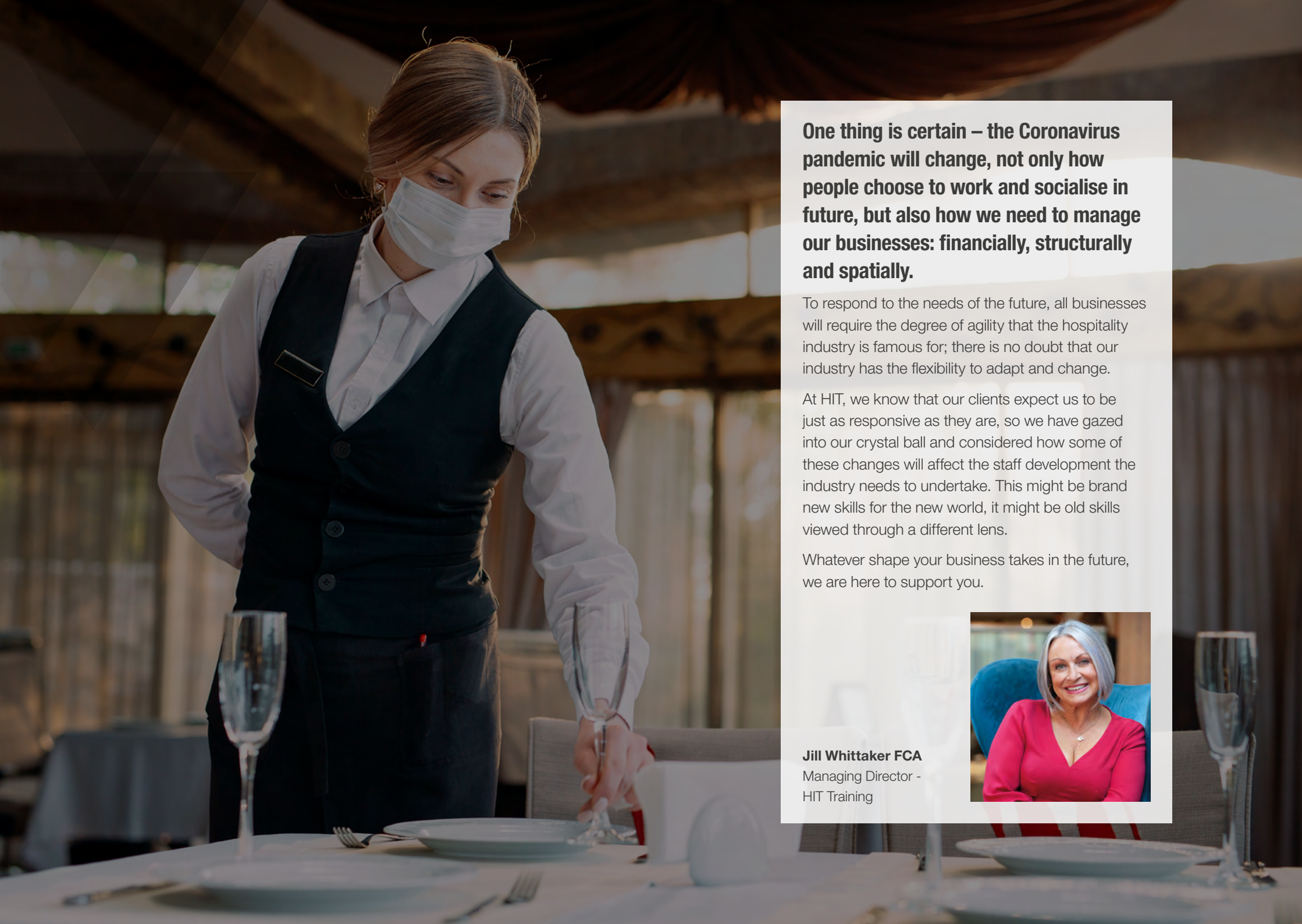


# The Future Workforce: Upskilling and Adapting to the Outbreak





**One thing is certain – the Coronavirus pandemic will change, not only how people choose to work and socialise in future, but also how we need to manage our businesses: financially, structurally and spatially.**

To respond to the needs of the future, all businesses will require the degree of agility that the hospitality industry is famous for; there is no doubt that our industry has the flexibility to adapt and change.

At HIT, we know that our clients expect us to be just as responsive as they are, so we have gazed into our crystal ball and considered how some of these changes will affect the staff development the industry needs to undertake. This might be brand new skills for the new world, it might be old skills viewed through a different lens.

