

COVID ————— 19

SAFER COMMUNITY CENTRES

Helping community centres and
village halls to reopen safely

Community Centres and Village Halls are places that help to support and sustain public life across the country. This Covid-19 Safer Spaces guide is to assist staff and volunteers in adapting their centres to enable safe reopening and hire.

Developed by architects IF_DO, in partnership with the ACRE and Clarion Futures, this free-to-use guide sets out clear stages of how to safely reopen community centres and village halls across the UK. Visual diagrams illustrate the spatial adaptations required for hiring and other essential services to recommence as safely as possible.

As an architecture practice, IF_DO is focussed on the design of social infrastructure - places that help to improve lives for people and foster stronger and more resilient communities. These places will be critical to the social recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic, and the Covid-19 Safer Spaces project has been developed to provide expert guidance on how they can be safely adapted.

We are grateful for the support of numerous individuals who have contributed their time and expertise to the development of this guide. With thanks in particular to Deborah Clarke, Rural Evidence and Village Halls Manager at ACRE, Kate Beeching, Community Asset Manager at Clarion Futures, Danny Chappell, Community Assets and Facilities Officer at Clarion Futures, Kate England at Wickham Community Centre, Dave Lunn at Riverside Community Centre and Lynda Redding at Hewish & Puxton Village Hall.

Developed by

IF_DO

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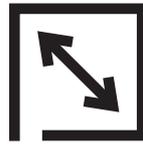
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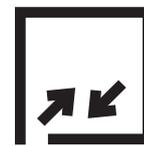
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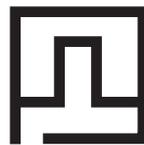


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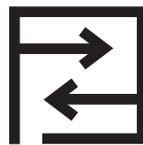


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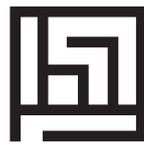
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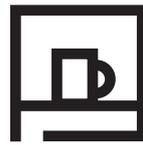
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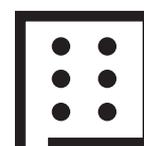
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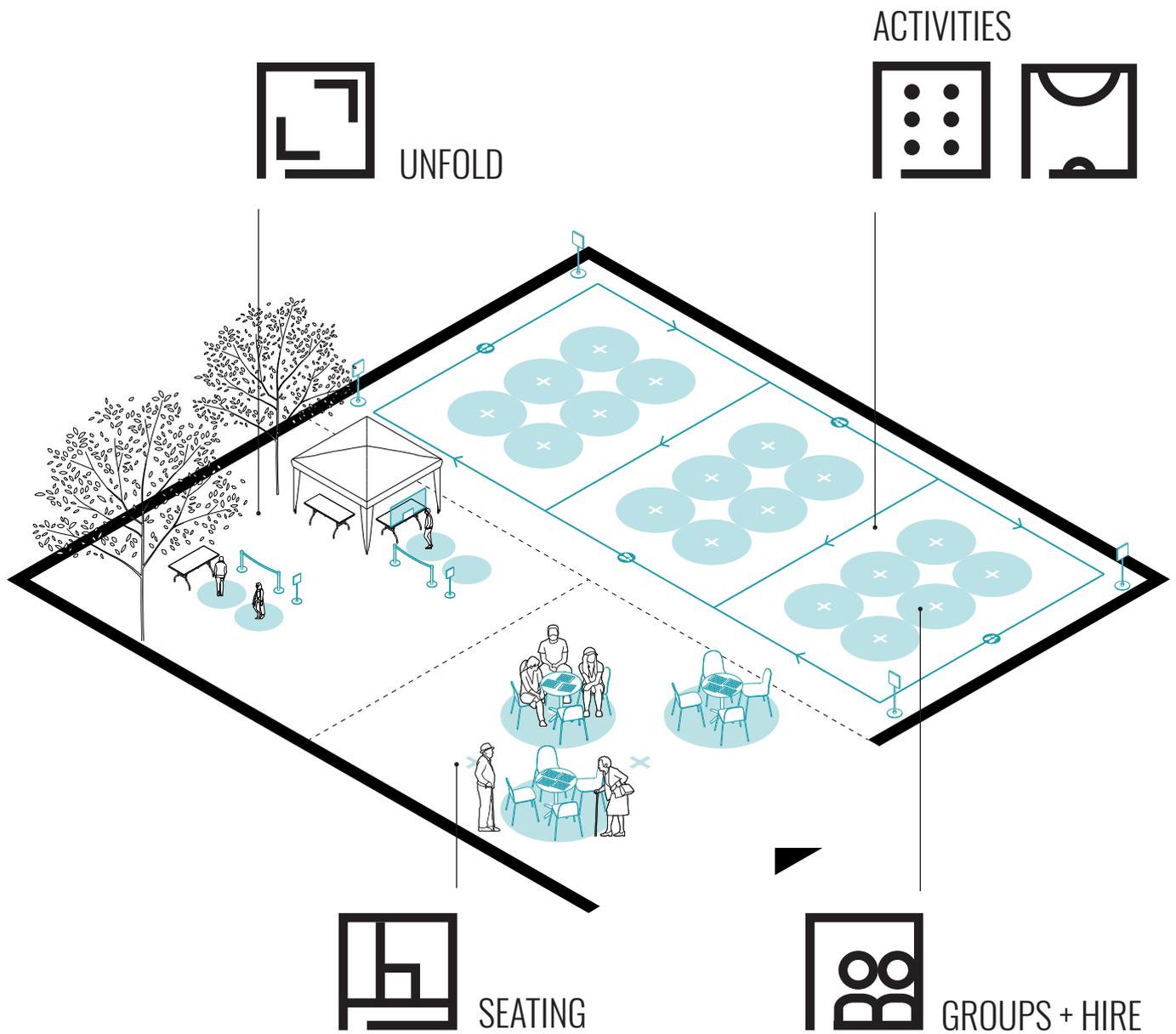
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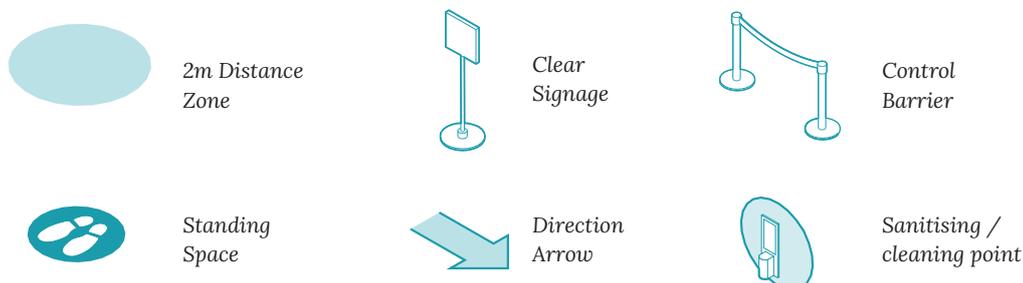
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OVERVIEW

The overview diagram below illustrates the core elements for the initial reopening for community centres and village halls across the UK. The key details the graphical components used throughout the guide.



KEY



KEY CONSIDERATIONS

01

Reopening for hire safely. Community centres rely on the income generated from hiring spaces to various members of the public. It is therefore paramount to ensure that the spaces are safe to be used by any group on any day.

02

Enabling multiple uses. Conceiving a simple system of markers and clear signage to ensure that social distancing guidance can be adhered to in many different instances that take place in a single place safely.

03

Acknowledging distancing requirements. Entrances to community centres may introduce a permanent marker on the floor to indicate safe distance areas, as a tangible reminder for all hirers.

04

Supporting volunteers. Community centres are important social hubs and come in different shapes and sizes. Smaller village-halls will operate on a volunteer basis, which this guide accounts for in suggesting simple strategies for safe reopening.

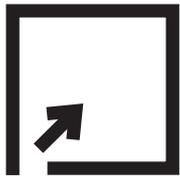
05

Registering Users. A record of all users of the community centre or village hall should be made and kept for 21 days in accordance with government test and trace guidelines. Digital or online registration should be used where possible.

06

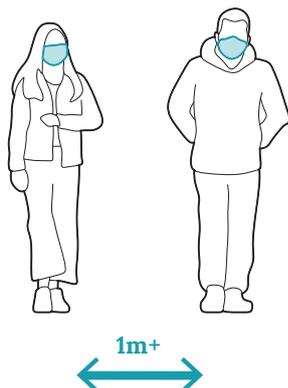
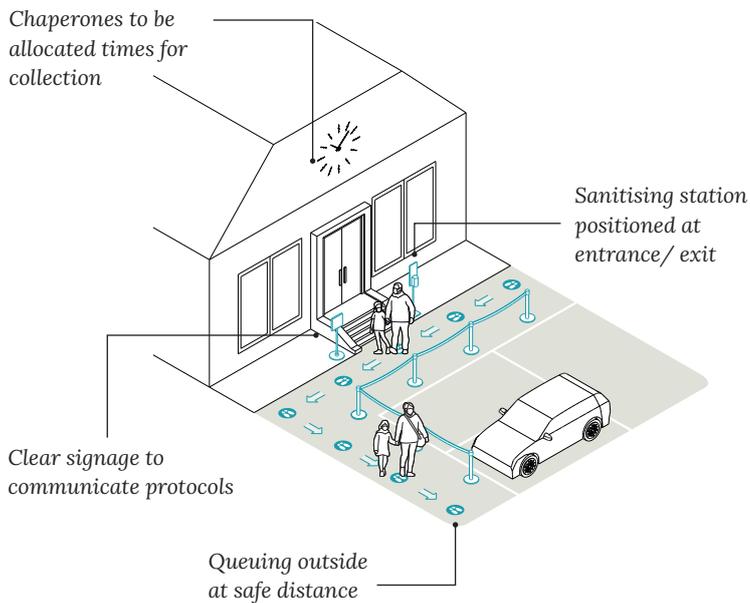
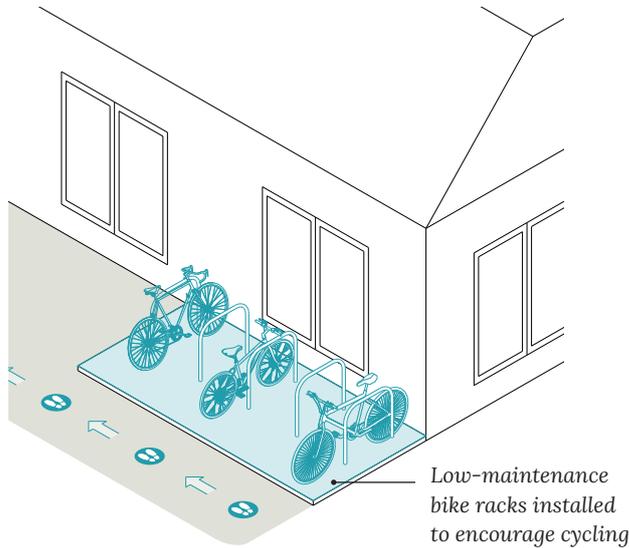
Unfolding into external spaces. Guidance for social-distancing may restrict the indoor activity to the extent they are not worthwhile hosting. Facilitating these same activities outdoors may enable greater numbers of participants.

ELEMENTS



PROTOCOLS

ARRIVAL



Alternative Travel

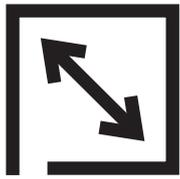
Supporting sustainable transport options will help to reduce a reliance on public transport. For example, providing additional bike racks may encourage more people to cycle.

Parent Chaperone

Chaperones or carers may wait outside premises while adhering to social distance guidance. Limit adult to adult contact, such as at entrances. Avoid the need for chaperones to wait, but consider the use of physical distancing markings for when they do.

