

Latest Corona Virus information from ACRE for village and community halls in Tier 4

Village and community halls located in Tier 4 areas are required to close from Sunday 20th December onwards, except for the purposes outlined below.

The new restrictions are similar to those of the November lockdown. Review is scheduled for 30th December:

1. Specific exemptions from closure of village and community halls:

(a) the provision of essential voluntary activities or urgent public support services (including the provision of food banks or other support for the homeless or vulnerable people, blood donation sessions or support in an emergency),

(b) formal education or training, for example use by schools and colleges.

(c) Organised support groups providing mutual aid or therapy or other forms of support with no more than 15 participants including but not limited to victims of crime, people with long term illnesses, bereavement support and people in drug and alcohol recovery, meetings with youth workers and other forms of support. Workers and children under 5 do not count towards this limit.

(d) registered childcare and early years education for example nurseries and pre-schools.

(e) supervised activities for children (for example after school clubs, supervised sports activities)

(e) weddings, funerals, and commemorative events to celebrate a deceased person's life. No more than 30 people may attend a funeral. No more than 6 may attend a wake or a wedding. Celebrants do not count towards these limits.

(f) parent and child support groups, with no more than 15 participants. Children under 5 do not count towards this limit.

2. Outdoor exercise on recreation fields and use of children's playgrounds

People may only exercise with their household/support bubble or meet one other person. Children under five and carers for those with a disability do not count for this purpose. Outdoor sports courts and gyms may remain open for exercise within household/support bubbles or with one other person. Organised outdoor sports for those aged under 18 are permitted.

3. Other permitted activities at village and community halls

Some of the exemptions relevant to other premises apply to halls providing these services:

- a) For work purposes, where people cannot work from home (this would include the hall being hired to provide a socially distanced workplace for a local company for example health and safety training, training for carers, packaging).
- b) Food and essential retail for example Community shop, indoor market selling food, post office, newspapers.
- c) Takeaway food and drink services
- d) Libraries may remain open for digital access to public services and the above essential support groups and public services, but not for other purposes. This indicates that a Community Hub which, in areas without library facilities, provides similar facilities to enable digital access to public services may remain open as an essential voluntary or public support service.
- e) Worship in accordance with guidance for Places of Worship.
- f) For voting in a local government or government election.
- g) As part of a government programme responding to the spread of COVID-19.

4. Other premises required to close and relevant exemptions

The following premises are required to close, which means the relevant activities held at village and community halls will normally not be permitted. However, there are certain exemptions, which are expected to continue to apply as they have done during previous lockdowns:

- a) Indoor and outdoor leisure facilities, including gyms, dance studios, soft play facilities. The exceptions are for organised activities for those under the age of 18, for fitness purposes for those with a disability, for elite sportsmen and sportswomen or professional dancers.
- b) Theatres, concert halls, cinemas, museums and galleries, bingo. There are exemptions for film and audio recording and broadcasting, rehearsals, education, and training.
- c) Social clubs, bars, cafes. There is an exception for takeaway food and non-alcoholic drink.

5. Action by village and community halls

Given the rapid spread of the new variant of COVID-19 it seems unlikely that areas will be moved out of Tier 4 for some time and further areas may well move into Tier 4.

Consequently, committees and managers will need to consider their response in relation to at least the forthcoming 2 months, and potentially to the end of April.

If your hall is likely to remain open (for example for essential services and, after Christmas, for pre-schools) other bookings will need to be cancelled.

If your hall is likely to close, you should inform your insurer and follow any guidance they issue with respect to maintaining heating, shutting down water supply and security systems/checks.

The financial support packages for businesses forced to close or impacted by the Tier restrictions (including the Additional Restrictions Support Grant and Local Restrictions Support Group), furlough and other schemes will apply.

Links are at the end of this guidance: [Tier 4: Stay at Home - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/tier-4-stay-at-home)

If your village halls committee needs support, then please contact your local [ACRE Network](#) member.

For further information from ACRE see our [Information Sheet on Opening your Hall](#)