

Young People, Children & Education

COVID-19 Reopening Guidelines



Note

This is a living document, which means that as government restrictions and public-health guidelines evolve, this document will also evolve to reflect new government advice and changes to protocols as they emerge. All sectoral guidelines have been developed in line with the government's [COVID-19 Resilience and Recovery 2021: The Path Ahead](#) and the [Work Safely Protocol](#), and is based on the latest health guidance available from the Department of Health and the HSE.

Disclaimer

The information contained within these operational guidelines can change from time to time. It must not by itself be relied upon in determining obligations or other decisions. Users of this document must independently verify any information on which they wish to rely. It is expected that all business owners and management will have familiarised themselves with the [Work Safely Protocol](#) prior to reopening and will have implemented all relevant requirements.

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REVISIONS:

Version	Date	Description
1	26/04/2021	Initial publication

FOREWORD

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by Ireland in 1992, asserts children's right to participate in cultural life and the arts. Our national policy frameworks for children and young people, including *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: The National Policy Framework for Children & Young People* (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2014) and cross-departmental initiatives such as Creative Ireland, recognise the contribution of the arts to young people's well-being, and promote cross-agency collaboration for the benefit of young people. *The Arts in Education Charter* (Department of Education and Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, 2013) highlighted the importance of the arts as part of our young people's education in Ireland, and initiatives such as Creative Schools are a result of cross-departmental commitment to this area.

In addition to the rights-based rationale that requires us to ensure children and young people have opportunities to enjoy and participate in the arts and to express themselves through the arts, research clearly demonstrates the benefits to young people across a range of child outcomes when they participate in the arts. Two comprehensive research reports regarding arts and cultural participation among children and young people, which draw on data from the Growing Up in Ireland: National Longitudinal Study of Children, provide insights in this regard (Smyth, 2016, 2020). These are included in reference section at the end of this document.

The research demonstrates the benefits to be derived from arts and cultural activities that can take place at home, such as painting, drawing, reading and playing an instrument, and young people should be encouraged to engage in these wherever possible. However, the benefits of participating in structured, cultural activities are equally clear. The research shows that taking part in structured cultural activities outside school contributes to cognitive development (in terms of both verbal and numeric skills) as well as to academic self-confidence.

Before COVID-19, just under half of nine-year-old children and one-third of thirteen-year-olds took part in a structured cultural class or club (such as dance, drama and music) outside school time. Schools provided an important arena for children to access cultural activities through the formal curriculum and through after-school provision. However, observing the challenges faced by some schools in providing these activities, the research pointed to the importance of linking school and community initiatives centred on the arts.

The *Growing up in Ireland* special COVID-19 survey shows that participation in organised cultural activities (e.g. music, dance, drama) has declined over the course of the pandemic: fifty-nine per cent of twelve-year-olds and thirty-two per cent of twenty-two-year-olds participated less often than before the pandemic, with only very small percentages participating more often. Children in the lowest income groups were more likely to say they had participated less than usual in organised cultural activities.

Girls are far more likely to participate in organised cultural activities than boys, and the decline in participation is therefore particularly relevant to this group. It is notable that, while many participants in the recent COVID-19 survey reported increases in symptoms of low mood and the

consumption of 'junk food and sweets', the research found that this was more common among girls and young women than among boys and young men.

COVID-19 Resilience and Recovery 2021: The Path Ahead (Government of Ireland, 2020) acknowledges the well-being concerns arising from the pandemic for all of society, in particular the challenges faced by children. It acknowledges the role of the arts in supporting our resilience and recovery. We have developed this particular guidance in recognition of the important work carried out by the arts and culture sector to engage young people in the arts, and to provide them with opportunities to express and enjoy themselves and to develop their skills and broaden their experiences.

Cultural activities that meet the definition of 'youth work' in section 3 of the Youth Work Act 2001, and arts education that is part of the school curriculum, have been able to avail of government guidance in these areas. This has been hugely important, and we welcome the work of our colleagues in the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth and in the Department of Education and Skills in developing those documents. We also commend the work of arts organisations and practitioners that have managed to adapt and deliver programmes online wherever possible.

