

Covid-19 Guidance AirS Update 17th May 2021

The Government has confirmed that Step 3 of the Roadmap to Unlocking will take place on 17th May as planned.

In summary, from then:

- Up to 30 people will be able to attend weddings, receptions, and commemorative events including wakes, as well as standalone life-cycle events, such as bar/bat mitzvahs and christenings, will also be able to take place with 30 people.
- These can take place outdoors or at any indoor Covid secure venue that is permitted to open.
- The number of people able to attend a funeral will be determined by the number that can be safely accommodated in the venue with social distancing in place.
- Up to 30 people will be able to attend a support group or parent and child group. The limit will not apply to children under 5.
- Organised indoor sport will be able to take place for all (this includes gym classes). This must be organised by a business, charity or public body and the organiser must take reasonable measures to reduce the risk of transmission.
- People will be able to attend indoor and outdoor events, including live performances, sporting events and business events. Attendance at these events will be capped according to venue type, and attendees should follow the COVID-secure measures set out by those venues.
- Outdoor gatherings will be limited to 30 people unless organised by a business, charity, public body, or similar organisation.
- Indoor gatherings will be limited to 6 people or 2 households, so within a larger event at a Covid secure venue people will only be able to “gather” in these size groups (unless an exemption or other Guidance applies).
- New guidance on [meeting friends and family](#) emphasises personal responsibility rather than government rules. Instead of staying 2m apart from anyone you do not live with, you will be encouraged to exercise caution and consider the guidance on risks associated with COVID-19 and actions you can take to help keep you and your loved ones safe.
- The risks of close contact for very vulnerable people no longer shielding need to be borne in mind.
- Indoor entertainment and attractions such as cinemas, theatres, concert halls, bowling alleys, museums and children’s indoor play areas will be permitted to open with COVID-secure measures in place, meaning that film shows, music events, indoor bowls and soft play can resume at community halls.
- Indoor hospitality venues such as restaurants, pubs, bars and cafes can reopen, subject to social distancing.
- Step 4 is still due to take place no earlier than 21 June. Further detail on Step 4 will be set out at the end of the month.

See: [\(COVID-19\) Coronavirus restrictions: what you can and cannot do](#)

Parish Council meetings

Confusion appears to be arising over arrangements for holding Parish Council meetings now that the legislation allowing them to meet online has lapsed. **Members of the public can attend PC meetings in Covid-secure halls, in accordance with social distancing guidelines i.e., in groups of up to 6 people or 2 households**, each group being seated at least 2m from the next group (i.e. as at a restaurant). If it will not be known who or how many of the public will attend, set seats out 1m apart, with some in household pairs, in forward facing rows. The public should wear face masks. The Covid-secure capacity of the venue for a seated audience in rows in groups of 6 or 2 households will apply. If larger numbers are likely, people can be asked to book seats via the clerk, turned away or may listen outside at open doors and windows.

Councils have been encouraged by Government to allow the public to attend remotely until at least 21 June. Remote attendance via streaming has been adopted by some authorities for years so, while it appears the High Court ruling may prevent remote "participation", it would not prevent remote "viewing".

Consequently, technology permitting, a Parish Council can allow any councillors or public who wish, to **watch** online. If they wish to speak, they will need to talk to the clerk or chair before the start of the meeting and either ask them to convey their points or, if appropriate, the Chair can close the meeting to permit them to speak (as in the usual way for visiting speakers). The chair would then re-commence the meeting.

Guidance for weddings, receptions, and celebrations

The guidance has been updated to reflect step 3 of the roadmap:

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): Wedding and civil partnership ceremonies, receptions and celebrations.](#)

There is detailed guidance about any music performances, including by choirs, which should follow the guidelines as set out in the [performing arts guidance](#). Background music should not be played at a volume that makes normal conversation difficult.

Dancing is advised against, except the couple's 'first dance'. Other activities such as cake cutting and playing games can take place.

While close contact with friends and family will be a personal choice, and people are encouraged to exercise caution it should be remembered that some people are more vulnerable than others. Ventilation with external air should be maximised.

While children of all ages are included in the limits on the number of attendees for both ceremonies and receptions, it would not be reasonable to refuse parents to bring tiny babies.

Guidance for pre-schools updated

[Actions for early years and childcare providers during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#) has been updated to reflect step 3 of the roadmap. Information has been included on parent and child groups, organised performances, trips.

Asymptomatic testing

Rapid lateral flow testing is now available free to anybody without symptoms, from pharmacies and testing sites: [Find out more about how to get rapid lateral flow tests](#). Those with symptoms should continue to [get a PCR test](#). See also: [find out which coronavirus test you should get](#).

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Government guidance is that from 17 May, if you are meeting friends and family, you can make a personal choice on whether to keep your distance from them, but you should still be cautious. Does this apply to public venues as well?

A: No. At Step 3 social distancing is still required in public venues, businesses and workplaces, including a Covid-secure hall. The “rule of 6 or 2 households” will apply, as will Covid-secure capacity limits that accommodate social distancing.

Q: A hall has asked if they can accept a booking for a casino night (organised by a company) on 19th June (a Stag Do)?

A: This is a tricky one: As this will be during Step 3, private “parties” are not permitted with loud music and dancing (which must be avoided). “Significant life events” are permitted with up to 30 people. It isn’t clear that a “Stag Do” would qualify, so it would be better to assume the Hall’s Covid capacity and social distancing (ie the rule of 6 or 2 households) would apply to seating arrangements, and it would need to be well supervised by the organising company. Any food and alcohol would need to be provided as table service only. While casinos can re-open on Monday 17th, any Government Guidance for them may not be issued until after that date and must be followed. So, potentially permitted, but subject to careful supervision.

Q: Will 11-18s have to wear masks at youth clubs, scouts etc even though they won't have to at school?

A: The current guidance on Out of School Settings should be followed. This appears to indicate that face masks are required except where outside or removal advised (eg sports/dance, eating)

Q: Can a baby and toddler group serve refreshments?

A: Refreshments can be served from a hatch for consumption while seated, providing alcohol is not served, by or at any group.

Francis

Francis Burrows
Facilities Advisor

Mobile: 07513 123673

francis.burrows@ruralsussex.org.uk