

How does the latest COVID-19 advice affect community halls?

14.5.20

Latest Government advice

As you know, from Wednesday 13 May, those of us who are not vulnerable are able to:

- spend time outdoors – for example, sitting and enjoying the fresh air, picnicking, or sunbathing
- meet one other person from a different household outdoors - following social distancing guideline
- exercise outdoors as often as we wish - following social distancing guidelines
- play sports on outside sports courts which can reopen but only with one other person, or members of your family or alone.

[More information](#)

Community halls and pre-school/ nursery provision

Community Centres are among the governments list of businesses and venues that are required by law to stay closed. This also means village halls and other community buildings.

However, please also take note of the [Recovery Strategy Roadmap](#) that the government published this week. Recovery is set out in 3 steps (see p. 25 for an explanation of the steps).

- In step 2 it says that children are anticipated to be able to attend early years settings from 1 June. Further guidance is yet to come on this but community halls hosting pre-schools and nurseries need to plan for this.
- Community halls appear likely to be allowed to open in Step 3 (hoped to be 4 July) providing they meet CV-19 guidelines (please see below).

Consultation is taking place with key sectors. Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE) is compiling clear guidance from these consultations, which CFO will circulate in due course.

Important notes

- If the number of infected people starts to rise again then all these steps will have to be put back.
- Information is changing daily so please continue to look at all the relevant websites for guidance.
 - <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>
 - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing>

Other relevant updates

General

- Over 70's and especially those older people with health issues need to be shielded until the end of June.
- Small wedding ceremonies may be able to take place from 1 June, but there are no details on this yet!
- Face coverings are encouraged in public spaces where social distancing is not possible or where you are likely to come into contact with people who you don't normally meet, such as supermarkets, public transport and other shops.
- For the moment public gatherings of more than 2 people are prohibited – unless people are from the same household.
- Non-essential retail, restaurants, pubs, bars, gyms, and leisure centres will also remain closed. They will re-open in a phased manner (some halls have gyms attached).

Playing field facilities

- For those halls and councils which run playing field facilities, please note that play equipment/ areas must remain closed.

Workspaces and outdoor areas¹

Ahead of updated risk assessment advice, please note that:

- A CV-19 risk assessment should be carried out in consultation with employees/ clients. For halls, this would include caretakers, preschool workers and teachers/ groups who hire the hall.
- Premises should be cleaned more regularly. Close attention should be paid to high-contact objects like door handles and keyboards.
- Handwashing facilities or hand sanitisers should be provided at entry and exit points.

¹ ACRE is compiling guidance on risk assessments for halls – consultation is ongoing. CFO will send this out as soon as it is available. Risk assessments are vital to managing your hall when you re-open. Also, remember that hall committees must document all decisions and actions taken.

- Social distancing should be maintained where possible. Stay side to side rather than face to face. Wear a face covering (not face masks) where 2m distancing is not possible and wash them regularly.
- People should apply hand sanitiser when entering a building and after contact with surfaces.
- Limit the number of people that an individual is regularly in contact with.
- Keep indoor areas well ventilated, i.e. windows and doors open or use air conditioning.
- Wash clothing and fabrics regularly.
- Crowds will still need to be avoided in Step 3

Risk assessments for future re-opening

You will need to consider:

- The maximum amount of people each room can hold, keeping in mind the two-metre distancing
- Who might need face coverings -is there is a certain group that will not be able to keep a distance?
- Whether you have to limit the number of people that an individual is in contact with regularly – this might this mean classes have to wear face masks, or will physical distancing be enough by July?

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