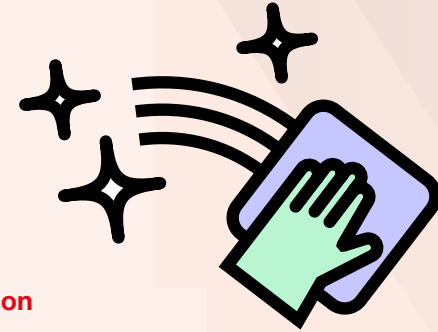
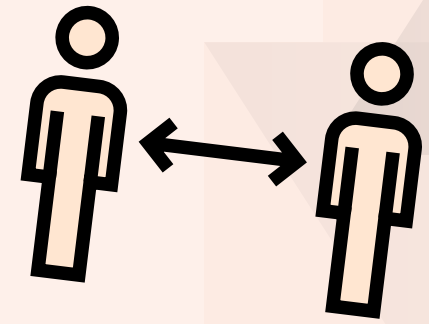
Whatever shape your business takes in the future, we are here to support you.



**Jill Whittaker FCA**  
Managing Director -  
HIT Training

## What do hospitality businesses need to consider?

The COVID-19 outbreak is unlike any crisis the hospitality industry has faced in living memory. As we begin to consider reopening our businesses to welcome back our employees and customers, Coronavirus is at the forefront of our thinking.



**Reopening Soon**

### **To stay ahead of the curve, preparation is going to be key to our success.**

Supporting and upskilling our workforce to be ready for the demands ahead will be one of our core priorities. This virus will be an active part of our society for the foreseeable future, and the industry will need to be prepared for additional waves of COVID-19 or potential future pandemics.

Social distancing measures and stricter infection control procedures are likely to mean that the day-to-day operations of our businesses change dramatically in the early days.

Businesses will need to introduce much stricter cleaning, hygiene and infection control methods as part of their everyday operations. In order to give our customers confidence, it will become commonplace for cleaning procedures to be overt, rather than something we do behind closed doors.

The way we interact with our customers will also change. We'll be providing customer service from a distance whilst still trying to maintain that personal touch our industry is built on.

Effective communication of the changes we're making to ensure our businesses are safe places to visit will be essential. Customers and employees will feel more comfortable walking into a venue that is following strict protocols to maintain their safety, even if it does mean service is a little slower than, or slightly different to, what they're used to.

## **Looking at the operations of our workforce in the near and distant future, we'll need to consider:**

### **How can we maintain social distancing between our employees?**

This could include staggering shifts, introducing A and B teams, or having multi-skilled staff to work on multiple kitchen sections or tasks.

### **What can we do to keep our business infection-free as much as possible?**

Businesses could introduce the routine cleaning of surfaces in between customers, replacing the furniture in premises with easier to clean alternatives, e.g. plastic furniture, or temperature checking everyone before they step foot on-site.

### **Which areas of our business or operation pose the highest risk?**

Consider whether soft furnishings could be replaced with wipe down surfaces, offering sanitising products alongside high-touch areas (like touchscreen order systems or menus), or how you can safely offer face-to-face services from a distance.

### **How can we address any skills gaps within the workforce?**

Staff may need to be trained in other areas and upskilled in infection control methods, or you may need to recruit more team members to fill new roles such as monitoring those entering the premises or implementing additional cleaning procedures.

### **How can we encourage social distancing between customers?**

Measures could include queue management techniques, moving to a table-only service, or using vases of flowers on every other table to demonstrate they're not to be used.

### **How will we make our employees and customers feel safe in our venue?**

Look at ways to introduce consistent, clear and regular communication with both employees and customers. People will be reassured by the measures you're taking to maintain their safety - don't shy away from being open and honest.

### **What are the liability concerns? How will they be managed?**

Consider what your procedures will be if an employee or past customer becomes ill with COVID-19. You'll need to decide how other customers and employees will be notified if this happens - it's better to come from you than from a third party.





## **What's the manager's role in the 'new normal'?**

The quality and understanding of your line managers will be fundamental to the success of your establishment's reopening strategy. They will be cascading information, providing a higher level of support for employees and leading by example.

### **Communicating change**

There is likely to be a shift in attitudes as the health, safety and wellbeing of staff and customers becomes a bigger priority over guest experience. Managers will have a front line role in supporting and protecting both employees and customers, whilst facilitating the best service and experience possible in the circumstances.

They will need to provide clear and consistent communication to educate employees to understand the reasons behind the changes in place, not just that they need doing. This will be especially true for newly introduced infection control methods. Gaining employee buy-in will ensure they're adhered to long-term.

Managers will need to ensure they bring in the right safety measures and precautions to match the business' clientele. Managers will need to use their understanding of the market to ensure they continue to meet the needs and expectations of their customers with as little disruption as possible.

Complaint management will likely take on a new angle as the wave of changes could be distressing to some customers and employees. Managers will need to be able to effectively communicate and reassure that every measure is in place to support the health of those entering the premises. Serving staff members will also need to be trained in these forms of communication so that they're in a position to diffuse any customer concerns.

