



<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>Standing Order 2 Time and Place of Meetings</b>
<b>Committee Report Submitted To:</b>	<b>Corporate Policy and Resources Committee</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>28<sup>th</sup> September 2021</b>
<b>For Decision or For Information</b>	<b>For Decision</b>

<b>Linkage to Council Strategy (2021-25)</b>	
Strategic Theme	Cohesive Leadership/Improvement and Innovation
Outcome	Providing effective, accessible and sustainable local public services
Lead Officer	Democratic & Central Services Manager

<b>Budgetary Considerations</b>	
Cost of Proposal	
Included in Current Year Estimates	<b>YES/NO</b>
Capital/Revenue	
Code	
Staffing Costs	

<b>Screening Requirements</b>	Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals.		
Section 75 Screening	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	EQIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Rural Needs Assessment (RNA)	Screening Completed	Yes/No	Date:
	RNA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	DPIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:

## 1.0 Introduction

The purpose of this report is to consider Standing Order 2: Time and Place of Meetings following Council's decision to amend Standing Order 2 in June 2021.

## 2.0 Background

At its meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2021 Council resolved 'that Council approve Standing Order 2: Time and Place of Meetings; subject to a review in September 2021.' Standing Order 2 was amended due to the impact of Coronavirus pandemic on physical Council meetings, and the subsequent expiry of emergency legislation.

## 3.0 The Local Government (Meetings and Performance) Act (Northern Ireland) 2021

- 3.1 Correspondence has been received from the Department for Communities, dated 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2021, which states that *under section 1 of the Act, the Local Government (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of District Council Meetings) Regulations (NI) 2020 come into effect again from 27 August 2021 which will provide councils with the flexibility to hold meetings by remote or hybrid means until the Coronavirus Act 2020, under which the Regulations were made, expires (currently scheduled for 25 March 2022).* The correspondence is attached at **Appendix 1**.

## 4.0 Standing Order 2

- 4.1 Standing Order 2 states that 'The Annual Meeting and other meetings of the Council shall normally be held at 7.00 pm in the Council Chamber, or in remote or hybrid format, except where otherwise fixed by statute or by special summons.'
- 4.2 The matter is now before Members for review in line with Council's previous decision.

## 5.0 COVID-19 – Current position and PHA Advice

- 5.1 The latest guide to the coronavirus restrictions in Northern Ireland and the Public Health Advice is included in **Appendix 2**. This guide will change frequently to reflect changes in the regulations. This version of the guide reflects the regulations as they stand on 10 September 2021.
- 5.2 A consolidated version of the Regulations can also be found at the link below. Changes are updated here within 48 hours of each amendment being made.  
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisr/2021/93/contents>

The purpose of this guide is to provide clear information and advice for the public on (a) the restrictions in law on movement and activities during the pandemic and (b) what you, your business, your place of worship or your organisation can and should do to limit the spread of COVID-19.

- 5.3 There are now two sets of regulations:
- the [Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Restrictions\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2021](#), which deal with restrictions on businesses and gatherings. In the paragraphs that follow these Regulations will be referred to as “the Principal Regulations”; and
  - [the Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Wearing of Face Coverings\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2020](#), which deal with face coverings. In the paragraphs that follow, these Regulations will be referred to as “the Face Coverings Regulations”.
- 5.4 Each restriction and each requirement must be removed as soon as it is no longer necessary.
- 5.5 The guide is in three sections:
- (1) requirements under the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Wearing of Face Coverings) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020
  - (2) requirements under the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021
    - a. what the Regulations mean for you as an individual citizen;

- b. what the Regulations mean for your business;
- (3) the public health advice.

5.6 The first two sections are about the legally enforceable restrictions and requirements, while the third is about practical things you can do to protect yourself and protect others. The two go together and both are necessary to bring the epidemic to an end. The key to further progress is for each of us to act responsibly.

5.7 The main purpose of the guide is to help you to navigate and comply with the restrictions and to enable you to live as freely as possible within the constraints that they impose. PLEASE NOTE: the guide is not a definitive statement of the law and should not be quoted or relied upon as such.

This guide includes links to other forms of guidance about COVID-19.

## **6.0 Recommendation**

6.1 It is recommended that Council;

- a) notes that the Local Government (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of District Council Meetings) Regulations (NI) 2020 come into effect again from 27 August 2021 and;
- b) having reviewed Standing Order 2, approves no change to the provisions of the Standing Order which state that 'The Annual Meeting and other meetings of the Council shall normally be held at 7.00 pm in the Council Chamber, or in remote or hybrid format, except where otherwise fixed by statute or by special summons', subject to review in March 2022.

All Chief Executives

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Dear Chief Executive

2 September 2021

## **The Local Government (Meetings and Performance) Act (Northern Ireland) 2021**

I am pleased to inform you that the Local Government (Meetings and Performance) Act (Northern Ireland) 2021 received Royal Assent on 26 August 2021.

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/nia/2021/8/contents/enacted>

Under section 1 of the Act, the Local Government (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of District Council Meetings) Regulations (NI) 2020 come into effect again from 27 August 2021 which will provide councils with the flexibility to hold meetings by remote or hybrid means until the Coronavirus Act 2020, under which the Regulations were made, expires (currently scheduled for 25 March 2022).

On 17 August 2020, I wrote to councils highlighting that, as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic and associated restrictions, a decision had been made to set aside the statutory requirements for councils to produce and publish a performance improvement plan for the 2020/21 year. The Act regularises this position for 2020/2021 by setting aside sections 85, 87 and 92(4) & (5) of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014.



