




# Building your business back better

Tips, support and advice to make a success of the new normal





**68% of homeowners** are happy to welcome tradespeople back according to our survey of **over 2,000 UK households**. But they would like some changes. They want you to observe new guidelines, take new precautions, and work in new ways.

As you get **back to business** in a world of social distancing and local lockdowns, this guide will help you to make a success of the new normal: along with giving you more ways to keep doing what you do best and have a pipeline of **new work** booked in.

**We'll help you with tips, support and advice to take your business forwards.**

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# Chapter One: Understanding The New Normal



As a result of Covid-19, the way you work needs to change. The new normal needs new working methods. In this chapter, we'll help you to understand what these changes mean for you, for your employees, and for your customers.

The first step is to discover what risks you'll face in the new normal, and the changes you'll need to make.

## Keep your team and your customers safe

- 68% of homeowners are happy to welcome tradespeople back according to our survey of over 2,000 UK households. But they would like some changes:
- 60% want decorators to wear protective equipment, such as face masks and gloves
- 55% expect decorators to keep at least a 2m distance from them at all times
- 40% would like decorators to keep to separate rooms where possible

## Safely prepare for work by asking the following questions:

- Is anyone in the household you're working in showing symptoms, self-isolating, or confirmed to be infected with Covid-19?
- How can you and your team access and work in a property in a way that reduces contact with customers?
- Will you have access to dedicated toilet and hand-washing facilities?
- Who is responsible for removing waste on site?
- How will equipment and supplies be delivered to your work site in a safe, contactless way?
- When should you be wearing face coverings?
- How regularly will you need to clean surfaces in the household, including door handles and taps?
- How will refreshments be handled? Will you bring your own bottled water, or tea and coffee mugs?



## You must:

1. Discuss your customers' concerns with them before starting a project
2. Brief your team on customer requests, and safety measures
3. Avoid unnecessary contact by replacing in-person quotes and meetings with virtual sessions
4. Make each job as safe as possible with:
  - Regular hand washing opportunities (or hand sanitiser)
  - 2m social distancing on site where possible, or 1m separation with a face covering if not (including during breaks and travel to site)
5. Create set, fixed teams to keep the same employees working together in a bubble
6. Look after your self-isolating employees by regularly checking in and supporting their mental health



## Your team must:

1. Before anyone heads out on a job, remind them of these important points
2. Wash hands regularly when on site
3. Maintain 2m distance between others where possible or 1m distance with a face covering where 2m isn't practical
4. Travel to work separately, or wear face coverings when required to travel together
5. Share any concerns about safety on a job immediately
6. Self isolate if they're showing symptoms for ten days

*My go to phrase has become "We keep ourselves safe to keep our customers safe". Each customer is different and you find ways of working with them to ensure safety for both parties.*

**Sean Kelly, Sean Kelly Enterprises Limited**

**There are helpful signs and a discussion guide you can print out at the end of this document to reassure customers.**

Keep things clear and simple (and maybe bring your own flask of tea!), and you'll keep everyone safe and ready to make a success of the new normal.

Please note, all information on safe working is subject to change. You can read the [latest version of these guidelines here](#).

# Chapter Two: Winning More Work

Get on the front foot, so you don't just get back to where you were pre-lockdown, but can build your business further.

## Building your business back

1. **Priorities:** Do you need to work down your customer wait list, or make a plan for future cash flow? The FSB has provided a range of resources about the questions to ask in this “recovery” phase.
2. **Challenges:** How will new precautions impact the amount of work you do? Will you have additional health and safety costs? Does it change the contracts you'll sign?
3. **Opportunities:** Where can you find new, ideal customers? What can you offer? Can you get repeat business from old clients?

## Getting more out of your social media

A strong social presence can help you reach a new audience and take advantage of those new opportunities. Take the time to set up profiles and share your work on the most effective social networks if you haven't already:



**Facebook** has more users than any website, and lets you reach huge numbers



**LinkedIn** is perfect if you want to work for business clients



**Instagram** lets you show off your work



### Don't spread yourself too thin

Pick just one or two social media accounts, and focus on them. Test timings and types of content to see what works best.

### Show off a little

Get in the habit of taking pictures of finished work and sharing them far and wide on social media.

### Ask for help

Reach out to your past clients and ask for recommendations and reviews on Facebook.

### Connect with your community

Facebook is full of local community groups. Join them, and offer advice (rather than a hard sell) where you can. Recommend other trades to build connections too.

## Communicating - and Quoting - Remotely

*I ask the client if they want a video call on WhatsApp and when they say yes... Bingo!*

**Mike Poole - Mike Poole Decorators**

Video chats are a great way of keeping in touch with old clients, discussing jobs with new customers, and winning more work if customers are nervous.



## It's free and easy

- **Skype** - free, unlimited video calls to any Skype account
- **Zoom** - 40 minutes of free face-to-face chatting
- **Meet** - included with Google business packages
- **Teams** - included with Microsoft 365
- **Whatsapp** - free video calls to anyone in your contact list
- **Messenger** - free video calls to anyone on your Facebook friends list

Once you're up and running, arranging a meeting is as simple as sending a link by text or email.



