

Summary of COVID-19: Guidance for the safe use of multi-purpose community facilities

1. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to simplify the guidance published by the government on 30th June 2020 found via the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-multi-purpose-community-facilities/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-multi-purpose-community-facilities> (accessed 02/07/20)

In order for operators and users of community facilities to better understand their responsibilities and the range of activities for which facilities can be used.

This document will summarise permitted activities with respect to community venues and the responsibilities for operators and users of community facilities from the 4th July 2020.

2. Definitions

Indoor Gatherings – This means a group consisting of no more than two households, a household plus members from a support bubble household are together classed as a single household. Within that group social distancing of 2m or 1m plus mitigations will need to be maintained between members of different households.

Outdoor Gatherings – This means a group consisting of no more than 6 individuals from different households, or a greater number of individuals from two households where a household plus members from a support bubble household are together classed as a single household. Within that group social distancing of 2m or 1m plus mitigations will need to be maintained between members of different households.

Social Distance – This means a distance of 2m or 1m plus mitigations where it is not possible to maintain a distance of 2m.

1m plus mitigations – Where it is not possible to maintain a 2m distance at all times, community facility operators should ensure that people can maintain a 1m distance with mitigating actions taken. These mitigating actions can include but are not limited to: reducing the capacity of facilities, staggering access to buildings, reducing time spent in facilities, orienting rooms/furniture so people don't face each other (i.e. sit side-by-side not face-to-face), wear face coverings, increase ventilation (opening windows), use one way systems, avoid loud talking/singing, provide more hand washing/sanitising stations.

Household – This is a group of people who live together within the same property or a group of people who live in two properties where they have formed a support bubble with each other.

3. Permitted Uses of Community Facilities

From the 4th July community facilities will be able to open and offer:

- Services for Children & Young People (In addition to the childcare & early years provision allowed from 1st June).
- Voluntary & Community sector service provision (In addition to the essential voluntary activities and urgent public services such as food banks, homeless services and blood donation already allowed).
- Recreation, leisure & social gatherings
- Meetings & civic functions where meetings cannot take place digitally.
- Indoor & Outdoor markets

Further details on the permitted uses of community facilities can be found via:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-multi-purpose-community-facilities/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-multi-purpose-community-facilities> (accessed 02/07/20)

4. Restrictions on Use of Community Facilities

From the 4th July community facilities **must not** be used for:

- Indoor sport or fitness activity (This covers activities that would normally take place in a gym, sports venue, fitness or dance studio).
- Live performances of drama, comedy or music (this includes singing, chanting or playing musical instruments).
- Playing music or broadcasts that may encourage shouting.
- Communal dancing.

5. Community Facility Operator Responsibilities

Operators of community facilities are responsible for the following:

- Undertaking a Covid-19 risk assessment before re-opening the facility, this is in addition to any risk assessments currently in place for the community facility.
- Undertaking reasonable practical measures (see section 7) to ensure the premises, access to it, and any equipment or substances provided are safe for people using it, as far as reasonably practicable before re-opening the facility.
- Making arrangements for cleaning the facility and any associated equipment in between uses, frequent cleaning and disinfecting of objects that are touched regularly such as door handles, ensure shared equipment is cleaned after each use.
- Set clear guidance for the use and cleaning of toilets, showers and changing facilities to ensure they are kept clean and social distancing is achieved as much as possible.
- Make users or hirers aware of number limits on gatherings (see section 8) and encourage compliance with these limits. For example, this can be done when users are booking the space or upon arrival.
- Work with users or hirers to keep a temporary record of all visitors for 21 days to assist with NHS Test and Trace in a way that is manageable and in line with data protection legislation.
- Operators of community facilities with car parks should consider undertaking practical measures such as changing the car park layout to help people socially distance.
- Ensure that the venue is hired out for activities which are permitted from the 4th July onwards according to the current guidance, see sections 3 & 4.
- Working with local authorities, neighbouring businesses and travel operators where the community facility is one of a number of venues re-opening within a small area to assess risk and implement mitigating actions such as:
 - Further reducing capacity from what was determined through the risk assessment.
 - Staggering entry time with other venues and taking steps to avoid long queues in surrounding areas.
 - Arranging one-way travel routes between venues & transport hubs.
 - Giving advice to attendees regarding methods of transport or routes to avoid and to avoid crowded areas when travelling to the community facility.

