**Guidance for Re-opening Voluntary Managed Community Centres**

Newport City Council has provided the information in this briefing, to inform the Board / Committee of the Voluntary Managed centres of your responsibilities for managing and monitoring all bookings for your centre.

Public health risks posed by Covid-19 are still very real and guidance from Welsh Government on restrictions is continually being reviewed and updated. Community centres, village halls, and other multi-use community facilities support a wide range of local activities and groups. However, their communal nature also makes them places that are vulnerable to the spread of coronavirus (Covid-19).

The threat from coronavirus has not gone away and only by all of us acting responsibly will we be able to keep our residents and communities safe. Following the recent lockdown, Community centres are now permitted to open. However, the decision on whether to open each individual centre is a decision for each centre individually and importantly, the Welsh Government message is “just because you can does not mean you should”.

It is important that the decision to re-open safely is not rushed and your management committee/board are fully aware of the responsibilities and liabilities placed upon you as a committee/board, and potentially individually as committee/board members. Newport City Council have no role in this process. New working procedures and changes will be required to safely operate your centres and you should ensure that you are fully aware of the responsibilities placed on the Management Committee or Board if you take the decision to re-open your centre for general use.

A number of centres have already taken the decision to remain closed because of concerns around their ability to manage the risks of transmission or not having sufficient staff members or volunteers to undertake additional cleaning etc in order to open safely. Others are concerned about the liabilities associated with opening their centres and whilst this is a matter for your members, it is important that the Council highlight this to you. A link to the current regulations is provided below:

<https://gov.wales/health-protection-coronavirus-restrictions-no-5-wales-regulations-2020-amended>

The steps Community Centres can take for re-opening will continue to be controlled by these Regulations and will depend of the Alert Level Wales is placed into at any given time. It is the responsibility of the Community Centre Management Committee or Board to ensure that they remain aware of the alert levels contained in Schedule 1 – 4 of these Regulations and operate the Community Centre according to the current Alert Level for Wales.

**Specific issues that will require your attention and consideration:**

* **Safety** - The safety of those who use your community facility, your volunteers and staff should be of paramount importance. All available protection measures should be considered; <http://wcva.cymru/guidance-for-community-centres-reopening-in-wales>
* **Premises Managers** - Has the building been maintained and statutory checks been completed during lock down? Do these checks continue to be completed? Please refer to appendix A.
* **Risk Assessments & Procedures** - Reviewing and updating your building risk assessment and operating plans is essential. These will need to be recorded and retained as they may be required by compliance officers or your insurers should claims arise at a later date. Guidance in respect of completing risk assessments is provided using the following link. <https://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/risk/risk-assessment-template-and-examples.htm>

The Council cannot write the risk assessments for you.

* **Record keeping** - Any key decisions should be taken at a virtual meeting of the relevant trustee’s/management committee/board members and minutes recorded and retained to evidence decisions taken and what factors were taken into consideration when the decision was made;
* **Insurance** - The Centre is presumably operating in adherence to all government advice. If so, the Insurers would provide an indemnity. In the event of a claim, they would seek copies of all risk assessment and evidence that the Centres are compliant in ensuring an adequate cleansing regime is in place, social distancing is adhered to and face coverings worn where applicable. There is an expectation by all Insurers that their Insured adhere to good practice to ensure cover is maintained;
* **Track & Trace** **Record keeping** - To ensure effective delivery, the centre will be responsible for implementing a robust track and trace system. The legal requirement is to collect a service user’s name and information sufficient to enable the person to be contacted. This will need to include a telephone number and the date and time at which the person was at the premises.

The General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) places a legal obligation on anyone requesting and handling personal data. The process you put in place for recording and storing this information must comply with the GDPR. You will need to ensure that you have an up to date GDPR policy.

* **Charitable objects** - If you are significantly changing what you deliver, you will need to check whether you are still operating within your charitable objects or whether you need to make special arrangements to enable you to do so.

**Appoint a COVID Safety Officer**

At least one person from your Management Team should act as the designated COVID Safety Officer. This person must have the ability to engage with your community members and stakeholders, keep up-to-date with the latest public health regulations and be a focal point for your re-opening preparations.