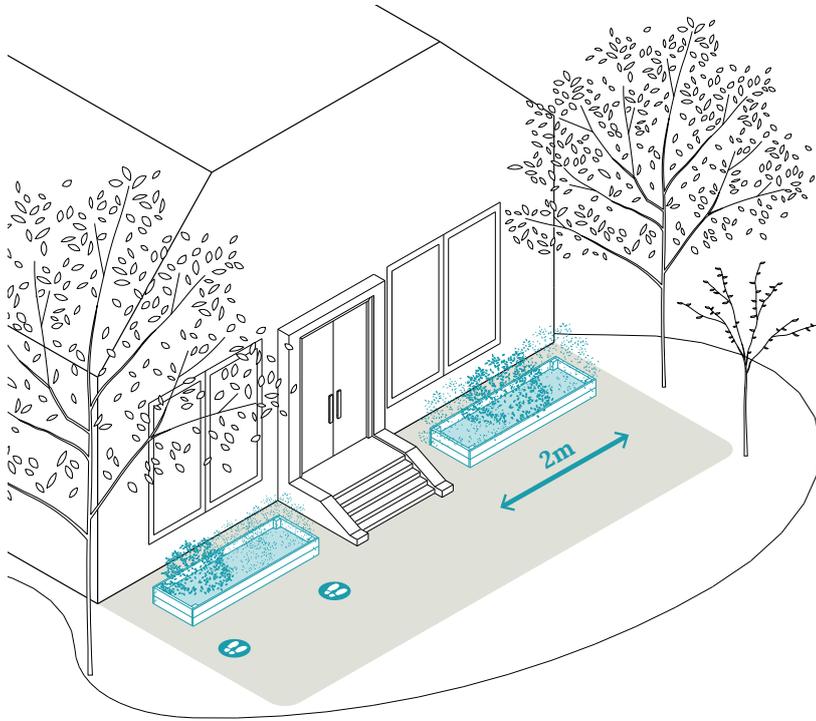
Face Coverings

Face coverings must be worn immediately before entering the community centre, and must remain on until exiting the building. Please refer to government guidance for exceptions. This guide has been developed to allow for 2m safe distance between people, which ensures 1 metre + guidance can also be maintained at all times.



PROTOCOLS

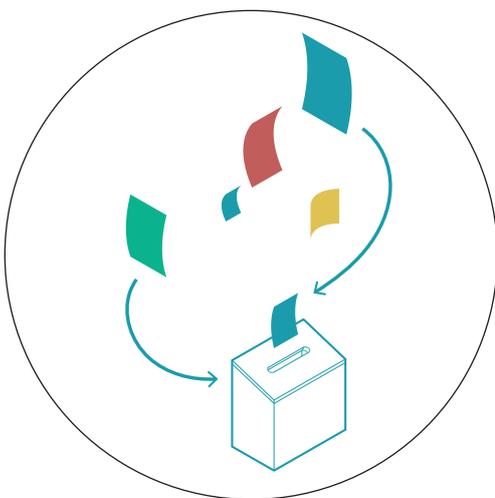
SAFE DISTANCING



Engaging Distancing

Everyday objects such as flowerbeds can also function as social distancing markers, facilitating the guidance and also adding beauty to the community centre's entrance. They can assist in the safe distancing of queues outside the building, whereas community boards can do the same within. These objects might be collectively produced; a wall piece composed of uplifting messages from regular hirers functions as both a practical tool to ensure safe distancing as well as an opportunity to maintain morale.

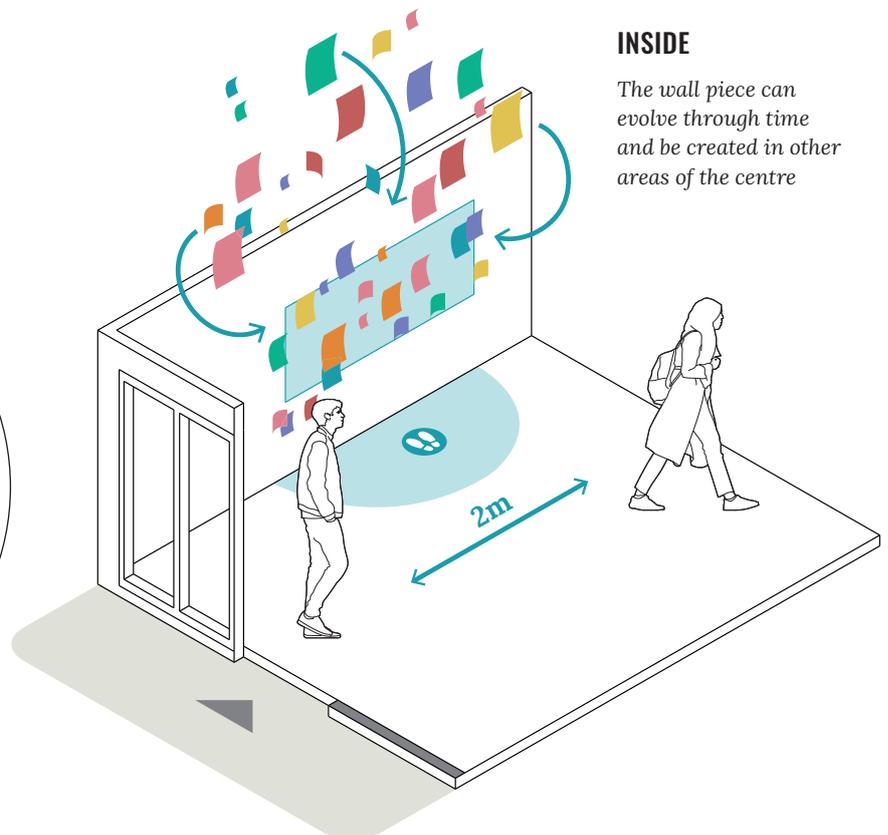
OUTSIDE



Collection box to be clearly labelled and quarantined for 72 hours

INSIDE

The wall piece can evolve through time and be created in other areas of the centre



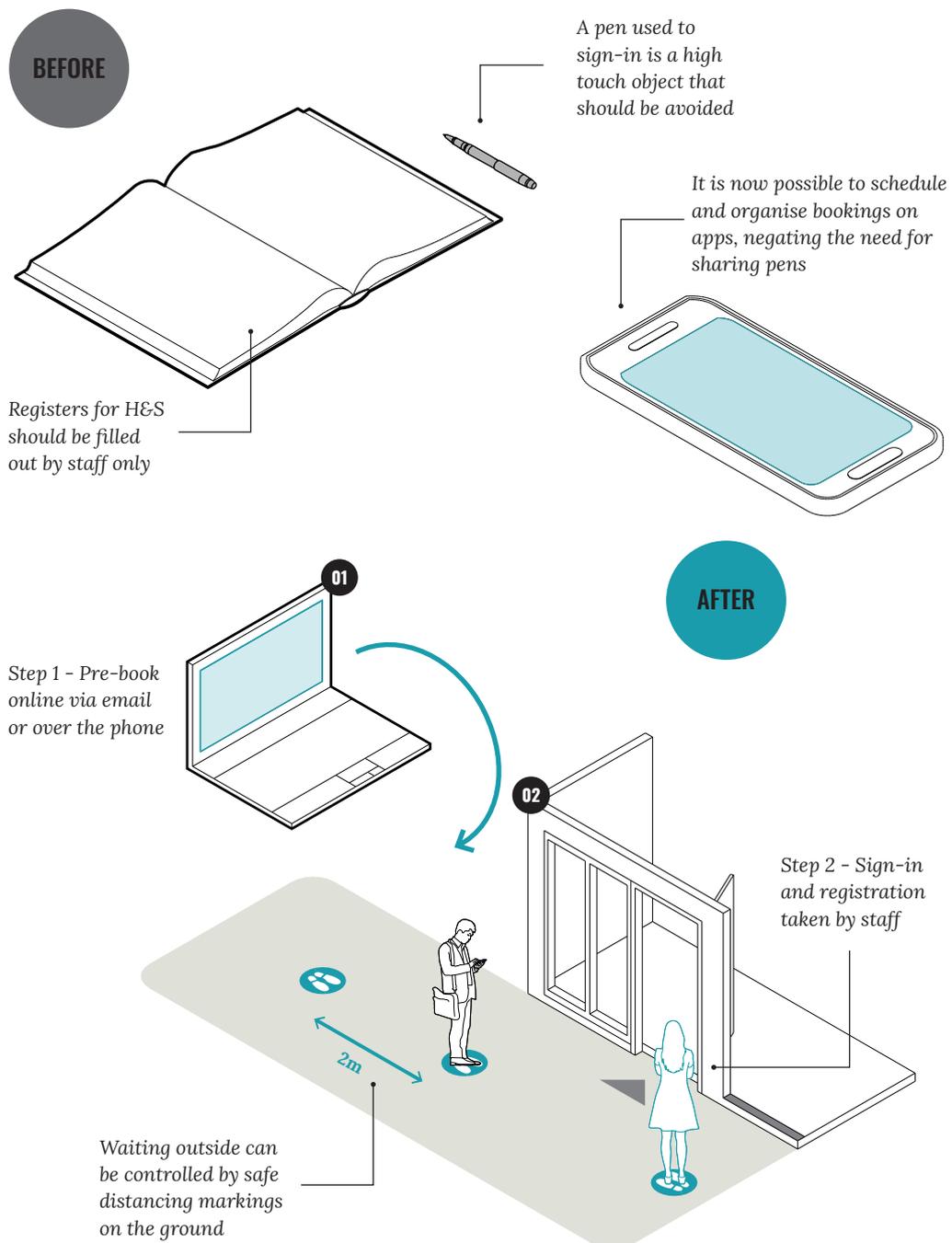


PROTOCOLS

ENTER + EXIT

Registration

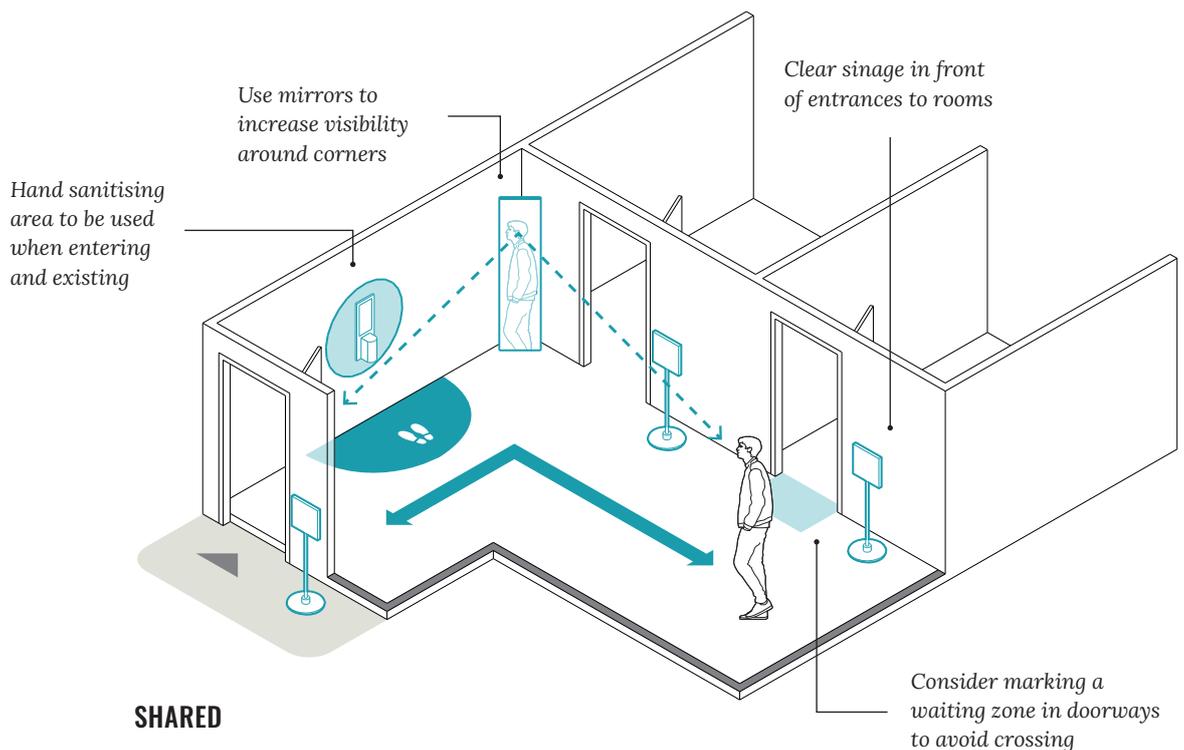
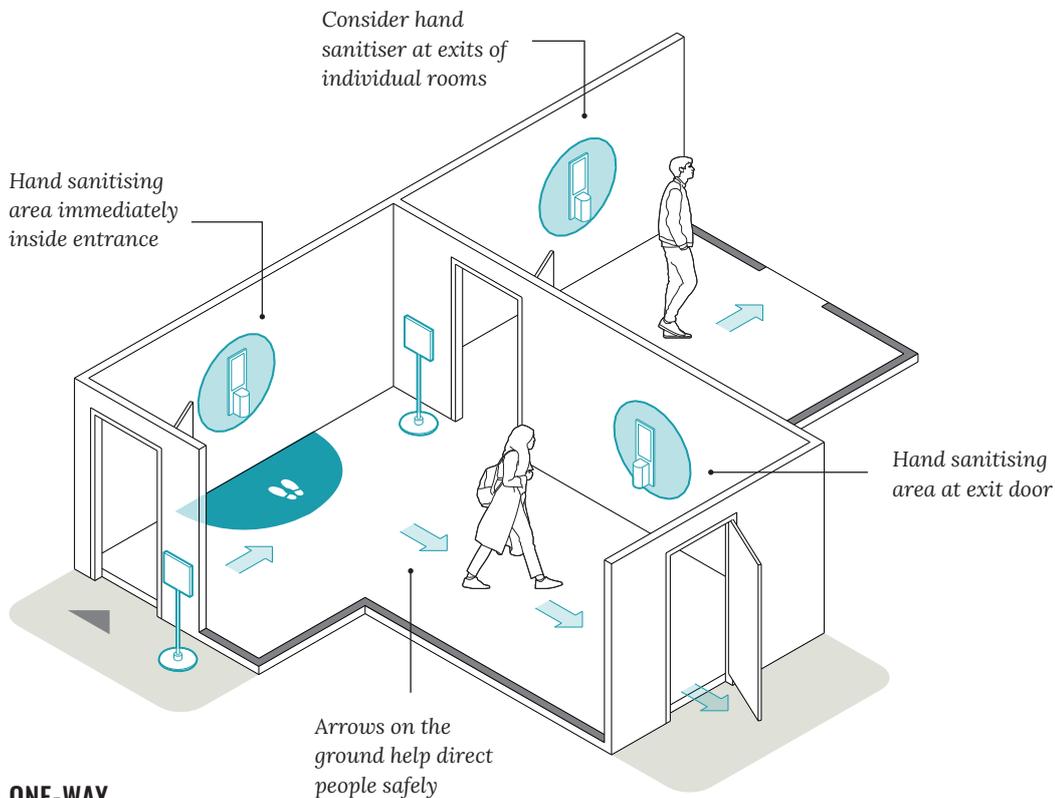
High touch objects that are used by everyone entering the community centre, such as registers and pens, should be avoided. Instead, hirers should book a time and date to access the centre's spaces online. Time slots will control the number of people within, as well as manage the flow of those entering and exiting the building. Where possible, hirers are recommended to register all participants in their activity for Test and Trace; all registers of staff and hirers should be kept for 21 days as per test and trace government guidance.