If you have any queries regarding the above please contact Julie Broadway  
([Julie.broadway@communities-ni.gov.uk](mailto:Julie.broadway@communities-ni.gov.uk) or Lynn McCracken  
([Lynn.McCracken@communities-ni.gov.uk](mailto:Lynn.McCracken@communities-ni.gov.uk)).

Yours sincerely



**Anthony Carleton**



## COVID-19 PANDEMIC

# GUIDE TO THE CORONAVIRUS RESTRICTIONS IN NORTHERN IRELAND AND THE PUBLIC HEALTH ADVICE

This guide will change frequently to reflect changes in the regulations. This version of the guide reflects the regulations as they stand on **10 September 2021**.

A consolidated version of the Regulations can also be found at the link below. Changes are updated here within 48 hours of each amendment being made.

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisr/2021/93/contents>

The purpose of this guide is to provide clear information and advice for the public on (a) the restrictions in law on movement and activities during the pandemic and (b) what you, your business, your place of worship or your organisation can and should do to limit the spread of COVID-19.

There are now two sets of regulations:

- the [Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Restrictions\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2021](#), which deal with restrictions on businesses and gatherings. In the paragraphs that follow these Regulations will be referred to as “the Principal Regulations”; and
- [the Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Wearing of Face Coverings\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2020](#), which deal with face coverings. In the paragraphs that follow, these Regulations will be referred to as “the Face Coverings Regulations”.

In this guide, the expression “you must not” is used where the Regulations prohibit an activity; “you must” where the Regulations require you to do something, and “you may” where the Regulations permit an activity. The expressions “you should” and “you should not” are used to express advice including public health advice.

The guide is intended to protect you, protect other people, reduce the spread of infection and bring the epidemic to an end as soon as possible, so please follow the advice.

Each restriction and each requirement must be removed as soon as it is no longer necessary.

The guide is in three sections:

- (1) requirements under the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Wearing of Face Coverings) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020
- (2) requirements under the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021
  - a. what the Regulations mean for you as an individual citizen;
  - b. what the Regulations mean for your business;
- (3) the public health advice.

The first two sections are about the legally enforceable restrictions and requirements, while the third is about practical things you can do to protect yourself and protect others. The two go together and both are necessary to bring the epidemic to an end. The key to further progress is for each of us to act responsibly.

The main purpose of the guide is to help you to navigate and comply with the restrictions and to enable you to live as freely as possible within the constraints that they impose. PLEASE NOTE: the guide is not a definitive statement of the law and should not be quoted or relied upon as such.

This guide includes links to other forms of guidance about COVID-19.



**(1) REQUIREMENTS UNDER THE HEALTH PROTECTION (CORONAVIRUS, WEARING OF FACE COVERINGS) REGULATIONS (NORTHERN IRELAND) 2020**

**FACE COVERINGS REGULATIONS**

“Face Covering” means a covering of any type which covers a person’s nose and mouth.

**Face visors or face shields**

Face visors or shields do not offer the same protection as a cloth face covering which sits directly over the nose and the mouth. If you wear a face shield or a visor you should also wear a cloth face covering.

The use of cloth face coverings is recommended, as they provide much better protection from the risk of infection from the COVID-19 virus.

**It is now mandatory to wear a face covering:**

- a) on public transport including school transport services (excludes junior pupils not yet receiving secondary education), in taxis, private buses, coaches and on aircraft, in train and bus stations and in airports. This includes:
  - boarding any mode of public transport;
  - when on board any mode of public transport and
  - when present on public transport premises or stops;
- b) in enclosed public areas of premises to which the public have or are permitted access. Premises are “enclosed” if they would be considered enclosed or substantially enclosed for the purposes of regulation 2 of the Smoke-free (Premises, Vehicle Operators and Penalty Notices) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2007. Examples include:
  - when entering or leaving a place of worship;
  - in shops, shopping centres, banks, building societies, credit unions and undertakings which by way of business operate a currency

exchange office, transmit money (or any representation of money) by any means or cash cheques which are made payable to customers;

- when visiting a government office e.g. jobs and benefits office;
  - in museums, galleries, cinemas, cultural and heritage sites, libraries, aquariums, indoor zoos and visitor farms, bingo halls, amusement arcades, indoor sports stadiums, funfairs, theme parks, bowling alleys, indoor play areas including soft-play areas when not involved in an aerobic activity, snooker and pool halls, auction houses, estate agents, theatres, concert halls, conference facilities and comedy clubs and other leisure facilities.
- c) in hospitality settings, such as cafes, restaurants, public houses, bars and venues that sell or provide food or drink (including intoxicating liquor) and to which the public have or are permitted access, unless seated at a table;
- d) when providing or receiving a close contact service as defined in the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 unless it is not possible due to the nature of the service.

Staff in retail, transport and hospitality settings should now also wear a face covering in areas accessible to the public, unless they are protected by a partition.

**The wearing of a face covering in these settings is mandatory unless you have a reasonable excuse.**

**A reasonable excuse includes:**

- when seeking medical assistance;
- providing care or assistance to a vulnerable person;
- to avoid injury, illness or to escape a risk of harm e.g. if you have respiratory diseases, such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), emphysema or bronchitis;
- where the person cannot put on, wear or remove a face covering because of any disability (within the meaning of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995) or without severe distress;

- the need to communicate with a person who has difficulties communicating (in relation to speech, language or otherwise);
- to eat or drink, where reasonably necessary or the need to take medication;
- the need to remove a face covering temporarily to comply with a request by a relevant person or another person acting in the course of their duties.
- where a person responsible for a relevant place (e.g. owner, proprietor, manager, tenant of a shop) or an employee of that person acting in the course of their employment, has asked that the face covering be removed for identification purposes. Staff in airports, including airline staff, may also require you to temporarily remove your face covering.

