

Camden & Islington Public Health

Guidance on reopening of community centres

VERSION 1.0

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If you have questions relating to this guidance please contact Public Health: CIPHAdmin@islington.gov.uk

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1. About this guidance

This guidance is intended to support community centres in reopening. It sets out key considerations in preparing to reopen and provides guidance on the type of activities and that are permitted as well as wider infection prevention measures.

This guide has been adapted from national [guidance for the safe use of multi-purpose community facilities](#), and [working safely during coronavirus](#).

This local guidance does not replace national guidance. Local guidance has been produced to facilitate the interpretation and application of national guidance to specific local services and situations, taking full account of national guidance and evidence.

We will keep this guidance under constant review in light of the evolving COVID-19 situation and changes to national guidance.

2. Planning ahead of programmes and events

2.1 What activities are permitted in community centres?

[National guidance on the use of multi-purpose community centres](#) sets community centres can be used for the following purposes:

- Early years and youth provision
- Voluntary sector and other service provision
- Social clubs or groups

- Public meeting or civic functions, for example, MP or Councillor surgeries, public meetings and local consultations.
- Retail and shop facilities
- Places of worship and faith activities
- Office spaces
- Outdoor spaces

2.2 What activities are still prohibited?

The following activities are currently prohibited:

- Indoor performances in front of a live audiences – including drama, comedy and music. This is important to mitigate the risks of droplets and aerosol transmission from the performer(s) or their audience.
- Indoor sports or fitness activities, or any other sports activities that would typically take place in an indoor gym, sports venue, or a fitness or dancing studio are not permitted to take place until 25 July.
- Large gatherings or celebrations.
- Marriages or civil partnerships with more than 30 people. See further guidance [here](#).

2.3 How many people can attend at any one time?

By taking steps to ensure that they are COVID-19 secure, community centres can host events or activities of more than 30 people providing there is enough space at the venue to maintain social distancing between visitors.

National guidance on the use of community centres recommends that when meeting inside, no more than two households should socially interact, or if meeting outside no more than a group of up to 6 people from different households should interact. However, this guidance recognises the importance of social clubs for some individuals and that these can proceed with certain precautions in place, including the below actions to become COVID-19 secure.

2.4 How can the centre become COVID-19 secure?

Actions to ensure that premises or locations can be COVID-19 secure include:

- Carrying out a risk assessment. It is important to undertake a risk assessment *before* the premises opens, and to conduct an individual risk assessment for every activity that is reinstated. They should be reviewed, and if necessary, updated regularly.
- Develop cleaning, handwashing and hygiene procedures.
- Take reasonable steps to help people work from home (or access activities from home).
- Maintain social distancing of **2 metres** between people who do not live with each other. This includes consideration of the likely pinch points and busy areas (e.g. entrances, exits) and where possible, introducing alternative or one-way routes.
- Where it is not practical for people to be 2 metres apart, occasional time can be spent at 1 metre if additional risk mitigations put in place. These additional risk mitigations include:
 - Minimising the time spent doing the activity
 - Using screens or barriers to separate people
 - Using back-to-back or side-to-side approaches when interacting with people

- Staggering arrival and departure times
- Reducing the number of people each person has contact with
- Using face coverings (evidence suggests that wearing a face covering does not protect you, but it may protect others if you are infected but have not developed symptoms)

A COVID-19 secure poster is available [here](#).

2.5 Activity planning checklist

The below checklist is intended to help you identify which activities and programmes can proceed based on the current guidance.

| Considerations | | Advice |
|----------------|--|---|
| a | Will more than 30 people be attending? | Yes – You must ensure that you are COVID-19 Secure (see section 2.4)* |
| | | No |
| b | Is it possible to keep a social distance of 2 metres? | Yes |
| | | No – consider option c |
| c | Is it possible to keep a distance of 2 metres for most of the time with occasional time spent at 1 metre and with additional risk mitigations (e.g. face coverings)? | Yes |
| | | No – activity cannot take place |
| d | Will the activity involve close contact, such as communal dancing? | No |
| | | Yes – activity cannot take place |
| e | Is it possible for everyone to wash their hands thoroughly on entering and leaving the facility or to use hand sanitiser if hand washing facilities are not available? | Yes |
| | | No – activity cannot take place |
| f | Is the activity an <u>indoor</u> performance in front of a live audience, such as drama, comedy and music? | No |
| | | Yes – activity cannot take place |
| g | Does the activity usually take place in an <u>indoor</u> gym, sports venue, or a fitness or dancing studio? | No |
| | | Yes – activity cannot take place until 25 July |
| h | Does the activity involve <u>indoor</u> sports or fitness? | No |
| | | Yes – activity cannot take place until 25 July |
| i | Will the activity encourage shouting? For example through singing or playing music loudly which makes conversation difficult and encourages shouting? | No |
| | | Yes – take steps to avoid people needing to unduly raise their voices |

* if this is a wedding no more than 30 people can attend, regardless of whether the building is COVID-19 secure.

