

## Appendix D

### Management of Social Distancing at Community Facilities and Activities A Risk Based approach

Following the end of lockdown community groups need to know whether or not they can once again use community facilities to hold their usual – or a version of their usual – activities and, if so, what conditions may be appropriate so as to reduce the risk of spreading infection and address fear.

The following takes a risk-based approach to a complex situation, bearing in mind: the hundreds of different kinds of organised activities which take place in or around village and community halls and playing fields; the important need to address isolation, loneliness and mental health issues and take advantage of the warmer summer months; the needs of families with young people; the need to enable people to remain fit and healthy; and the need for people who normally earn a living around community facilities to do so. This note cannot cover every situation and is intended only as a guide to help halls draw up their own policy towards accepting bookings, with tips shared by halls, so that the Booking Secretary knows how to respond to requests.

The following points should be considered in risk assessing whether each potential hirer can meet the COVID-19 secure guidelines.

- Can attendance at indoor activities be limited to the capacity figures the hall sets and will the organiser be able or willing to comply with social distancing requirements (see Section 2.2)? What arrangements would be made if more people attend than the room has capacity for? A meeting which usually takes place in a committee room may need to be moved to a larger space to allow social distancing.
- The likely age of those attending. If 70 or over, or if clinically vulnerable, can arrangements be made to ensure 2m social distancing **throughout** their use of the premises, including when using toilets. (The clinically vulnerable are advised to shield until 31<sup>st</sup> July).
- Are the organisers willing to clean regularly used surfaces before the event, while it takes place and before leaving?
- If activities are to be held outdoors what arrangements will be made in the event of rain or a cold snap, e.g. tents, umbrellas?
- Will other organisations be using the premises at the same time? If so, what arrangements will be made to avoid contact between the different groups e.g. staggered start/finish times, Occupied/vacant signage for toilets?
- If an activity will take place outside, will it require access to toilets? If so, a charge would be reasonable to help defray cleaning and other costs such as water rates and insurance.
- Will it comply with any Government Guidance for specific activities (eg places of worship if a religious ceremony is to take place, guesthouses and hostels if overnight accommodation such as cubs).

The following are all subject to social distancing, cleaning and hygiene being met:

#### Group 1: Permitted

- **Activities which provide essential services, or otherwise already permitted:**

e.g. Pre-schools, food and medicine distribution, making PPE, Pop-Up COVID-19 testing. Retail activities such as Community Shops and indoor markets (e.g. Farmers Markets, Craft Markets, and Antique Fairs) must comply with Government Guidance for the retail sector.

- **Use by Schools:** Guidance has kindly been provided by the Charity Commission, which is available from your Network member if required.
- **Office and certain other forms of employment:** e.g. Building work to the hall, Parish Council, or other office, hire by local companies or organisations for training events, distribution purposes, video recording/transmission. A hairdresser or health therapist (providing they are not offering a service which is not yet allowed to re-open such as nails). The relevant Government Guidance for that type of employment should be observed.
- **Activities which can be held outdoors and where social distancing can be readily achieved:** e.g. tennis, bowls, football training, keep fit type classes, dog training classes, dancing classes. Equipment should be cleaned regularly e.g. gate latches, handles, balls etc. DCMS guidance permits personal training or coaching if people are able to follow social distancing guidelines. People who play team sports can now train together (e.g. hold fitness sessions). See **Appendix K** and link to DCMS guidance in Section 6.
- **Activities held indoors where smaller numbers of people attend:** For example: seated activities and meetings held in a large hall such as art classes, history group, dog training classes, weight loss groups, Parish Council meetings. While it is recommended that meetings continue to take place digitally rather than face-to-face, where possible, the Government Guidance for community facilities specifically permits meetings of civic, political or community groups (e.g. parish council, ward meeting of political party, charity board of trustees), MP or councillor surgery/drop in sessions. A combination may be feasible: A face-to-face meeting may help those who struggle with digital technology to participate or attend, while others participate digitally.
- **Libraries and book lending schemes:** Users should be asked to clean hands on arrival, regularly if browsing and when leaving. Returned books should be placed in a box for 72 hours before placing back on display, cash donations placed in a bowl and handled by one person wearing gloves.