Someone experiencing difficulty in understanding you when you are wearing a face covering may ask you to temporarily remove your face covering. For example, someone who aids their understanding by lip reading may request that you temporarily remove your face covering.

It is important to be aware that there are circumstances that make it difficult for some people to wear face coverings. In these circumstances people may have a 'reasonable excuse' not to wear a face covering indoors therefore it is important that you respect these individuals and remember that the reasons for not wearing a face covering may not always be visible.

If you are unable to wear a face covering you will not be required to provide evidence that you have a reasonable excuse. However if you do have a reasonable excuse it is recommended that you co-operate and assist with any such requests e.g. from a constable, shop owners, transport operators etc. as much as possible.

There are exceptions to the requirement to wear face coverings. In particular, they do not have to be worn:

- a) by a junior pupil not yet receiving secondary education on public and school transport;
- b) by a constable acting in the course of their duty;

- c) by an emergency responder acting in their capacity as an emergency responder;
- d) by a person providing a passenger transport service, or an employee of that person, or the driver of a bus, coach or taxi, where there is a partition between the person, or employee or driver, and members of the public;
- e) by any other person providing services in a relevant place under arrangements made with a person responsible for a relevant place where there is a partition between the person providing services and members of the public;
- f) by a person responsible for a relevant place or by the employee's in a part of a relevant place e.g. a shop, shopping centre, restaurant, café or bar, bank, building society or credit union that is not accessible to members of the public and where a distance of at least two metres can be maintained between persons in that part of the relevant place;
- g) by a person in a place of worship or a place where beliefs are practised during an act of worship, except when entering or leaving the premises;
- h) by a couple at a ceremony to solemnise their marriage or to form their civil partnership;
- i) by a person dancing at an event to celebrate a wedding or a civil partnership;
- j) by a person performing physical exercise in a gym, leisure centre or similar venue;
- k) by a person who is a visitor to, and seated in, a restaurant (including those in hotels or members' clubs), a cafe, bar or public house or any other venues that sell or provide food or drink (including intoxicating liquor) and to which the public have or are permitted access;
- l) by a vehicle examiner in a vehicle testing centre, unless present in a vehicle with a member of the public;
- m) it is necessary not to wear a face covering due to the nature of a close contact service.

Places and premises where the Face Coverings Regulations explicitly do not require face coverings to be mandatory:

- a) on a public operated ferry where the area is outdoors and a distance of two metres can be maintained between any persons on the ferry or the part of the ferry which is open to members of the public;
- b) on a privately operated ferry within NI territorial waters;
- c) in those parts of a building used by a Northern Ireland Government Department which members of the public are not permitted to enter to access services;
- d) in a place where aerobic exercise is the primary purpose of attendance;
- e) when seated at a table in hospitality settings, such as cafes, restaurants, public houses, bars and venues that sell or provide food or drink (including intoxicating liquor) and to which the public have or are permitted access;
- f) in a place of worship or a place where beliefs are practised during an act of worship, except when entering or leaving the premises

You may be asked to remove your face covering where a 'relevant person' e.g. a person responsible for an indoor premises or an employee of that person acting in the course of their employment, or a police officer has asked that the face covering be temporarily removed for identification purposes.

## **(2) REQUIREMENTS UNDER THE HEALTH PROTECTION (CORONAVIRUS, RESTRICTIONS) REGULATIONS (NORTHERN IRELAND) 2021**

### **GUIDANCE FOR THE INDIVIDUAL CITIZEN**

#### **Gatherings at Private Dwellings**

“Private dwelling” is a dwelling occupied by a person as their only or main residence and includes any garden, yard, passage, stair, outhouse or other appurtenance of the dwelling.

#### **Outdoor Gatherings at Private Dwellings**

There are no restrictions on the number of persons that can gather outdoors at private dwelling e.g. in a garden. Social distancing however is still recommended

#### **Indoor Gatherings at Private Dwellings**

Up to 15 people from 4 households may gather in a private dwelling and stay overnight if so desired. Children aged 12 years and under are not counted in the total.

There are exemptions which permit visitors inside a private dwelling for the purposes of:

- childcare provided by a person registered in accordance with the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, childcare provided less than 2 hours or any childcare provided free of charge;
- the provision of care or assistance, including social services, to a vulnerable person (the vulnerable person may be the resident, or may be the visitor);
- building or maintenance works or the provision of the services of any trade or profession at the private dwelling;
- visits required for legal or medical purposes;
- a house move and to undertake associated activities for that purpose, including viewing properties and making arrangements for removals; or

- a marriage or civil partnership where one partner is terminally ill. A maximum of 10 people may attend (including the celebrant).
- removal of the remains of a deceased person from or to a private dwelling.

### **Large Households**

Larger households should note that if they have visitors from another household some household members may not be able to be present, so that the limit of 15 is not exceeded indoors.

### **Marriage and civil partnership ceremonies in private dwellings**

Indoor gatherings in a private dwelling are permitted for the purpose of a marriage or a civil partnership where a party to the marriage or civil partnership is terminally ill. In these circumstances up to 10 people may attend a wedding or civil partnership ceremony indoors at a private dwelling. This number includes children under the age of 12 and the celebrant.

### **Funerals in Private Dwellings**

In non-covid situations, the remains of the deceased can be brought to a private dwelling to rest or for a funeral service to be conducted. A maximum of 15 people from no more than 4 households are permitted to gather indoors. This number does not include children aged 12 and under but does include the clergy/officiant conducting the funeral service. There is no restriction on the number of people permitted outdoors at the private dwelling.