### **Mental health support**

It's likely that workforces will need additional mental health support during and after the COVID-19 crisis. Employees will have gone through stressful and, in some cases, life-changing situations throughout this pandemic meaning they may not be in the same headspace they were before.

Managers will need to be trained to recognise the signs that an employee is struggling with mental health problems and be able to step in with support. Employees will need to feel that they can trust their manager to be supportive, understanding and non-judgemental if they are facing any issues.

Stigma around mental health problems is often an issue in the hospitality industry. Managers will need to create a more inclusive culture within their venue, making employees feel safe and supported when raising mental health concerns.

## What does the future workforce look like?

Changes to working routines to follow social distancing and infection mitigation measures will require workers to have a more comprehensive skill set than before. Traditional skills will still be required and may need to be carried out to a much higher standard to reassure guests that it's safe for them to return.



### **Multi-skilled workforce**

There may be short-term changes to the roles needed within your establishment. For example, fewer chefs may be working in the kitchen to maintain social distancing, whilst you may need additional front of house staff to manage increased cleaning procedures and customer monitoring.

Employees may need to be upskilled or multi-skilled to be comfortable working across a variety of different roles or sections. There may also be a need to recruit new members of staff as the pandemic creates new job roles, for example, door persons or infection control monitors.

### **New approach to customer service**

Delivering the high quality of customer service that our industry is renowned for will change considerably for some time. Customer service will need to be provided from a distance with more attention being paid to relationship management as the use of face masks could compromise our 'service with a smile' approach.

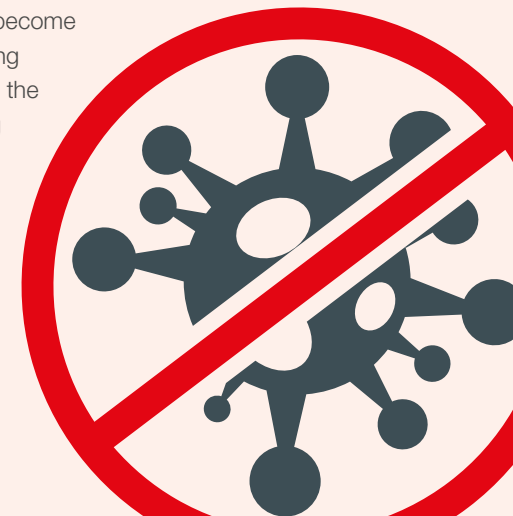
The way in which we serve our customers could differ as traditional ways of providing table service and bar service is compromised. There may be an increase in the use of technology or apps to reduce the amount of contact between guests and employees. Employees will need full and thorough training on these changes and be able to confidently communicate them with any customers who raise concerns.

### **Infection control abilities**

Increases to hygiene, infection control and cleaning processes will mean workers in every role will need new skills in understanding the chain of infection and how to break it in a work environment.

Sanitising and wiping down of surfaces will become an additional part of each employees' working routines. Employees will need to understand the importance behind these additional cleaning measures and the most effective ways to carry them out quickly and efficiently.

Cleaners and housekeepers will need to undergo additional training as routine cleaning will now need to be completed to a much higher standard taking infection control measures into account.



## What training is available to prepare for the 'new normal'?

Providing our employees with quality training and skills to adapt to the changes to our industry will be integral to the success of a business' reopening plans.