**Steps for reopening**

<https://gov.wales/safe-use-multi-purpose-community-centres-covid-19>

**Step 1:** What activities are you thinking of running? If you do not own the setting - have you spoken to the owner? Do you have an agreement/charter with the owner?

**Step 2:** Do you know what you’ll need to do? For example, changes to insurance or hire agreements. WCVA has produced a set of practical guidance for community centres reopening that you might find useful. <http://wcva.cymru/guidance-for-community-centres-reopening-in-wales>

**Step 3:** Have you undertaken a risk assessment? Those responsible for the community centre (the management) will still have discretion over when they consider it safe to open for any activity permitted by legislation. Part of your risk assessment should consider how you will respond to a ‘local lockdown or firebreak’ event. Risk Assessment Templates and examples can be found on the Health and Safety Executive website. <https://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/risk/risk-assessment-template-and-examples.htm>

**Step 4:** Who runs the activity? Do those running activities understand the requirements of the regulations? Have they seen the risk assessment for the setting? Have they undertaken a risk assessment for their activity which has been seen and approved by you? Are they aware of this guidance? Are they aware that WCVA has produced additional help? Remember there are some activities that still cannot take place and the list of permitted activities regularly changes. If an activity cannot safely follow the advice in the relevant guidance for that activity, it is recommended it is not undertaken.

**Step 5:** What adjustments do you need to make? If you need to make adjustments to minimise the risk of exposure to coronavirus in the centre, have you considered how much these will cost? See Additional support below.

**Step 6:** Are you in touch with your local support infrastructure? We recommend that you remain in regular contact with the Council to discuss changes in regulations and guidance. We also recommend that you contact your local County Voluntary Council as they may be able to provide support. They will also be able to inform you if any local restrictions apply. <https://thirdsectorsupport.wales/contact/>

As you go through the process of reopening your community centre, by taking reasonable measures to minimise risk of exposure to and spread of coronavirus (including, but not limited to, 2m physical distancing, hygiene, use of PPE, recording contact information) are you confident that you can re-open safely?

For the reasons listed, it imperative that the decision to re-open safely is not rushed. Please remember that the Welsh Government message is “just because you can does not mean you should”. Failure to ensure the safe use and operation of centres could mean that enforcement notices are issued to the management committee/board. A compliance notice may specify measures that the person(s) must take as soon as is reasonably practicable, to prevent that person(s) from continuing to contravene the requirement(s), or it may require the immediate closure of the centre.

**Cleaning and infection control**

COVID-19 is mainly spread between people who are in close contact with one another and by droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It can also spread through contact with a surface or object that has the virus on it.

Cleaning to an appropriate standard helps minimise the spread of COVID-19. A cleaning regime should be established based on the risk assessments and use of the building. High usage areas and anything that is frequently touched, especially if it is touched by lots of people, will need more regular cleaning than normal. Guidance on cleaning to the appropriate standard can be found on the Health and Safety Executive <https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/cleaning/index.htm> in addition to the following specific guidance on cleaning of non-healthcare settings <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings>.

If the setting is used for certain activities, for example childcare, higher levels of cleaning/ infection control will be required. Managers and operators should see the relevant section below.

Current regulations allow any activity to take place providing it is organised by a club or recognised body and within the legal limits on numbers attending. There is no permitted sale or consumption of alcohol on the premises. However, whilst the current regulations allow for a wider range of activities than before the lockdown, we would urge you and the organisers to consider whether the activity needs to take place indoors, particularly where it has been successfully delivered either virtually or outdoors over the last few months.

The management committee/board will be responsible for taking all reasonable measures to minimise risk of exposure to coronavirus at the premises or the spread of coronavirus by those who have been at the premises.

The Welsh Government advice remains that activities involving singing, chanting or shouting should not take place indoors due to the additional risk of infection, even where physical distancing or face coverings are used. There are also some musical instruments such as wind instruments, which also should not be played indoors. It is critical that you keep informed of the type of activities which are permitted by regulation, and any changes to those regulations.

