

Guidance for Community Centres reopening in Wales

Foreword

This guidance is for community centres based in Wales to provide you with a brief overview of how to prepare for restarting your services when it is permissible to do so.

At the time of writing, community centres must remain closed subject to certain exceptions. These exceptions include providing essential voluntary services to homeless or vulnerable people and, upon the request of the Welsh Ministers or a local authority, providing public services. See Regulation 7 [here, updated on 3 July 2020](#).

On Friday, 10 July 2020 it was announced by Welsh Government that guidance will be published to support community centres to restart more public services at the discretion of local authorities.

[The Health Protection \(Coronavirus Restrictions\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2020](#), impose a number of restrictions on businesses and other services and you must operate your organisation in a way that is compliant with these regulations, as updated or amended.

This guide is correct at the time of publication and we recommend it is read in conjunction with government guidance which you need to regularly review for updates. In Wales you can refer to these sites for guidance: [Welsh Government](#) and [Public Health Wales](#). You should also refer to guidance provided by the [Health and Safety Executive](#). For the regulation itself and any updates or amendments please see [here](#).

This guidance is not legal advice and WCVA accepts no liability arising from it and it does not constitute professional advice. WCVA recommends you perform your own research alongside this guidance to ensure you have taken all reasonable steps to ensure the safety of your premises, your staff, volunteers, customers and the community.

If you are permitted to open your venue, you should only do so when it is safe and when you feel confident in your ability to protect users of the building. Until then your venue should remain closed.

Please consider if local restrictions are in place and consider the potential for future local restrictions.

Remember that if someone becomes unwell in the workplace with a new, continuous cough; high temperature; the loss or a change in their normal sense of smell or taste they should be sent home and advised to follow the advice to stay at home.

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Risk assessment

WCVA recommends that you undertake a specific Coronavirus risk assessment in addition to any risk assessment you may already have in place. Your risk assessment should identify high risks and identify any mitigating actions you could put in place. You should consider implementing a timetable to ensure you can reopen safely. Guidance on the Coronavirus is evolving as new evidence emerges, so your plans should be flexible enough to be ready to adapt to any changes.

Publishing your plans and risk assessment may help to reassure staff, volunteers, the public and stakeholders and will clearly set out the changes and your expectations. For example, changing from booking in person to booking online and not accepting cash payments.

See [here](#) for a specific Coronavirus risk assessment template and guidance published by the Health & Safety Executive. If you are unfamiliar with completing risk assessments please see [here](#) for examples.

Test, Trace, Protect

To control the spread of the virus WCVA recommends that you keep a record of attendees at your premises to cooperate with Welsh Government's [Test, Trace, Protect](#) strategy. You should also ensure those hiring the venue retain records for the same purposes.

Please note that Data Protection legislation (ie GDPR, Data Protection Act 2018) does not preclude the sharing of data where there is an overriding public interest. However, you must ensure that you make every effort to inform individuals how their data will be used, ie plan for the likelihood that you may have to pass on their information to the Test Trace Protect scheme should they need their contact tracers to get in touch with the individual. Therefore, you should review your privacy notices to ensure they are still compliant given the changes in circumstances. The ICO has produced some useful guidance about collecting customer and visitor details which can be found [here](#).

Insurance

It is very important to keep your insurance company informed of your activities. Your insurance company will require you to follow and adhere to all recommendations and guidelines issued by Welsh Government. You will need to inform your insurance company that you will be resuming services and discuss any new requirements you must consider in order to ensure you comply with your insurance policy.

Thomas Carroll insurance brokers have produced guidance specifically for voluntary organisations resuming their services, which can be located [here](#) and [here](#).

Physical/social distancing

Physical/social distancing measures are actions taken to reduce interactions between individuals/households in order to minimise transmission of the Coronavirus. The current measures at the time of writing impose a strict two-metre distance between persons on your premises and grounds. Admitting people in smaller numbers may make it possible to maintain the distance.

‘Reasonable measures’ must be taken to ensure this and further Welsh Government guidance can be found [here](#), which includes examples such as staggering shifts and reducing the number of people in the premises at any one time. WCVA recommends that you retain details of the steps you have taken to ensure ‘reasonable measures’ have been implemented and details of the adjustments you have made to comply with this requirement.

