

# COVID-19 SAFETY AND HYGIENE

### Putting shopper and staff safety first in mid-Wales

As the coronavirus crisis began to take hold, Jamie Ashton took rapid steps to protect both shoppers and staff at his two forecourt stores in Powys, mid-Wales.

Protective screens were put up very quickly and social distancing signs placed throughout the store. Hygiene protection measures were also put in place including cleaning of trolley handles after every use and the sanitisation of the fuel pump handles.

One specific area of the store where Jamie has taken particular care is in and around the tills. The area in front of the tills has been marked off with chevrons to make it clear where shoppers should and should not stand to protect themselves and colleagues within the store. Floor stickers were also installed to show where queuing customers should wait. In addition, when shoppers are using a trolley, the team simply take the trolley behind the tills to scan in order to minimise contact.

Staff safety has been top of mind for Jamie. From the very beginning of the crisis, his team were offered masks and hand sanitiser; although Jamie has made the use of masks optional as he appreciates that not everyone finds them comfortable to use. Based on staff feedback, new protective face visors, which are being produced locally, are now being provided to his team.

“We took the decision at the outset of the COVID-19 crisis to put in place thorough protective measures and have continued to consider what more we can do,” said Jamie. “This approach has helped reassure shoppers and, crucially, it has given our staff peace of mind about how serious we are about protecting their health and wellbeing.”

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A combination of the protective measures and ability for shoppers to complete a full shop in his 3,000 and 4,000 square foot stores has attracted a large number of new shoppers. In particular, with a complete range of Co-op Own Brand products in store, shoppers have reacted positively to the high-quality products available and the two stores are trading over 20% up.

“We are seeing a lot of new shoppers across both stores. We know many people are travelling several miles to visit the stores in preference to larger supermarkets because it is more convenient to shop with us. We are also seeing many locals who are either shopping with us more and or even for the first time having not previously thought of walking on foot to a forecourt convenience store,” added Jamie.

“We know from feedback that the measures we have put in place have been greatly appreciated by shoppers and we’ve all been reassured by how they have respected and followed social distancing and safety precautions. We have simply tried to take the guesswork out of how to shop safely and it’s been working well.”

Like many stores, Jamie and his team have been keen to provide additional help to people locally. This has included a free delivery service for people who are self-isolating.



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