## It's face-to-face (without contact)

A video call lets you share all of those body language cues that build rapport, without putting you at unnecessary risk.

*All communication initially is done remotely, building a rapport and asking a range of open questions to encourage as much information as possible. It all helps me reach a decision whether I can work with this client or not.*

**Mike Poole - Mike Poole Decorators**

## It's simple

Once you're in a meeting, you can simply share your screen to show images of the work you'll be doing, or let the customer share images of their home or that inspire them.

## It's professional

Zoom and Skype let you load virtual backgrounds to make it look like you're in an office, or blur your video background so people can't see what's happening behind you, leaving you free to focus on giving a winning impression to your new customer.

*Before our call, I ask them to provide a video of the work area showing detail of any faults. Once I've received it then I make note of all the issues and prepare a list of questions to ask, including any potential hazards and or H&S issues.*

**Mike Poole - Mike Poole Decorators**

## Tips for a successful online video meeting

1. **Check your connection is strong** - making sure nobody on your network is watching Netflix or playing online games will help
2. **Dress to impress** - just because you're at home doesn't mean you're not working
3. **Treat it as a face-to-face meeting** - you've presented quotes and estimates to clients before, so fall back on what works
4. **Be flexible** - clients will prefer different platforms, so give them the option and let them make the choice

*Only proceed once you're confident you've established a good rapport. It's vitally important that you understand the nature of the work and the client's expectations before you agree to move forward. Follow-up with a written quote including detailed specifications of the work to be agreed by your client, an invoice for the agreed deposit, and a confirmed start date.*

**Mike Poole - Mike Poole Decorators**





## Taking Digital Payments

Invoicing remotely and taking payments online is a quick, simple and effective way to keep the cash flowing easily and reduce contact with customers as there is less need for follow up visits to site.

### Types of Digital Payment:

- **Payment Gateways:** Encourage instant payments through secure websites like Stripe and Paypal using a debit or credit card (but factor in the small transaction fees).
- **Pay By Link:** Use Worldpay and PayPal to send a direct payment link to your clients via email, SMS or WhatsApp.
- **Integrated Payments:** Quickly and easily set-up your accounting software to take payments directly if it has the capability (and it's cost-effective).
- **BACS Transfers:** Simply provide payment details on your invoices and let your customers pay directly into your business' bank account via BACS.

Ask your customers what they prefer. If everyone you work with is comfortable with a BACS payment via their mobile banking app, there's no need for you to spend money on a payment gateway.



# Chapter Three: What Your Customers Want

Customer priorities have changed, and you can capitalise to give them exactly what they want, and win more work.

## Customers want to start new decorating projects...

- Over half (53.77%) of surveyed homeowners were willing to start a new decorating project
- They've tried (and sometimes failed) DIY decorating, and they've realised that they need professional help. Someone with the tools and the talent to complete a project quickly. To make sure everything looks great. And to set yourself apart from the competition, you can show that you do the things that homeowners can't tackle highlighting your specialist skills.

**54%**  
willing to start  
a project

## Dial up your specialist skills

Almost a quarter of people undertook decorating during lockdown that they'd usually have left to a professional, and results were mixed.

It all proves your specialist skills are in demand:

### Wallpapering

Customers' biggest DIY disasters usually involve hanging wallpaper. Position yourself as a wallpaper specialist as well as a painter, and you'll find your advanced wallpapering skills in demand.

### Craft skills

Sharpening your craft skills with marbling, graining and organic effects lets you add a touch of glamour, a faux antique finish, or an authentic outdoor atmosphere to your painting and decorating projects.

### Spraying

Dialling up your spraying skills will let you achieve faster, consistent results (without compromising the finish) no matter the surface you're working on.

### Doing what they can't

Even a seasoned DIYer wouldn't know where to start with a mural or a feature wall, but you can easily take your wallpaper hanging skills further by learning how to apply digital murals that'll make a huge impact.

## Adapting homes for the new normal

Coronavirus hasn't just changed the way that we work, it's changed the way that we interact with the spaces around us. From working at home to self-isolating, this is an opportunity for you.

### Zoning homes

Talk to customers about colour schemes to help them create specific zones and multi-purpose spaces to separate home and work life. Simple cool blues like Denim Drift create a calm space for relaxation or study, while a rich russet red feature wall signifies that a room is for playing and socialising.

### Decorating for wellbeing

Help customers focus on their well-being, switching bold, brash colours for mood-boosting and calming shades from the Dulux ColourFutures™ palettes will create spaces where your customers want to spend time - to relax, to unwind, to escape from the world outside.



Need inspiration?

Check out our [Colour Tools and Dulux Visualiser!](#)



# Chapter Four: Standing Out From The Crowd

## Making a success by developing your skills



The Dulux Academy is the home of painting and decorating excellence. Our experts have seen it all. Done it all. And they're ready to show you it all.

No matter how long you've been decorating for our learning experiences will grow your knowledge and understanding. Get hands-on in practical sessions and build the skills and craftsmanship that the decorating industry celebrates.