3. Delivering activities and events

3.1 Preparing the space

- Re-arrange furniture to maximise the space you have
- Avoid using small meeting rooms or other enclosed spaces
- Increase ventilation e.g. by opening windows
- Use signs and posters to build awareness of good handwashing technique, avoiding touching your face, and coughing/sneezing into a tissue (which is then disposed) or into your arm
- Consider social distancing markers on the floor where queues form. Toilets can often be a pinch point, therefore consider how social distancing will work practically in these spaces (e.g. closing off a sink or hand dryer to enable distancing; operating a one-in, one-out system; 2 metre spaced queueing system outside).

3.2 Cleaning

- Clean frequently touched surfaces such as door handles, rails and any equipment. Further guidance on cleaning can be found [here](#). A cleaning and disinfection schedule for the premises can aid collective agreement on what should be cleaned and disinfected, and with what solutions.
- Set clear use and cleaning guidance for toilets to ensure they are kept clean and social distancing is achieved as much as possible
- Consider making hand sanitiser available (e.g. on entry and exit to the building, on entry to the toilets)

3.3 Arrival and departure of visitors

- It is important to check whether visitors, or the people they live with, have had symptoms within the previous 14 days. Where possible, this should be checked before arriving at the venue (see Box 1 below).
- Where practically possible advise visitors to avoid public transport, or going through crowded areas, to arrive at the venue. Encourage people to walk or cycle where possible. Note that face coverings are now [mandatory on public transport](#), apart from those who meet the [exceptions](#). Guidance on safer travel can be found [here](#).
- Where available, make use of multiple exit and entry points to introduce a one-way flow in and out of the premises, with appropriate floor markings or signage. Any changes to entrances, exits and queues should take into account the need to make reasonable adjustments for those who need them, such as people with disabilities
- Stagger entry times and taking steps to avoid queues building up in surrounding areas.
- Record contact details of people attending the centre for NHS Test & Trace (see section 4 below for further details).
- Regulate visitors so that the space does not become overcrowded

- Ensure that people don't need to unduly raise their voices to each other. Consider whether music or broadcasts are played at a volume which makes normal conversation difficult. This is because of the potential for increased risk of transmission – particularly from aerosol and droplet transmission.
- Ensure you clearly communicate the new procedures to visitors to help them comply with your arrangements and reassure them of the pro-active steps you are taking to keep everyone as safe as possible.

Box 1: Asking visitors about coronavirus symptoms

1. Does anyone in the household have symptoms of COVID-19 that started in the last 7 days?
2. Is anyone in the household currently self-isolating due to a household member having COVID-19 symptoms?
3. Is anyone in the household self-isolating because they have been identified as a close contact of someone who has COVID-19 (via NHS Test and Trace?)

Symptoms of COVID-19 include:

- a high temperature
a new, continuous cough (coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours)
a loss of or change in sense of smell or taste

4. NHS Test & Trace requirements

As part of NHS Test and Trace, any establishment that provides an on-site service (including community centres) are required to maintain records of staff, customers and visitors, and sharing these with NHS Test and Trace where requested. This is to help to identify people who may have been exposed should anyone who attended the venue later test positive for covid-19.

The following information should be collected by the venue, where possible:

- staff
 - the names of staff who work at the premises
 - a contact phone number for each member of staff
 - the dates and times that staff are at work
- customers and visitors
 - the name of the customer or visitor. If there is more than one person, then you can record the name of the 'lead member' of the group and the number of people in the group
 - a contact phone number for each customer or visitor, or for the lead member of a group of people
 - date of visit, arrival time and, where possible, departure time
 - if a customer will interact with only one member of staff (e.g. a hairdresser), the name of the assigned staff member should be recorded alongside the name of the customer

A [Customer Logging Toolkit](#) has been produced to provide further information and guidance on keeping records of staff and visitors attending premises. Resources included in the toolkit include:

- customer logging overview
- FAQs on maintaining records
- Instructions on maintaining records
- Privacy notice template
- Social media resources

Further guidance is available [here](#) setting out the retention period for this data, and how to handle this data in relation to GDPR.

5. Useful resources

National guidance

- [COVID-19: Guidance for the safe use of multi-purpose community facilities](#)
- [Working safely during coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Providers of grassroots sport and gym/leisure facilities – working safely during coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [COVID-19: cleaning in non-healthcare settings](#)
- [Maintaining records of staff, customers and visitors to support NHS Test and Trace](#)
- [Customer Logging Toolkit](#)

Posters

- [Best practice handwashing](#)
- [Covid-19 secure](#)