

REOPENING NI SECTORAL GUIDELINES – SMALL ACCOMMODATION WEBINAR

Questions and Responses

1. What's an OTA?

Online Travel Agent, such as: [booking.com](https://www.booking.com), [laterooms.com](https://www.laterooms.com), [lastminute.com](https://www.lastminute.com), etc.

2. Should there not be an industry wide statement about guests not travelling if suspect have Covid-19 rather than us pre-surveying and having to make individual statement?

The Northern Ireland Executive, Public Health Agency and other Executive departments have been communicating widely about not travelling with suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19. This includes online and offline advertising campaigns.

3. How often will common areas (lifts, stairs, and hallways) need to be disinfected?

Daily and in some cases more regularly (more than once per day) for areas such as door handles, switches, bells, table tops, push bars, stair bannisters, etc. Advice on deep-cleaning/sanitising can also be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings>

4. Do we have to have forms filled in saying where guests have come from and where they are going?

It is a legal requirement for all accommodation providers in Northern Ireland to capture guest's details including name, address, date of arrival, date of departure and nationality.

For other sectors, or for accommodation providers who might have walk-in visitors, the advice as of 07-July-2020 is that the Public Health Agency will manage this process and there is no need to record additional information. It is likely that the advice will be updated in the coming days, so please monitor Tourism NI's website and Twitter account for details.

Information on the NHS test and trace system can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/maintaining-records-of-staff-customers-and-visitors-to-support-nhs-test-and-trace>

5. What is the procedure for the actual quilts and pillows in regard to cleaning sanitation (not the covers or protectors)

Bedding & Linen: Use gloves to remove dirty linen carefully directly into bags (if it has not been stripped by guests). Linen should not be shaken in case viruses are dispersed through the air. Ensure it is removed from the property prior to cleaning. Clean pillow and mattress protectors should be used for each changeover. Bedding should be sprayed with disinfectant or pillows and duvets can be rotated (removed and left bagged for 72 hours between use). Remove gloves and dispose of them after stripping beds. Wash hands. Apply clean gloves before putting the clean linen on the beds.

6. Are fogging machines recommended for self-catering?

Government guidance on cleaning in non-healthcare settings can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings>. This page recommends that 'cleaning an area with normal household disinfectant will reduce the risk of passing the infection to other people'. It also advises that



“when items cannot be cleaned using detergents or laundered, for example, upholstered furniture and mattresses, steam cleaning should be used.” There is no recommendation to use fogging machines.

According to the Health & Safety Executive, “Fogging employs similar disinfectants and concentrations to those used in mist and foam applications. However, fogging presents a particular risk to the respiratory system as it produces smaller droplets than spraying. These can remain suspended in air for 45-60 minutes or longer, depending upon the droplet size. This method requires a risk assessment for each type of agent used and strict management procedures to prevent early re-entry of people into fumigated areas, particularly where the more hazardous disinfectants are used (eg aldehydes or peracetic acid).”

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/food/disinfectants.htm>

7. In self-catering you are supposed to have 2 pillows per person. Is the recommendation to have only one per person and one available on request?

Yes recommended 2 per person. It is up to you and best check requirements with guests, it just means more laundry with 2 per person but guest comfort is paramount.

8. Very good session. Is there a dedicated site for COVID advice for Self-catering?

The main guidance for hotel and tourist accommodation is applicable to all tourist accommodation: <https://covid19.tourismni.com/guidanceaccommodation>. The association of self-catering in Scotland has a very useful website with sector specific advice:

www.assc.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Cleaning-Protocols-for-Self-Catering-Properties-and-Short-Term-Lets-V4-1.pdf



9. In self-catering: do we have to remove food items? I leave tea, coffee, butter, milk, etc. for guests.

Welcoming guests is a very important part of the guest experience. If you wish to continue to offer local produce to guests during their stay you may wish to consider only offering produce which is sealed or packaged. You may also wish to consider how you are presenting the produce, i.e. whether you use a wipeable, disposable or single use, container or simply leave the produce as stand-alone items. Any welcome notes or information should be either single use or wipeable. After the guest has departed you should clear away any left overs and not leave items for future guests, such as tea bags/coffee sachets etc.

10. Do irons and ironing boards need to be removed?

Iron and ironing boards again would need a thorough clean after guests depart. If it is an item not used by all guests than perhaps it could be available on request.

11. Do CDs, video tapes and books need to be removed from guests rooms?

With regards to CDs, videos and books, yes you can have these, but each individual one would need disinfected at change over, having less or decluttering is about reducing the risk. It would be possible to have a selection of books, DVDs etc. available and at change over take these away to rest for 72 hours (the virus will then be eradicated) and place a different set on the cottage for the guests the following week.

12. What to do if someone takes unwell while staying in your house and Covid-19 is suspected? If you have other guests staying and or arriving, do you have to rehouse them somewhere else?

Information is provided on page 6 of the guidance. You can find information about what to do if a visitor becomes unwell and also how to clean after a suspected or confirmed case.

<https://covid19.tourismni.com/globalassets/business-support/downloads/guidance/working-safely-during-covid-19-in-hotels-and-tourist-accommodation/tni-working-safely-hotels.pdf>.

