

“Let’s Talk” Hospitality & Tourism



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.

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Edition 3: July 2021

From Monday 24th May 2021, unlicensed premises and licensed premises including social clubs could reopen indoors with a maximum of 6 people per table, children aged 12 and under are not counted in the total, however the number of individuals at a table should not exceed 10.



Brief summary:

- **FOR LICENSED PREMISES ONLY ; table service still required however customers can leave table to access carvery and buffet services**
- More will be permitted if all are from one household, to a max. of 10
- All contact details must be taken and retained
- Social distancing required – minimum of 1m
- Must stay at table – no gaming machines, pool tables, etc.
- Face coverings must be worn once no longer seated for any reason, for example, to go to the toilet
- No meal requirement
- No dancing
- Risk assessment as per current regulations

Do I have to provide table service? Yes, only in licensed premises

The Northern Ireland Executive has made changes to the way that food to be consumed on your premises can be ordered. From 05 May 2021, a licensed premises should:

- * permit orders for food or drink (including intoxicating liquor) to be placed only by persons seated at a table, **except when accessing a buffet or carvery;**
- * must not permit the consumption of food and drink (on the premises including intoxicating liquor) by visitors to the premises other than by a person seated at a table

Please note these are different requirements to those contained in the regulations last year.

What this means for you as an operator of unlicensed premises ?

You can permit customers to queue with social distancing to order food for consumption either on or off the premises. If the customers are staying on the premises food purchased must be consumed by the customer whilst seated at a table.

From Monday 5th July live music is permitted in licensed and unlicensed premises. Music must be at ambient levels that permit normal conversation and with suitable mitigations in place.

A person responsible for a hospitality business must take reasonable measures to ensure that social distancing measures are maintained at all times to limit the risk of transmission of the coronavirus.

For further information about regulations in place at any given time, visit NI Direct.

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-regulations-guidance-what-restrictions-mean-you>

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.

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

- enter the premises, reach the table at which they will be seated
- access buffet/toilet /baby changing facilities or smoking areas or to leave the premises;

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>

Overnight Tourism Accommodation:

This applies to any business that provides overnight accommodation. That would include, for example, hotels, guesthouses, bed and breakfasts, self-catering accommodation, hostels etc.

Up to six people from no more than two households can stay together overnight. Children aged 12 and under are not counted in the total.

If a household has six or more members the number staying together can be greater than six, as long as it is no more than 10. Children aged 12 and under are not counted in the total. **Visitor information must be obtained.**

Given that the main risk present in the guest accommodation itself is indirect transmission then the key controls come down to cleaning and hygiene.

- The guest bedroom and bathroom, as with any other part of a venue, must be regularly cleaned. In practice this will mean during normal housekeeping pay particular attention to the cleaning and disinfection of all surfaces, including hand contact surfaces.
- Housekeeping staff should wash their hands before entering and upon leaving each guest bedroom, and ensure that they do not touch their face.
- Housekeeping staff must have access to face coverings in the eventuality that they come within proximity of guests. Adequate social distancing should be maintained .

Further information 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/>

Managing large events and gatherings:

Events could include large functions, performances, conferences, exhibitions etc. Certain businesses to which this guidance applies may either regularly or from time to time host certain events.

Indoor and outdoor gatherings (with numbers governed by a risk assessment) are permitted with certain mitigations in place.

WEDDINGS

Weddings are permitted and each venue must determine the maximum capacity of the venue taking into consideration the social distancing requirements as well as maximum table sizes.

- There are no restrictions on the number of people seated at the 'top table'.
- Other tables are restricted to a maximum of 10. Children under 12 are excluded from table numbers.
- Live music is permitted in licensed and unlicensed premises. Music must be at ambient levels that permit normal conversation with suitable mitigations in place
- Dancing is not permitted at weddings that are being held in licensed or unlicensed premises. The only exception to this is the couple's 'first dance'.
- A person responsible for a hospitality business must take reasonable measures to ensure that social distancing measures are maintained at all times to limit the risk of transmission of the coronavirus.

BUSINESS MEETINGS

- Business meetings of up to 15 persons are permitted with adequate social distancing arrangements and do not require a risk assessment. Any meetings over 15 persons must be individually risk assessed .

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/lean/>

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/>