

Covid-19 Guidance

AirS Update 1st February 2021

Lockdown Review

The PM announced on 27th January that the current lockdown would be reviewed on 22nd February, and indicated schools might re-open 8th March, subject to a review of situation. If that is the case, it would indicate that Pre-Schools and Out of School Activities would then be available to all children, not just those of key workers.

New guidance - Playgrounds and Outdoor Gyms allowed to re-open

Under the national lockdown announced on 4 January outdoor public playgrounds could remain open. While outdoor gyms were required to closed, revised guidance issued on 28th January permits them to open with a clearly marked one-way system around the fixtures/ machines, to help prevent users from coming into close contact with each other. There is a reminder of the need for a COVID-19 secure risk assessment before opening.

Key points for unstaffed play areas and outdoor gyms include:

- Social distancing is essential. Signage should remind users of the need for and adherence to social distancing. Parents, guardians, or carers taking children to a playground must not "socialise" (i.e., mingle) with other people while there.
- Signs should communicate maximum number of users at one time. It is recommended signs request those using the play area only have 1 family member accompanying a child.
- Signs should promote cleaning of equipment by users, parents, and carers, particularly clear touch points such as swing rockers and see saws, machine handles or exercise bars.
- Outdoor gym users should be encouraged bring their own towel and hygiene products and wipe down equipment after use.
- Parents should be encouraged to bring hand sanitiser gel or wipes to clean their children's hands at the beginning and end of play.
- For outdoor gyms, where machines and equipment are less than 2 metres apart, pieces of equipment should be moved to allow social distancing measures to be adhered to wherever possible. If not possible, 1 metre distance with risk mitigation is acceptable. The mitigations should be set out in the risk assessment, for example increasing frequency of surface cleaning, avoiding face-to-face contact and placing equipment back-to-back or side to side where possible.
- Limiting the available number of seats on equipment or numbers of swings available is recommended to promote social distancing.
- Current government guidance states that face coverings should not be used by children under the age of 3. The Guidance indicates that wearing a face covering in a playground setting could pose a safety risk and recommends judgement is used on whether a child wears a face covering. It provides information about disposal of face coverings, which should not be put in a recycling bin."

The sample poster for playgrounds given in Appendix I of the ACRE COVID-19 Village Halls Information Sheet remains appropriate. The addition of a reminder to take face coverings home would be wise if such litter has been a problem (add this to bullet point 6), the addition that only 1 family member may accompany a child wise if the play area is small and enclosed.

For outdoor gyms, a poster should ask users to follow the one-way system, bring their own towel and hygiene products and wipe down equipment after use.

See: [COVID-19: Guidance for managing playgrounds and outdoor gyms - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-guidance-for-managing-playgrounds-and-outdoor-gyms)

Insurance cover when a hall is out of use

Ansvar have issued the following information to halls covered by their policy. It would be wise for halls with other policies to check their own position.

Normally, where a hall has not been used for 30 days, the following perils are no longer covered:

- Theft or attempted theft
- Malicious damage
- Storm
- Escape of water or oil
- Accidental damage
- Damage to glass and sanitary fittings

At the start of the current government restrictions, Ansvar required that someone work from the Hall for one full day each month in order to avoid the restrictions from applying. However ACRE, through Norris & Fisher, explained to them that this is not generally possible for a Hall committee and they agreed to amend their requirements. The restrictions in cover can now be avoided if someone from the committee visits the Hall at least once a month to check the premises thoroughly and keeps a log of the visits.

Ansvar have issued a Guide to the Management of Unoccupied Premises [Management-unoccupied-premises-risk-guide.pdf \(ansvar.co.uk\)](https://www.ansvar.co.uk/management-unoccupied-premises-risk-guide.pdf)

FAQs

With thanks to ACRE Network Village Hall Advisers for sharing these Q and A's.

Q: Our village hall runs a 50/50 club. During lockdown events could not be held, at which the monthly draws usually take place. How should we manage these so as to comply with our rules?

A: Options might include: Holding it in the village hall as a zoom or teams' event to which those with tickets are invited to attend online, with two or three people socially distancing performing the draw and noting the numbers, with winnings provided subsequently by cheque or BACS. (This would be permitted as it would constitute voluntary work). Or doing the draw live via zoom from the organiser's house, run by one trusted person. One hall uses a spreadsheet which selects a number at random. All the numbers were entered in without any other identification. The spreadsheet is sent to different trustees each month basis to actually press the relevant button and report the winning number back to the draw organiser.

Q: Can we hire the hall to class instructors that use zoom to keep their classes going? They could use the hall on their own, we would get income and they would have an interruption-free setting and still be in a COVID-19 safe environment. If we filming and professional dancers are permitted, surely a single class instructor is safer?

A: People can go to work if they cannot work from home, so this is permissible if factors such as domestic interruptions (dogs, home schooling, deliveries), lack of suitable space or flooring or the need to avoid Wi-Fi interference with home schooling or partner's business meetings/connectivity issues make it difficult to run a class via zoom from home. It would be best to check with the local

authority whether this will interfere with the hall's eligibility for any of the lockdown or discretionary grants available. Ask local authority staff to check with BEIS if they cannot answer the question.

Q: Can a Toy Library continue operating from a hall during lockdown, operating within all COVID-19 safety restrictions. Toys would be sterilised between use by different families and collected on a 'Click and collect' basis.

A: This could operate if part of a childcare/education setting, which is currently exempt in a community building, but is safer run on a "Click and Collect" basis, as ordinary libraries are allowed to do. While the support given to new parents means it could potentially operate as a "support group", the high transmission rate of the new strain of Covid-19 needs to be borne in mind. It would be safer if the "support" elements of its work could be given either online or in a one to one or very small group setting.

Q: Can a group of 8 students attend a first aid course organised by a Hospice in a village hall?

A: This is permitted either under the education and training exemption or for work/volunteering which cannot be done from home.

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