All attendees and persons responsible for organising or operating a gathering for the purpose of a funeral or an event associated with a funeral must comply with the DoH guidance

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/covid-19-guidance-surrounding-death>.

## **Indoor and Outdoor Gatherings (This does not apply to gatherings at private dwellings)**

### Indoor Gatherings

There is no limit on the number of people that can gather indoors. The maximum number of people that can gather indoors will be determined by a risk assessment that must be carried out by the person responsible for organising or operating the gathering. The responsible person must take all reasonable measures to limit the risk of transmission of the coronavirus.

If 15 people or less are to be present then a risk assessment is not required.

Please refer to the '[Gatherings operated or organised by a responsible person](#)' section below.

### Outdoor Gatherings

The maximum number of people who may gather outdoors is also determined by a risk assessment carried out by the person responsible for the gathering. The responsible person must take all reasonable measures to limit the risk of transmission of the coronavirus.

A risk assessment is not required if 30 people or less are attending the outdoor gathering.

Please refer to the '[Gatherings operated or organised by a responsible person](#)' section below.

Please note that a risk assessment for the gathering may be required under other legislative requirements e.g. Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978.

These restrictions **exclude** [gatherings in a private dwelling](#) (as detailed above).



## **Gatherings operated or organised by a responsible person**

The person responsible when organising or operating a gathering must;

- (a) have carried out an appropriate risk assessment and
- (b) take all reasonable measures to limit the risk of transmission of the coronavirus, including implementing the preventive and protective measures identified in the appropriate risk assessment undertaken and complying with relevant guidance issued by a Northern Ireland Department.

A person responsible for organising or operating a gathering must, if requested to do so by a relevant person (i.e. a constable or an enforcement officer), provide to that relevant person a copy of the risk assessment and an account of the reasonable measures taken as soon as reasonably practicable and in any event within twenty-four hours of the request.

### ***Risk Assessments***

An appropriate risk assessment is an assessment carried out by the person responsible for organising or operating a gathering for the purpose of identifying and evaluating—

- (a) the nature and magnitude of the risk of infection, contamination and transmission of coronavirus arising in the course, or as a result, of the organisation or operation of the gathering; and
- (b) measures which are reasonably practicable to take to avoid, mitigate or eliminate those risks including—
  - I. those which prioritise the greatest communal protection;
  - II. those designed to replace practices with less hazardous ones; and
  - III. the use of clear and concise verbal and written instructions.

## **PLACES OF WORSHIP**

The person responsible for organising or operating a gathering in a place of worship including venues when used as such, must carry out a risk assessment to determine the maximum number of people who can safely attend where the gathering is expected to have more than 15 participants indoors, or more than 30 participants outdoors. The responsible person must take all reasonable measures to limit the risk of transmission of the coronavirus. Please refer to the '[Gatherings operated or organised by a responsible person](#)' section above.

Face coverings are mandatory whilst entering and leaving a place of worship when attending an act of worship. It is recommended they continue to be worn at all times, particularly when moving around the building or whilst singing.

Face coverings continue to be mandatory at all times within places of worship where the indoor gathering is not an act of worship.

Funerals, marriages and civil partnerships have additional requirements (see sections below).

## **Funerals, Marriages and Civil Partnerships**

### **Funerals and Associated Events**

The numbers permitted to attend a funeral service or committal at a place of worship, funeral home, burial ground or the City of Belfast Crematorium will be determined by a risk assessment by the person responsible for organising or operating the funeral, taking into consideration the size of the particular venue.

Funeral Directors will liaise with the particular venue and should communicate with the family when making the arrangements to ensure they are aware of the numbers permitted to attend and any measures in place to reduce the risk of infection, contamination or transmission.

Pre and post funeral gatherings are permitted. The numbers attending will be determined by the particular venue and subject to a risk assessment by the organiser or operator.

Whether you are a person attending or a person responsible for organising or operating a funeral or associated event in a Church, funeral directors or elsewhere you must comply with the guidance for handling the infection risks when caring for the deceased and managing funerals issued by the Department of Health  
<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/covid-19-guidance-surrounding-death>

The person responsible for organising or operating a funeral or a service associated with a funeral includes the person operating the place where it takes place and the funeral director making the funeral arrangements.

Further guidance relating to Covid-19 can be found at the link below.

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/covid-19-guidance>.

## **Marriages and Civil Partnerships**

A person responsible for the organisation or operation of a marriage or civil partnership must, take measures to—

- obtain visitor information either in advance or at the time of attendance.

This consists of:

- a. the name and telephone number of each person aged 16 years or above in attendance;
  - b. the date and time of arrival;
- record the visitor information in a filing system; and,
  - retain visitor information for a period of 21 days beginning with the date on which the visit occurred. The organiser or operator must destroy visitor information as soon as reasonably practicable after the 21 day period unless there is another basis outside these regulations on which the details may lawfully be retained.

The visitor information must be provided to a relevant person as soon as reasonably practicable but in any event within 24 hours of a request, if so requested by that person.

There is no specific limit on the number of persons that can attend a marriage or civil partnership ceremony or post-ceremony events. Instead, the organiser or operator of the marriage or civil partnership ceremony or post-ceremony event must carry out a risk assessment to determine the maximum number of people who can safely attend and put in place, implement and maintain mitigating measures to reduce the risk of virus transmission.

Venues that are otherwise required to close may open for the purposes of a ceremony to solemnise a marriage or civil partnership.

