

“Let’s Talk” COVID



As we are still in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, we want you to know that the Environmental Health Department is here to help with all of your covid and social distancing queries. We have also included useful links in this edition to help assist your business with recovery planning.

Please feel free to contact us.

Environmental Health Contact Details

Tel: 028 9034 0160

Email: envhealth@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk

Website: www.antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk

Edition 1: April 2021

- g. must carry out a risk assessment which complies which determines—
 - (i) the maximum number of persons who may be seated in each part of the premises; and
 - (ii) the volume at which any background or ambient music will be played so as to enable visitors to conduct conversation at normal loudness of speech;
- h. must retain the risk assessment on the premises and make it available immediately for inspection on request by visitors to the premises or to a relevant person on request;
- i. must take all reasonable measures to limit the risk of transmission of Coronavirus;
- j. must display prominently, at each part of the premises, the maximum number of persons who may be seated in that part of the premises;
- K. must permit orders for food or drink (including intoxicating liquor) to be placed only by persons seated at a table;
- L. must not permit the consumption of food or drink (including intoxicating liquor) on the premises other than by a person seated at a table;

Link to the Regulations:

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/health-protection-coronavirus-restrictions-regulations-northern-ireland-2021>

Requirement in relation to Social Distancing:

- “Social distancing measures” means measures for the purpose of minimising the risk of exposure to, or spread of, coronavirus and includes ensuring—
- a) that servants and agents, and visitors to a relevant place, are provided with information on how to minimise the risk of exposure to and the spread of coronavirus;
 - b) that the persons referred to in paragraph (a) maintain a distance of 2 metres from each other (unless members of the same or a linked household) 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 to another;
 - c) that persons waiting to enter maintain a distance of 2 metres from each other (unless members of the same or a linked household);
 - d) that the premises is regularly cleaned, hygiene is maintained and in particular points or places which are likely to be used frequently by servants, agents and visitors (such as entry barriers and gates and card terminals) are regularly sanitised.
 - e) Seats at tables must be at least 2m from any bar used either wholly or partly for the service of food and/or drink.

Where it is **not reasonably practicable** for tables to be 2m apart, the person responsible must take reasonable steps to ensure that—

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

Visitor Information

- where visitor or attendee information is not provided in advance, obtain that information at the time of the visit or attendance;
- record that information in a filing system (which may be an electronic system) suitable for recording, storing and retrieving the information;
- retain that information for a period of 21 days beginning with the date on which the visit or attendance took place; and
- destroy that information as soon as reasonably practicable after the expiry of that period unless there is some other lawful basis for its retention.

A person must provide visitor and attendee information to a relevant officer as soon as reasonably practicable and, in any event, within 24 hours of a relevant officer requesting.

“Visitor and attendee information” means—

- a) the name and telephone number of each visitor and attendee over the age of 16; and
- b) the date of their visit or attendance and the time of their arrival.

Hand Sanitisation Facilities

Functioning hand sanitising facilities **MUST** be provided at each point of entry for customers to sanitise their hands on or before entering the premises.

Face Covering 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 or type 2 disposable face mask.

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

Staff in hospitality settings MUST wear a face covering in areas accessible to the public, unless they are protected by a partition.

Customers MUST wear face masks/coverings when not seated.

Food Buffet

You **MUST** ensure that customers only move;

- Enter the premises, reach the table at which they will be seated
- To select food from the buffet, access toilet facilities or leave the premises;
- Customers **MUST** maintain a distance of two meters between households when selecting food from the buffet.

Cleaning and disinfection

Definitions: Cleaning means the removal of dirt.

Disinfection means the destruction of microorganisms, including virus and in this case Coronavirus.

Increased frequency of cleaning of general room surfaces reduces the presence of the virus and the risk of contact. Cleaning and disinfection play a key role in reducing the risk of this second transmission mode.

There are a variety of products that can be used on surfaces to disinfect them. Some products can provide both cleaning and disinfection together. Sodium hypochlorite (bleach / chlorine) may be used at a recommended concentration of 0.1% or 1,000ppm (1 part of 5% strength household bleach to 49 parts of water). Alcohol at 70-90% can also be used for surface disinfection.