One-Way System

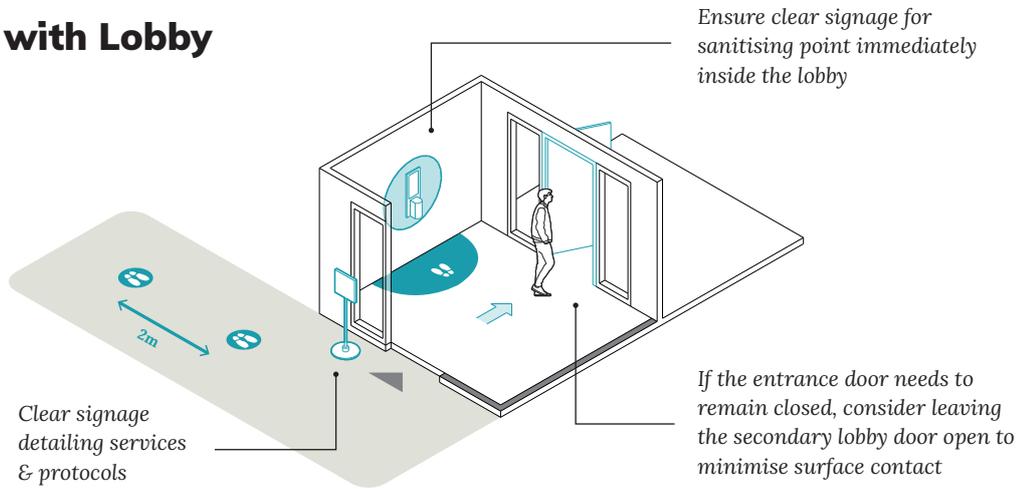
Creating a one-way system throughout the site is encouraged, as this ensures safe distancing, and decreases dwell times in hallways. Where this is not possible, considering using mirrors on corners to increase visibility. Use clear signage at room entrances help direct people to appropriate facilities.



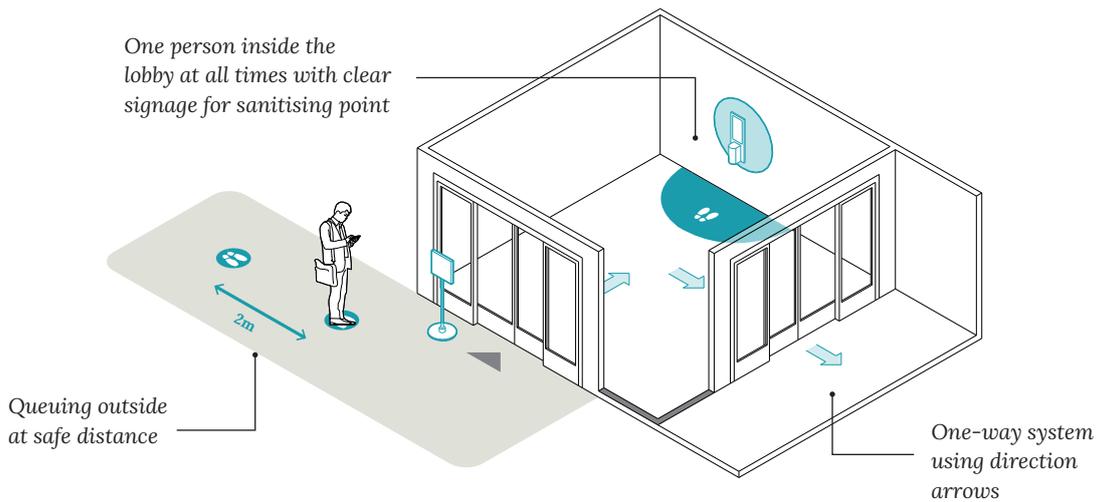


ENTRANCES

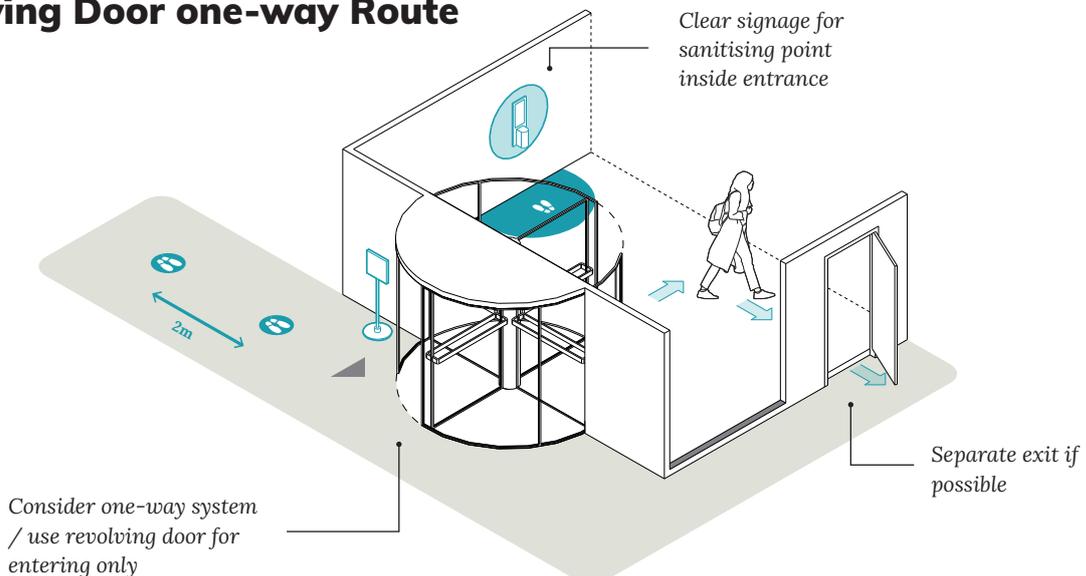
Single Door with Lobby



Automatic Door with Lobby



Revolving Door one-way Route



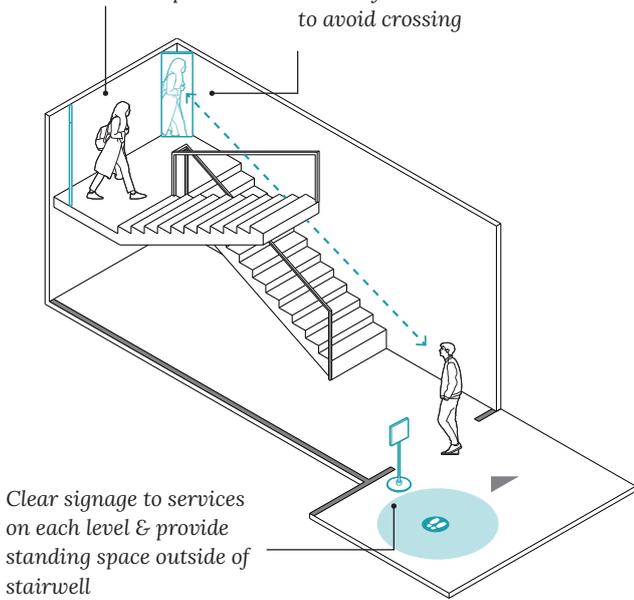


CIRCULATION

Single Staircase

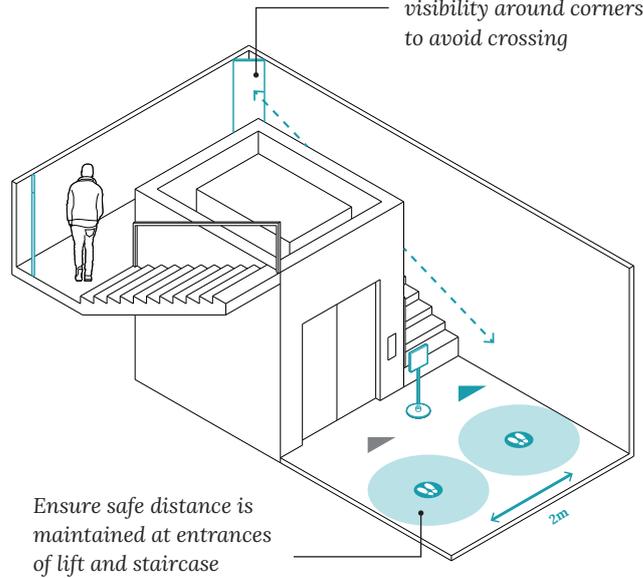
One way system on staircases where possible