**Here's what's available from HIT Training...**

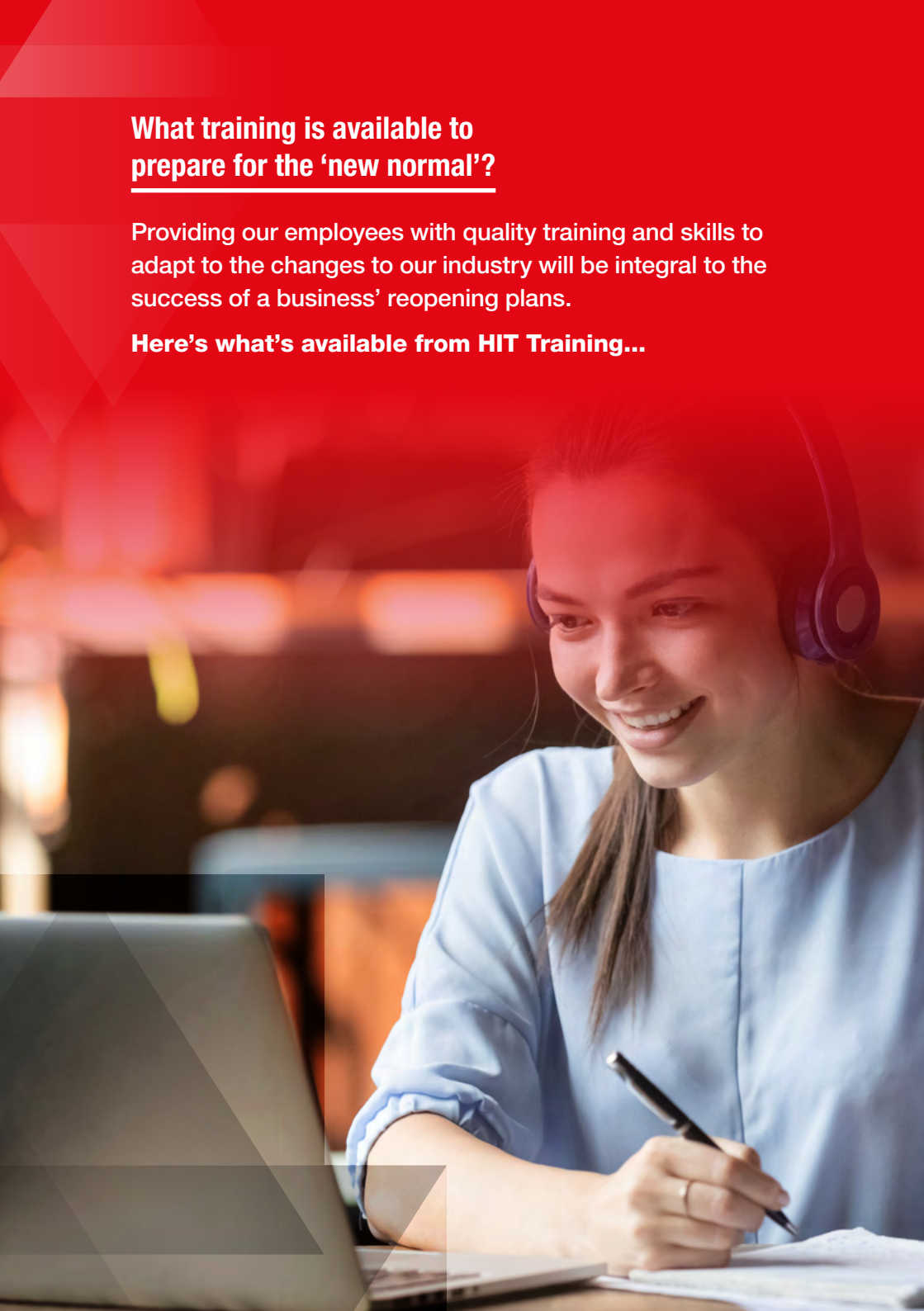
## Mental health first aid

Educate your employees to be mental health aware with three levels of mental health first aid qualifications with HIT Training. Our trainers have real-world experience of working in the mental health industry, providing an engaging introduction to the field.

**Level 1 Awareness of First Aid for Mental Health** is suitable for all employees, providing them with the knowledge to identify suspected mental health conditions, the skills to start a conversation about mental health and be able to signpost a person towards professional help.

**Level 2 First Aid for Mental Health** gives employees the skills and knowledge to create a positive culture towards mental health within the workplace. They will also build upon the learnings from Level 1 to grasp a deeper understanding of mental health conditions and the support available.

**Level 3 Supervising First Aid for Mental Health** is aimed at managers and supervisors who have responsibility for supporting and implementing a positive mental health culture within the workplace. Learners will gain an in-depth understanding of mental health conditions and the ability to be a workplace Mental Health First Aider.





## **Infection protection and control**

In light of the COVID-19 outbreak and in preparation for any future pandemics, all employees within the hospitality industry should have a working knowledge of infection prevention and control.

**The Principles of Infection Control and Safe Working** is suitable for all employee levels. The course teaches solid foundations to limit, control and prevent the spread of infection in the workplace.

**Level 2 Award in the Prevention and Control of Infection** is aimed at supervisors, managers and those responsible for cleaning procedures in the workplace. This qualification provides in-depth knowledge and understanding of the prevention and control of infections including legislation, policies, systems and protocols.

## **Customer service**

COVID-19 will change the way we approach customer service in the hospitality industry. We'll be providing personal experiences from a safe distance with many employees wearing protective clothing, which may be intimidating if left unexplained.

**Customer Service in the New World** is a new two-hour online course from HIT Training developed to tackle these concerns. Suitable for employees of all staff levels, this course focuses on the adaptations we need to make to our traditional customer service delivery in light of the COVID-19 outbreak.

## **Facilities management**

Facilities management is essential to the smooth and productive running of a business creating efficiencies in service delivery and implementation. With the changes the hospitality industry is currently undergoing, these staff members will be essential in helping to weather the storm.

**The Facilities Management Supervisor Apprenticeship** prepares an individual for managing a facilities management service, or a group of services in the hospitality industry. Apprentices will supervise others, understand contractual requirements and service delivery targets to achieve service targets. They'll also have to provide customer service skills and be proactive in finding solutions to problems.





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