

3 June 2020

FAQs 2 for community buildings and village halls during the Covid-19 pandemic

Since we compiled our first FAQs in April 2020, community buildings and village halls have remained closed for everything except essential services.

From 1 June 2020 community buildings are now able to open for the provision of early years childcare. ACRE have issued a [guidance document](#) for management committees to help them with this opening.

Amendments have been made to the Health Protection regulations from 1 June and they now read as follows:

5. (7) A person who is responsible for a community centre must ensure that, during the emergency period, the community centre is closed except where it is used to provide:

(a) 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),

or

(b) for early years childcare provided by a person registered on the Early Years Register under Part 3 of the Childcare Act 2006.

“Early years childcare” is defined in the Childcare Act 2006 and means for children from birth to five years old.

Inevitably we are all looking to the time when community buildings will be given the go ahead to open their doors for more groups and activities. ACRE is working on a document which will provide comprehensive advice on how buildings can do this safely.

Community First Yorkshire will publish this document through the [website](#), enews and social media channels as soon as it becomes available.

Whilst we wait for the advice from ACRE here are some FAQs and answers that may help as you start to think about how to re-open:

Can we use the village hall car park for an outside market?

Yes, but committees should ensure the market can comply with social distancing regulations. Committees will also need inform their insurance company.

Can we open the toilet in our village hall to the public?

Toilets in community buildings and village halls must remain closed until the regulations are changed.

Will it be necessary to purchase specialised cleaning products to clean the hall?

Standard domestic cleaning products are suitable for cleaning halls. It will be important to ensure adequate supplies are available at all times.

Will the hall need to provide hand sanitiser?

Yes, halls will need to provide hand sanitiser as a minimum at every entrance and exit.

Sanitiser and/or running water, soap and paper towels will be required in toilets. Hot air dryers are not recommended as they distribute droplets.

Will our hall have to open when the government says it can?

No. Trustees would need to meet online or by phone to take a decision that it would not be in the best interests of the charity to re-open. Minute the reasons why, so that you can show that the matter has been carefully considered in the event of a challenge.

Trustees want to put together a post Covid-19 opening plan but we're not sure where to start, can you help?

ACRE will provide a re-opening checklist for community building management committees listing possible tasks to be completed before the building can be safely open.

It is also strongly recommended that a risk assessment is carried out to ensure safe opening.

If you need further support or guidance please contact communitybuildings@communityfirstyorkshire.org.uk