

SUMMARY OF RESTRICTIONS FOR OUTDOOR VISITOR ATTRACTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

27th April 2021 (Version 2)

INTRODUCTION

This document summarises the restrictions as they apply to Outdoor Attractions and Activities which are permitted to reopen from 23rd April 2021.

The most up-to-date information on *The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021* can be found [here](#). Further guidance on all restrictions can be found on the [NI Direct website](#). Please note that businesses must stay up to date with regulations and how they impact their individual business.

This document contains a summary of the latest requirements and restrictions for businesses to which it applies. It should be read in conjunction with the full guidance document produced by Tourism NI and the Department for the Economy, which can be found [here](#).

It is important to note that the virus is still in circulation and everyone must continue to take precautions. For business owners, this means completing a risk assessment and implementing appropriate controls. These will include social distancing; restricting group sizes; the use of face coverings where appropriate; and good hygiene practices. For visitors this means following those controls when visiting an outdoor attraction or taking part in outdoor activities.

Failure to comply with legal requirements could result in enforcement action including premises improvement notices, fixed penalty notices and/or prosecution.

1. WHICH BUSINESSES CAN REOPEN?

Outdoor visitor attractions, activity centres, parks, play areas, outdoor areas of properties operated by the National Trust and the outdoor areas of stately homes, historic homes and castles are permitted to open.

This also includes drive-in cinemas and performances. When going to these events, visitors should be advised not to share their vehicle with anyone outside their household or bubble.

Outdoor activities such as kayaking or guided tours are permitted as long as they meet all other requirements, including the limits on the number of people that can meet outdoors.

Indoor visitor attractions including amusement arcades, bingo halls, museums, galleries and cinemas must remain closed. An indicative date of 24th May has been set for the reopening of indoor visitor and cultural attractions

2. OUTDOOR VERSUS INDOOR

Indoor areas must remain closed to the public, except to allow one individual from a party to make payment, order food and drink for takeaway, or to allow use of a toilet, baby changing, or breast feeding facilities. All relevant control measures should be in place.

A place is indoors if it would be considered to be enclosed or substantially enclosed for the purposes of regulation 2 of the Smoke-free (Premises, Vehicle Operators and Penalty Notices) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2007(5).

Premises are considered to be enclosed if they have a ceiling or roof and are wholly enclosed with the exception of doors and windows. They are considered to be substantially enclosed if they have a ceiling or roof and an aggregate area of openings in the walls which is less than half of the areas of the walls or similar structure. What the structure is made of does not matter. In other words, a premises is indoors if at least 50% of the wall area is closed.

3. USE OF INDOOR AREAS

No indoor areas can be used for any purposes other than the following:

- For one individual from the party to make payment. Note that payments should be taken outside whenever possible.
- For individual access and use toilet facilities.
- For individual access and use of baby changing or breast-feeding facilities.
- To order food and drink for takeaway.

Businesses should take steps to prevent queues from forming in indoor areas. If they are unavoidable, they should be managed appropriately.

4. RESPONSIBLE PERSONS:

Responsible persons in terms of a business are defined in regulations and can include the owner, proprietor and/or manager. Any of these persons can be held accountable for any non-compliances with regulations.

5. RISK ASSESSMENT:

As a business owner, you have a legal responsibility to protect workers, customers and others from risks to their health and safety. All businesses should complete a risk assessment for COVID-19. Full details of what this is and how to complete it can be found within the main guidance document referenced above.

HSENI has produced an example risk assessment which shows the kind of approach a business or workplace to take when carrying out a risk assessment for COVID-19. This can be found [here](#).

6. LIMITATIONS ON GATHERINGS AND SOCIAL DISTANCING

The number of people that can access a site or take part in an activity at any one time should be managed through your risk assessment to prevent overcrowding.

Up to ten people, including children of all ages, from a maximum of two households can meet outdoors for a permitted reason. Any staff member, instructor or guide is included in this total.

This means that the responsible person(s) must take reasonable steps to communicate this requirement as well as implement any controls that may assist in preventing breaches of the requirement by visitors. Suggestions include:

- Ensure that all visitors are aware of this requirement as well as the need to maintain at least 2m between them and other parties at all times. This could be achieved through signage, website information, and information given at booking and on arrival.

- Avoid queues as far as possible. Where they cannot be avoided, manage them appropriately.
- Ensure that staff are briefed on key requirements and operating procedures.

7. COLLECTION OF VISITOR INFORMATION

It is not currently a legal requirement for outdoor visitor attractions and activities to collect and store visitor information for the purposes of contact tracing.

