

Update to Guidance for the Safe Use of Multi-Purpose Community Facilities

forwarded by Jackie Tomnie - 15/09/2020

I am circulating the latest advice received from WRCC. The advice in this email will be confirmed or amended later in the week (per this email) - this gives us all time to digest the advice before coming to a decision on how to react.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Kim Slater <kims@wrccrural.org.uk>

Sent: Tuesday, 15 September 2020, 12:37:14 BST

Subject: Update to Guidance for the Safe Use of Multi-Purpose Community Facilities

Dear Colleague

I am writing as the gov.uk webpage for [Multi-Purpose Community Facilities](#) was updated yesterday and changes my previous interpretation issued last week.

The update includes the following:

3c: Recreation, leisure and social gatherings

Managers and providers in community facilities are not permitted to organise or hold informal or formal social groups, clubs and activities unless limited to groups of six people following social distancing rules.

However, for activities and social groups where there is a significant likelihood of groups mixing and socialising (and where it will be difficult to prevent mingling and therefore breaking the law) should not take place in a community facility. These may include but are not limited to:

- formal or informal clubs and hobby clubs (e.g. women's institute, veteran's associations, freemasons, sewing clubs, book clubs, crafts clubs, reading groups)
- amateur choirs and orchestras
- informally organised sport activities on facilities grounds (professionally organised sport activities are exempt)

Unfortunately, this guidance is likely to further increase confusion.

My interpretation is based on the difference between groups meeting with social distancing and "socialising" or "social", where social distancing is largely ignored. With this interpretation and in my opinion, the guidance still allows many activities in village halls for more than 6 people, for example, formal meetings or exercise classes where attendees rigidly adhere to social distancing.

It does, however, place an additional responsibility on village halls to evaluate the likelihood of groups mixing and socialising during events. Events should not occur where this is likely to be the case.

ACRE yesterday released the following statement:

"The new Regulations, that are behind the Government Guidance, that are supposed to become law this morning (14.9.20) have not yet been published or laid before Parliament so we are waiting on them before releasing definitive information for village hall committees. Please keep in touch with your local adviser as we will let him/her know as soon as we can."

I understand that the legislation was made yesterday and we are hoping that and updated ACRE Information Sheet will be issued this week. I will share it with you as soon as possible. ACRE asked that you do not contact them for advice. They are getting enquires from halls across the country and are merely referring everyone to their local ACRE Network member (us), but this is taking up a significant resource. Unfortunately, halls in Solihull, Birmingham or Sandwell have a separate set of [guidelines](#) to deal with that are just as complex.

Please bear with us, I will issue the ACRE guidance as soon as I can. I am continuing to work from home most of the time, so e-mail is the best way to contact me.

Keep safe & well

Kim Slater

Chief Executive

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