

CHARITY SHOP REOPENING PACK v1.0

Version history:

Document history	Version number	Date	Next stage
Opening draft for comment	0.1	30/4/20	Staff comment
Incorporating staff comments	0.2	30/4/20	Further staff comments to follow; board approval for certain items
Additional staff and board comments incorporated	0.3	1/5/20	Awaits government developments 2/3 May
This draft: Further comments incorporated	1.0	4/5/20	Publication on website for wider comment cycle and discussion at opening meeting on 6/5/20

Preamble

Welcome to the Charity Retail Association (CRA)'s reopening pack. Please note that this document is **constantly subject to change** due to changes in government guidance – please compare the version number listed above to the version on the CRA website to ensure you are reading the latest version.

We are extremely grateful to the numerous CRA members who have contributed time and effort to making this pack as comprehensive and useful as it could be. And also to the CRA staff team who have spent many hours collating and codifying an enormous amount of information into one coherent documents.

Structure

In order to create what is hopefully a logical structure for this document we have created three sections: the bricks and mortar and physical side of the shop, the people issues, and the commercial considerations. Clearly there is some overlap and we have tried wherever possible not to duplicate, so it would be advisable to read the whole pack or use searches to find the specific information you are looking for.

Status coding

Everything that follows in this pack is colour coded according to the following scheme:

Red items are those that we consider **mandatory**, ie legally required or mentioned in government guidance.

Amber items are those that are not legally mandated, but are **strongly recommended** by the CRA board (which consists largely of highly experienced charity retailers).

Green items are those that we recommend you consider against the requirements of your own businesses

Assumptions (nb this section may change over time)

Clearly there are many unknowns with regard to the guidance being offered (or not offered) about health and safety, Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) and other matters. This section lists the assumptions made within the current drafts.

- It is assumed that shops will open before the current COVID-19 pandemic is considered over.
- It is assumed that social distancing of 2 metres will be required even after the opening of shops
- It is assumed that frequent handwashing and the use of protective gels will be mandatory
- It is assumed that the use of personal face masks and protective screens will *not* be mandatory

National differences

In a limited number of cases guidance is differing in each part of the UK. Where we are able to we are noting such differences and it is anticipated this will increase in future versions of the document.

Finally

Please note that this document is intended to cover the opening period only, and it may be necessary to treat all the advice herein as temporary or “pilot”. The situation is bound to change quickly and frequently and you must keep your working practices **under constant review** rather than stick rigidly to what is suggested.

1. Bricks and mortar – shop and shop-related issues

1.1 Deciding which shops to open when

1.1.1 Timings

We do not yet have clear sight of when the Government will lift lockdown restrictions, or if they will be lifted simultaneously across the country. During the reopening meeting on the 17th April, discussions were held around how long it will likely take shops to open from the date that we are given the go ahead. Most members agreed that 7-10 days would allow sufficient time to prepare shops, rally teams and open doors.

There are a number of things to take into account when deciding when to reopen. Amongst these are:

- Availability of staff and volunteers. Will you be able to resource your shops when they are open?
- Location and size of shop. Do government restrictions apply? Do you want to spread your open shops across many locations or cluster them? Do you have better resources in one area (eg those nearest your head office) than in others?
- Profitability of shop. Do you want to open more profitable shops first to maximise immediate income? Or do you want to open less profitable shops first to concentrate on bringing them back?
- Availability of stock. Will your shops have sufficient stock to make opening worthwhile?

1.1.2 Phased or in one go?

Clearly you must consider whether to open all shops at the same time or a phased opening plan based on income, space, staff levels, stock levels, priority maintenance issues and government guidelines. A phased opening plan allows for thorough preparation and organisation of the shops, effective distribution/utilisation of available staff/volunteers, but obviously reduces the amount of income you can return to your charity at a time when they will need it most.