Use mirrors to increase visibility around corners to avoid crossing



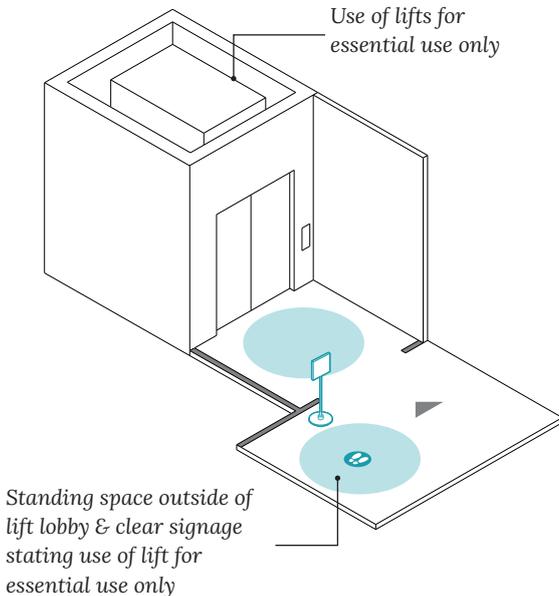
Lift & Stair Core

Use mirrors to increase visibility around corners to avoid crossing



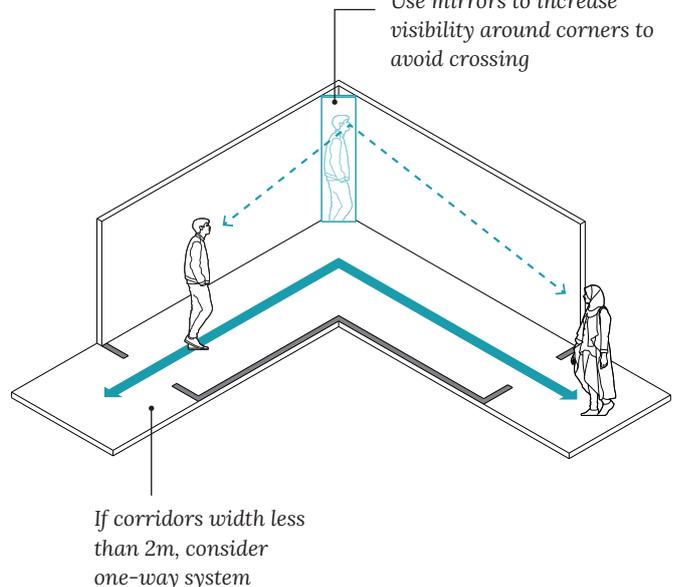
Elevator

Use of lifts for essential use only



Corridor

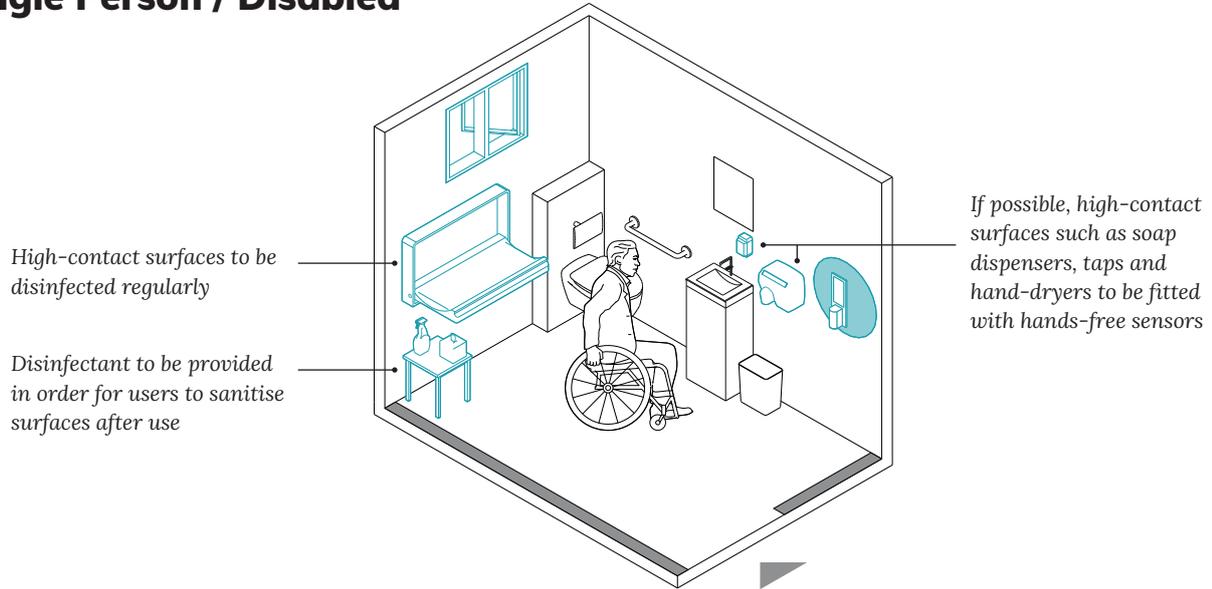
Use mirrors to increase visibility around corners to avoid crossing



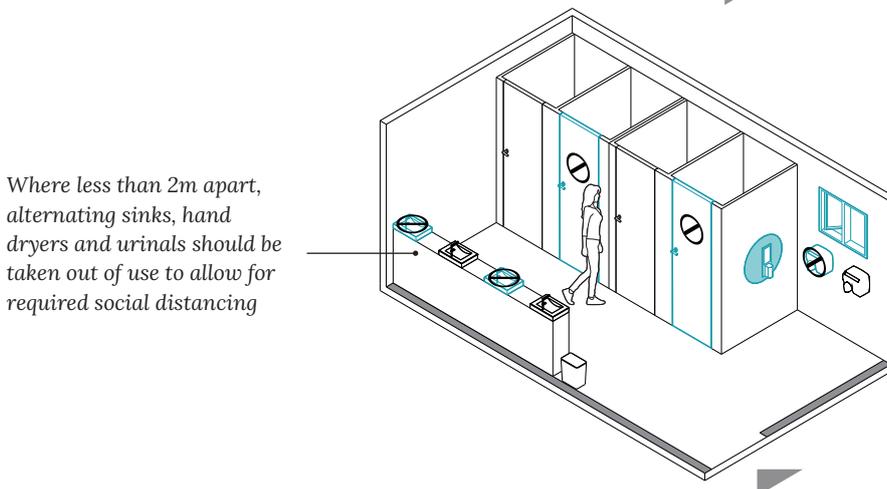
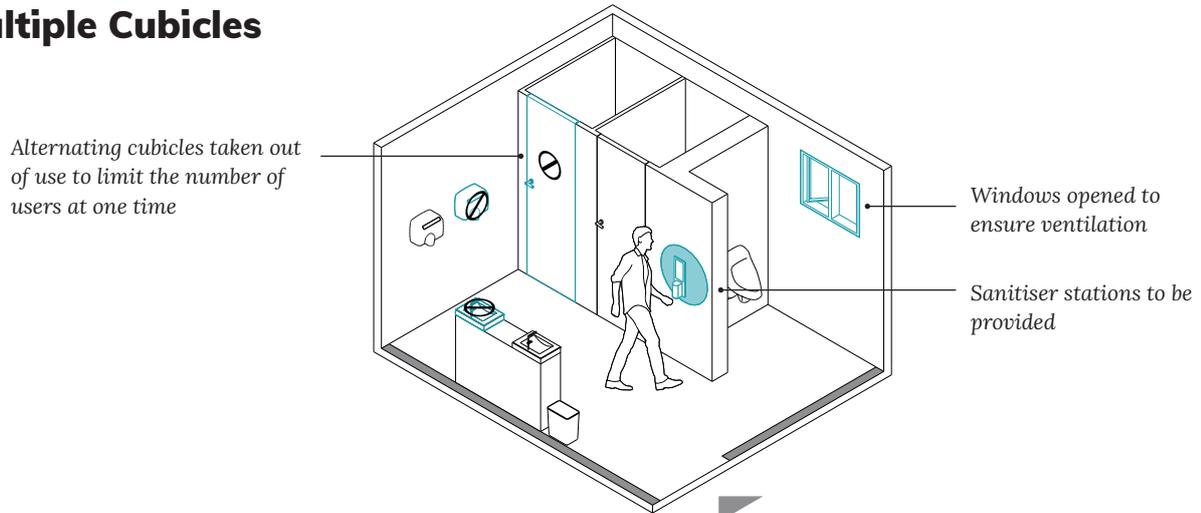
GENERAL FACILITIES TOILETS

Appropriate cleaning protocols to be established and maintained to comply with government guidance.

Single Person / Disabled

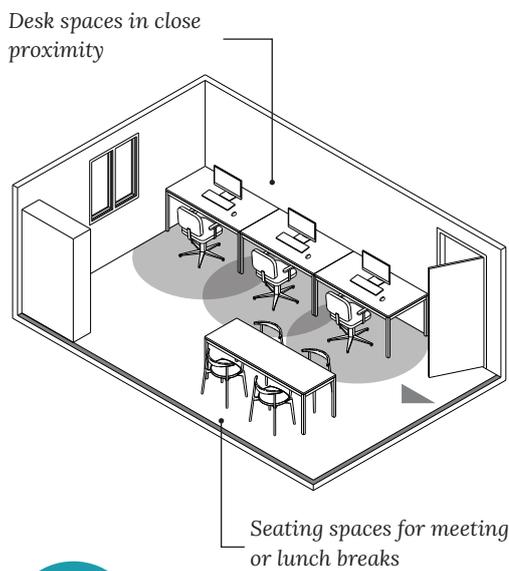


Multiple Cubicles

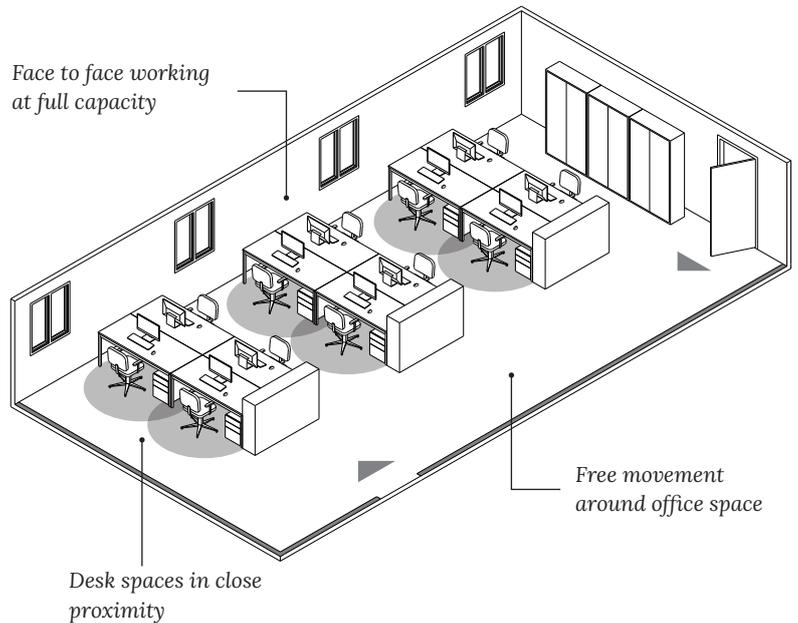


BEFORE

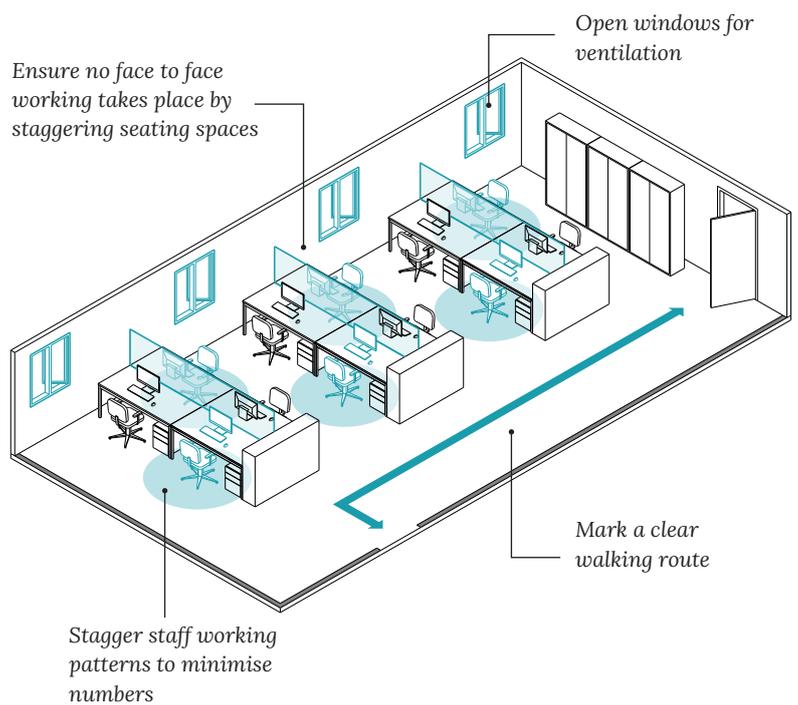
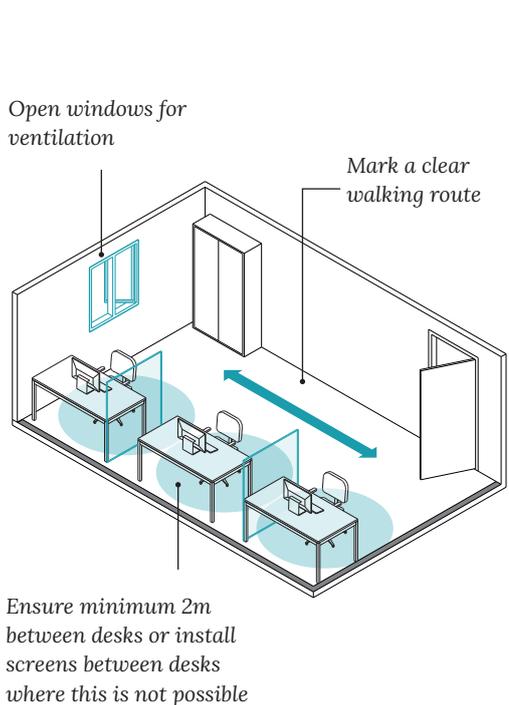
Small/Medium Office