13. What about UV light sanitizing on soft furnishings?

Government guidance on cleaning in non-healthcare settings can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings>. This page recommends that ‘cleaning an area with normal household disinfectant will reduce the risk of passing the infection to other people’. It also advises that “when items cannot be cleaned using detergents or laundered, for example, upholstered furniture and mattresses, steam cleaning should be used.”

14. I have read on the Tourism NI site that it is not essential to have a written risk assessment. Is this true? Also is there a “Template Risk Assessment” for self-catering available?

Everyone needs to assess and manage the risks of COVID-19, and in particular businesses should consider the risks to their workers, volunteers and customers. As an employer, you also have a legal responsibility to protect workers and others from risk to their health and safety. This means



you need to think about the risks they face and do everything reasonably practicable to minimise them, recognising you cannot completely eliminate the risk of COVID-19.

You must make sure that the risk assessment for your business addresses the risks of COVID-19, using this guidance to inform your decisions and control measures. A risk assessment is not about creating huge amounts of paperwork, but rather about identifying sensible measures to control the risks in your workplace and making a record of the significant findings. If you have fewer than five workers, or are self-employed, you don't have to write anything down as part of your risk assessment, however it is useful to have a written assessment so you can review it at a later date, and to have a written record of what you have done to protect your guests and your employees.

A useful link for risk assessment templates include: www.hseni.gov.uk/publications/example-covid-19-risk-assessment-template. This is a draft copy of a generic risk assessment for dealing with the current Covid-19 situation in the workplace. It is not likely to cover all scenarios and each employer should consider their own unique circumstances. Tourism NI recently ran a useful webinar for risk assessments: <https://covid19.tourismni.com/support-centre/past-webinars/risk-assessments-for-tourism-businesses/> as did Mid and East Antrim Borough Council: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TQDvYiTVFj4&feature=youtu.be>

15. What about ornaments, plates on Welsh dressers and other items decorating a room? If we declutter all of these the accommodation will lose its appeal and personality.

The fewer you have the less cleaning, you can keep these items but all will need to be cleaned / sanitised before next guest, particularly any items that are touchable.

16. You briefly touched on fogging device, can you please comment on Ozone Generator?



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<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings>. This page recommends that ‘cleaning an area with normal household

disinfectant will reduce the risk of passing the infection to other people’. It also advises that “when items cannot be cleaned using detergents or laundered, for example, upholstered furniture and mattresses, steam cleaning should be used.” There is no recommendation to use fogging or Ozone generators.

According to the Health & Safety Executive, “The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH) requires employers to prevent or control exposure to hazardous substances. Where exposure cannot be prevented, employers are required to assess the risk to health, and provide adequate control measures when using hazardous chemicals.)”

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/food/disinfectants.htm>

17. I plan to offer my B&B for use solely for either a family of four or two couples who can travel together. Can you offer any advice in terms of catering arrangements?

As the property is being used for the exclusive use by members of a family and therefore count as one household and do not have to socially distance from one another, it would be possible to provide a buffet at breakfast. It is possible to provide a hospitality tray in the bedrooms as long as any remaining sachets/tea bags, sugar are disposed of after guest departure and the kettles/teapot along with cups are deep cleaned/sterilised.

18. If a client is staying in self-catering for two weeks or longer what's the recommendations for cleaning regularity.

Accommodation providers must clean the room between each let or once per week for long-term guests. If the guest specifically requests that you do not service the room due to health concerns, you can provide clean bedlinen, towels, tea towels, etc. Leave these in a bag outside the property for guests to do their own change over, ask if they need any more cleaning materials. The previous linen should be bagged and taken away.

19. How often should mattress and pillow protectors be washed and indeed the duvets and pillows themselves?

Clean pillow and mattress protectors should be used for each changeover. Bedding should be sprayed with disinfectant or pillows and duvets can be rotated (removed and left bagged for 72 hours between use). Remove gloves and dispose of them after stripping beds. Wash hands. Apply clean gloves before putting the clean linen on the beds. It is good to have additional sets of bedding so you can allow pillows and duvets to 'rest' between lettings for 72 hours. Not a requirement but a recommendation where possible.

20. The recommendation is to bin linens if someone takes ill. Who will covers this cost?

Information about washing laundry in non-healthcare settings can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings>. The UK government recommends washing in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

21. My property is a Victorian B&B with lots of antique furniture. As my tables are antique I need to have table protectors and tablecloths. Are table cloths acceptable as long as they are washed between guests?

Table cloths can be used if they can be wiped down or washed between each use. Instructions on laundry can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings>.

22. I have pump action shower gel and shampoo as well as pump action antibacterial soap? Are these acceptable as long as they are thoroughly cleaned between guests?

If used, these should be disinfected between each use and rested for 72 hours if practical. Single use soaps can be used.

23. Is there any advice on what specifics we need to add to our Terms & Conditions regarding Covid-19?

Amend your cancellation policy, apply flexibility, can also add in that the guest confirms they are fit and healthy with no Covid-19 symptoms, cough or temperature.