For information, we have included the polling results from the reopening meeting on 17th April 2020:



1.2 Safety and equipment

1.2.1 Fire

- Ensure that all fire extinguishers are working properly and have not missed their service date.
- Test fire alarms and ensure any connections to fire brigade, police etc, are working.
- Carry out a fire drill

1.2.2 Mould, pests and legionella

- Inspect the property carefully for pests and mould and take any necessary corrective action
- Please see the leaflet from HSE: 'Legionnaires' Disease'.

For a detailed guide and Q&A on Legionella control during the COVID-19 pandemic, please see the 'Legionella Control' documents.

- 1) If shops are being visited weekly and flushing regimes in place for all outlets at least once a week, no additional actions are required for re-opening (if this weekly regime didn't start straight away when shops were closed, it cannot now be started without risk to the people who would be flushing so step 2 is required)
- 2) As the water will have been sitting for a period of time, legionella bacteria will have had chance to grow (even in simple shop water systems and whether water was switched off or left on). Before reopening water needs to be tested/sampled by a competent water hygiene company and if the result is positive to trigger levels, disinfection of the water system will be required. Step 2 must be carried out before shop is reoccupied and people allowed to run water outlets. Simply running before reopening will potentially expose the people running the outlets to aerosols and bacteria.

1.2.3 Electrical

- Take appropriate professional advice on the order with which to restart your electricity network – this will depend on whether it was turned off at the mains or not. Be aware that turning everything on at once might cause a power surge which will cause disruption or damage.
- Recharge or replace any back-up batteries that have been depleted.
- Ensure that intruder alarms (if fitted) are still working and advise the alarm monitoring station of any re-opening.
- Ensure that any CCTV cameras fitted are still working and appropriately positioned.

1.2.4 Electronic - EPOS, PDQ, tablets

- Again take appropriate professional advice on the order with which to restart your electronics network, if necessary by contacting your EPOS provider. Be

aware that any electronic appliances such as tills and tablets may require a substantial period of updating before they can be used again.

- Updates and patches - Most PoS devices use Windows/Linux based operating systems, similar to that you would find on your home PC or Laptop. In order to keep your PoS and Back Office devices secure it is vitally important that the Operating System (OS), Drivers and Applications are kept up to date, in fact for certain updates, it is a PCI requirement. A lot of updates and patches are created to fix flaws that security researchers have found in the OS or software. If left unpatched it can leave your PoS devices vulnerable to Hackers, Malware and other malicious adversaries. Ideally you should have a process in place to ensure the PoS devices are updated on a regular basis, at least monthly.
- If you have turned off all your PoS tills during this lockdown, bear in mind that once you start the tills again, subject to your I.T policy to patch updates, it may slow down your tills and require multiple reboots to get to the most recent patch build before your tills start to perform optimally again and be secure.
- Antivirus - All PoS and Back Office devices should have some form of Antivirus installed. Antivirus helps protect your devices against Viruses, Malware, Ransomware, Malicious Intrusions etc. In order to be effective, Antivirus needs to be updated regularly, to keep you protected against the latest threats usually this requires some form of paid subscription. The Antivirus should be protected by password so that it cannot be turned off by a user or Adversary.
- One other thing to note, Generally, it is also a PCI requirement to have some form of Antivirus installed on your PoS devices, but does depending on a number of other factors on your infrastructure.
- Tablet & Mobile Devices - Your PoS environment may also utilise Tablets and Mobile devices. Mobile devices and Tablets also require regular OS and Application updates to protect them from vulnerabilities. They should also have some form of Antivirus package installed, if available. It's just as important to protect Mobile and Tablet devices as any other device, these devices may also be connected to your PoS network, therefore an unprotected device could provide a route into the PoS network for an intruder.

1.2.5 Fly tipping and removal of accumulated rubbish

With shops closed, some charity shops have experienced donations (or in some cases actual waste) being left outside the shop. These pose an environmental health concern, fire risk and may limit access for key services.