Despite this important work, a wide range of cultural activities that form an important part of young people's lives have been curtailed, and the providers of these activities have lacked a clear path to navigating this crisis. We hope this guidance document will be of help to these arts and culture providers working with children and young people. Our approach has been to achieve consistency with other relevant guidance across education, youth work and sport. We recognise the necessity to take a cautious approach and to work within existing guidance and parameters. This document will continue to be updated in line with public-health guidance, and we welcome feedback throughout this process. In the meantime we hope the contents of this document are of assistance to providers as they plan for the safe and gradual resumption of live arts and cultural activities for children and young people.



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An Chomhairle Ealaíon/the Arts Council

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GLOSSARY

- **Activity:** includes a class, workshop or attendance at an arts event (arts appreciation).
- **Arts and culture provider:** any organisation or individual providing arts and culture services, activities or experiences with and for children and young people.
- **Arts and culture services:** refers broadly to the full range of activities and contexts set out in this document.
- **Arts education:** refers usually to mainstream teaching and learning of the arts as part of general education and curriculum (Ref. Arts in Education Charter, 2013, p. 3).
- **Arts in education:** refers mostly to interventions from the realm of the arts into the education system by means of artists of all disciplines visiting schools or by schools engaging with professional arts and culture practices in the public arena, including via arts organisations and national cultural institutions (Ref. Arts in Education Charter, 2013, p. 3).
- **Attendee pods/groups:** participants organised into set groups. Pod members participate in activities, take their breaks together and, as far as possible, travel together. Pods/groups should be independent of other pods/groups and should not mix.
- **Children:** individuals under the age of eighteen.
- **Cleaning:** removes germs, dirt and impurities from surfaces or objects. This process does not necessarily kill germs, but by removing them it lowers their numbers and the risk of infection spreading.
- **Controlled environment:** an environment in which the number of people and the ways that they interact can be actively managed. The owners or organisers can control the number of people coming in and out, and there is space to physically distance. Controlled environments are those where the number of people present and the ways that they interact can be controlled, where there is a recognised organiser, where people are seated or have a designated area and generally remain in that same seat/area for the event, where physical distancing can be practised, where hand hygiene can be monitored, and where contact tracing can be facilitated – e.g. a sports club AGM, watching indoor sport, youth club meetings, AA meetings, conferences, training events, theatre performances.
- **Conventional classes:** conventional classes are classes that have not been adapted with social distancing in mind – e.g. conventional dance classes include free movement, mingling of groups, partner work, hand-holding and sequencing where social distancing cannot be maintained.
- **Disinfecting:** process of eliminating the disease-causing microorganisms.
- **Early-childhood arts:** includes a wide range of practices and experiences, including artist workshops, performances and residencies in early-childhood settings, the creative arts work that takes place in early-childhood settings through early-childhood educators, and creative arts activities taking place in young children’s homes and within families. In Ireland early childhood is the period from birth to age six.
- **Employer:** includes any organisation or individual that hires other workers to deliver services. *See Arts and culture provider.*
- **IPCM:** infection prevention and control measures.
- **Organised cultural activities:** structured cultural activities delivered separately to young people’s independent/family activities at home, and separate from their early learning and care or formal education. The term is used in research regarding arts and cultural participation

among children and young people, drawing on Growing Up in Ireland: National Longitudinal Study of Children. Structured or organised cultural activities include dance, drama and music classes outside school.

- **Parents /Guardians:** the parents or other adults responsible for a child attending an activity. Children participate in an activity with the permission of their parent/guardian.
- **Participant:** includes any child or young person participating in an arts activity, workshop or class as a participant, learner or audience member.
- **Sanitising:** reduces bacteria to safe levels, as set by public-health standards, to decrease the risk of infection. May not kill all viruses.
- **Venue:** the place in which an activity occurs. This can be indoors or outdoors. Venues can also be owner-occupied, rented and/or shared premises.
- **Worker pods/groups:** workers organised into set groups. Pod members work together, take their breaks together and, as far as possible, travel together. Pods/groups should be independent of other pods/groups and should not mix. Workers are not included in participant pods.
- **Workers:** includes teachers, artists, activity leaders, volunteers and all personnel working with a service provider.
- **Workplace:** location(s) at which arts and culture providers will plan, prepare and deliver activities, recognising there could be different fixed and temporary locations at each stage of delivery, and that these could be indoors or outdoors. *See also Venue.*
- **Young people:** refers to individuals up to the age of twenty-four. For the purpose of this document we have used the term young person/people when referring to children and young people
- **Youth arts:** broadly defined as young people taking part voluntarily in creative, cultural or expressive activity outside of the formal education process. It can encompass participation and appreciation, as well as engagement with arts work specifically created by, with or for young people. This can take place in youth-work settings, arts settings or the voluntary sector, such as young ensembles.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

COVID-19

What is COVID-19?