Floor markings, one-way routes, removing or cordoning off furniture, setting out designated areas and safe queue management systems are some of the measures you could consider. Please note these are only suggestions of potential approaches and do not constitute a check list: each setting and scenario is different.

Hygiene

You should make arrangements for enhanced hand hygiene to prevent the risk of infection. Some examples could be hand washing or the use of hand sanitisers upon entering or exiting the building, after the use of toilets and

when moving within different rooms/locations within the building. Posters and signs should be used to encourage individuals to wash their hands. Instructions on how to wash hands could be positioned near sinks, a variety of illustrations and posters are available for you such as [this](#).

Good respiratory etiquette will minimise the transmission of Coronavirus. 'Catch it, bin it, kill it' posters should be visible to remind individuals to continue good levels of hygiene. Bilingual printable posters available from the Public Health Wales website can be found [here](#).

Trustees and good governance

Trustees have an important role to play and you must take action to minimise the potential for spreading the Coronavirus amongst individuals within your building and grounds. You must retain all documents on assessments made and minute all decisions taken. In terms of governance arrangements during this pandemic, trustees are advised to familiarise themselves with the guidance made available by the [Charity Commission](#), and keep abreast of changes and updates.

It may be that you must adjust the nature of your services due to the Coronavirus outbreak. If so, refer to your charity objectives in your governing documents to ensure any new services are in line with your objects.

Vulnerable people

Employers are under a statutory duty to ensure, as far as reasonably practical, the health, safety and welfare at work of their employees, as well as owing them a duty of care. It is important to note that during this crisis a significant proportion of your employees may be suffering with stress and anxiety at present and you should ensure support is in place. Public Health Wales' *How are you doing?* campaign provides some useful resources [here](#).

You should also note that 'extremely vulnerable' individuals are not permitted to return to work until 16 August 2020 and will be in receipt of a shielding letter from the Chief Medical Officer for Wales or their GP.

Volunteers

Organisations have a duty of care to volunteers, who must be afforded the same level of protection as any employee. See [here](#) for further information from WCVA on volunteering during the crisis.

Taking bookings and cash payments

Where possible, you should endeavour to take bookings online or over the phone. Where this is not possible, you should avoid handling cash and consider contactless or card payments. If you must continue to take cash, then gloves should be worn when handling money.

Safety and physical distancing signs

Welsh Government has created several bilingual signs that be may be useful to you, see [here](#). These signs can be printed and displayed at your premises. There are other options available on signage, including a wide variety of posters, labels and floor signage: please email rpgenquiries@wcva.cymru if you require information on suppliers.

At present a two-metre distancing rule is in place: it may be wise to mark this out in places that individuals would normally congregate, such as the entrance to a venue.

Contracts and hiring out centres

It is important to consult with those hiring out your centre, particularly those that hire regular slots. It may be, for example, that they require a larger room than they usually would to adhere to social distancing measures.

You should also consider whether it is a requirement of the hirer to clean surfaces and equipment or whether this is something you will control. You must be confident that the cleaning is undertaken to the higher level now required and that the individuals are undertaking the rigorous requirements and following guidance on cleaning.

It is recommended that you provide hand sanitiser at entrances/exits and in meeting rooms. You should also record the last time and date that cleaning was undertaken and consider displaying this to reassure visitors to your venue.

You should give priority to essential services during the re-opening phase.

Where the centre has several bookings, you may need to leave a longer period

of time between the bookings to allow cleaning to take place and to prevent bottlenecks in footfall as people enter and leave rooms/the premises. You should also ensure that supplies such as sanitiser and cleaning materials are replenished.

You should issue hirers with new conditions in light of Coronavirus, in writing and attached to the usual hire agreement. The new conditions must be accepted by the hirer in writing (via a signature).

You should provide your hirer with a copy of your risk assessment. You may also request that they undertake their own risk assessment and provide you with a copy.

Those hiring your centre should be encouraged to bring their own food and drink as opposed to making food and drink at the premises, reducing cleaning required in the kitchen. Hirers bringing in their own equipment should also be encouraged to use their own sanitiser and wipes.