If you encounter such items when you re-open your shop we would advise you in the first instance to contact your local authority to find out if they will collect it - see the template letter in the Appendix. Some charity members have approached their local authority and asked for support in clearing rubbish or donations left outside whilst shops are in lockdown. Most were supportive so it may be worth contacting your local council to see if they will be happy to do this. Other boroughs have said they are currently closed but would be willing to collect once restrictions are relaxed. The Local Authority Recycling Advisory Committee (LARAC) have confirmed local authorities are unlikely to prosecute charities for donations left outside shops during this time. A portal for reporting fly tipping incidents is available [here](#).

In some cases charity members have used their drivers and un-furloughed staff to drop by some shops to, along with other duties, check any donations that have been left outside. Others have established close relationships with the local community so there is usually someone keeping an eye on anything that may be dumped. If needed, private waste collectors may be available. One member reports that the best available rate they have discovered is £55 for up to 2 cubic metres.

1.2.6 Other opening tasks checklist

Check for break-ins, leaks and other property-related issues	
Ensure you immediately photograph any problems you encounter	
Remove any inappropriate posters from your shop window	
Contact staff and volunteers (see next section)	
Update any emergency contacts as necessary, especially if some staff and volunteers are no longer available	
Ensure van drivers are back on stream (subject to restrictions itemised below)	
Inform local stock partners that you are open (if applicable)	
Replace any still applicable campaign POS in your windows	
Redress your windows	
Inform any local services (e.g. window cleaners) that you are now open again	
Adjust any answering machine message on your phones as appropriate	
Adjust any email out-of-office messages as appropriate	
Ensure your key log is brought up to date	
Reset any passwords as necessary	
Read meters	
Contact the police to inform them that you have reopened	
Contact your insurers to inform them that you have reopened	
Contact any town centre radio links schemes to inform them that you have reopened	
Make contact with your neighbouring shops to inform them that you have reopened	
Reset your safe	
Recreate your float	
Complete any outstanding bankings	
If you created a grab bag ensure it is replenished and repositioned in the shop	
Clean shop thoroughly	
Unseal the letterbox	
Consider removing curtains from staff areas to reduce the risk of contamination	

1.3 Stock and donations

1.3.1 Receiving donations in shop

Steps should be taken to maintain social distancing in and, immediately outside the shop. You should put up signage reminding donors to keep 2 metres away from other people and not to enter the shop if they have any COVID-19 symptoms; a current list of symptoms can be found [here](#). Some form of queue management or regulated entry system for members of the public dropping off donations may be required to ensure people maintain distance between one another in the shop and to prevent people dumping donations outside the shop. If a shop's layout and space allow, this could include a fenced off/floor marked path that splits donors from customers. If possible, a staggered or contactless donation system could help alleviate the number of people who come to the shop at once. Shops could accept donations when closed but not when trading (e.g. accept donations 9-11am and 4-5pm each day).

Be aware that it is perfectly possible to accept verbal gift aid declarations if donors are already signed up to the scheme. You could, if you need to, record these on your mobile phone or simply write down the declaration if that is your policy.

1.3.2 Storing and isolating (quarantining) donations

Current guidance from Public Health England (PHE) estimates that COVID-19 can survive on inanimate objects for up to 5 days at temperatures of 22 to 25°C and relative humidity of 40 to 50% (which is typical of air conditioned indoor environments). However, this does depend on the type of surface with studies showing COVID-19 can last up to 72 hours on plastic, 48 hours on stainless steel, 8 hours on copper, and 24 hours on cardboard.

As a precautionary measure, you should wait 72 hours before sorting newly donated stock. Alternatively, where this is not possible you should seek to process newly donated stock last. Members have given examples of isolating donations in warehouses, donated containers and, in some cases, taking on new, unoccupied, units in shopping centres. Other members have said their smallest shops will only be used to accept donations and won't be actually trading, at least in the immediate weeks after lockdown relaxes. These separate areas may, depending on size, be used as a drop off point to keep donors away from the shop floor. If, owing to shop size, isolating shop donations is not practical, clear space where feasible and keep new donation handling to an absolute minimum for 72 hours. Ensure staff/volunteers wash their hands regularly where donations are being stored. Please refer to our overall risk management document for further information, to be found [here](#).