Face coverings are mandatory whilst entering and leaving a place of worship when attending an act of worship. It is recommended they continue to be worn at all times, particularly when moving around the building or whilst singing.

Face coverings continue to be mandatory at all times within places of worship where the indoor gathering is not an act of worship.

Music and dancing are now permitted at events to celebrate a marriage or civil partnership.

## **GUIDANCE FOR BUSINESSES INCLUDING SELF-EMPLOYED PEOPLE**

### **Venues and services that must close:**

- nightclubs;

If any of the businesses listed above is part of a larger business, the larger business may continue to operate if it closes those parts of its business that are required to close.

Wedding venues that are otherwise required to close may open for the purposes of a ceremony to solemnise a marriage or civil partnership or for the purposes of enabling a potential marriage or civil partnership customers to view the wedding facilities. The number of visitors must not exceed 4 people and 1 staff member at any one time.

### **Businesses that are permitted to open with restrictions:**

If you are responsible for operating any of the following types of business you are permitted to open with restrictions:

#### **1. Theatres, Concert Halls, Conference & Exhibition Venues and Other Indoor Venues**

##### **This requirement applies to:**

- Theatres;
- Concert halls;
- Venues used for the purposes of a conference or exhibition and
- Indoor venues other than private dwellings, theatres and concert halls, when used for the purpose of a performance, recording or rehearsal.

##### ***a. Operational Requirements***

The person responsible for organising or operating an indoor gathering in one of the above venues must:

- ensure dancing is not permitted for visitors unless attending an event to celebrate a marriage or civil partnership;
- display prominently, at each part of the premises, the maximum number of persons who may be seated in that part of the premises;
- comply with [Social Distancing Requirements](#);
- comply with [Visitor and Attendee Information](#)

### ***b. Seating requirements***

A person responsible for the organisation or operation of an indoor gathering in a theatre, concert hall, conference & exhibition venue or other indoor venue must:

- provide visitors with seating and ensure visitors remain seated unless they are entering or exiting the premises, to access a seat, to access an exhibition stand or exhibit, make a payment, accessing a buffet or carvery, to place or collect an order food or drink (including intoxicating liquor), to play gaming machines, games tables or other games e.g. pool, darts etc., to dance at an event to celebrate a wedding or civil ceremony or access and use toilet, baby changing or breast feeding facilities or a smoking area;
- ensure consumption of food or drink (including intoxicating liquor) on the premises indoor is only permitted by a visitor seated;
- not permit the consumption of food or drink (including intoxicating liquor) indoors by a person seated at a counter or other structure which serves the purpose of a table and which is used wholly or partly as a bar for the service of food or drink.

### ***c. Risk Assessments***

A person responsible for organising or operating a gathering in a theatre, concert hall, conference or exhibition venue or other indoor venue:

- must carry out a risk assessment in accordance with the [restrictions on gatherings](#). The risk assessment must determine the maximum number of persons who may be seated indoors in each part of the premises; and

- must retain the risk assessment referred to above on the premises and make it available immediately for inspection by visitors to the premises or to a relevant person on request;
- must take all reasonable measures to limit the risk of transmission of the coronavirus in accordance with [restrictions on gatherings](#).

In this regulation “visitors” does not include staff of the venue, performers at the venue or organisers, speakers or presenters at a conference or exhibition at the venue.

## **2. Retail Businesses**

All retail businesses are permitted to open. A person responsible for the organisation or operation of a shop must take reasonable measures to ensure that [social distancing requirements](#) are adhered to at all times. Face Coverings are mandatory within retail shops.

## **3. Close contact services**

Close contact services:

- (a) hairdressing or barbering;
- (b) provision of beauty or aesthetics treatments including treatments in relation to nails or makeup;
- (c) tattooing;
- (d) tanning;
- (e) services in spas;
- (f) sports and massage therapy;
- (g) well-being and holistic therapies;
- (h) dress fitting, tailoring and fashion design;
- (i) body piercing;
- (j) electrolysis;
- (k) training in any of the services listed at (a) to (j);
- (l) driving instruction, including testing.

A person providing a close contact service must comply with the requirements relating to [Visitor and Attendee Information](#).

A face covering must be worn by the person providing a close contact service and the client unless they have a reasonable excuse or where it is not possible due to the nature of the service.

The requirements in relation to face coverings and obtaining visitor information do not apply to close contact services for the purpose of:

- film or television production;
- ancillary to medical, health and social care services; or
- driving instruction for the test of competence to drive a vehicle provided by, or on behalf of, the Police Service of Northern Ireland, the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service Health and Social Care Trust, or the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Board.

#### **4. Indoor Visitor Attractions and Sport Facilities**

A person responsible for:

- an indoor attraction including an amusement arcade, a bingo hall, a museum, a gallery or a cinema;
- an indoor sports or exercise facility including a soft play area, a leisure centre, a swimming or diving pool, a gym, an equestrian centre, a venue relating to motor sport or an activity centre,

must comply with the requirements relating to [Visitor and Attendee Information](#).

#### **Outdoor Music Events**

**This section does not apply to licensed and unlicensed premises. Please refer to [The Hospitality and Tourism Sector](#) section, below.**

Outdoor music events are permitted to resume:

- at premises which are specified in an occasional licence granted under article 30 of the Licensing (Northern Ireland) Order 1996; **and**



- which are wholly or mainly outdoors

Music can be live or recorded and there is no restriction on the volume at which music can be played.

