you with anything?"*

Be aware of visitors asking about value of objects, specifics about how objects are stored and where, security system/alarms, specifics of exit routes or asking how many members of staff are working. Never give out information about these topics and report to a manager if you feel something was wrong or suspicious about the interaction.

- **Access to facilities**

*"I don't have a ticket but can I please use the toilets?"*

Please use your discretion for people needing the baby changing facilities, children, use of accessible toilet and people who may have medical conditions which mean they need access to the toilets. Make sure that Covid-19 regulations are maintained when people enter the building. Make sure the visitor is wearing a face covering or check for mask exemption, show them the one-way route to the facilities and point out the hand sanitiser.

Response example:

*"The toilets are located..... Follow the arrows and there are signs to let you know where they are. Please use the hand sanitiser on your way in and keep your face covering on at all times." (If they don't have a face covering, ask if they are face mask exempt or if they require a face mask)*

- **Access to shop**

*"I would just like to visit the shop please?"*

If your shop has a separate entrance/exit then direct visitors to this, making them aware of any social distancing guidelines such as giving way to exiting visitors first. Make them aware they will need to wear a face covering once inside and that there is hand sanitiser.

Response example:

"Our shop has a separate entrance at the moment because of our one-way system. Follow the signs to reach the shop but please be aware of other people using the entrance. Please wear your face covering inside the shop, thank you."

- **Curatorial enquiry/complaint**

**If a visitor has an urgent curatorial enquiry or complaint that they want to give direct to a curator.**

Follow your normal procedure for this, whether this be to point them towards a specific email address or to take their details down on an enquiry form. It is worth letting the visitor know that due to the pandemic that the curator is working off site/on furlough so it may take a while for a response.

If it is a complaint, listen to the visitor and make notes so that you can refer to these later. Reassure the visitor that you have taken on board what they are saying and will pass it on to a curator.

Please ensure that you first consult HM Government guidance [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): guidance and support - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-and-support) and [Nmdc Good Practice Guidelines For Reopening Museums - National Museum Directors' Council Website \(nationalmuseums.org.uk\)](https://www.nmdc.org.uk/guidelines) . Please note that this document has been written to provide practical advice, but the authors are not legal or medical experts. We recommend that you obtain specialist advice if you require it. This resource was produced in May 2021.