For bric a brac and furniture donations you may wish to consider applying a biocide or bleach to kill the virus before putting it onto the shop floor.

You could consider using a traffic light or colour coding system to identify the date of donation of stock items.

1.3.3 Sorting donations

We have previously produced guidance and resources on handling donations prior to the rise of COVID-19. We would advise members continue these practices in addition to the

guidance in this pack. These resources are available on our Guidance page under 'Health & safety and fire safety' [here](#).

Anyone sorting donations should wash their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds regularly, and definitely before and after sorting, when they arrive to work and before they leave. If possible, set up a pop-up handwashing station with soap and water/hand sanitiser next to the sorting area.

Disposable gloves should be worn whilst sorting stock. Any gloves that are used to handle potentially contaminated donations will themselves become potentially contaminated so should be safely removed and disposed of immediately after use before touching any other surfaces and the sorter should wash their hands/apply hand sanitiser.

Government guidelines do not currently recommend the use of face masks outside of clinical or care settings. If a face mask is to be used when sorting donations it must be worn and removed, correctly, changed often, disposed safely and used in combination with good hygiene behaviour.

Steam all clothing thoroughly and wash down donated goods with hard surfaces with standard cleaning products. CRA Corporate members, Propress Steamers, said this: "Steamers should be turned on and tested as part of the preparatory work for the opening." Please see Propress Care and Maintenance Guide for more information.

1.3.4 Driver collection and delivery

Drivers should minimise their contact with donors if they need to collect from a property. The driver should not enter the customer's property and items being delivered or collected shouldn't be physically handed over but left somewhere for the other party to collect. Drivers should be given hand sanitiser to be carried at all times and used after each deliver/collection. They should be encouraged to wash their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds as regularly as possible. When delivery/collection teams are travelling together, good ventilation (i.e. keeping windows open) and facing away from each other may help reduce the risk of transmission. If an option, one person can drive the van and another follows in a car, though this will be based on staff ability to drive, willingness to use their own vehicles and incurring of travel expenses. Vehicles should be cleaned regularly using gloves and standard cleaning products.

If entering someone's home cannot be avoided, drivers should wash their hands using soap and water for 20 seconds and continue to do so regularly, particularly after blowing their nose, sneezing or coughing. If hand washing facilities aren't available hand sanitiser should be used. Drivers should maintain a minimum of 2 metres distance from the donor/customer where possible. Keep time spent in property short and sanitise any surfaces touched before leaving.

Drivers should not enter a household which is isolating or where an individual is being shielded. Ensure a system is in place for customers/donors to notify you if they are in self-isolation/shielding. Drivers should feel comfortable to refuse to complete collection/delivery if the customer/donor appears unwell or it doesn't seem safe to proceed.

Examples to reduce the amount of interaction for drivers include:

- Remove the need to sign for deliveries
- If collecting, communicate with donor to manage their expectations about what can be collected at the moment
- Vehicle dividers between two front seats (these would need to be cleaned after each journey)

As much as possible, keep delivery teams working together rather than mixing individuals on different shifts. The inside of lorry cabs should be regularly cleaned, particularly between use by delivery teams. Drivers should use stairs in preference to lifts to reduce crowding and to reduce the number of touch points (like lift buttons). If possible, try to time deliveries at a time when no-one else will be coming to the shop to further reduce crowding.

You may need to consider whether it is feasible to continue to pick up/deliver two person lift items, implementing some of the additional measures list above. Alternatively you may decide only to proceed with one person lift items for the time being. If you decide to only proceed with one person lift items and therefore only one delivery driver – you may need to consider establishing a lone working policy specifically for van drivers.

Consider issuing customers with a statement such as this:

“What precautions are your delivery drivers taking to ensure I don’t get Coronavirus?”

Our drivers are following all Government advice. As such, your driver will call you ahead of arriving at your property to double-check if you’re isolating or not. On arrival, your driver will ensure they keep a 2 metre distance from your door and will ask you to wait in another room whilst they deliver your product. Our drivers will be wearing gloves and are washing their hands regularly.

