

Covid-19 local restrictions in the North East

New guidance and associated regulations were published by the government during the early hours of 30 September 2020. You can read the full guidance via this link:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/north-east-of-england-local-restrictions>

You can view the associated additional regulations via this link:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2020/1057/contents/made>

These local restrictions are in addition to the national restrictions with compliance required to whichever are the most restrictive.

CAN continues to receive many queries on these matters from village halls and community buildings in particular. Having digested the new guidance (as in place on 30 September 2020), our understanding is that venues can remain open, subject to compliance with all covid risk assessment and covid-secure procedures, for activities that qualify within a range of stated exceptions. Previous restrictions associated with venues in relation to the provision of food, drink and hospitality remain in place and are now enforceable with fines of up to £10,000.

The guidance states the following:

“If you live in the affected local areas, you must not (unless they’re in your support or childcare bubble):

- host people you do not live with in your home or garden
- meet people you do not live with in their home or garden, whether inside or outside the affected local areas
- socialise with people who you do not live with in indoor settings, whether inside or outside of the affected local areas”

Individuals can be fined for non-compliance with these rules.

Stated exceptions in relation to indoor settings, which are not private dwellings, include:

- Where a gathering is “reasonably necessary” for work purposes, for the “provision of voluntary or charitable services”, for the purposes of education or training, to provide emergency assistance along with other listed exceptions.
- Where a gathering is of a “support group” which means “a group which is organised by a business, a charitable, benevolent or philanthropic institution or a public body to provide mutual aid, therapy or any other form of support to its members or those who attend its meetings.”

All existing covid secure arrangements, including covid risk assessments, social distancing, face mask and other measures, must be carried out in all circumstances and persons must not “mingle” with anyone from another household.

In relation to indoor sport, Northumberland County Council currently state the following:

“You can continue to take part in organised sporting or licensed physical activity in groups of more than six outdoors and up to six people indoors (for over 18s). There is an exemption for indoor sports if it is organised for the purposes of someone who has a disability taking part and for children’s activities. The additional restriction brought in on September 30, on mixing with other households within indoor settings, does not change these limits. You should only be playing team sports where the relevant governing body has published guidance on how to do so safely.”

In relation to gym classes, Northumberland County Council state that these can still take place “as long as these venues have the required Covid-secure risk assessments and guidelines in place.”

Restrictions, guidance and regulation are highly likely to continue to evolve over the coming weeks and months. CAN, together with our national umbrella organisation ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England) will continue to do our best in communicating changes and understanding the detail of what can and cannot take place. The information in this bulletin represents our understanding as at 9.00am on 1 October 2020.

National and local restrictions may change with very little notice. All activities will need to comply with the regulations in force at the time they take place rather than at the time they are organised.

For up to date information please keep a close eye on the government’s coronavirus web pages at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

Northumberland County Council maintain up to date information which you can view via this link: <https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/coronavirus/Latest-information-and-advice-on-Coronavirus.aspx>