Medium/Large Office



AFTER





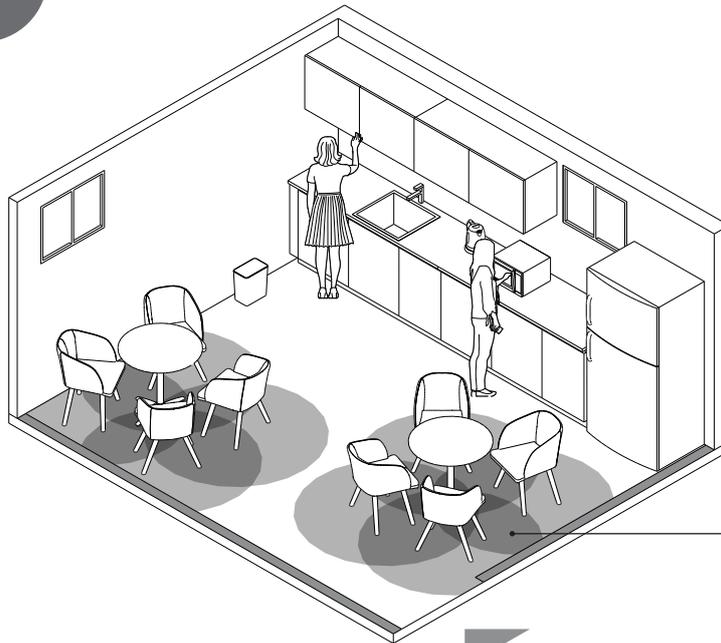
GENERAL FACILITIES

STAFF AMENITY

Staff / Volunteer Kitchen

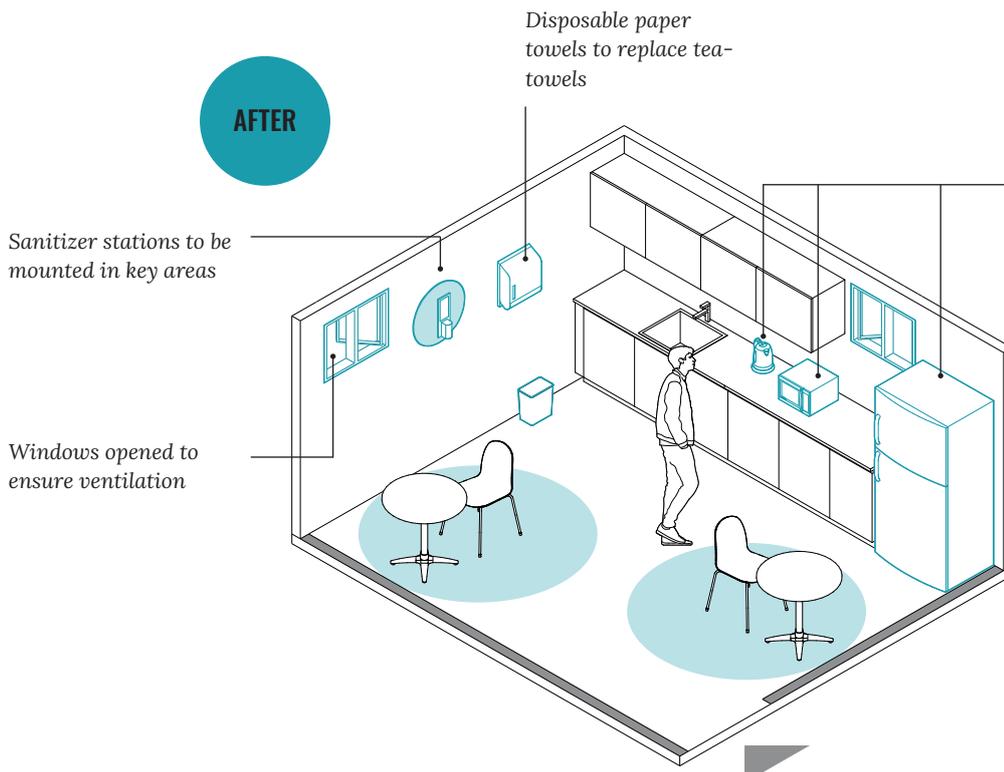
Limited to essential use with limited capacity determined by size of room.

BEFORE



Existing arrangement of furniture does not comply with social distance guidance

AFTER



Sanitizer stations to be mounted in key areas

Windows opened to ensure ventilation

Disposable paper towels to replace tea-towels

High-contact surfaces to be disinfected regularly



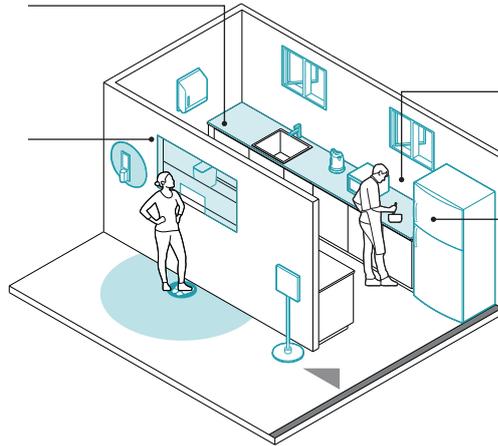
GENERAL FACILITIES

KITCHEN, CAFE + BAR

Kitchens

High-contact areas and surfaces subject to regular sanitising regimes

Where possible, service hatches should be utilised and have perspex screens installed for protection

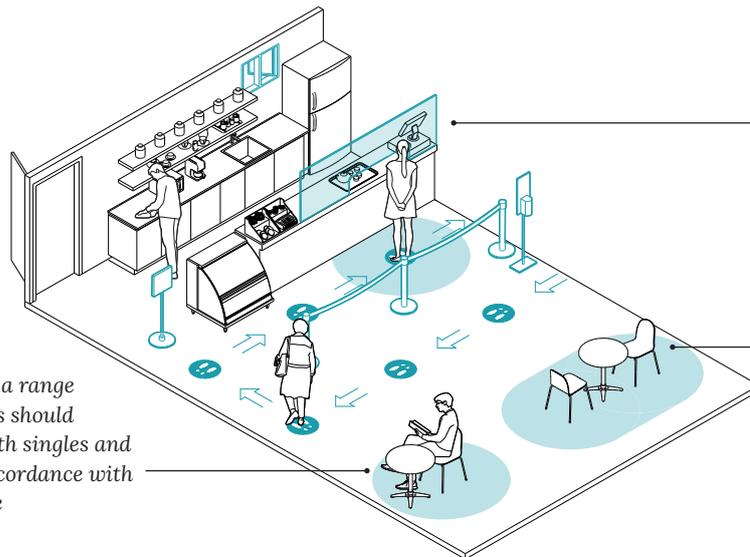


Unless capacity allows otherwise, kitchens should be restricted to one person at any one time

Consider advising hirers to bring pre-prepared food

Cafés

Where possible, a range of seating layouts should accommodate both singles and households in accordance with current guidance



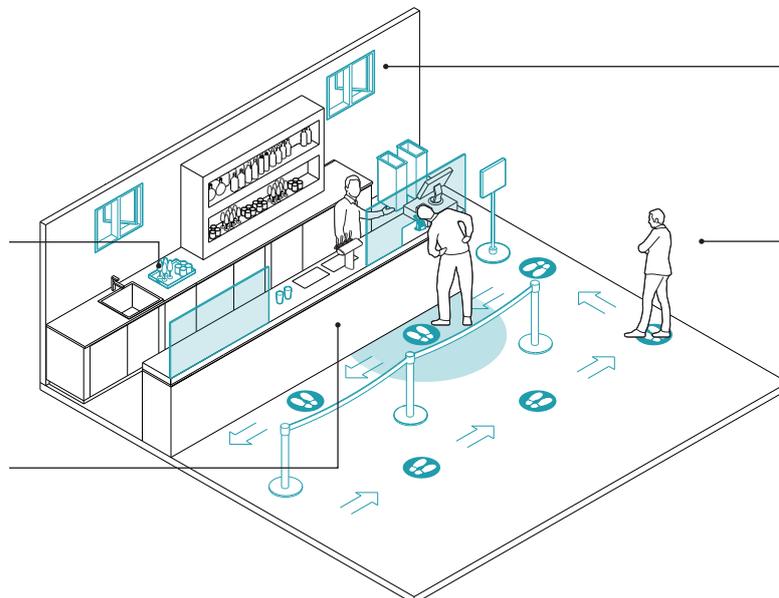
Perspex screens should be installed on counters between staff and customer where safe distancing cannot be maintained

Upholstered furniture to be replaced with easily cleaned alternatives, such as plastic chairs

Bars

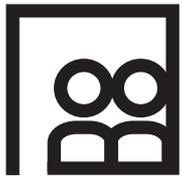
Used glasses should be removed immediately and either quarantined for 72 hours if possible or cleaned immediately after collection

Bar-workers should ensure that the ordering, payment and collection of drinks be made as swiftly as possible



Ensure spaces are continually ventilated

A one-way system should be clearly marked to ensure customers are safe distancing



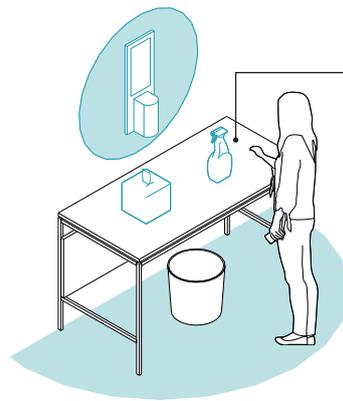
ACTIVITIES

GROUPS + HIRE

Furniture

Careful consideration needs to be made when using furniture between different users. Stickers can be used to identify clean and used chairs, as well as creating dedicated storage areas to safely manage furniture. It is important that adequate time is given between meetings to clean furniture, or quarantine objects for 72 hours.

*"I've been cleaned
- ready to go!"*

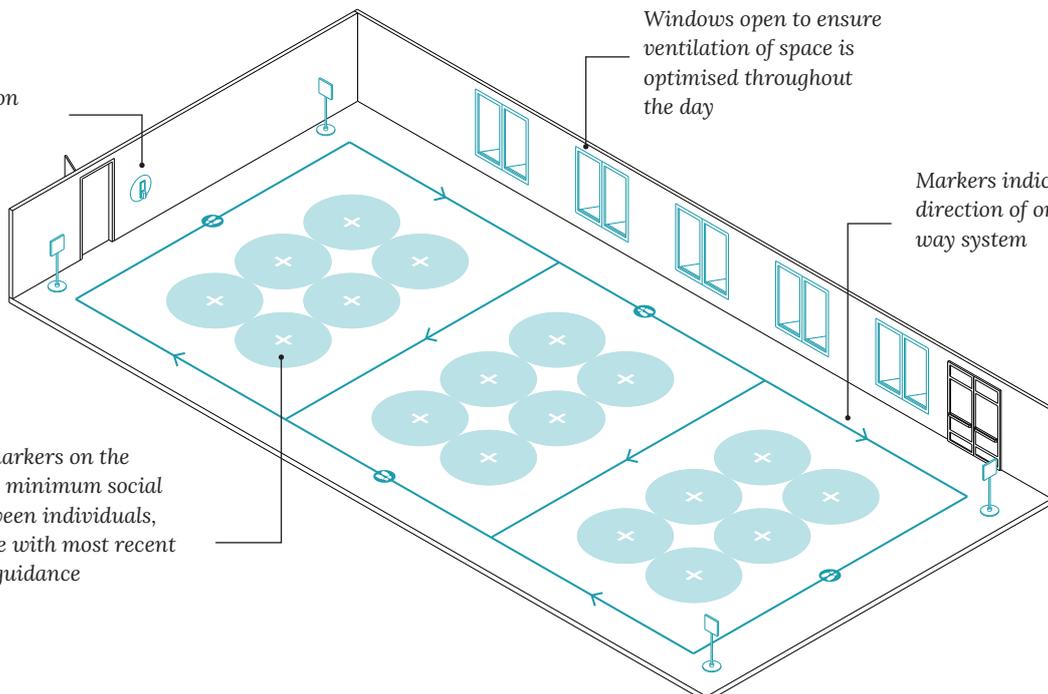


*Cleaning station allows
hirers to clean the space
after use, which can help
considerably if the centre
relies on volunteers*

Preparing for Hire

Permanent social distance markers can create a general layout for a wide range of activities, which can be used at the discretion of the hirers. Consider use of one-way arrows to facilitate a one-way system of circulation. Ensure key considerations are communicated – this will include capacity limits, cleaning protocols and ventilation. All furniture should be cleaned by staff or volunteers before hire.