Where a community building is also used as a workplace those responsible for the premises should be aware of their responsibilities as employers to ensure a safe working environment. Operators should take practical actions based on 5 main steps provided within Appendix B.

Organisations have a duty of care to volunteers to ensure as far as reasonably practicable they are not exposed to risks to their health and safety and are afforded the same level of protection as employees and the self-employed.

6. Community Facility User Responsibilities

Users and hirers of community facilities are responsible for managing risks arising from their own activities when they have control of premises and should take into account any specific guidance related to the activity which they wish to undertake.

This will include:

- Asking everyone, including staff/volunteers, to wash their hands thoroughly for at least 20 seconds using soap and water or hand sanitiser upon entering and leaving the facility.

- Advising everyone, including staff/volunteers, to wear a face covering when using an indoor community facility, except for children aged under 3 years or those who may find them difficult to manage correctly see Appendix C.
- Work with operators to ensure that a temporary record of all visitors is kept for 21 days to assist with NHS Test and Trace in a way that is manageable and in line with data protection legislation.
- Ensure that you only use community facilities for activities which are permitted from the 4th July onwards according to the current guidance, see sections 3 & 4.

7. Risk Assessment & Mitigating Actions

Before opening the facility to the public, operators should complete a Covid-19 risk assessment. The risk assessment should be used to determine the capacity of the facility allowing for a social distance of 2m or 1m plus mitigations between individuals from different households using the facility, this includes staff/volunteers.

It should be noted that there is a clear preference within the guidance for a social distance of 2m to be maintained, this will need to be taken into account when determining capacity and advising users/hirers of the facility of restrictions.

Within the Covid-19 risk assessment operators will need to identify specific risks associated with the use of the building and also identify and implement appropriate mitigating actions.

The practical recommendations given by the HSE for mitigating against Covid-19 risks include:

- Using floor tape/paint to mark work areas.
- Providing signage reminding people to keep 2m apart.
- Using screens to create a physical barrier between people.
- Having people work side-by-side rather than face-to-face.
- Limiting movement of people around the facility.

With respect to limiting the movement of people the guidance for multi-purpose community facilities recommends that the risk assessment should identify high-risk areas within buildings such as doorways and implement practical mitigating actions which include:

- Using multiple exit & entry points (taking into account reasonable adjustments for people with disabilities).
- Introducing one way systems (identified with floor markings or signage).
- Managing arrival & departure times.
- Introducing socially distanced queuing systems.

More detailed HSE guidance on undertaking Covid-19 risk assessments can be found via the following link:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/working-safely/covid-secure.htm> (accessed 02/07/20)

8. Social Distancing & Capacity

From the 4th July the government guidance on social distancing for individuals will change, full details can be found by clicking the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing-after-4-july> (accessed 02/07/20)

The guidance states that community facilities which have been made Covid-19 secure will be allowed to hold more than 30 people, subject to the capacity limits of a facility determined by their Covid-19 risk assessment.

It should be stated that for both indoor and outdoor venues a social distance between individuals of different households of 1m plus mitigations should only be used where a social distance of 2m is not viable, and the mitigating measures should be considered within the Covid-19 risk assessment.

Specific considerations for indoor venues when determining capacity are:

- Gatherings must be limited in size to two households and that provision will need to be made to ensure that members of the gathering from different households can maintain social distancing.