Dulux Academy is a CITB Approved Training Organisation (ATO), which means that many of our courses can be funded through levy payments.

For more information on our courses, venues and dates, visit [duluxacademy.co.uk](http://duluxacademy.co.uk)

Or [download our latest prospectus](#).



## Sharpen your skills online with Dulux Academy Live

Along with our inspiring face-to-face courses, Dulux Academy offers **free** online workshops where expert tutors will teach you and a small group of delegates about a range of decorating skills, and cover ways of enhancing your business.

*Dulux Academy Live offers a wide range of informative workshops for the professional decorator. I highly recommend them to old and new painters in the industry.*

**Chris Payne**

If you'd like to join a Dulux Academy Live workshop, you can [enrol online](#).





## Going one step further

We'll always support professional decorators of all sizes, but maybe you want to do more?

If you go above and beyond, meet the highest standards of workmanship, treat customers with the greatest of respect, and manage your business in a professional way, join us as a Dulux Select Decorator.

## What are the benefits of being a Dulux Select Decorator?

As a Dulux Select Decorator all of your work will be covered by our 24 month guarantee. Your customers get extra piece of mind, and you'll be able to advertise yourself as the best of the best.

Dulux Select Decorators also receive:

- Branded templates, stationery and online assets to promote your business
- An online profile on the Dulux Select Decorators portal
- More visibility with high value customers in your area
- Access to The Rainy Day Trust's financial, mental health and counselling support
- Access to an exclusive experts forum to share with and learn from other experts
- Regular competitions
- Recognition at our prestigious annual awards ceremony
- Discount vouchers for leading Dulux products
- Tickets to subsidised events to meet other members and their families
- Discounts at the Dulux Academy

All you need to do is prove your quality and pay your annual fee.

And for a small additional fee, you'll also receive full accreditation from the government-endorsed Trustmark scheme.



*We have various family and activity events over the year, an awards ceremony each year celebrating the best work and achievements, competitions, money off vouchers for products, a great support network both from the team running it and within an online community, and you get to meet some brilliant people.*

*If you're smart, you can get way more value out of membership than the annual fee costs.*

**David Barrett, Dulux  
Select Decorator  
since 2015**



Everything the scheme does is designed to help you stand out, grow your business, and improve your skills - three things you'll need to do more of in the new normal.

As Vickie, the scheme's lead, explains - David's right about the value you can get out of Dulux Select membership.

*Dulux Select has always aimed to help decorators win more business in their town by standing out from others. The assets we supply can be used online, on printed resources or on your vans. And that's without mentioning the opportunities to learn and grow. It really is something that the more you put in, the more you will get out - both personally and professionally.*

**Vickie Mather, Dulux Select Lead**

## **Be the best at what you do best - join Dulux Select**

Dulux Select Decorator membership isn't open to everyone. We only accept professionals who'll be able to get real value from the scheme - and offer genuine value to their clients. Meet those criteria, we'll give you support and resources to grow your business.

[Visit the website](#) to see the full criteria and apply.

# Chapter Five: The Essentials

Print off these essential signs, documents and design assets for use on-site, or add them to your company website or social media.

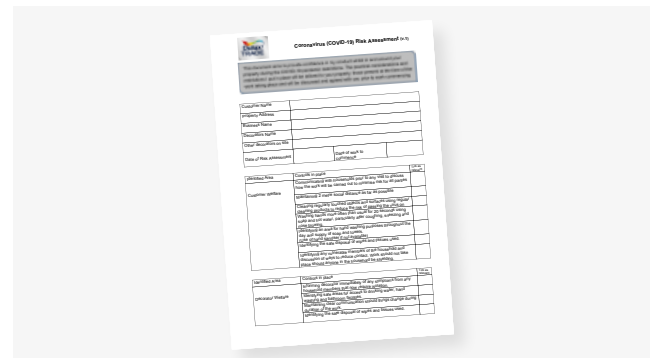
## Printable Workplace Signage

To carry out new risk assessments and make sure your team and customers know how to stay safe, print off these helpful signs to display prominently at work.



## Printable Discussion Document

Print out and refer to the following document to guide your safety discussions with your team and customers.



## Website Assets

Let customers know that you're prepared for the new normal - and that you're using the best quality Dulux Trade products with our downloadable website assets.







# New Normal Checklist

You're prepared to do what you do best, refer to the checklist below to keep on track as you do more for customers.



## **Keep Everyone Safe**

Stay up to date with the government's guidelines, communicate with customers and employees, and make arrangements for anyone who's self-isolating or shielding.



## **Embrace Online**

Social media, video calling and online payments will make it easier for you to safely win more work, quote for it, and keep the cash flowing into your business.



## **Focus on Your Customers**

Your customers need your skills more than ever. It's up to you to show them that you're far more than just a painter by demonstrating your professional skills and know-how.



## **Improve Your Skills**

Grow your skills even further with the Dulux Academy and Dulux Academy Live workshops, and show customers just how good you are by applying to be a Dulux Select Decorator.



## **Use What We've Given You**

Remember to print off and use the signage and discussion cheat sheets we've provided in this PDF. They'll make life far, far easier.