*Sanitising station
clearly marked
at entrance*



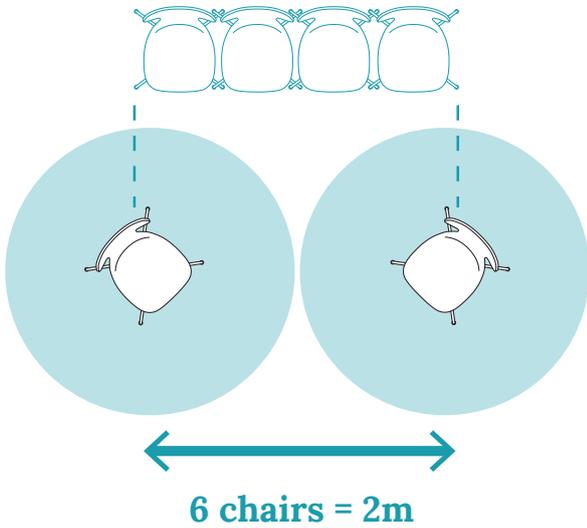
*Windows open to ensure
ventilation of space is
optimised throughout
the day*

*Markers indicate
direction of one-
way system*

*Permanent markers on the
floor indicate minimum social
distance between individuals,
in compliance with most recent
government guidance*

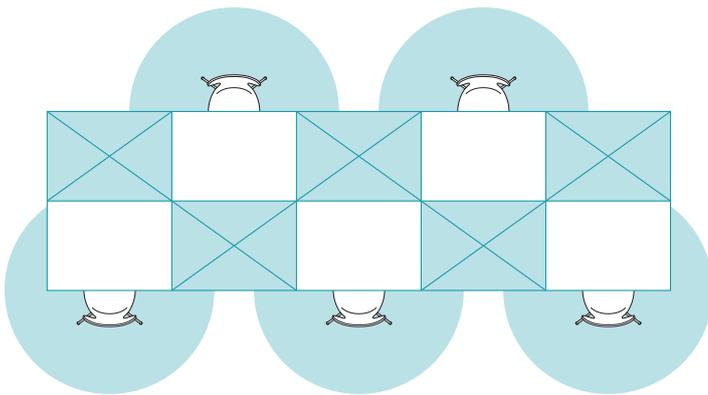


SEATING



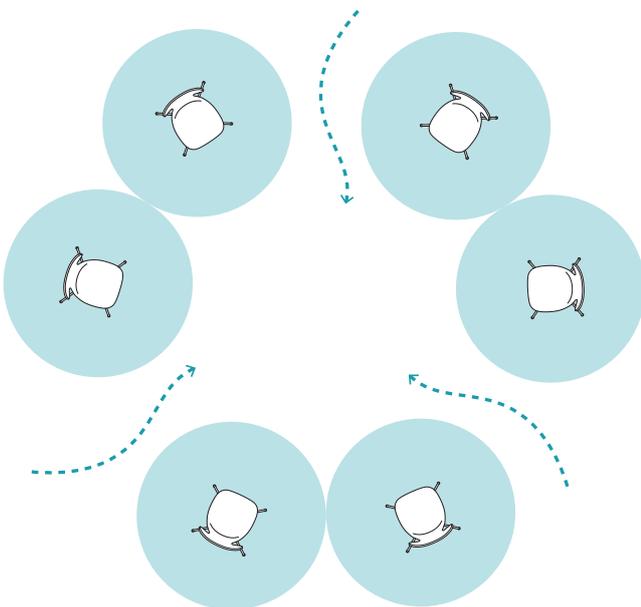
One-To-One

A useful rule of thumb is the width of 4 chairs is 2m safe distance.



Meeting

In the case of a formal meeting (eg AGM), avoid face to face arrangements by alternating seats. Sections of the table can be masked off to indicate safe arrangements.



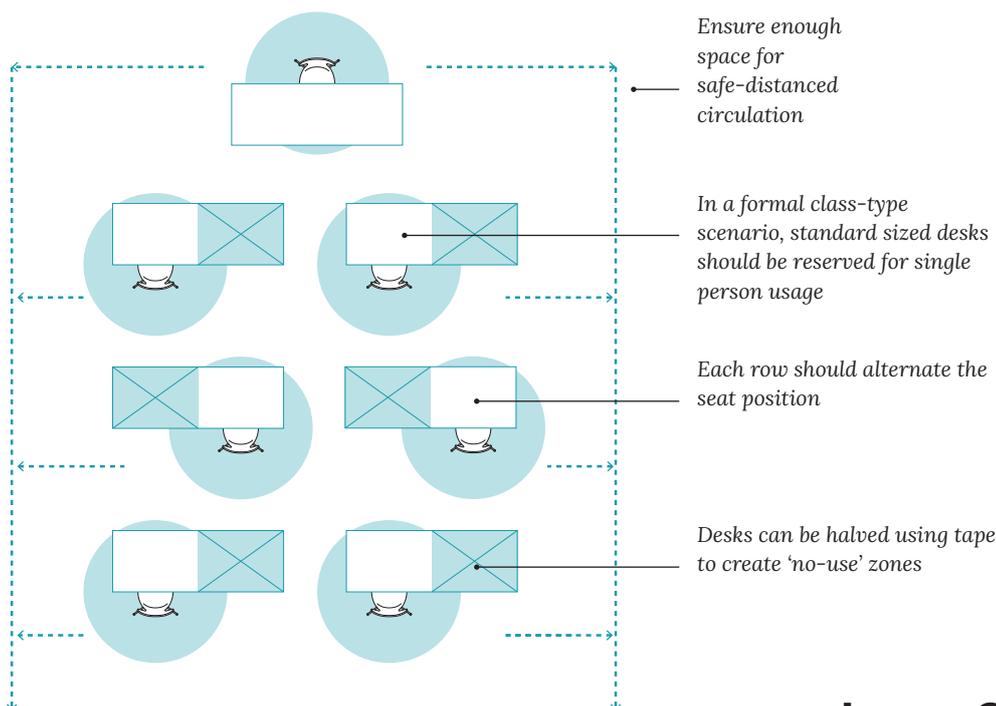
Small Groups

Use circular arrangements to ensure everyone can see each-other, while maintaining safe distancing. Seats should be arranged at safe distances before the meeting, with circulation routes consider to ensure safe passage.



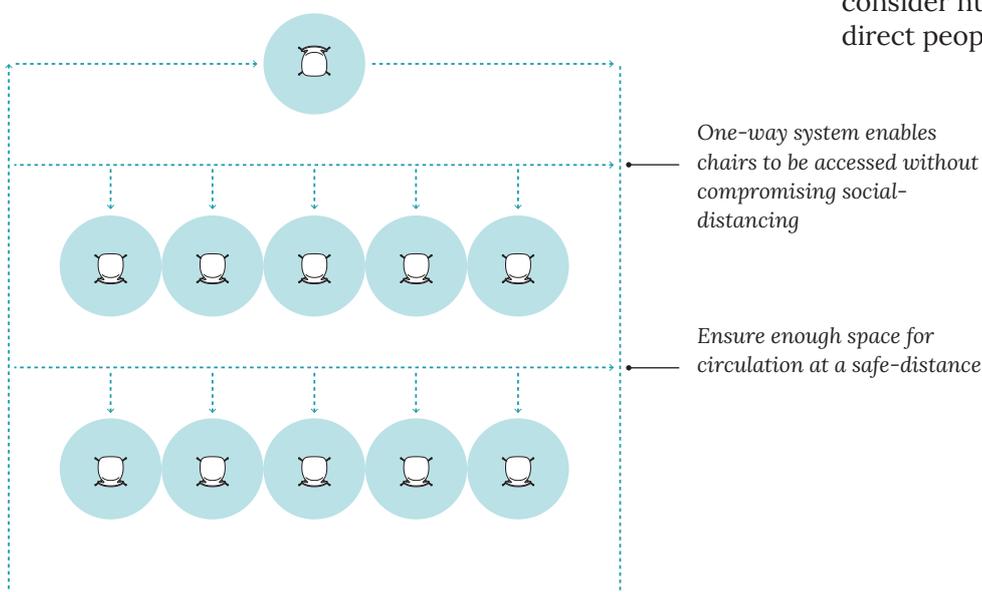
Classes

Ensure safe distancing and circulation. Limit capacity of class and have one person per table to ensure any movement of chairs will still maintain safe distancing.



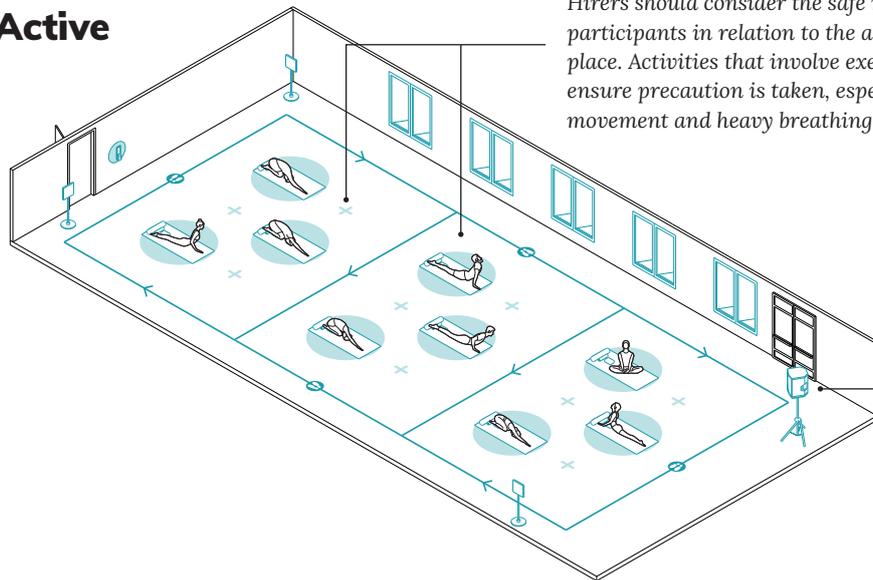
Larger Groups

Safe distances should ensure the worker can move around the group, as well as exit the group if necessary. Chairs should be arranged prior to the meeting, and consider numbering the chairs to help direct people to seating spaces.