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus. Most people infected with the COVID-19 virus will experience mild to moderate respiratory illness and recover without requiring special treatment. Older people and those with underlying medical problems, such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease and cancer, are more likely to develop serious illness.

How does it spread?

The most common way you can get COVID-19 is by coming into close contact with someone who has the virus.

It can also spread through airborne transmission by way of tiny particles known as aerosols, and through infected surfaces when someone who has the virus sneezes or coughs droplets onto surfaces around them.

Common symptoms of COVID-19 include:

- A fever (high temperature – i.e. 38 degrees Celsius or above).
- A new cough – this can be any kind of cough, not just dry.
- Shortness of breath or breathing difficulties.
- Loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you can't smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste differently than usual.

Young People, Children and Education

The Arts Council

The Arts Council is the Irish government agency for developing the arts. We work in partnership with artists, arts organisations, public policy-makers and others to build a central place for the arts in Irish life.

The Arts Council supports and promotes children and young people's engagement with the arts from birth to early adulthood. Young People, Children and Education (YPCE) is the term we use to describe this area of work. YPCE encompasses all art-form areas, and centres on the child or young person's experience of the arts whether as a young artist, learner, participant, audience member or a combination of these.

The Arts Council Strategy for 2016–25 articulates our commitment to working with relevant partners to plan and provide for children and young people.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by Ireland in 1992, recognises children's right to participate in the arts and cultural life, and to express themselves freely in the medium of their choice, including in the form of art. The Convention also recognises children's right to an education that enables them to develop to their full potential. The Arts Council considers opportunities for

children to learn and develop artistic skills, and to experience the arts, as essential to realising these rights.

While the Convention relates to the rights of children under the age of eighteen, the Arts Council's work in the area of Young People, Children and Education encompasses children's engagement with the arts from early childhood up to the age of twenty-four. This is in line with national government policy and reflects a key developmental period in young people's lives.

Government Guidance

[*COVID-19 Resilience and Recovery 2021: The Path Ahead*](#) has placed priority on children and young people and ensuring their access to education and services. This priority reflects the developmental nature of childhood and youth, and the potential impact on children and young people when they miss key opportunities and milestones. In addition, in assessing the risk associated with different activities the plan outlines that, while our understanding of COVID-19 continues to evolve, research to date indicates that the role of children in the transmission and spread of COVID-19 may be less important when compared with other respiratory diseases.

The Path Ahead recognises the well-being concerns arising from the pandemic for all of society, in particular the challenges experienced by children. It also recognises the important role of the arts in contributing to our resilience and recovery.

The arts provide children and young people with opportunities to express themselves, develop their skills, have fun and make friends in a safe and friendly environment. The arts nurture young people's development in the broadest sense through opportunities to communicate ideas in different forms and respond to the ideas and experiences of others.

In addition to the important role of the arts in nurturing children and young people's well-being, arts practices also demand technical competence, and for young people who wish to achieve a high level of competence in an artistic field, or to develop a career in the arts and creative industries, it is important that they can avail of opportunities to learn and train at key stages in their development. Otherwise, they are likely to experience barriers to developing their careers at home and abroad. Not all arts areas are fully catered for within the school curriculum or in the funded youth-work sector for which guidance has previously been developed, and young people at times rely on accessing education and training opportunities outside of these contexts, including through organisations funded by the Arts Council or directly by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sports and Media, through local authorities and through independent providers.

This document outlines how children and young people can be supported to continue to access arts and culture services as safely as possible, alongside other education and services. The document has been prepared in the broader context of the government's [*COVID-19 Resilience and Recovery 2021: The Path Ahead*](#) and the [*Work Safely Protocol*](#), and reflects each of the five levels. This guidance should be read in conjunction with those documents and any future government advice in relation to COVID-19.