If a driver asks to wash their hands in your home we would appreciate if you could help them out. There’s currently a nationwide shortage of hand sanitiser but we are working hard to source stock and provide our drivers with this. In the meantime, hand washing is the best advice.

On occasion we do use third party delivery people who have ensured us they are following all Government guidance.

Will you bring the product into my home?

All deliveries will now be made to behind the main entrance of your home. If you have a shared entrance – if you live in an apartment block, for example – this means we’ll bring it into your apartment, not just the front entrance to the building.

The only exceptions to this will be American Fridge Freezers or any cooking products that include an installation service - which we will continue to deliver to the room of your choice.

If you have a recycling collection booked, you’ll need to bring your item to your door ready for us to collect otherwise we won’t be able to remove it.

If you're self-isolating because of illness or Coronavirus/Covid-19 symptoms, and have booked an installation for a cooking product or American Fridge Freezer, we won't be able to enter your home to carry out the installation. We will need to leave the item on your doorstep. The cost of your installation will be refunded.

We're taking a sensible approach to the evolving situation with Coronavirus by following all Government advice to make sure we can continue to serve our customers and protect our people. When we deliver, we ask that you distance yourself from our drivers by waiting in another room while they carry out the delivery. This helps to reduce the risk of spreading the virus to others.

1.3.5 Rag

Maintain communication with your textile recycler as much as possible. Even though many will be in lockdown some charity members have reported collection bins and van collections were available in some cases. Communicate with your recycler to try and bring them in sync with your reopening plans. As shops open up, the recycler sector will likely be in receipt of a significant level of items. This may result in a reduction in rag price and, potentially, a limit on the amount and the type of items a shop will be able to have taken away as rag. Consider other potential merchants for items such as books and DVDs and, as a last option, identify the waste costs for their disposal.

1.4 Rental and landlords

Obviously inform your landlords that you have reoccupied the premises and will now be carrying out checks as normal.

In many cases our members have been able to obtain favourable consideration from landlords. If you are one of the lucky ones please ensure that you carefully follow what has been agreed with your landlord.

If you have not yet been able to obtain such terms we have published a template letter which can be personalised and sent to landlords to request rent relief/adjustment for the lockdown period. We have had a number of successes from members, but also some landlords who will not engage. We have also been engaged with some joint lobbying with recalcitrant landlords so do contact us for assistance if appropriate.

2. People

2.1 Returning from furlough

Clearly there are a number of legal and commercial considerations applying to the return of staff from furlough, and you are advised to contact your HR department in the first instance to understand the issues associated with bringing staff back. By way of assistance HMRC are running a series of Webinars which aim to support businesses and employers dealing with the economic impact of COVID-19 – including furloughed workers, scheme eligibility, how to calculate a claim and more. Book on to the Webinars [here](#).

Hopefully this checklist may be of some assistance:

Organise national minimum wage increase for furloughed staff (if you didn't apply increase in April pay already)	
Create a recall from furlough schedule	
HR produce recall letters for staff and send out	
Inform redeployed staff (and their current line managers) of shop opening and move back into shops (notice period to work in new role)	
Unfurlough shop teams and agree notice period	
Confirm which staff will be back for shop opening	
If people can't return to work due to schools/nurseries not being open, what is charity policy on this?	
Produce a motivational video for shop managers and volunteers	
Create a wellbeing information pack for staff including where to find support for practical, emotional and financial matters	
Prepare guidelines for line managers to support staff returning from furlough	
Once open – get Area Retail Managers to visit shop with the first week or two to see how staff/volunteers are coping and if new measures are working	
Confirm with HR employees who have not returned from furlough (sickness, AWOL) and set up an action plan for dealing with non-returns	
HR and Area Managers to identify staff who need extra support during first weeks back and put this support in place	

2.2 Re-engaging with volunteers and staff

2.2.1 Bringing staff together for the opening

If it is appropriate and possible to do, whilst observing any social distancing measures, you may wish to bring all your shop staff together to share your vision for the shop reopening and planned successes for the next few months. This could be a nice way of motivating them and making them feel part of the wider shop strategy. You could always consider doing this as a webinar on video conference, if it's not possible to do it face to face.

