

Extract from Information Sheet

There has been some concern by trustees about how social distancing applies at community halls and confusion about the way different Government Guidance applies. The following may help:

1. Trustees of Village Halls are unlikely to be at risk if they have undertaken and followed a COVID19 Risk Assessment before re-opening their Halls, unless the activity is on the specific 'banned' list that is referred to in Regulation 4 (and regularly amended).

2. Risk under the 'crisis regulations' falls to the event organiser. If a hirer, the event organiser, does not feel the Hall is in a condition that enables them to comply, they should not make the booking.

3. Trustees and managers of Village Halls will, of course, want to ensure that their premises make it as easy as possible for both hirers and individuals to comply with relevant Guidance through the provision of adequate handwashing, signage, spacing/capacity guidelines, multiple small tables etc. specific to their Hall. The manner or extent to which managers choose to do this is unlikely to alter the risk for them under the regulations.

4. Hirers must commit themselves to operating in a COVID-19 Secure way by following the Government's Guidance in force for their activity. The Government guidance says: "if organising an activity, you should carry out a COVID-19 risk assessment to identify actions which could minimise the risk of transmission".

5. Trustees and managers of Halls should follow good practice themselves and avoid creating the conditions for the spread of COVID-19 in their community. For this reason, they will want to avoid letting to any hirer where there may be an obvious risk of the Guidance being hard to comply with.

6. In order to assure themselves on 4, above, trustees of Halls should ensure hirers inform all participating individuals that they must adhere to social distancing guidelines. In general people are being advised to only meet indoors in groups of up to 2 households or, outdoors, meet in a group of up to 6 people from different households, following social distancing guidelines as far as possible. Those in single adult households can form a support bubble with another household. The responsibility rests with the individual to comply and with the hirer (the event organiser) to have carried out a risk assessment and operated the event under COVID-19 Secure guidelines to make it possible e.g. by laying out seats or tables so as to enable household groups to achieve social distancing from the next group. For example, at a family quiz household groups might be invited to sit at one table, 2m from the next table. At bingo, a "bubble" might sit side by side, separated from the next group. The aim is to contain risk of virus spread to small groups.

7. The Government guidance for individuals advises: " More generally, you can continue to meet in larger groups if necessary for work, voluntary or charitable services, education, childcare or training, elite sporting competition or training, to fulfil legal obligations,"; " If taking part in activities with larger groups, you should take particular care to follow social distancing guidelines."; "you should not hold or attend celebrations of any size (such as parties) where it's difficult to maintain social distancing" and "limit social interaction with anyone outside the group you are attending a place with". These do not stop community

activities nor people holding conversations in the way many are now used to doing while social distancing in the street, shops or at work.

Common sense should be applied.