Relevant Frameworks

The resources and external reference documents listed below are provided to assist arts and culture providers that may be operating in contexts that vary by location, funding provider, or age group. This includes activities provided by:

- Department of Education and Skills in primary and post-primary settings, higher and further education
- Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth – in Early Learning and Care, School-Age Childcare and Youth Work
- Private and commercial ventures
- Indoors and outdoors activities

Education

Education is considered an essential service under the Health Act 1947 (Section 31A – Temporary Restrictions) (Covid-19) (No. 8) Regulations 2020. Under part 2 of the schedule to the regulations, essential education encompasses primary and post-primary schools, and higher and further education where remote learning is not possible. Some visual arts, drama, music and dance lessons may take place where they are required to comply with the national curriculum for primary and post-primary education. For these classes, schools are required to ensure that infection-prevention control measures are in place in line with the school’s COVID-19 response plan and public-health advice to limit the risk of the spread of infection. These arrangements do not include extracurricular classes.

Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth

Some arts and culture services may also fall into the definition of ‘youth work’ as provided for under section 3 of the Youth Work Act 2001. The Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) has published guidance to support the funded youth-work sector. This guidance recognises the importance of the youth-work sector in maintaining services throughout the period of the pandemic in a manner similar to the education and childcare sectors. It is recognised that some youth-work programmes may include drama, dance, singing and other arts/culture elements. It should be noted, however, that this guidance has been developed by and for the funded youth-work sector, not for commercial/private operators. ‘Youth work’ is defined under section 3 of the Youth Work Act 2001 as follows:

‘In this Act “youth work” means a planned programme of education designed for the purpose of aiding and enhancing the personal and social development of young persons through their voluntary participation, and which is –

- a) is complementary to their formal academic or vocational education and training, and;*
- b) is provided primarily by voluntary youth work organisations.’*

Arts organisations co-funded by the Arts Council and DCEDIY may refer to the DCEDIY guidance. These guidelines are available [HERE](#). They may also refer to this Arts Council guidance where relevant.

The Arts Council provides funding for youth arts activities. This includes funding offered through the Young Ensembles Scheme and the Artist and Youth Work Residency Scheme (the latter is managed by the National Youth Council of Ireland, and is funded by the Arts Council and the DCEDIY). Youth arts projects that have been funded through these or similar targeted funding and that meet the definition of 'youth work' in the Youth Work Act 2001 may use the published guidance for the youth-work sector.

Department of Education and Skills Guidance

The Department of Education and Skills and the Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) have developed guidelines for activities carried out in primary, special and post-primary school settings. These guidelines should be referenced for youth activities carried out in these settings.

Arts and culture providers providing activities within these contexts should liaise with school COVID-19 response teams to confirm risk-mitigating measures.

- [HPSC HERE](#).
- [Department of Education of Skills HERE](#).

Early Learning and Care

The government of Ireland and the HPSC have developed guidelines for early learning-and-care settings. Arts and culture providers providing activities within these contexts should follow the guidelines for these settings and liaise with the childcare facilities for risk-mitigation measures.

- [First 5 \(government of Ireland\) HERE](#).
- [HPSC childcare guidance HERE](#).

Sport Ireland

Young people's participation in sports in Ireland provides a useful reference point for young people's participation in cultural activities. Both sports and arts activities contribute to young people's active and healthy lives and are recognised as such within the National Policy Framework for Children and Young People, *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures*. The arts and sport provide meaningful and enjoyable activities for children and young people, require skills development, and are particularly important for young people who have a passion and interest in a particular area, including those who may wish to develop a professional career in that area. Some arts activities, such as dance and circus, are highly physical and athletic in nature, and the guidance developed for sports is particularly helpful as a reference point in these cases. The sports guidance is helpful with regard to individual training and with regard to the concept of the pod of one as an approach to skills development and training in the context of COVID-19.