Consider providing a detailed overview of what has happened whilst they have been away, the twists and turns of the changing landscape and the decisions that were taken with reasons. A huge emphasis should be to assure people that they will be returning to a safe working environment

2.2.2 Thanking volunteers during Volunteers' Week

CRA are producing a media pack and guidance for celebrating Volunteers' Week (1 – 7 June) and thanking your volunteers, even if the shops are still closed. It will contain information about suggested activities throughout the week, as well as ideas for producing short thank you videos and other social media content. This should be available from Wednesday 20 May.

2.2.3 Further considerations for volunteers

Another helpful checklist:

Volunteer return newsletter prepared	
Return to volunteer letters sent out	
Speak to volunteers to understand who is available to return	
Volunteers contacted by phone to check on well-being and maintain contact	
Prepare a mini refresher induction for volunteers including a wellbeing check	
After first couple of weeks – understand and review the changes in volunteering levels in shops and the effect on the business	

2.3 Morale and mental health

As mentioned under the assumptions section it is expected that shops will reopen before the coronavirus outbreak is fully controlled. This may result in increased stress for staff, volunteers and especially anyone still in isolation. The CRA has funded access for our members to acquire expertly curated wellbeing resources via the retailTRUST's self-help website, myrtwellbeing.org.uk. The site includes a wealth of digital resources to support the emotional, physical, vocational and financial wellbeing needs of you and your retail colleagues.

This member benefit brings wellbeing resources within easy reach of those that need it. Content is updated and added to regularly and profiles are personalised to the preferred content of the user. Use is confidential and designed to be discreet for those seeking guidance and support. To find out more and set-up access please visit our website: <https://www.charityretail.org.uk/supporting-your-wellbeing/>

When faced with challenging circumstances it can sometimes be difficult to know how best to support ourselves and in turn help others. Below are some additional resources that you may find useful and informative.

A number of organisations have put together short guides on how to look after your mental health during this uncertain time. There are many recurring themes, the common tips include:

- setting up a routine and sticking to it

- staying connected with loved ones online and digitally
- limit your news and social media intake
- keep moving and eating well.

For further information contact:

- BBC - Coronavirus: How to protect your mental health
- Mind – Coronavirus and your wellbeing
- Samaritans - worried about your mental health during coronavirus?
- And two important organisations well known for their assistance in this area:
 - Mind
 - Samaritans or call on 116 123

2.4 Keeping people safe

2.4.1 COVID risk management

We have produced a comprehensive risk guide on keeping staff, volunteers and customers safe from COVID-19. This document is to be found [here](#). Please use it to guide your own risk assessments when deciding what to do and how to keep your shops as safe as possible. Similarly to this document it is categorised by mandatory steps, steps advised by CRA, and items for you to think about.

2.4.2 PPE

As noted in the risk management document referenced above, the government requirements on Personal Protection Equipment are not definitive at this point. However in anticipation, you could consider sourcing the following:

- Tape/Floor stickers
- Disposable gloves
- Hand sanitiser – with stand
- Perspex till shield

We have assembled a directory of potential suppliers of such equipment and this will be kept regularly up to date.

2.5 Recruiting additional volunteers

Once you know which shops are able to reopen, how many staff the shop will have and the number of volunteers you think will return, you need to compare this to how many people you need in the shop to run it successfully and see if you need to recruit for more volunteers at this time.