Those managing and using community centres for the following activities also need to take account the specific guidance and regulations below:

* The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). <https://gov.wales/keeping-records-staff-customers-and-visitors-test-trace-protect>
* Childcare Provision: Providers of childcare provision in community centres should follow the relevant government guidance. <https://gov.wales/education-coronavirus>
* Youth Work Services: Guidance will be available here towards the end of July 2021.
* Families First and Flying Start services: Providers of Families First and FlyingStart services in community centres should follow the relevant government guidance. <https://gov.wales/education-coronavirus>
* Places of worship: Guidance is available on re opening places of Worship. <https://gov.wales/guidance-reopening-places-worship-coronavirus>
* Marriages and Civil Partnerships: Guidance is available on marriages and civil partnerships. <https://gov.wales/guidance-marriages-and-civil-partnerships-coronavirus>
* Sport Recreation and Leisure: Guidance on a phased return for sport, recreation and leisure is available. <https://gov.wales/sport-recreation-and-leisure-guidance-phased-return>
* Culture and Heritage Destination Venues: Guidance for culture and heritage destinations and venues is available. <https://gov.wales/culture-and-heritage-destinations-and-venues-guidance-phased-return-0>
* Safety and physical distancing signs for employers: coronavirus. <https://gov.wales/safety-and-physical-distancing-signs-employers-coronavirus>
* Coronavirus regulations: frequently asked questions. <https://gov.wales/coronavirus-regulations-guidance>

This guidance is not intended to be comprehensive and has been created to assist Community Centres to make the correct decisions and take all appropriate measures to re-open safely, as permitted by the latest WG Regulations. However, the responsibility for opening safely rests which each individual Community Centre Manager/Management Committee, who must ensure that they are aware of the most recent legislation and guidance on re-opening safely, and have acted in accordance with the latest guidance. As such, NCC cannot accept any liability for any claims or action taken against individual Community Centres which may arise as a result of the re-opening of their Centre.

**APPENDIX A**

**Community Centres – Recovery: Increased and Reoccupation**

Use the checklist below to identify actions that need to be taken before you can safely increase the occupancy or reopen a building.

**Has the building been completely closed during crisis? Yes ☐ No ☐**

**You must be able to tick yes to every question** and provide dates where required before you can reopen the building.

1. **Has a Covid-19 risk assessment for increased/reoccupation been completed? Yes  No**
2. **Have you continued to provide access for contractors to undertake statutory testing during the period of closure? Yes  No**

**Section 1: Reopening a Building**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **i** | **Hot and Cold Water Systems** | |  |  |
|  | Have **all** outlets been flushed, in line with Legionella Management Guidance, on a weekly basis during closure period and records kept, or has the system already been fully flushed? You must be able to provide NCC with full records of this activity. | | Yes | No |
| **If NO you must contact Newport Norse to arrange for the water system to be tested/completely flushed before the building can be reoccupied.** | | | | |
|  | Date system flushing completed | Click or tap to enter a date. | | |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **ii** | **Gas Systems** | |  |  |
|  | Are all gas heating system safety checks up to date? | | Yes | No |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | | | | | | | |
| **iii** | **Fire** | | |  | | |  | |
|  | Are all contracted tests and maintenance visits up to date? | | | Yes | | | No | |
|  | Has a fire alarm test been carried out? | | | Yes | | | No | |
|  | Have emergency light tests been carried out? | | | Yes | | | No | |
|  | Have fire extinguishers been visually inspected for damage and pressure? | | | Yes | | | No | |
|  | Are fire escape routes clear of obstructions? | | | Yes | | | No | |
|  | Are final exit doors unlocked and operational? | | | Yes | | | No | |
|  | Are any automatic dampers, smoke venting and smoke extraction systems operational? | | | Yes | | | No | |
|  | | | | | | | | | |
| **iv** | | **Asbestos** | | |  | | |  | |
|  | | Has a visual inspection of ACMs been completed to ensure no deterioration during the closedown? | | | Yes | | | No | |
|  | | | | | | | | | |
| **v** | | | **Lifts and Lifting Equipment** | | |  | |  | |
|  | | | Are all LOLER checks up to date? | | | Yes | | No | |
|  | | | Has all lifting equipment been checked and tested to ensure it is functional before being used? | | | Yes | | No | |
|  | | |  | | |  | |  | |
| **vi** | | | **Plant and Equipment** | | |  | |  | |
|  | | | Is all plant and equipment up to date with their statutory or manufacturers’ guidance maintenance and checks? | | | Yes | | No | |
|  | | | Has all plant and equipment been tested before it is used for the first time? | | | Yes | | No | |
|  | | |  | | |  | |  | |
| **vii** | | | **Premises Specific** | | |  | |  | |
|  | | | Have any premises specific statutory, manufacturers or recommended tests and checks been carried out? | | | Yes | | No | |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |  |
| **viii** | **Electrical Systems** |  |  |
|  | Is your 5 yearly fixed wiring check up to date? | Yes | No |
|  | Is your portable appliance testing up to date? | Yes | No |
|  |  |  |  |
| **ix** | **Extraction Systems** |  |  |
|  | Is any LEV system testing up to date? | Yes | No |