As would be the case with normal cleaning procedures, surfaces must be cleaned with water and soap or a detergent first to remove dirt, followed by disinfection. It is important to follow clearly all instructions provided for the use of cleaning chemicals including, if stipulated, contact times (some chemicals will require to be left on surfaces for a period of time prior to washing or wiping clean).

The infection risk from a COVID-19 contaminated environment decreases over time.

Cleaning after a known case of COVID-19

The principles set down at the link below should be followed if cleaning after a known case of coronavirus:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings#left-area

Ventilation

There is evidence to suggest that poor ventilation in confined indoor spaces is associated with increased transmission of respiratory infections.

It is important to clarify exactly what is meant by ventilation. Ventilation refers to air changes. Air change can only be achieved by opening windows and/or doors or through mechanical ventilation systems that draw fresh outdoor air into the space and extract old air.

Fans or other devices used on their own, without any source of fresh outside air simply move the same air around the room. This should be avoided.

It is important to have good ventilation in order to reduce any potential concentration of virus in the air that may be present in the indoor space.

Natural ventilation can be provided through open windows, or through other means such as vents. However, fire doors should not be propped open.

It is important not to completely close windows and doors when the area is occupied as this can result in very low levels of ventilation.

Lower temperatures and windy weather conditions will increase the natural ventilation through openings. This means you don't need to open windows and doors as wide, so partially opening them can still provide adequate ventilation while maintaining a comfortable workplace temperature. Opening higher-level windows is likely to generate fewer draughts.

There is useful further information on ventilation on the Health and Safety

Executive Website:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/equipment-and-machinery/air-conditioning-and-ventilation.htm#balancing>.

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

COVID-19 is an infectious respiratory disease caused by a newly discovered Coronavirus.

It is still very important to wash your hands regularly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before preparing, handling or eating food.

➤ Working safely during COVID-19

Click below for guidance in regards to workplace safety in different business settings

<https://www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/content/coronavirus-working-safely-different-business-settings>

➤ Assessing Health and Safety Risks

Click below for a template to help assess Health and Safety Risks within your business during the COVID-19 pandemic:

<https://www.hseni.gov.uk/news/example-risk-assessment-covid-19-workplaces>

Don't forget our website...

➤ You can find more details on how Council is supporting local businesses: during the Covid-19 pandemic by clicking on the link below:

<https://antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk/coronavirus-information-for-businesses/>



➤ **Links to PHA guidance and posters**- the posters for handwashing and social distancing will be useful for display and available from the link below:

<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications?keys=coronavirus> OR

<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/social-distancing-posterW>

Tourism NI Guidance

Tourism NI has released updated guidance: Working Safely during COVID -19 in Tourism & Hospitality Businesses.

The guidance document covers sections highlighted in this newsletter and also covers specific sectors of the tourism and

hospitality industry including overnight tourist accommodation,

takeaways and spa/gym facilities.

The guidance document and a summary of restrictions can be accessed on the Tourism NI website:

<https://www.tourismni.com/covid-19/practical-guidance-for-working-safely-during-covid-19/>

Water Systems

When buildings re-open, it is essential that hot and cold water systems such as taps, showers and water features are not brought back into use without first considering the **risk of Legionnaires' Disease**.

The following links provide guidance on how to assess and manage any potential risks prior to reopening.

<https://www.cieh.org/policy/coronavirus-covid-19/resources/>

(Legionnaires' disease: lockdown risks and reopening safely)

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/index.htm>

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/healthservices/legionella.htm>

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/guidance-businesses-re-opening-after-temporary-closure>

Recovery Planning

The Council's Economic Development team offers support to local businesses through free mentoring.

Topics include:

- **strategic planning**
- **financial management**
- **access to funding**
- **procurement**
- **marketing and sales**
- **research and development**
- **business efficiency**
- **human resources**
- **ecommerce.**

All mentoring at present is delivered remotely through telephone calls, video conference and email. These sessions provide an opportunity to plan ahead and prepare for the future, even if your business is currently closed.

For further details on any of the current business support initiatives, please contact our Economic Development team by emailing business@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk or by texting **Business to 80039**.

A range of **free business webinars**, filmed in response to COVID-19 is now available online by visiting <https://antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk/learn/>

You can also access the latest Government guidance for businesses via our website by following the link below.

<https://antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk/coronavirus-information-for-businesses/>