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## **ACRE Briefing for village and community halls Update February 22nd 2022**

**Please contact your local ACRE Network member for support and advice for your village hall. You can find details by clicking on the relevant area of this [Map](#)**

### **Living with Covid - 19**

The Government announced on 21<sup>st</sup> February that Plan B restrictions would be lifted on 24<sup>th</sup> February. Full details are here: [COVID-19 Response: Living with COVID-19](#). The guidance for individuals has been updated: [Coronavirus: how to stay safe and help prevent the spread](#).

- While there will no longer be a legal requirement for those who have tested positive to self-isolate for a week, those who have symptoms are still encouraged to obtain a PCR test.
- Until 1<sup>st</sup> April employers will need to continue to consider COVID-19 in their risk assessments. After 1<sup>st</sup> April employers will instead be advised to continue to consider the needs of those at greater risk from COVID-19.
- New public health guidance will be issued from 1<sup>st</sup> April in order to encourage safer behaviours, replacing the "Working Safely" guidance.

**For Village and Community Halls:** It is more important than ever that vulnerable people, those who feel more cautious and those who have suffered as a result of isolation during the last two years feel confident using village and community halls, in order to improve mental health and wellbeing. This is particularly important for their usual, regular activities.

Consequently we encourage halls to ask users to follow the principles below.

This information replaces the Covid-19 ACRE Information Sheet for Village and Community Halls and is accompanied by shortened versions of the following Appendices.

Appendix C: Poster "Please help keep vulnerable users of this hall safe from Covid".

Appendix E: Special hire conditions

Appendix F: Sample Covid 19 Risk Assessment for halls

Appendix G: Sample Covid 19 Risk Assessment for hirers

Appendices H and L: (Covid 19 First Aid Box, Treatment Plan) can still be used and have not been revised.

## Key principles:

1. People should stay at home if unwell.
2. Those who have recently had COVID-19 should not attend the hall until either a week has passed and they no longer have a temperature or they have two negative lateral flow tests on days 5 and 6. They should inform their close contacts and avoid contact with anyone in an at risk group. Contacts of people with COVID-19 are asked to take extra care, following general guidance on safer behaviours. Routine contact tracing ends on 24<sup>th</sup> February.
3. Let fresh air in if meeting indoors. Opening a window for ten minutes helps. (This has also been shown to reduce risk of catching other airborne diseases such as flu).
4. Continue to wear a face covering in crowded and enclosed spaces, especially where you may come into contact with other people you do not normally meet and when rates of transmission are high.
5. Clean your hands often, avoid touching your face, nose or eyes. "Catch it, bin it, Kill it".
6. Maintain social distancing as far as possible from anyone you do not have regular contact with. Respect the fact that others may wish to take a more cautious approach.
7. If a more crowded event is likely to take place, eg a wedding reception with dancing, hirers can be encouraged to ask everyone to take a lateral flow test beforehand, as recommended in the "How to Stay Safe" guidance.

## The Omicron Hospitality and Leisure Grant

Organisations which are ratepayers are eligible to apply for this grant, which closes for applications 18<sup>th</sup> March 2022 and is administered by rate billing authorities. Payments will be £2,667 for those with a rateable value (RV) under £15,000, £4,000 for those with a RV over £15,000 and under £51,000, £6,000 for those with a RV over £51,000.

## Rate Relief 2022/23

A 2022/23 rate relief scheme should assist those halls and sports clubs that would usually receive only the 80% mandatory rate relief: [Business rates guidance: 2022/23 Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Relief Scheme - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#). "Public halls" are listed in the eligible organisations.

## Government Guidance

That for grassroots sports providers, volunteering, conduct of weddings etc, early years and out of school settings have been updated to show the removal of the requirement to self-isolate. They will be further updated in due course.

## FAQs

**Q:** Will the NHS COVID-19 app still be in use?

**A:** Yes. The "How to Stay Safe" guidance still encourages people to use it to check in to venues with an NHS QR code and to report symptoms and order test kits.

**Q:** Will ACRE issue further updates?

**A:** We hope this will be the last one, at least for a considerable time, and that these common sense measures will help in the event of new variants. Well done everyone for coping with the situation over the last two years.