*I confirm that access has been maintained for statutory testing and maintenance and all relevant checks are up to date. Certificates/records are attached.*

*Print name:*

*Signed: Date:*

**Section 2: Social Distancing**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| i | Are plans and signage in place to ensure that corridors can be navigated whilst maintaining social distancing? | Yes | No |
| ii | Have pinch points been identified? | Yes | No |
| iii | Are social distancing markers in place at every possible queueing or pinch point as per your risk assessment? | Yes | No |
| iv | Have Perspex screens/dividers been installed in places identified by your risk assessment? | Yes | No |
| v | Are plans in place to manage social distancing in toilets and kitchens/rest areas? | Yes | No |
| vi | Have offices and meeting rooms been assessed and assigned/labelled with a maximum occupancy? | Yes | No |

**Section 3: Hygiene and Cleaning**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| i | Is soap and water (preferably warm) available in every toilet? | Yes | No |
| ii | Are there hand sanitiser stations at entrances and exits, and at other strategic points as identified by your risk assessment? | Yes | No |
| iii | Are bins available in every room? | Yes | No |
| iv | Is there a regular emptying regime for bins and safe storage for waste? | Yes | No |
| v | Where possible have paper towels been provided in all toilets and kitchens, and hand dryers disconnected? | Yes | No |
| vi | Have cleaning regimes been updated to include regular cleaning of toilets, kitchens and touch points? | Yes | No |

**Section 4: First Aid and Fire Marshalls**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| i | Has a revised first aid needs assessment been carried out based on new potential occupancy levels? | Yes | No |
| ii | Are there sufficient first aiders available? | Yes | No |
| iii | Is first aid equipment readily available, including appropriate PPE? | Yes | No |
| iv | Are there sufficient fire wardens for new occupancy levels? | Yes | No |
| v | Has the fire plan been amended to consider new occupancy levels and need to maintain social distancing as far as possible during evacuations? | Yes | No |

**Section 5: Contractor and Visitor Management**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| i | Do you know which contractors/visitors are likely to be attending the centre regularly? | Yes | No |
| ii | Have contractors/visitors been given information about whether covid-19 specific PPE is needed on site? | Yes | No |
| iii | Do you have mechanisms for ensuring you know where contractors/visitors will need to go on the premises before they arrive? | Yes | No |
| iv | Do you have robust processes in place for providing information to and managing contractors and visitors when they are on site, taking into consideration the need for social distancing, access to welfare facilities and cleaning regimes? | Yes | No |
| v | Do you have plans in place for managing emergency works? | Yes | No |
| vi | Do you have processes in place for requesting and receiving Covid-19 risk assessments, or the significant findings of risk assessments, from groups using your centres? | Yes | No |

What is your proposed date of reopening/restarting activities?\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Please submit this checklist to** [**Jason.Conibeer@newport.gov.uk**](mailto:Jason.Conibeer@newport.gov.uk) **at least one week before you intend to recommence activities**