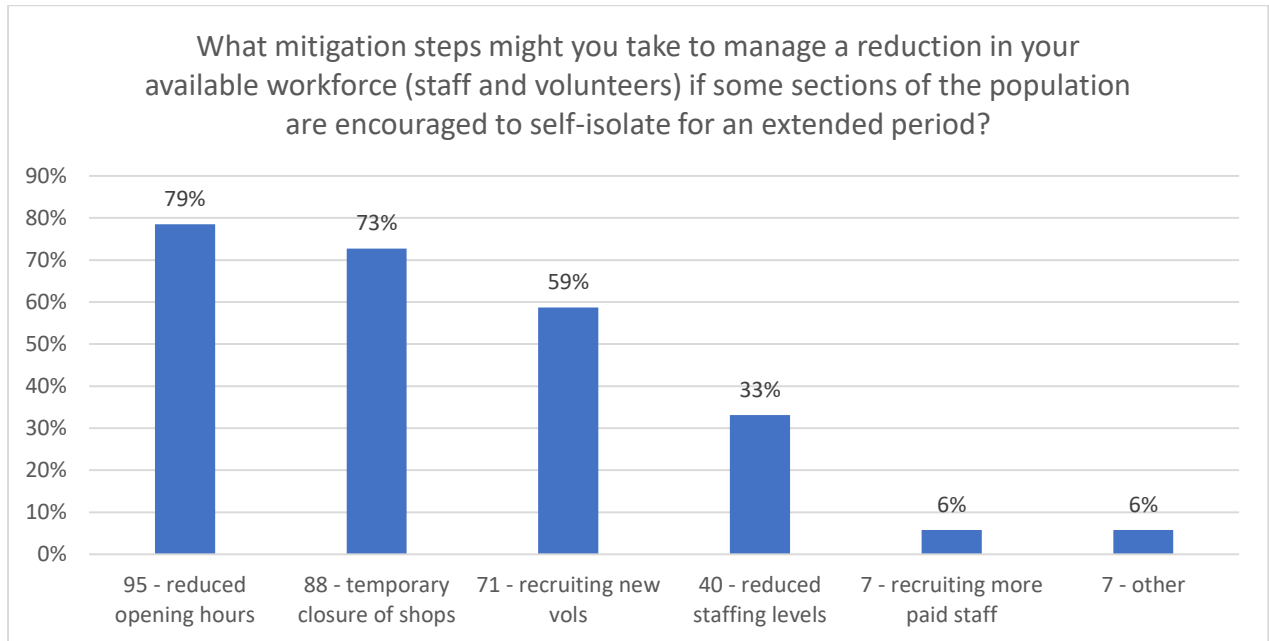
NB: It is important to note that social distancing measures may limit how many people you can have in the shop at any one time, or how many volunteers you need for each shift for the first few weeks the shop is open, so please refer back to specific social distancing guidance in this resource before undertaking any volunteer recruitment activity.

If you do decide to undertake volunteer recruitment activities pre-shop opening and in the first few weeks of the shops being reopen, here are some things you may wish to consider:

- Identify your recruitment needs – do you need specific voluntary roles, or volunteers on specific days.
- Create a volunteer role description for each specific role you're recruiting for e.g. one role description for a social media volunteer and another for a volunteer van driver.
- Where will you promote this volunteering opportunity?
 - Shop based advertising, such as an A board outside the shop or a poster in the shop window, flyers for customers to take
 - Word of mouth advertising through customers, donors and existing volunteers – do they know someone who would like to volunteer?
 - Speak to your local volunteer centre about advertising the role, promoting your charity and any other opportunities they might have
 - Engage the local community by speaking to local community groups, putting flyers up in local spaces (such as libraries, supermarket boards etc.)
 - Make contact with the local newspaper – they will often advertise volunteer roles for free. Can you write about the benefits of volunteer for the paper as an advertorial piece?
 - Reach out to schools, universities and colleges to see if their students would benefit from volunteering (perhaps as part of a Duke of Edinburgh scheme or work experience)
 - Post your advert online – through your own charity's social media channels, on volunteering websites like Do-it.org, Indeed or Gumtree
 - Contact your local Job Centre Plus to explore offering volunteering roles to the job seekers they are supporting
- Make sure everyone in the shop knows you're recruiting for volunteers and can talk to any potential applicants, or know of any specific resources to hand them.
- Once you've received interest from a potential volunteer, it is best practice to set-up an informal discussion with them. This could be over the telephone or you could invite them into the shop for a chat.
- Set aside time to develop questions to ask during the informal discussion and make a note of their answers. This is so you can be consistent with each potential volunteer you see. Here are some questions you could ask them:
 - Why would you like to give your time to our charity?
 - What are you hoping to get out of volunteering?
 - What skills do you have that you can bring to our volunteer team?
 - Tell me about any previous retail or volunteering experience you've had
 - Tell me about your hobbies and interests
 - What is your availability volunteer?
 - Where did you hear about volunteering in our shop?
 - Is there anything we can do to support you in your volunteering?
- After the discussion, thank them for coming in to meet you (or talk on the phone) and tell them you'll be in touch, and give a time frame. It is important to let every potential volunteer know either way and follow up with each one after their informal chat.
- You may want to offer the potential volunteer a taster session volunteering in the shop and should arrange a suitable time and date to do this.