Ventilation in centres should be encouraged through opening doors and windows as opposed to mechanical ventilation but remember health and safety and security implications. Fire doors must remain closed.

Fans that circulate air should not be used, see [here](#) for more information.

Cleaning

It is highly likely that your building has been closed for some time and therefore you should undertake a general health and safety check before reopening. Legionella growth, for example, is an increased risk because water has been left stagnant. You should undertake a thorough deep clean and disinfection of the building before re-opening.

Cleaning protocols should be put in place: you will need to decide how often cleaning/regular decontamination takes place and this will be based on your risk assessment. You should also record and display when cleaning has taken place. If the cleaning duties are not discharged to the hirers, you will need to ensure the individual responsible, eg the caretaker, has a clear schedule of hires and sufficient time is allocated to cleaning duties.

When considering your cleaning regime you should refer to the guidance available from the Health and Safety Executive, outlined [here](#). You should

identify frequently touched surfaces such as door handles, light switches, etc, as these will need more regular cleaning than usual. The guide suggests two approaches: deep cleans and periodic cleaning. It also suggests that you limit movement and reduce people's needs to touch objects and contains some helpful tips. Where possible, remove magazines and soft furnishings.

You must also consider waste generated from cleaning along with other general waste, which should be put in a plastic rubbish bag and tied when full, placed in a second bin bag, tied and put into a suitable and secure refuse container until collection.

Note that mobile devices must also be cleaned, see [here](#) for more information.

Cleaning products

Inevitably your demand for cleaning products and hand sanitiser will increase. If your usual supplier is unable to assist you, please email rpgenquiries@wcva.cymru if you require information on suppliers.

For information on choosing surface disinfectants to see [here](#) from the Health and Safety Executive.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) supplies

PPE consists of items such as facemasks, aprons, gloves, visors, shoe coverings, etc. We are not aware of any major supply shortages in Wales at the time of writing. Surges in demand for PPE since COVID-19 has seen a huge amount of counterfeit and non-compliant products enter the market, it is vital that you only purchase correctly certified products.

Your organisation may not require PPE, and this should be determined through your risk assessment and the latest available guidance. Public Health Wales advises there is no requirement for the use of PPE, except when providing direct personal/clinical care within two metres or where being within two metres of an individual cannot be avoided. Further and more detailed information can be found [here](#) and [here](#)

If you conclude that PPE is a requirement for your organisation, it is important to note that in order for it to be effective, you must ensure you know how to use the PPE. It will only prevent the spread of infection if it is:

- Used and changed at the right time
- Accompanied by good hand hygiene and
- Respiratory etiquette is applied

If using gloves and aprons for example, they are single use items only. Hands should be washed or gelled between service users and **after** removing gloves.

If using a face covering ([see Welsh Government guidance](#)) or mask, you must not take it off and leave it on surfaces and you must not leave a face covering/mask below your nose or hanging off your chin. Similarly, goggles should not be on top of your head.

Self-contamination is very common when removing (doffing) PPE. Guidance for donning (putting on) and doffing (taking off) PPE is available [here](#).

WCVA is working with the National Procurement Service for Wales (part of Welsh Government), which currently sends regular updates on certified stock, availability and prices. This information is then passed on to an email distribution list specifically for the voluntary sector in Wales. If you would like to be added to this list, please email ewaldron@wcva.cymru.

Equalities

Your strategy to resume services must recognise the needs and rights of individuals. For example, any new physical barriers that individuals may encounter, communication barriers, etc, should not impede the movement of people using walking sticks or wheelchairs, should be clearly visible and should not provide a hazard to people with sensory impairments. You could also consider, for example, providing a bag nearby for immediate disposal of tissues where individuals may need assistance with respiratory secretions.

Welsh Language

Whilst the Welsh Language Commissioner acknowledges that during a national crisis, it is possible that some organisations are not able to offer a Welsh Language service in every situation, you must still comply with the requirements of the Welsh Language Measures. Also, it is important to include this as part of your planning, for example, ensuring signs are bilingual. For information on Welsh Language services and offers, please see [here](#).

Using the venue for childcare use

Centres that provide childcare or nursery provision should follow the relevant guidance made available by Welsh Government [here](#).

This guidance has been developed by WCVA in consultation with Welsh Government.