A person responsible for carrying on a business or a members' club at premises to which this paragraph applies must:

- carry out a risk assessment which complies with the requirements of 'Gatherings operated or organised by a responsible person' section;
- retain the risk assessment on the premises and make it available immediately for inspection by visitors to the premises or to a relevant person on request;
- take all reasonable measures to limit the risk of transmission of the coronavirus. Please refer to the ['Gatherings operated or organised by a responsible person'](#) section below.
- require audience members to obtain a ticket in advance of attending an event; and
- must comply with the requirements relating to [Visitor and Attendee Information](#).

## **The Hospitality and Tourism Sector**

### **Visitor Information**

A person responsible for:

- carrying on the business of, providing the service of, or operating any tourist accommodation
- organising or operating a gathering which is a visit for the purposes of viewing the facilities of a place where a marriage ceremony or civil partnership ceremony may take place; or
- carrying on a business of selling or providing food or drink (including intoxicating liquor) for consumption on the premises,

must comply with the requirements relating to [Visitor and Attendee Information](#).

## **Licensed and Unlicensed Premises**

If you are a person responsible for carrying on a business or members' club which sells or provides food and drink (including intoxicating liquor) for consumption on the premises, whether licensed or not, you must comply with the following requirements:

### ***a. Operational Requirements***

The person responsible:

- must display prominently, at each part of the premises, the maximum number of persons who may be seated indoors in that part of the premises; and
- must provide visitors with seating and not permit a visitor to move indoors in the premises other than to enter or exit the premises, access a table, make a payment, to view the premises for the purpose of booking a marriage or civil partnership ceremony, access a buffet or carvery, to place or collect an order of food or drink (including intoxicating liquor), to play gaming machines, games tables or other games e.g. pool, darts etc., to dance at an event to celebrate a wedding or civil ceremony or access and use toilet, baby changing or breast feeding facilities or a smoking area;
- must ensure the consumption of food or drink (including intoxicating liquor) indoors on the premises is only permitted by a visitor seated at a table;
- Must comply with [social distancing requirements](#).

### ***b. Dancing and music in hospitality premises***

Within the current limitations on the hospitality sector:

- Dancing or the provision of music, whether live or recorded, for dancing is not permitted except at an event to celebrate a marriage or civil partnership.
- Music, whether live or recorded, is now permitted with no restriction on volume.

### ***c. Risk Assessments***

A person responsible for carrying on a business or members club:

- must carry out a risk assessment in accordance with the [restrictions on gatherings](#). The risk assessment must determine—

- the maximum number of persons who may be seated indoors in each part of the premises; and
- must retain the risk assessment referred to above on the premises and make it available immediately for inspection by visitors to the premises or to a relevant person on request;
- must take all reasonable measures to limit the risk of transmission of the coronavirus in accordance with [restrictions on gatherings](#).

#### ***d. Tourist Accommodation***

“Tourist accommodation” means a bed and breakfast establishment, hotel, bunkhouse, hostel, guest accommodation, self-catering establishment or guest house.

The remainder of tourist accommodation can re-open including shared facilities may re-open e.g. at campsites.

The person responsible for carrying on the business of, providing the service of, or operating any tourist accommodation must take reasonable steps to comply with the requirements relating to [Visitor and Attendee Information](#).

A maximum of 15 persons from 4 households may share an accommodation unit (e.g. a room, self-catering apartment etc.) in tourist accommodation. Children aged 12 years and under are not counted in the total.

#### **Businesses or professions that operate at home or within a private dwelling**

Although there are restrictions on the number of visitors permitted inside a private dwelling, there are exemptions which permit businesses, trades and professions that operate either at home or within other people’s homes to continue to do so.

Therefore a business that operates from home will be permitted to have clients into their private dwelling for the purposes of the business activity.

Trades and other professions that carry out work activities within other private dwellings e.g. electrician, plumber, close contact services as listed above, tutors, cleaners, etc., will be permitted to visit other people's private dwellings but only for the purposes of their work activity and at the home owner's discretion.

### **Requirements in relation to Visitor and Attendee Information**

A person responsible for:

- providing close contact services (excluding close contact services provided for film or television production, ancillary to medical, health and social care services; or driving instruction);
- carrying on the business of, providing the service of, or operating any tourist accommodation;
- organising or operating a gathering which is a marriage ceremony or a civil partnership ceremony;
- organising or operating a gathering which is a visit for the purposes of viewing the facilities of a place where a marriage ceremony or civil partnership ceremony may take place; or
- premises which are specified in an occasional licence granted under article 30 of the Licensing (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 and which are wholly or mainly outdoors.
- carrying on a business of selling or providing food or drink (including intoxicating liquor) for consumption on the premises;
- an indoor attraction including an amusement arcade, a bingo hall, a museum, a gallery or a cinema;
- an indoor swimming or diving pool;
- an indoor sports or exercise facility including a soft play area, a leisure centre, a gym, an equestrian centre, a venue relating to motor sport or an activity centre;
- a theatre or concert hall;
- a venue used for the purposes of a conference or exhibition; or
- indoor venue other than private dwellings, theatres or concert halls, when used for the purpose of a performance, recording or rehearsal

is required to—

- obtain visitor information either in advance or at the time of a visit. This consists of:
  - a. the name and telephone number of each person aged 16 years or above visiting the premises; and
  - b. the date and time of arrival.
- record the visitor information in a filing system; and,
- retain visitor information for a period of 21 days beginning with the date on which the visit occurred. The organiser or operator must destroy visitor information as soon as reasonably practicable after the 21 day period unless there is another basis outside these regulations on which the details may lawfully be retained.

The visitor information must be provided to a relevant person as soon as reasonably practicable but in any event within 24 hours of a request, if so requested by that person.

