

## **The Health Protection (Coronavirus)(Restrictions)(Scotland) Regulations 2020 Phase 3 The reopening of village halls and community centres Last updated: 15<sup>th</sup> July 2020**

As you are aware the First Minister has indicated that a number of businesses which until now have remained closed will be able to reopen from the 15 July 2020 as part of Phase 3 of the route map to recovery and the transition out of lockdown. Further information with regard to the Scottish Government's route map can be found here <https://www.gov.scot/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-scotlands-route-map/>

Unfortunately, at present, there is a lack of sector specific guidance for village halls, community centres, and other shared community venues. The government has indicated that all childcare providers will be able to open from the 15<sup>th</sup> of July, and we would include nurseries and playgroups hosted in premises such as yours in this.

Until this date, all community centres must remain closed per regulation 4(8) of the above legislation, except where they:

- Are used to provide essential voluntary activities or urgent public support services, including the provision of food banks or other support for the homeless or vulnerable people, blood donation sessions, or support in an emergency
- and
- Take reasonable measures to ensure a distance of two metres is maintained between every person on the premises while those services are provided, other than between two members of the same household, or a carer and the person they are assisting.

You will be allowed to host playgroups and nurseries and other forms of childcare from the 15<sup>th</sup> of July. Any other activities yourself or service providers that you accommodate will be subject to other guidance as to whether they can go ahead. For example; we would consider church groups to be allowed to reopen as part of communal worship, subject to physical distancing. However, indoor sports would not be allowed to resume until such time as the government permits this.

Additionally, large gatherings are still not permitted, and as such we would advise that all indoor activity is restricted to the current guidance, namely in that adults and older children should maintain physical distancing and have no more than three households at one time using the space.

Our position is that operators of community centres and halls have a general duty of diligence to those using the space and to any services and activities directly run by them. Those hiring the space to provide a service would be responsible for any activity they themselves run. For example, the operator should ensure that a regular cleaning regimen is carried out and enough time left between hires to carry out this regimen, as well as communicating to hirers what their obligations would be in terms of any cleaning pertaining to their own activities.

A group such as a playgroup hiring the space would be the ones responsible for the safety of children in their care. Community groups would be responsible for ensuring physical distancing in events they arrange within the space where this is not arranged by the operator directly. We would encourage service providers to consult sector-specific guidance pertaining to the service that they operate.

We would advise that if you are planning to reopen, you will be required to undertake a 'suitable and sufficient' Covid-19 specific risk assessment to prevent the spread of infection within your premises. Information that you may find useful is available on Aberdeenshire Council's Environmental Health website <https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/environment/environmental->

[health-covid-19/](#) and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has a dedicated web page offering advice on risk assessment <https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/coronavirus.htm>. In addition, your own trade body may have produced relevant guidance and information to assist you in managing Covid-19 and the move out of lockdown and you should reference that.

We would encourage the following action points:

- Conduct a more rigorous cleaning schedule, using disinfectant-based cleaners over detergents where possible, with an emphasis on surfaces which are frequently touched. Allow for more time between hires for cleaning to be carried out. Where toilet facilities are being made available to hirers, we would draw your attention to the guidance of public and customer toilets, attached to the bottom of this document. If not possible to fully carry this out with your own staff, consider what measures you feel are practical to expect hirers to carry out.
- Consider pinch points and narrow corridors which would make it difficult to socially distance and measures which could be taken to mitigate this, such as signage drawing attention to such an issue, staggered start and finish times, or implementing a one-way entrance and exit system where possible to avoid congestion.
- Engagement with hirers on arrangements and measures in place ahead of time. You may wish to encourage groups to bring their own equipment and/or food and drink. Food Standards Scotland have also produced guidance on food operators where your space hosts coffee mornings or otherwise sells food and drink.

We are offering an advice service to Aberdeenshire businesses on compliance with the current regulations and guidance. You may wish to provide us with your revised risk assessments and procedures, or approach us with any questions you may have.

As the business operator you should ensure that the control measures you identify in your Covid-19 risk assessment are fully communicated to employees and/or those who share your business premises and that they are implemented as necessary before reopening. You must ensure that staff have been suitably trained and are provided with any necessary personal protective equipment. We would also encourage operators to engage with regular hirers to ensure they are aware of the provisions of this risk assessment and aware of any expectations put upon them.

Should you wish to discuss any aspects of the above you can make contact with Aberdeenshire Council's Trading Standards Service at [psmg@aberdeenshire.gov.uk](mailto:psmg@aberdeenshire.gov.uk).

The following guidance may be relevant to your business, or to those operating services out of your spaces:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-framework-decision-making-scotlands-route-map-through-out-crisis-phase-3-update/>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-events-sector-guidance/pages/overview/>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-public-and-customer-toilets-guidance/>

<https://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/web-resources-container/covid-19-guidance-for-non-healthcare-settings/>

<https://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/publications-and-research/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-food-business-operators-and-their-employees>

<https://sportscotland.org.uk/covid-19/getting-your-facilities-fit-for-sport/>