- If you feel they would be a suitable volunteer, offer them the volunteering role! Well done, now don't forget to consider the induction phase, including checking references and providing them with training.

If after all that you aren't able to recruit enough volunteers, you might like to consider mitigation. At a recent meeting the following question was asked:



3. Operational and marketing

3.1 Maintaining donations flow

Once shops reopen, you will need to ensure they maintain a steady stream of donations.

From the experience of charity members, common recommendations would be:

- Partnerships with private retailers, schools, hotels, and other organisations in the local community.
- Using social media to both request donations and promote what has already been received (e.g. ‘best of donations’).
- Adapt the shop floor to display the types of items you would like donated
- Make calls for specific donations.

Be mindful that any campaigns for stock, such as donation vans in a supermarket car park, must conform to government guidelines on essential travel, social distancing, PPE etc.

Depending on your sequence of opening some shops may not have enough season-appropriate stock so this may be something to take into consideration.

The CRA has numerous resources on sorting and pricing donated items to get the maximum value from what your shop receives. These can be found on our Guidance page under ‘Sale of goods’ [here](#) and on the donated item pricing tips [here](#).

3.2 Marketing

It will be extremely important to let people know that your shops are reopening in as many ways as possible. Social media is a quick, cost effective and highly successful method of sharing the good news. Ensure all of your channels reflect the same messages and contain the same information.

Keep the messaging positive and engaging, try to use imagery (an attractive shop front/window display, community spirit, etc) which will catch the eye. Aim to build up the anticipation over a few days, and make it exciting. Consider adopting a theme or event to lead with – e.g ‘Everything British’ celebrating how united we are as a kingdom, or ‘Thank you Keyworkers’, celebrating and giving thanks to those who have helped during the crisis. It could consist of small efforts in the shop, such as a themed window display or all the staff wearing rainbow colours.

Ensure that your website and Google are updated with shop opening hours, as this will likely be people’s first port of call to find this information. Write to local newspapers/magazines/radio stations and share the good news – their audiences will be eagerly awaiting news of local reopenings.

You could make posters to put in the window which state the date of the reopening, and include instructions for those who would like to donate (avoiding leaving donations outside, bring them to a specified location at a particular time/date, etc).

Here you will find a poster which you can customise for display on shop doors/windows to help with Social Distancing.

3.3 CRA Find a Shop database

At a time when online searching has become the norm, keeping your shops' information updated on our highly-ranked "[Find a shop](#)" page is essential for donors, volunteers and customers. Give your shops the attention they deserve by sending us any updates you might have (e.g. relocations, type of shop, phone number, opening hours, etc.). We would like to make your shops more visible online, help you attract more donors, customers and volunteers and consequently enable you to raise more money for your cause. Please send your updates to Irina at irina@charityretail.org.uk.

3.4 E-commerce

We are currently underway on an exciting project to bring you an 'E-Commerce' pack. It will consist of useful 'how to' guides on all the most popular ways of selling online. It will contain hints and tips for photography, and explain the rationale for shifting towards E-Commerce, especially in light of the current situation. The pack will be available in the next few weeks, we will announce its publication date in due course.