### **Requirements in relation to social distancing**

A person responsible for the organisation or operation of a relevant place or relevant hospitality venue must take reasonable measures to ensure that employees or visitors to such a place (but not including persons dancing at an event to celebrate a wedding or a civil partnership), comply with social distancing measures at all times.

“Social distance” means **one metre** in a relevant hospitality venue and in a relevant place.

A “Relevant Place” is:

- (a) a shop (for these purposes “shop” means any building, room or other indoor establishment which is open to the public in whole or in part and is used wholly or mainly for the purposes of retail sale or hire of goods or services);
- (b) an enclosed shopping centre (for these purposes premises are “enclosed” if they would be considered enclosed or substantially enclosed for the

purposes of regulation 2 of the Smoke-free (Premises, Vehicle Operators and Penalty Notices) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2007); or

A “Relevant Hospitality Venue” means-

- (a) the indoor premises of a business or a members’ club which sells or provides food or drink (whether or not including intoxicating liquor) for consumption on the premises and which is permitted to operate in accordance with [restrictions on licenced and unlicenced premises](#) but not including premises which are specified in an occasional licence granted under article 30 of the Licensing (Northern Ireland) Order 1996; and which are wholly or mainly outdoors;
- (b) an indoor attraction including an amusement arcade, a bingo hall, a museum, a gallery or a cinema;
- (c) an indoor theatre or concert hall;
- (d) an indoor venue used for the purposes of a conference or exhibition; or
- (e) an indoor venue other than private dwellings, theatres or concert halls, when used for the purpose of a performance, recording or rehearsal.

The responsible person is required to:

- provide information to employees and visitors on how to minimise the risk of exposure to and the spread of coronavirus;
- ensure all employees and visitors maintain social distancing indoors (unless members of the same household or a party seated at the same table or persons dancing at an event to celebrate a marriage or civil partnership). This can be achieved by altering the layout of a relevant place including those parts to which visitors do not customarily have access, managing and controlling the use of points of access and egress, shared facilities (such as toilets) and managing and controlling the means of moving from one part of a relevant place or relevant hospitality venue to another;
- that a relevant place or relevant hospitality venue is regularly cleaned, hygiene is maintained and in particular points or places which are likely to be used frequently by employees and visitors (such as entry barriers and gates and card terminals) are regularly sanitised.;

Where it is not reasonably practicable for social distancing to be maintained, social distancing measures require a relevant person to take reasonable steps to ensure that—

- (a) any close face to face contact is limited between persons;
- (b) barriers or screens are installed and maintained;
- (c) personal protective equipment is used where appropriate and in such a case is made readily available

### (3) PUBLIC HEALTH ADVICE

#### **Symptoms**

***If you experience any symptoms of COVID-19 you should stay at home and seek a test.***

The key symptoms are:

- a new and persistent cough
- a fever
- loss or change of smell or taste.

You should self-isolate **immediately** if you experience any one of these symptoms, however mild, and remain in self-isolation at home for 10 days from when your symptoms started. This action will help protect others in your community while you are infectious.

If you live with others and you or one of them have symptoms of coronavirus, then all other household members must stay at home and not leave the house for 10 days. The 10-day period starts from the day when the first person in the house became ill.

Coronavirus can be spread through close contact with an infected person or contact with a contaminated surface.

#### **Social distancing**

If you leave the place where you live, you should wherever possible maintain a social distance of at least 2 metres (6 feet) between you and anyone outside of your household or 1 metre if in a relevant hospitality venue, to minimise your exposure to the virus and the potential to spread the infection.



### ***Who should adhere to social distancing measures?***

Everyone should adhere to these measures at all times. On occasions when social distancing may not be possible or practicable, e.g. when providing or receiving medical assistance, other effective measures including good hand hygiene and respiratory hygiene practices should be considered crucial and adopted and wearing of a face covering in these circumstances is recommended.

### ***Those at higher risk of infection***

You should take particular care to minimise contact with others including those within your household if you or a member of your household are considered to be at a higher risk of severe illness from Coronavirus. This includes if you:

- are over 70 (even if you do not have an underlying health condition); or
- are pregnant; or
- have an underlying health condition; or
- are considered, on medical grounds, as extremely vulnerable - that is, people with specific serious medical conditions. If you are in this group you would have been previously advised to shield by your GP or health care team.

### **Hand hygiene**

Washing your hands properly is one of the most important things you can do to help prevent and control the spread of many illnesses. Good hand hygiene will reduce the risk of things like flu, food poisoning and healthcare associated infections being passed from person to person.

### ***When you need to wash your hands***

Hands normally carry lots of germs and should be washed:

- after you use the toilet;
- before you touch food;
- when you can see that they're dirty;
- after you have touched shared surfaces in public places; or
- after you have coughed or sneezed into your hands.

Washing your hands regularly will help to stop COVID-19 from spreading.

### ***How to wash your hands***

It is important to wash your hands properly. Make sure that you wash both your hands including the tips of your fingers, the palms of your hands and your thumbs.

The steps below explain how to wash your hands properly:

1. wet hands with water
2. apply enough soap to cover all surfaces of your hand
3. rub your hands palm to palm
4. right palm over back of left hand with interlaced fingers and vice versa
5. palm to palm with fingers interlaced
6. back of fingers to opposing palms with fingers interlocked
7. rotational rubbing of left thumb clasped in right palm and vice versa
8. rotational rubbing, backwards and forwards with clasped fingers of right hand in left palm and vice versa
9. rinse hands with water
10. dry hands thoroughly with a single use towel
11. use towel to turn off tap.