ACTIVITIES INDOOR

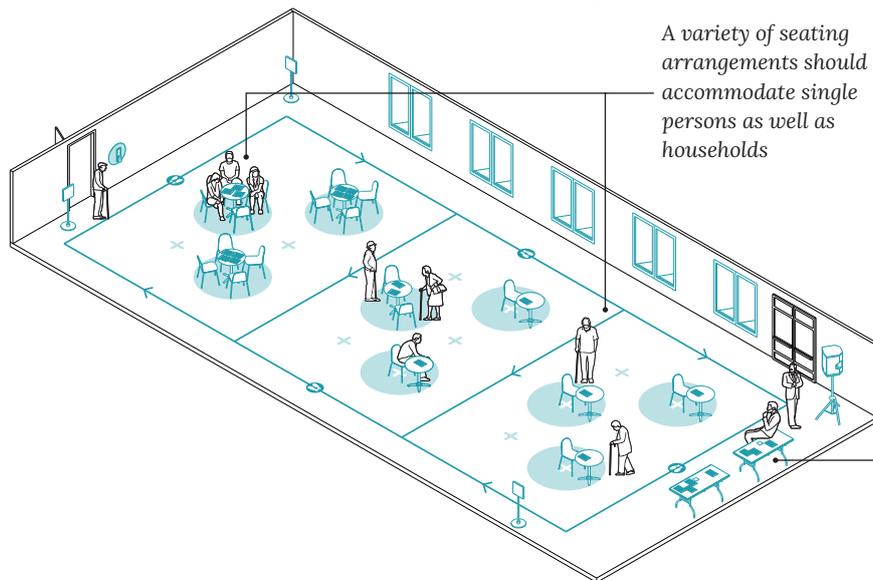
Stationary / Active



Hirers should consider the safe number of participants in relation to the activity taking place. Activities that involve exercise should ensure precaution is taken, especially when movement and heavy breathing is involved

Music should be played at a low volume to discourage speaking loudly and projecting one's voice

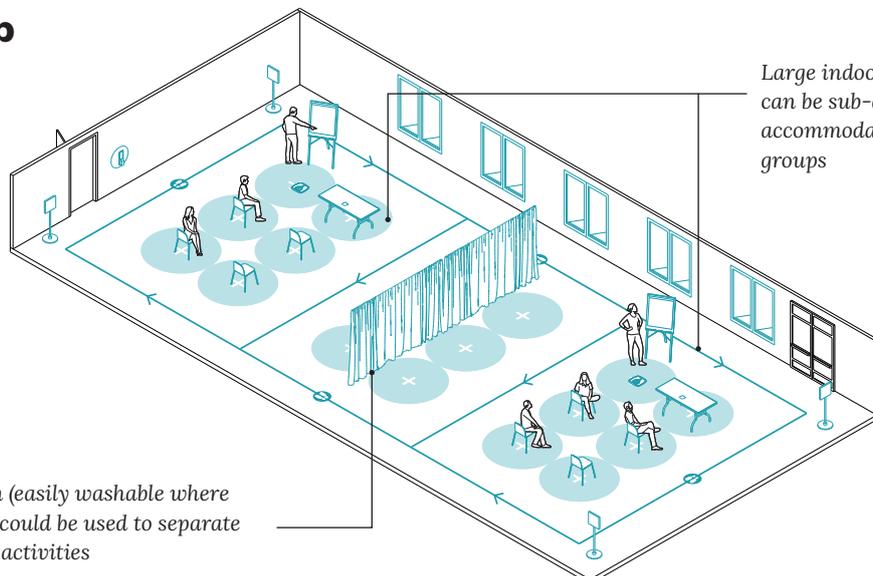
Seated



A variety of seating arrangements should accommodate single persons as well as households

Any paper-based materials required for activities, such as scorecards, should be disposed of by the user.

Seated Group



Large indoor spaces can be sub-divided to accommodate multiple groups

A curtain (easily washable where possible) could be used to separate different activities

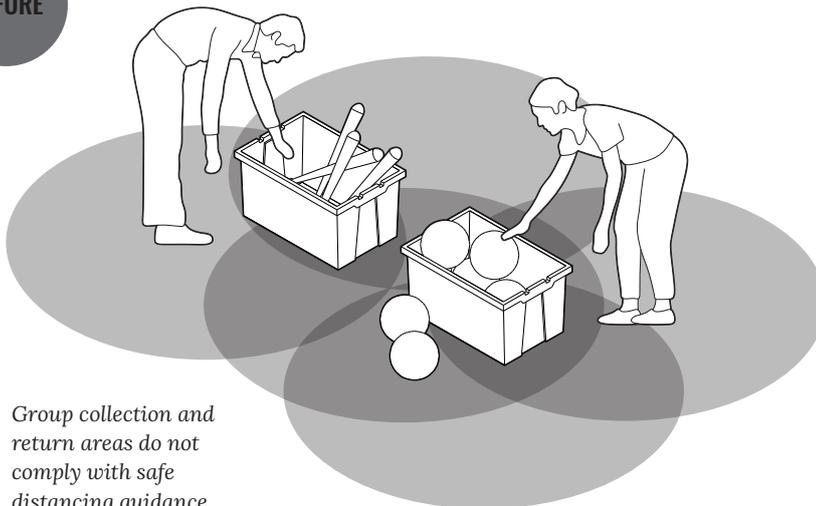


Players to wash their hands before & after games

Equipment

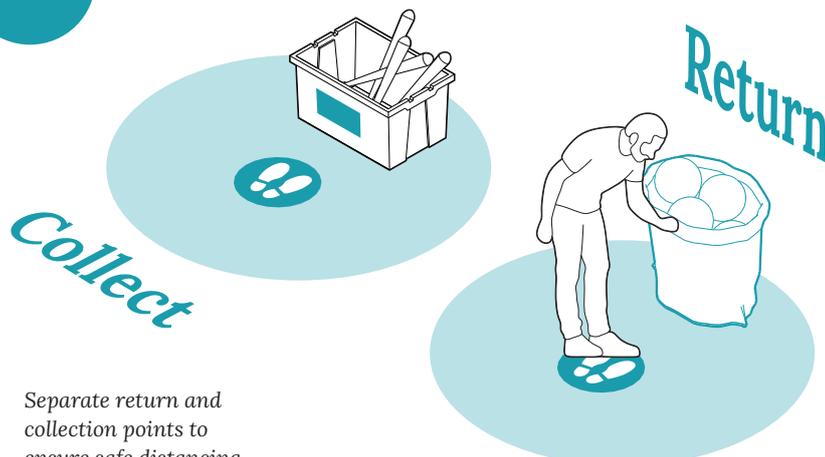
Shared equipment should be collected and returned using separate areas that allow for safe distancing. Equipment should be cleaned before and after use, and players should wash their hands before and after games. Consider using a bag for returned equipment, and the use of steam sanitisers. The use of objects such as bibs can be avoided by one team of players simply turning their shirts inside out to differentiate between teams.

BEFORE

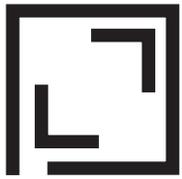


Group collection and return areas do not comply with safe distancing guidance

AFTER



Separate return and collection points to ensure safe distancing



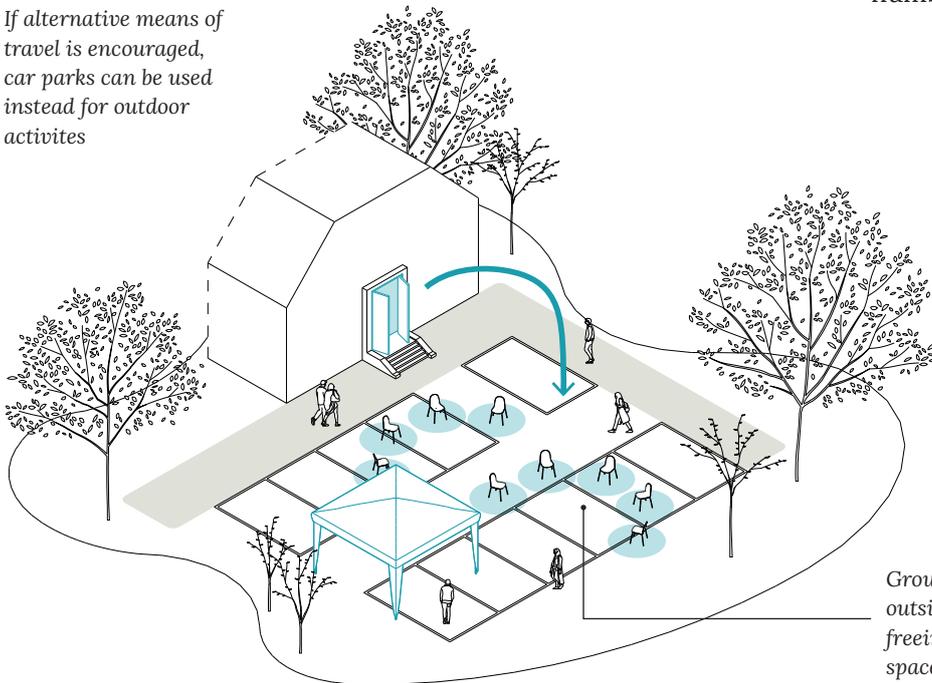
COMMUNITY

UNFOLD THE COMMUNITY CENTRE

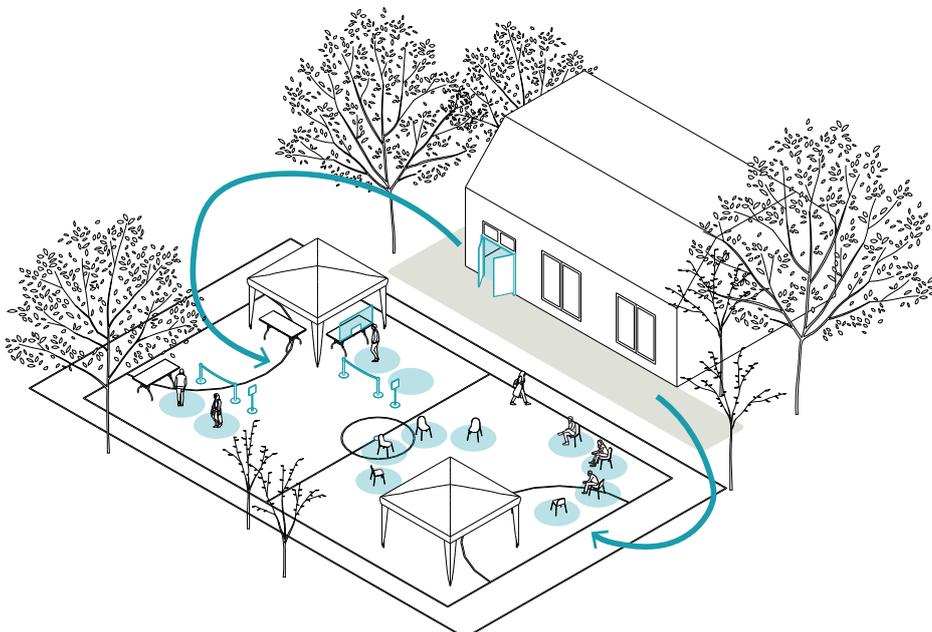
Taking the Community Centre outside

Activities and programmes that conventionally take place inside may be taken outside, which can increase the number of households that participate.

If alternative means of travel is encouraged, car parks can be used instead for outdoor activities



Group meetings can occur outside of the centre, freeing up the internal space for other services



Social events that remain unfeasible to host indoors might still take place outside, and continue to operate as an important hub for members of the community to come together

CASE STUDIES

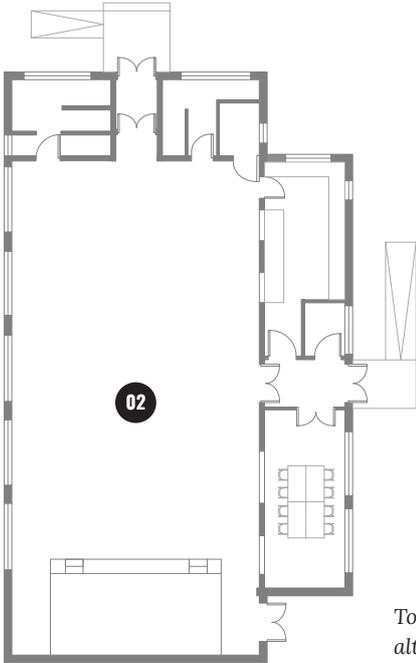
CASE STUDY

SMALL

Hewish and Puxton, Weston-Super-Mare, Somerset

BEFORE

01



02



01

Front double-door entrance with ramp.



02

Main hall

AFTER

This small village hall has two double door entrances; one leads directly into the main hall, the other into a small foyer with adjoining toilet, meeting room and kitchen. A one-way system has been introduced, beginning at the front entrance, through the main hall, leading out to the side entrance or fire escape. Permanent markers have been suggested to clearly indicate the rooms capacity in adherence with social distance guidance.