- Gatherings must only exceed 30 individuals under specific conditions defined in legislation and can only be comprised of up to 30 individuals for significant life time events such as a wedding, where gatherings for these major life events must also be limited in size to two households.
- Where the venue has capacity for multiple gatherings it must be possible for different gatherings to maintain a social distance between each other.
- Individuals from one gathering must not interact with anyone from a different gathering. For example, even if people who are part of different gatherings know each other they should not be speaking to each other inside the venue.

Specific considerations for outdoor venues when determining capacity are:

- Gatherings must be limited in size to 6 people if they are from more than two different households, with a social distance maintained between people from different households.
- Gatherings of more than 6 people can be accommodated outdoors provided the members of this gathering are from no more than two households and a social distance is maintained between people of different households.
- Gatherings must only exceed 30 individuals under specific conditions defined in legislation and can only be comprised of up to 30 individuals for significant life time events such as a wedding, where gatherings for these major life events must also be limited in size to two households.
- Individuals from one gathering must not interact with anyone from a different gathering. For example, even if people who are part of different gatherings know each other they should not be speaking to each other within the confines of the outdoor space being used as a venue.

9. Cleaning & Toilets

Facilities must be cleaned after each use, sufficient time needs to be given to this activity in between groups of users using the facility, this will affect the numbers of groups that can use the facility during opening hours and should be described within the Covid-19 risk assessment.

Frequently used objects, surfaces or spaces e.g. entrance/exit doorways, should be given particular attention when cleaning, this should be done using standard cleaning products.

Where possible windows and non-fire doors should be opened to improve ventilation, other measures that will usually be needed are the provision of:

- Signs & posters promoting good handwashing technique, the need to increase frequency of handwashing, the need to avoid touching your face, the need to cough or sneeze into a tissue which should be binned safely or into the crook of your arm if a tissue is not available.
- Hand sanitiser in multiple locations, such as reception areas, in addition to washrooms.
- Clear cleaning and usage guidance for toilets with increased frequency of cleaning in line with usage with social distancing is achieved as far as possible.
- Hand drying facilities e.g. paper towels or electrical dryers.

Regarding toilets the following practical steps will be usually needed in addition to the steps above are:

- Consider using social distancing marking (e.g. floor tape/paint) in areas where queues normally form, and the use a limited entry approach (e.g. one in, one out), while avoiding creating additional bottlenecks.
- Ensure the availability of suitable handwashing facilities including running water and liquid soap, also consider making hand sanitiser available on entry to toilets.
- Consider the use of disposable cloths or paper roll to clean all hard surfaces.
- Keep facilities well ventilated e.g. by fixing doors open where appropriate.
- Take special care with the cleaning of portable toilets and larger toilet blocks.
- Display visible and up to date cleaning schedules.
- Provide additional rubbish bins and more frequent rubbish collection.

If a facility is being cleaned after a known or suspected case of Covid-19 then you will need to refer to the guidance contained in the link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings> (accessed 05/07/20)

More detailed HSE guidance on appropriate cleaning arrangements can be found via the following link:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/cleaning/index.htm> (accessed 02/07/20)

10. Vulnerable People

Certain groups of people are at increased risk of severe disease from Covid-19, including all people aged 70 or over. Such individuals are advised to stay at home as much as possible and, if they do go out, to take particular care to minimise contact with others outside of their household.

11. Enforcement

Enforcing authorities such as the HSE or your local authority are empowered to take a range of actions to improve the control of risks, this would cover building operators and employers not taking appropriate action to ensure social distancing, where possible.

Failure to complete a Covid-19 risk assessment or completing a Covid-19 risk assessment but failing to put in place sufficient mitigating measures, could constitute a breach of health and safety law.

The actions an enforcing authority can take include the provision of specific advice (through enforcement notices) to building operators and employers to support them to achieve the required standard.

Serious breaches and failure to comply with enforcement notices can constitute a criminal offence, with serious fines and even imprisonment for up to 2 years. There is also a wider system of enforcement, which includes specific obligations and conditions for licensed premises.