

## Re-Opening of Village Halls and Community Buildings

### Update Summary 08/10/20

The following subjects are covered in this update and to be read in conjunction with V7 of the ACRE Information sheet

- Face coverings at film shows
- Protocols for face coverings at village halls
- Government Guidance for Community Facilities – section 3c
- Band rehearsals
- Charity Commission Guidance
- QR codes
- Music, singing and dancing
- Guidance for places of Worship
- Forest Schools, uniformed groups and other out of school activities
- Covid Poster and Hire conditions

#### Face coverings at film shows

There is an error on p30 of version 7 of the Information Sheet, which omits to say that face coverings can be removed for eating and drinking once seated. The guidance from Cinema UK for running film shows was updated in September and is at: <https://www.cinemauk.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/CINEMAS-keeping-workers-and-customers-safe-during-COVID-19-SEPTEMBER-2020-V2.5v.pdf>

#### Protocols for face coverings at village halls

Questions are arising about when face coverings can be removed. The presumption should always be towards wearing them because they reduce aerosol transmission, which is potentially more important over winter as windows and doors need to be closed. **There is now a legal requirement to display a notice at a hall regarding the need to wear them.**

They must be worn on entry and exit and when moving around the premises by all those aged 11 or over unless a health exemption applies, including by people popping in e.g. to collect or watch children at an activity.

The situations in which a face covering can be removed include:

- To eat and drink,
- Where it will interfere with exercise or other activity,
- Where someone will not be able to hear clearly (e.g. needs to lip read/see facial expression), or
- where other Guidance applies e.g. Performance, Grassroots sport, Out of School Settings where children are not recommended to wear them, or for a workplace, e.g. a cleaner working on their own, a parish clerk in their office, a receptionist or volunteer behind a Perspex screen.

Sometimes it is clear whether removal is permissible, e.g. during keep fit type classes, during a film show the seated audience can remove them to eat and drink, during dog training classes when the combination of voice and facial expression is important.

Questions arise over longer meetings where refreshments are needed or people use water bottles: Taking face coverings on and off frequently is not recommended and hands are supposed to be washed each time, so is it better to keep them off once removed? Would the Guidance for a workplace apply instead, which emphasises a hierarchy of controls?

The wisdom of Job is required to answer such questions!

It has to be down to the organisers and their members (rather than hall trustees or a booking secretary) to work out what is appropriate bearing in mind the purpose is to reduce transmission of the virus and the risk to the more vulnerable, including those aged 70 and over. Consequently, when face coverings are not worn other measures need to be followed carefully e.g. cleaning, social distancing. The following might help:

The obligation is on the individual to wear them. Organisers can ask those attending to put them on but cannot enforce it. Only if it's a hospitality venue such as a Members' Social Club, bar or community café must they ask people to leave if they refuse (when they must be worn other than when seated to eat or drink, table service only).

Organisers should remind people to respect others and that face coverings are required on entry, exit and when moving around unless an exemption applies, and why they are important.

People should not look for loopholes, but organisers can explain the exemptions.

The question of whether a face covering interferes with an activity or with hearing is subjective. It may differ from person to person (e.g. whether they wear glasses, whether a PA system is available, during certain tasks).

Organisers might ask those attending if they need to avoid being placed in a group (of up to 6) near anyone who removes their face covering (e.g. because they are vulnerable, shielding, working with vulnerable people). Others can be asked to respect the need to maintain 2m social distancing from them.

If an activity takes place at which there is doubt about whether an exemption or other Guidance applies a decision can be recorded. It would then be clear in the event of challenge why they were removed.

Trustees, volunteers, parents, tutors working in a hall when others are present should wear face coverings unless an exemption or other Guidance applies e.g. Out of School Settings (when facial expression may be important in working with children), Performance. Note that those serving customers in a retail, hospitality or leisure setting are obliged to wear them unless a screen is in place.

Bear in mind that the secretary of one village hall commented that the advantage of face coverings is that meetings do not last so long!

### **Government Guidance for Community Facilities – section 3c**

ACRE has taken up with MCHLG and others the inappropriate drafting of Section 3c where it suggests WIs, craft activities, veteran groups etc. are risky in the context of likely non-compliance

with the rules on groups of up to 6. We have pointed out that the risk of non-compliance with the group rules is low, that the risk for these groups is different, that of age and vulnerability and that the confused message is causing groups to close when their members need their socially distanced activities.

### **Band rehearsals**

A band e.g. with 16 members can rehearse in a village hall providing they comply with the Performing Arts Guidance.

### **Charity Commission**

Charity Commission's Covid-19 guidance <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-the-charity-sector> has been reissued

### **QR codes**

If the hall has a record of when a member of staff is working, that person does not need to scan the code. See point 9 of Appendix M.

### **Music, singing and dancing**

The latest versions of the Government's Community Facilities Guidance, section 3, refers to singing in groups of more than 6, dancing and loud music not being allowed. These are not new requirements and the rule of 6 now applies more generally. However, they are now legally enforceable with fines in hospitality venues, hence specifically mentioned in Appendix D of the ACRE Information Sheet under the heading of bars, clubs and cafes. There is a reference here to the Performing Arts Guidance and, later, to the fact dance studios can open and any such activities being required to comply with the Performing Arts Guidance. So, dance classes and keep fit type classes can continue, as can dance in performances.

### **Guidance for places of Worship**

This was re-issued on 7<sup>th</sup> October to reflect that the rules on groups of no more than 6 now apply to special ceremonies other than weddings and funerals.

[COVID-19: guidance for the safe use of places of worship and special religious services and gatherings during the pandemic](#)

### **Forest Schools, uniformed groups and other out of school activities**

The Guidance for Out of School settings applies to uniformed organisations, Forest Schools and similar organised groups, including those where parents routinely provide tuition and supervision. The guidance (and there is separate guidance for parents) indicates parents should not attend but the purpose is to avoid them being there to watch (except for the purpose of settling in a new child or to provide specific care), it does not mean they cannot act as group leaders or supervisors.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protective-measures-for-holiday-or-after-school-clubs-and-other-out-of-school-settings-for-children-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>

## **Covid Poster and Hire conditions**

It has been pointed out that there is a discrepancy between the wording of the poster at Appendix C and the Special Hire Conditions, Appendix E, SC4. The poster is only a summary and - as far as we are aware – correct.

However, the wording of the second part of SC4 should now say “You will make sure that everyone likely to attend your activity or event understands that THEY MUST NOT DO SO if they or anyone in their household has had COVID-19 symptoms in the last 48 hours, and that they develop symptoms, however mild, within 48 hours of visiting they must alert NHS Test and Trace and seek a COVID-19 antigen test. If they have received a positive coronavirus (COVID-19) test result, they should immediately self-isolate and stay at home for at least 10 days from when symptoms started”.

**However, the focus of the Information Sheet is on use of halls, not to replicate Government Guidance to individuals.**

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