## **Group 2: Requiring more careful management by organisers**

- **Small events providing catering:** e.g. coffee mornings, pop-up cafés or luncheon clubs, where seating may be out of doors and/or well-spaced. Takeaway drink or food can be provided from a room directly accessed from outside. Government Guidance for pubs, cafes and restaurants may be helpful in working out how to run these safely. Community cafes will be required to comply with that Guidance. NB Special arrangements should be made for vulnerable people in the shielding category who wish to attend, to enable participation and avoid their continued isolation.
- **Playing games at tables:** While the older age profile and difficulty complying with social distancing at card tables (normally 67cm) has led the English Bridge Union to advise Bridge Clubs against re-opening for a period, an informal local group may be

able to arrange social distancing if household groups always play together and slightly larger tables are used. Using new cards or cleaning them is advisable. For games such as scrabble, tiles would need to be cleaned and not touched by other players.

- **Activities for children and young people:** e.g. cubs, youth clubs, railway modelling club, Sunday school, picnics or BBQs in outdoor areas. For summer holiday playschemes Government guidance for out-of-school settings applies. For activities with toddlers, soft toys should be avoided, parents can be encouraged to bring toys which are not shared with other children. Pre-school type arrangements are appropriate i.e. focus on hand cleanliness, arranging the room into small groups. However, it has to be recognised social distancing will be difficult so arrangements may be needed for any families with clinically vulnerable close relatives who attend.
- **Public meetings and public consultation events (e.g. planning):** A one-way system can be created for exhibitions. For large meetings attendees can be asked to use the furthest seat from the entrance first unless hard of hearing, handouts provided at the end rather than at the beginning. Contact details should be taken (for NHS Test and Trace) by one person so attendees do not share a pen. Digital participation can also be encouraged.
- **Other larger events including those with seated audiences:** e.g. gardening club, film show, bingo, quiz night. Attendees can be asked to use the furthest seats from the entrance first unless hard of hearing. A booking system can be encouraged to manage numbers and obtain contact details for NHS Test and Trace.
- **Weddings and wedding receptions:** Weddings and similar life cycle religious ceremonies are permitted where attended by up to 30 persons. Recorded music is recommended. A musician may play a non-wind instrument. From 1<sup>st</sup> August sit down wedding receptions are permitted for no more than 30 people. See also Government guidance on Places of Worship. Government guidance for cafes and restaurants may be helpful in relation to catering.
- **Celebration events:** Government guidance is that community facilities should not facilitate large gatherings or celebrations at present. Events such as baptism or funeral teas, wedding anniversary lunches, are therefore best accepted in accordance with the limit of 30 for sit down wedding receptions. For private events no more than 30 are permitted if outdoor areas may be used. Note that loud music or broadcasts are not currently permitted, the purpose being to avoid aerosol dispersal. Consequently it is not yet advisable to hire for teenage or adult birthday parties.
- **Social Clubs and bars:** These may open in accordance with Government guidance for pubs. They may also provide takeaway refreshments from a room accessed directly from outside. Games such as darts and snooker are discouraged in the Government guidance for pubs. However, they can be permitted if not played in a Social Club or bar but as an activity in their own right or e.g. at a Youth Club.
- **Indoor sport and exercise and dancing classes:** Activities such as yoga, keep fit, badminton, table tennis, indoor bowls, dancing classes, and School PE lessons are permitted indoors from 25<sup>th</sup> July. These should be held in accordance with the Government guidance, summarized in **Appendix K**, and any guidance issued by the relevant governing body for sport. Energetic activities such as Zumba and circuit

training are subject to tighter capacity and ventilation requirements.