However, after completing your risk assessment, you may find that it is necessary to collect visitor information as a control to reduce the risk of COVID-19. In this case, customer details can include the name and telephone number of each visitor over the age of 16, as well as the date and time of arrival. Further information about maintaining records for the purposes of contact tracing can be found [here](#).

8. FACE COVERINGS

In general, visitors are not required to wear face coverings whilst outdoors. However, you may wish to require this in any scenario where queuing is unavoidable. This might include queues for takeaway food and drink, or queues for toilets.

Face coverings are mandatory in certain indoor settings. Businesses should actively manage this by ensuring that all visitors are aware of where face coverings are expected to be worn, such as any indoor area; when making payment; accessing toilets; or ordering food. This could be achieved through signage, website information, information given at booking and information on arrival.

People who work in these indoor settings must also wear a face covering unless they are separated from members of the public by a partition. Businesses may wish to consider making face coverings available to staff in customer-facing roles.

Some circumstances make it difficult for some people to wear face coverings. In these circumstances people may have a 'reasonable excuse' not to wear a face covering. Further information about the use of face coverings can be found [here](#).

9. FOOD AND DRINK

Hospitality venues such as cafes, restaurants, pubs, bars and social clubs must remain closed, with the exception of providing food and drink for takeaway, drive-through or delivery. Businesses providing takeaway services must close at 11.00 pm.

Outdoor areas of hospitality venues are not permitted to be used. However from 30 April, outdoor areas can reopen and separate guidance will be provided for 'outdoor hospitality'.

10. RETAIL WITHIN A VISITOR ATTRACTION

As of 23rd April, retail premises can only remain open if the business is wholly or mainly an essential retail business. However from 30th April, all retail can reopen, including a shop within a visitor attraction.

11. TOILETS AND RESTROOMS

Toilet facilities should be provided outside wherever possible. However one individual from a party may enter an indoor space to access toilet facilities, baby changing, or breast feeding facilities. If this facility is provided there are specific requirements on social distancing; use of face coverings; hand hygiene; and cleaning that need to be followed.

12. HYGIENE CONTROLS

Full advice on hygiene controls can be found in the overarching guidance document [here](#). This can include ensuring that equipment is cleaned or rotated between use.

Hand hygiene is a vital component in ensuring that the risk of transferring the virus is minimised. Hand sanitisation will be identified in your risk assessment as an important control in reducing the spread of COVID-19. Controls can include:

- Making staff and visitors aware of the requirements for good hand hygiene.
- Providing hand sanitation facilities at all points of entry to the inside of the premises as well as any high traffic areas and in particular at restrooms and service points.

13. OUTDOOR EXERCISING AND SPORTS

For specific queries about the return to sport, Sport NI has set up a dedicated email address to help individuals and groups understand the requirements: returntosport@sportni.net.

The following information has been provided on [NI Direct](#).

Up to 10 people - including children of all ages - from a maximum of two households can take part in outdoor exercise or sports activities.

Up to 15 people (including coaches) can take part in structured outdoor sports training, through clubs or individuals affiliated to recognised sports governing bodies or representative organisations for sport and physical activity.

Outdoor sports facilities can re-open but only to permit their use for those allowed in the regulations. Club houses and indoor sports facilities, which include changing rooms, showers, kitchens and meeting rooms, must stay closed, with the exception of essential toilet facilities.

Squad training is permitted as well as competitive outdoor sports. No spectators are permitted and numbers (including officials, participants, management and support personnel) should be restricted to the minimum number required for the delivery of the event and should not exceed 100.

The return to sport protocols put in place by sports governing bodies should be strictly adhered to including hygiene measures, social distancing and other mitigations. Any behaviour which may encourage the risk of transmission around sports activities, such as car sharing, congregation of people on the side-lines and sporting celebrations, should be avoided.

Sports governing bodies have a responsibility to ensure full compliance with the protocols and are expected to put arrangements in place to deal with non-compliant clubs, participants and coaches.

Indoor sport is not permitted, other than at elite level. Elite training and competition can continue, both indoors and outdoors. All indoor sports facilities such as leisure centres, gyms, health clubs, swimming pools, fitness and dance studios must remain closed.

Elite sporting events must be held behind closed doors without spectators. The definition of an elite athlete is set out in the regulations.

Horse racing and other recognised equine sports, can take place behind closed doors, in line with the elite sport regulations and animal welfare considerations.

Version Control (changes in bold)		
Section 1	27-Apr-2021	To add further examples of outdoor activities for clarity: Outdoor activities such as kayaking or guided tours are permitted as long as they meet all other requirements.
Section 6	27-Apr-2021	To add further information for clarity: up to ten people, including children of all ages, from a maximum of two households can meet outdoors for a permitted reason. Any staff member, instructor or guide is included in this total