**COVID-19 Policy**

This policy is to help enforce the operational systems and processes for Acorn to follow in relation to COVID-19, based on the guidance of Government and medical advice. The policy will be reviewed monthly by Acorn’s Trustees and Management as the guidance and advice of Government and medics develops. This policy is to also set and manage expectations of Acorn, its staff, volunteers, and guests.

**Staff and Work Environment**

Acorn staff are to work in their own homes using the equipment provided. Staff are not to work in public spaces such as libraries, cafes, and other people’s homes until it has been deemed safe to do so by Government and medical advice. Meetings are to be held over the phone or by using digital software provided by Acorn, such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams.

Staff are not to meet to work together until it is deemed safe to do so by Government and medical advice. When it is advised by Government that it is safe to meet other members of staff, all staff must follow the guidance that the Government and medics publish, i.e. 2 metres apart.

Staff are to comply with regular [handwashing guidance](https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/best-way-to-wash-your-hands/), washing their hands for 20 seconds with water and soap and drying properly with disposable hand towels. They are also to catch coughs and sneezes in tissues, avoid touching face, eyes, nose or mouth with unclean hands.

Staff are to report to their Line Manager any problems with complying to systems put in place.

Staff are to notify their Line Manager if they are affected by COVID-19, e.g., need to self-isolate, or are unwell.

Public Health Advice and Mental Health Resources will be available to staff via Microsoft SharePoint, an online document sharing platform. It is also known to staff that support will be offered to staff who are affected by Coronavirus or has a family member affected.

Staff are not to share vehicles to travel to and from work meetings and events, when it is safe to do so, unless Government and medical advice says otherwise.

Staff are to avoid using public transport to travel to and from work meetings and events, when it is safe to do, unless Government and medical advice says otherwise. If unavoidable, a mask and gloves should be worn for personal safety and the safety of those they encounter under Acorn work.

When it is safe to return to meeting in person, Government advice should be adhered to in regard to shielding, vulnerable people, and social distancing.

Acorn will supply masks, gloves, and hand sanitiser for staff and volunteers leading events or involved in face to face meetings.

**Volunteers**

Volunteers will not be asked to meet in person for an Acorn event until is confirmed as safe to do so by Government and medical publications. Once it is safe to meet in person and volunteer at Acorn events, volunteers must adhere to the event guidelines mentioned below.

Regular online meetings held bi-weekly on Zoom are organised for Acorn management and volunteers to receive up to date communications regarding their role and as an opportunity to pray together.

When it is safe to return to meeting in person, no volunteer is expected to return to their role until they and Acorn feel it is safe to do so. Government advice should be adhered to regarding shielding, vulnerable people, and social distancing.

**Events**

Acorn will only return to running in person events when:

1. Government and medical advice confirm it is safe to do so
2. Acorn Trustees and Management agree it is safe to do so as well as beneficial for the organisation
3. ***Private Bookings (Acorn delivering an event to a group or organisation in their chosen venue)***

Some venues will open ahead of when Acorn feels it is safe to run Acorn events. In this instance, Acorn have the right to decline running an event; both new bookings and postponed bookings prior to COVID-19. Postponed bookings will commence when a suitable date is agreed between both parties (Acorn and the organisation booking the event). If a date cannot be agreed, due to the concern for safety or Acorn staff, volunteers, and guests, then a refund of any payment will be issued. In some instances, a date might be agreed but must be postponed again due to the current state of the virus; if this happens then the same process will take place again.

Acorn will offer to run the event digitally if a booking must be cancelled or postponed. See Acorn’s Terms and Conditions of booking for full details.

Acorn staff and volunteers will comply with the safety measures put in place by venues, as well as holding its own safety measures, which will be highlighted to the organisation prior to booking an Acorn event. Safety measures put in place for staff, volunteers, and guests, are the following:

1. Gloves to be worn by Acorn event leaders if they feel it is necessary
2. Mask to be worn by Acorn event leaders if they feel it is necessary
3. Access to hand sanitiser or hand soap, as well as disposable hand towels, and a bin to dispose of litter (provided by organiser of group booking Acorn). If this cannot be provided, then Acorn will bring their own for staff and volunteers.
4. Adhere to social distancing rules put in place by Government
5. If no clear safety measures are put in place when arriving at the venue, and Acorn team feel vulnerable to the spread of COVID-19, Acorn team have the right to refuse delivery of the course on arrival. No refund or new delivery date will be provided to the organisation who made the booking as requirements will have been highlighted prior to booking.
6. No refreshments other than bottled water unless advised safe to do so by Government and Medical advice

Staff and volunteers are not to share a vehicle to travel to an event that they are leading. Public transport should be avoided to travel to events. If this is unavoidable, staff and volunteers must wear a mask and gloves for their own safety, and the safety of those they will later meet at an Acorn event.

1. ***Public Venue Hire (Acorn delivering an event at a hired venue)***

Some venues that Acorn regularly use will open ahead of when Acorn feels it is safe to run Acorn events. In this instance, Acorn have the right to decline running an event that was once ‘regular’. Acorn will continue to run as many of its regular events, both charged and free, digitally, while venues cannot be hired. Regular events in hired venues will commence when a suitable date is agreed between both parties (Acorn and the venue). If a date cannot be agreed, due to the concern for safety or Acorn staff, volunteers, and guests, then digital versions of the vents will continue until safe to return to meeting in person.

In some instances, a date might be agreed but must be changed due to the current state of the virus; if this happens then the same process will take place again. Guests who had already booked on to the event will have the option to attend digitally or receive a full refund.

Acorn will not hire a venue for any of its events without first receiving a copy of the venue’s COVID-19 policy, or safety measures put in place for those using the venue, and deciding whether it will be safe to run the event at that venue or not.

Acorn will provide a copy of its COVID-19 policy to the venue prior to making a booking, and highlight the following safety measures also:

1. Gloves to be worn by Acorn event leaders if they feel it is necessary
2. Mask to be worn by Acorn event leaders if they feel it is necessary
3. Access to hand sanitiser or hand soap, as well as disposable hand towels, and a bin to dispose of litter (provided by the venue). If this cannot be provided, then Acorn will bring their own for staff and volunteers.
4. Adhere to social distancing rules put in place by Government
5. If no clear safety measures are put in place when arriving at the venue, and Acorn team feel vulnerable to the spread of COVID-19, Acorn team have the right to stop the event before allowing guests to enter. Apologies to anyone booked on to the event will be issued, as well as any refunds.
6. No refreshments other than bottled water unless advised safe to do so by Government and Medical advice

Due to the social distancing restrictions, and safety measures put in place by Government, the format of Acorn events will be regularly reviewed and adapted to make sure that it is compliant.

**Communication**

Policies and up to date information regarding Acorn’s response to COVID-19 will be available and regularly updated on its website.