Toilets may need to alternate cubicles or introduce a traffic light system to reduce capacity

Clear signage communicates social distancing protocols and directs the one-way system throughout

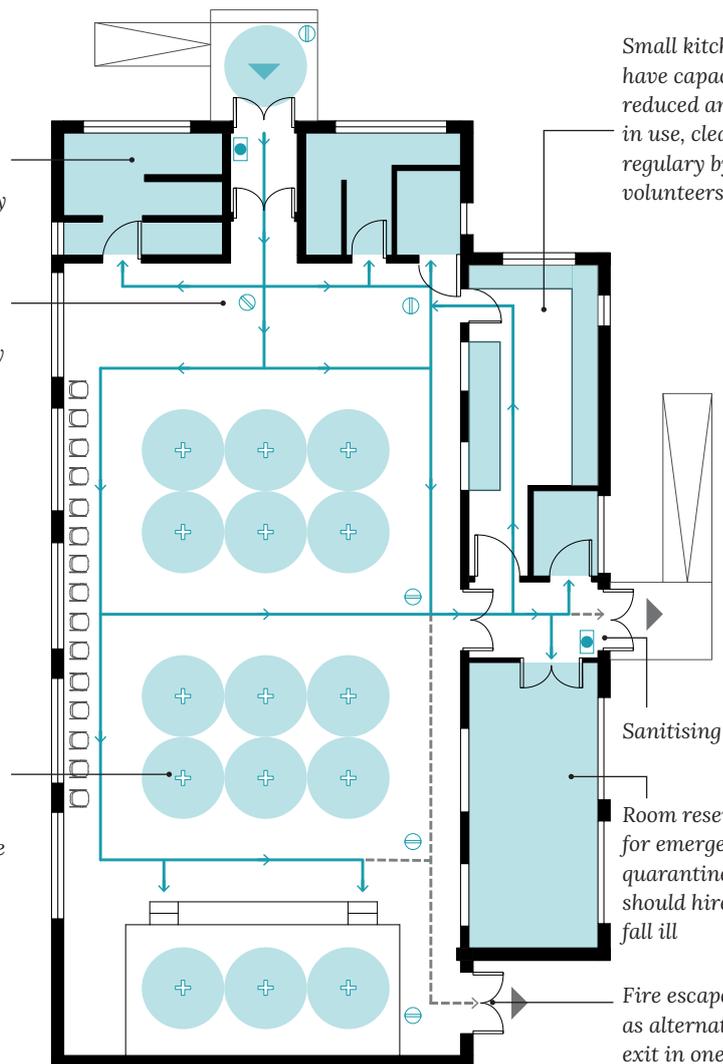
Semi-permanent markings indicate the room's capacity and enable hirers to follow social distance guidance easier

Small kitchen to have capacity reduced and if in use, cleaned regularly by volunteers

Sanitising at exit

Room reserved for emergency quarantine should hirers fall ill

Fire escape used as alternative exit in one-way system

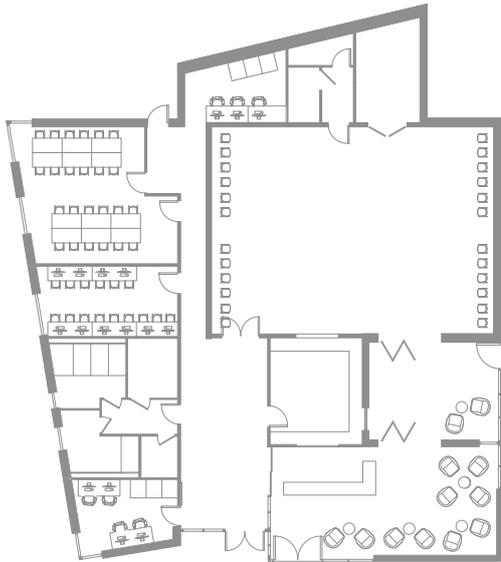


CASE STUDY

MEDIUM

Riverside Community Centre, Carshalton, Greater London

BEFORE



01



01

Two main entrances leading into a long foyer or a cafe respectively.

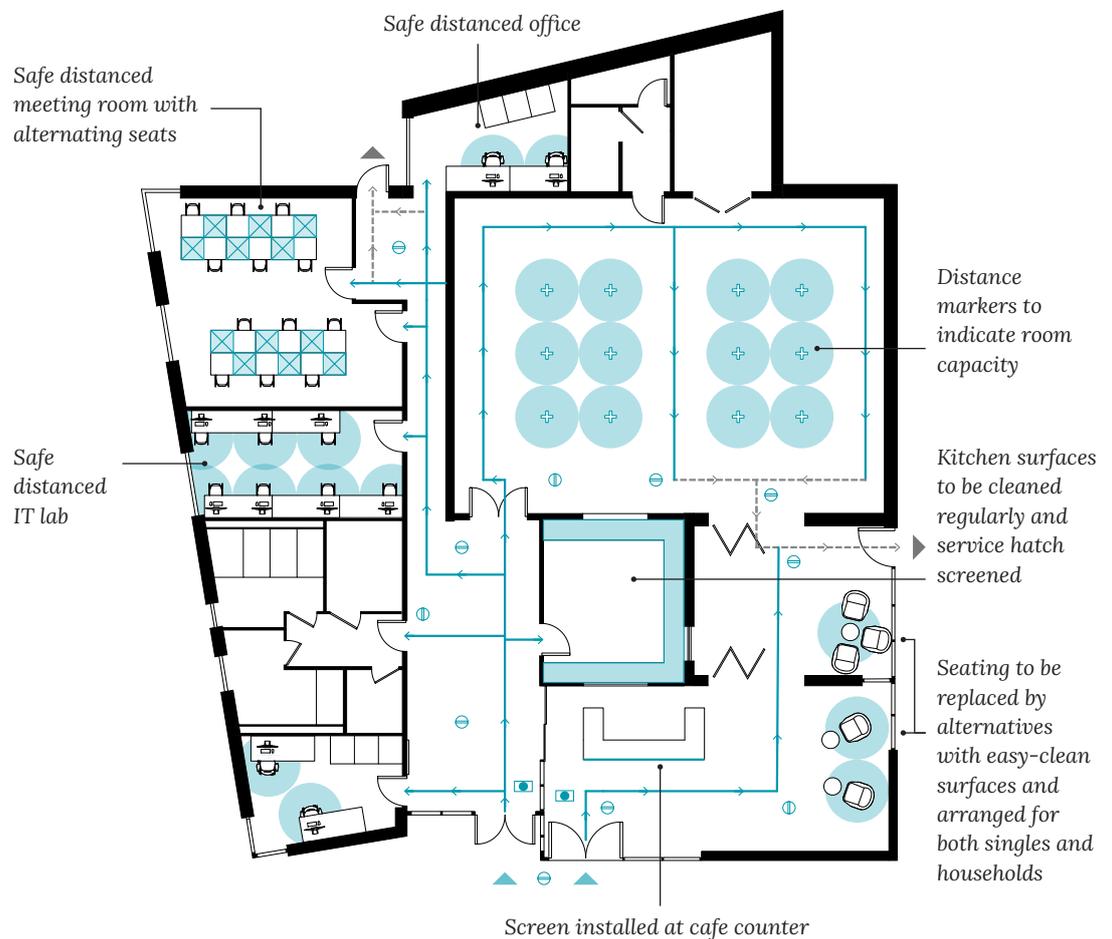


02

Outdoor space can be utilised and enable more households to congregate.

AFTER

The main entrance leads into a one-way system that circulates around the majority of the building. However, the cafe has a separate entrance and exit to minimise congestion. The meeting rooms have their tables marked to indicate alternating seating patterns. Offices have reduced capacity and toilet cubicles are alternated.

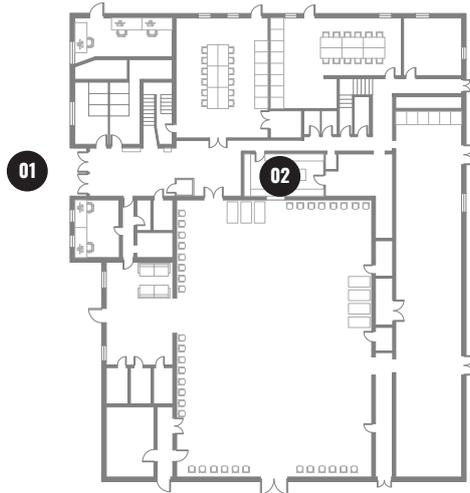


CASE STUDY

LARGE

Wickham Community Centre, Fareham, Hampshire

BEFORE



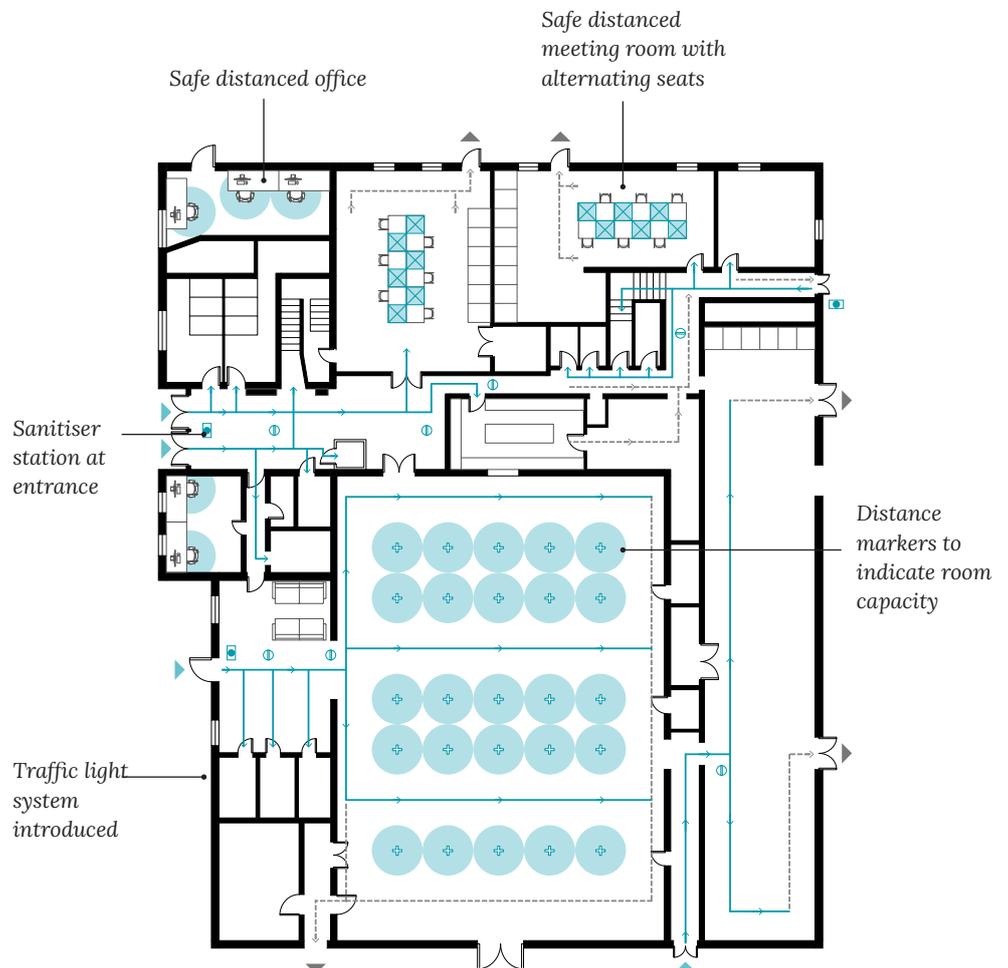
01 The main entrance consists of large porch with two sets of double doors.



02 The kitchen is sizable with easily cleaned surfaces, a service hatch and two doors leading in or out.

AFTER

Due to the fact there are several entrances and exits, there are multiple one-way systems introduced to minimise congestion at pinch-points. Meeting rooms will need to introduce alternating seating arrangements, and permanent markings can inform the main hall's capacity. Office spaces have had their capacity reduced, as well as toilets. Hand sanitiser stations have been introduced at all entrances with clear signage guiding circulation throughout.



This document has been developed with and should be read alongside all relevant Government guidance. Please note that knowledge of Covid-19 and best practice guidelines in response to it are evolving, and that this document may be updated to reflect ongoing learning.

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