### **Respiratory hygiene**

Like seasonal flu, the same public health advice applies for COVID-19: if you cough or sneeze, use a tissue to cover your mouth and nose, throw it away carefully after use, and wash your hands. If you don't have a tissue, use the crook of your arm.

### ***Face coverings***

In accordance with the Face Coverings Regulations, face coverings are mandatory on public transport including school transport services (excludes junior pupils not yet receiving secondary education), in taxis, private buses, coaches, in airports and on

aircraft, in train and bus stations, in all enclosed public areas of premises to which the public have or are permitted access including in hospitality settings except when seated or dancing at an event to celebrate a wedding or a civil partnership, in shops and shopping centres e.g. when shopping indoors for goods and services, to cover every-day high street, shopping centre, food shopping banks and building societies and when entering or exiting places of worship or a place where beliefs are practiced for the purposes of an act of worship. Face coverings must be worn at all times for other indoor gatherings in places of worship.

“Face Covering” means a covering of any type which covers a person’s nose and mouth. For further information on the requirement and exemptions to wearing face coverings please see the above section ‘Face Coverings Regulations’.

Crucially, do not get a false sense of security about the level of protection provided by wearing a face covering. ***Wearing of face coverings is not a replacement for other mitigations.*** It provides a degree of additional benefit but it is vital that a focus remains on:

- maintaining social distancing where possible
- careful attention to hand hygiene, washing your hands thoroughly throughout the day
- respiratory etiquette i.e. ‘catch it, kill it, bin it’ when you sneeze or cough.
- cleaning of shared contact surfaces
- good ventilation

That’s still the best way to protect yourself and others from COVID-19.

Indoor environments are still higher risk than outdoor meetings therefore you should follow public health advice and limit the duration of visits; ensure good ventilation; maintain good hand hygiene; and practice social distancing where possible. The use of a face covering is also strongly advised.

## **Work**

You should work from home if that is possible. You are allowed to travel for work purposes, including to provide voluntary or charitable services, where you cannot work from home.

Employers and employees should discuss their working arrangements, and employers should take every possible step to facilitate their employees working from home, including providing suitable IT and equipment to enable remote working.

Sometimes this will not be possible, as not everyone can work from home. Certain jobs require people to travel to, from and for their work – for instance if they operate machinery, work in construction or manufacturing, or are delivering front line services.

You should not travel to work if you are experiencing [coronavirus symptoms](#), or if you or anyone in your household are self-isolating following confirmation of testing positive for COVID-19.

While at work you should adhere to social distancing advice where possible and stick to good hand hygiene and respiratory hygiene practices.

Employers should implement procedures that are reasonably practicable to protect their employees and members of the public. Safety advice for employers can be accessed on the [HSENI website](#).

## **Travel, transport and holidays**

You are advised to avoid all except necessary travel. Everyone is asked to be very mindful of the risks of spreading the virus by travel.

If you feel you need to travel outside your area for any reason, satisfy yourself that it can be done in a safe and socially distanced fashion. Don't put yourself or others at risk.

The Regulations do not set limits for the distance that you may travel for any purpose. You should act responsibly and reasonably.

### ***Public transport***

Avoid using public transport e.g. trains, buses, taxis etc. if you can, to reduce exposure to the virus. If you have to use public transport to travel, e.g. to work or for basic necessities or supplies, you must wear a face covering. You should adhere to social distancing wherever possible and follow good hygiene practices e.g. avoid touching your face and follow good hand hygiene, as soon as possible. Hand sanitiser can be used when you do not have access to wash-hand facilities, however you should wash your hands as soon as you can.

### ***Travel within the Common Travel Area***

If you are travelling to Northern Ireland from another area of the Common Travel Area (CTA) or from outside of the CTA, please refer to travel advice on [NI Direct](#).

For further travel information please follow the link below.

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-travel-within-common-travel-area>

### ***International Travel***

If you are travelling to Northern Ireland and you have been outside of the Common Travel Area at any point within the previous 10 days, please refer to the travel information at the following link: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-international-travel-advice>

### ***Holiday accommodation***

You are permitted to stay in holiday accommodation including hotels, holiday homes, self-catering houses, static caravans, touring caravans and motorhomes:

If you are planning on visiting holiday and tourist accommodation you should have regard to any restrictions imposed in the area you are travelling to, which may have restrictions or closures imposed on your planned accommodation e.g. “local lockdown” scenarios.

You are reminded indoor gatherings of more than 15 people from more than 4 households are not permitted in private dwellings or tourist accommodation units.

### **Avoiding crowds**

Large gatherings increase the risk of infection transmission, and gatherings of any size indoors. Social distancing is therefore essential to prevent further waves of the epidemic and everyone has a responsibility to practice social distancing.

### **Outdoor exercise and outdoor activity**

You may participate in outdoor sport, exercise or activity including walking and running including outdoor competitive sport. Spectators are also permitted at sporting events.

For further information please refer to above section on [sporting events](#).

## **USEFUL LINKS**

You can find further advice and information on COVID-19 at the following links.

NI Direct:

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/coronavirus-covid-19>

Public Health Agency:

<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/covid-19-coronavirus>

Workplace health and safety

Guidance on workplace health and safety should be sought from the Health and Safety Executive NI. HSENI is the lead body responsible for the promotion and enforcement of health and safety at work standards in Northern Ireland. Together, HSENI and the district councils cover all work situations in Northern Ireland that are subject to the Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978. HSENI guidance is at:

<https://www.hseni.gov.uk/about-hseni>

<https://www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/campaign/coronavirus-updates-support-your-business>

<https://www.hseni.gov.uk/articles/covid-19-workplace-safety-guidance>

The Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1993:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisr/1993/20/made>

**END**