- **Indoor Performances, Rehearsals, broadcasts:** Rehearsals, filming and broadcasting of music, drama and dancing will shortly be permitted, including professional touring performances, amateur dramatics, pantomime groups, children's entertainers, band practices without woodwind or brass instruments (unless played by professionals). These should be held in accordance with the Government guidance for performing arts, summarized in **Appendix J**.
- **Outdoor Performances and events:** See **Appendix J**.
- **Children's birthday parties:** Many families do not have the space for this at home. While they are not banned from taking place at community facilities, large gatherings or celebrations are not permitted and the maximum allowed is 30 for an outdoor event organised by a private individual (including in private gardens). Managing social distancing, tea and hand washing for a small group of children would be easier so a lower capacity limit advisable, e.g. no more than 12 children plus supervising adults. The number would depend on factors such as size of room, age group, whether all already attending the same school and used to group working, whether one of the supervisors is used to managing social distancing etc in a school or Pre-school, whether a children's entertainer will perform (permitted from 1<sup>st</sup> August). Children's entertainers need to get back to work and will have plans for managing social distancing and encouraging hand washing, so a good option for those that can afford it.

**Group 3: Not permitted at 25<sup>th</sup> July, awaits further Government guidance:**

- **Singing:** Including choir practice, congregations, and performance.
- **Woodwind and brass instrument rehearsals and performances by amateurs.**
- **Outdoor events:** If more than 30 people will attend and the event is not organised by a charity, public body, business, or political organization in compliance with Covid-19 Secure guidelines.
- **Dances and discos:** Nightclubs are not permitted to open. Loud music is not permitted, and performers are advised not to encourage impromptu dancing by audiences.

**There has been some concern by trustees about how social distancing applies at community halls and confusion about the way different Government Guidance applies.**

The following may help:

1. **Trustees** of Village Halls are unlikely to be at risk if they have undertaken and followed a COVID-19 Risk Assessment before re-opening their Halls, unless the activity is on the specific 'banned' list that is referred to in Regulation 4 (and regularly amended).
2. Risk under the 'crisis regulations' falls to the **event organiser**. If a **hirer, the event organiser**, does not feel the Hall is in a condition that enables them to comply, they should not make the booking.

3. **Trustees and managers** of Village Halls will, of course, want to ensure that their premises make it as easy as possible for both hirers and individuals to comply with relevant Guidance through the provision of adequate handwashing, signage, spacing/capacity guidelines, multiple small tables etc. specific to their Hall. The manner or extent to which managers choose to do this is unlikely to alter the risk for them under the regulations.
4. **Hirers** must commit themselves to operating in a COVID-19 Secure way by following the Government's Guidance in force for their activity. The Government guidance says: "if organising an activity, you should carry out a COVID-19 risk assessment to identify actions which could minimise the risk of transmission".
5. **Trustees and managers** of Halls should follow good practice themselves and avoid creating the conditions for the spread of COVID-19 in their community. For this reason, they will want to avoid letting to any **hirer** where there may be an obvious risk of the Guidance being hard to comply with.
6. In order to assure themselves on 4, above, trustees of Halls should ensure **hirers** inform all participating **individuals** that they must adhere to social distancing guidelines. In general people are being advised to only meet indoors in groups of up to 2 households or, outdoors, meet in a group of up to 6 people from different households, following social distancing guidelines as far as possible. Those in single adult households can form a support bubble with another household. *The responsibility rests with the **individual** to comply and with the **hirer** (the event organiser) to have carried out a risk assessment and operated the event under COVID-19 Secure guidelines to make it possible* e.g. by laying out seats or tables so as to enable household groups to achieve social distancing from the next group. For example, at a family quiz household groups might be invited to sit at one table, 2m from the next table. At bingo, a "bubble" might sit side by side, separated from the next group. The aim is to contain risk of virus spread to small groups.
7. The Government guidance for **individuals** advises: " More generally, you can continue to meet in larger groups if necessary for work, voluntary or charitable services, education, childcare or training, elite sporting competition or training, to fulfil legal obligations,"; " If taking part in activities with larger groups, you should take particular care to follow social distancing guidelines."; "you should not hold or attend celebrations of any size (such as parties) where it's difficult to maintain social distancing" and "limit social interaction with anyone outside the group you are attending a place with". These do not stop community activities nor people holding conversations in the way many are now used to doing while social distancing in the street, shops or at work: Common sense can be applied.