Government guidance for sports has been used as the reference point in developing guidance for organised cultural activities for children and young people that fall outside of the guidance available for the education and youth-work sectors:

- [Sport Ireland](#)
- [HPSC return to sports activities for children and adolescents](#)
- [Individual training](#)

Organised Indoor Events

In cases where arts venues are used for arts education and training purposes, or to deliver children and youth arts services, the guidance within this document may be used in addition to guidance produced by other organisations, such as Theatre Forum's *Arts Centres: Working During COVID-19: A Framework for Arts Centres and Performing Arts Venues* (available [HERE](#)). Providers of arts education and training and of children and youth arts services must develop plans that ensure appropriate mitigation measures are in place in line with public-health advice. Performances and exhibitions for children and young people should be hosted in line with general guidance.

Arts Council Guidance: Young People, Children and Education

Arts Council guidance is intended for use by the arts and culture sector, including the funded sector and independent providers.

Cultural activities delivered in early learning-and-care settings, in schools and in further and higher education, or through youth-work organisations in receipt of funding through the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, may continue to refer to the guidance developed for those sectors referred to above.

The Arts Council's Young People, Children and Education guidance may be used for organised cultural activities for children and young people, including early-childhood arts activities and arts training and education services that are delivered outside of early learning-and-care, formal education and youth-work contexts. It may also be used as a supplement to other guidance where relevant. For example, early-childhood arts activities taking place in the context of early learning-and-care, and arts-in-education activities must operate within the guidance for early learning-and-care settings and schools, but may draw on this document as an additional resource. Publicly funded youth arts activities that meet the definition of youth work in the Youth Work Act 2001 may refer to the guidance for the youth-work sector and may draw on this document as an additional resource.

The governance structures through which arts and culture providers offer arts and culture services to children are varied. In addition, the adaptations required to ensure appropriate physical distancing vary according to the nature of activities and the spaces in which they take place. The guidance is therefore high level and by its nature cannot capture every eventuality. Each arts and culture provider providing arts and culture services for children and young people should prepare their own organisational plans for each level, in line with this guidance. These organisational plans should be informed by each provider's individual circumstances, in keeping with its accountability and governance structures.

In addition to this guidance, links are provided to guidance developed by resource organisations and associations that is specifically tailored to the activities of member organisations. Such

organisations can provide useful guidance on how the practical application of a broader framework can be safely interpreted for specific activities for their members:

- [Sing Ireland](#)
- [Youth Theatre Ireland](#)
- [Irish Association of Youth Orchestras](#)
- [National Youth Council of Ireland](#)
- [Theatre Forum, Arts Centres: Working During COVID-19](#)
- [Irish Ballet Teachers Association](#)

Monitoring and Oversight

This guidance has been prepared by the Arts Council in conjunction with the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media. This Oversight Group will continue to meet following the issuance of this guidance to keep it under review, ensure it is updated, and to provide additional detail and clarification as appropriate. As a living document it is anticipated that the guidance will be regularly updated in response to evolving public-health guidance and emerging need.

The Arts Council, with the support of the Oversight Group, is committed to communicating regularly with the sector. All future versions of the guidance will be circulated to the sector immediately upon approval.

1 DOCUMENT FORMAT

The guidance document is designed for use by arts and culture providers for children. Sections cover particular guidance with links to further reading. Additional information and templates are provided as appendices. Content covered in the document includes:

- Overarching guidance.
- Application of regulations and guidelines.
- Management of staffing and employment.
- New and revised COVID-19 roles and responsibilities.
- COVID-19 risk assessments.
- Selection, implementation and monitoring of infection prevention and control measures.
- Suspected-case management.

2 OVERARCHING GUIDANCE

Arts and culture service providers for children and young people must have regard to current government advice relating to the management of the COVID-19 pandemic. Key priorities for individuals and groups, which underpin every level, are summarised below:

KEY PRIORITIES	
INDIVIDUALLY	COLLECTIVELY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequent hand-washing; cough and sneeze etiquette; avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth; regularly cleaning and disinfecting surfaces. • Keep a safe distance of 2 metres from other people, especially those not among your close contacts. • Minimise your number of close contacts as much as possible and keep a record of your daily contacts. • Wear a face-covering when using public transport, in retail settings or in any other indoor setting where physical distancing cannot be maintained. You should wear a face-covering in crowded workplaces, in places of worship and in busy or crowded outdoor spaces where there is significant congregation. • Follow public-health advice on restricting the number of visitors to private homes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that gatherings of people are kept to a minimum, and in any event limited to the maximum numbers set out in the prevailing public-health advice. • Maintain physical distancing at all gatherings. • At gatherings ensure that a record of those attending is kept in order to facilitate rapid contact tracing. • Arts and culture providers should continue to adhere to public-health advice and guidance relevant to their sector, and should develop dedicated plans for all levels. • Arts and culture providers that can work remotely from home should continue to do so.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know and self-monitor for the symptoms of COVID-19. If you have symptoms, self-isolate and contact your GP without delay. See HSE list of symptoms HERE. • Stay informed of the current situation through trusted information sources and follow official public-health advice. • Avoid all non-essential travel overseas and reduce personal non-essential travel. 	
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ARTS AND CULTURE SECTOR: YOUNG PEOPLE, CHILDREN AND EDUCATION

Remain vigilant in relation to public-health advice, specifically on hand hygiene, cough etiquette, physical distancing, face coverings and on how to identify and respond to signs and symptoms of COVID-19. Effectively communicate such advice to workers, children and young people involved in the arts.

All activities should have regard to all other relevant requirements and good practice – e.g. child protection and the safety and well-being of workers, children and young people.

Physical Distancing

For most activities, a distance of 2 metres (4 square metres per person) should be maintained between individual children, young people and workers. Arts and culture providers and workers may wish to consider the following options to support physical distancing:

1. Utilise and reconfigure spaces to maximise physical distancing.
2. Review operating times to reduce congestion.
3. Reconfigure groups and allow sufficient break time between sessions to prevent waiting in groups.
4. Consider use of live streaming.
5. Access available spaces within the local community that may offer more space.

Consider appropriate physical-distancing metrics given the nature of activities (i.e. if the activity is static vs requiring a range of movement). See section 5.3 for further information on physical distancing.

Group Management

- Where possible, areas should be allocated consistently to the same workers, children and young people rather than having spaces that are shared.
- If a gathering is divided into groups, there should be clear separation of groups to ensure there is no contact between them. The objective is to limit contact and sharing of common facilities by people in different groups as much as possible.

- To the greatest extent possible, children, young people and workers should consistently be in the same groups.
- Workers who move from group to group should be limited as much as possible. They should take extra care when implementing public-health advice so as to reduce the potential spread of the virus between groups.

Maximum Group Sizes

The maximum group size when providing arts and culture services should be calculated with regard to the space available and the prevailing public-health advice, whichever is less. It should ensure that at least 2 metres' physical distancing can be maintained and take into account any other capacity restrictions that may pertain in accordance with child-protection or fire-safety requirements. The table below illustrates the maximum group size allowable in a discrete area¹ at each level.

Level	Indoors		Outdoors	
	Maximum capacity for organised events	Pod size ²	Maximum capacity for organised events	Pod size ²
1	100/200 ⁴	No limit	200/500 ⁴	No Limit
2	50/100 ⁴	6	100/200 ⁴	15
3	0	0 ³	15	15
4	0	0 ³	15	15
5	0	0 ³	0	0

¹ *A discrete area is a demarcated room or space within which the number of people and their interactions can be managed.*

² *The pod size adapted from guidance offered for sporting organisations for team activities. Numbers excluding workers.*

³ *Individual training is permitted depending on Government restrictions in place at the time.*

⁴ *See [Resilience and Recovery 2021 The Path Ahead](#) for further clarification.*

Contact Tracing

A record of physical attendance should be kept in order to facilitate rapid contact tracing and assist the HSE in the contact-tracing process if requested.

The aim of the contact-tracing log is to identify who has been in close contact and the areas of the venue that may be affected. The contact log should also:

- Identify workers who have potentially been exposed to COVID-19 and the impact this may have on the operations of the service.
- Provide records for the enforcing authorities (HSE, HSA) should they require further

information.

Travel to Work/Services

Under the government’s [COVID-19 Resilience and Recovery 2021: The Path Ahead](#), people may be asked to work from home, stay at home and/or restrict movements around the country. In line with this guidance, workers and participants must follow domestic-travel restrictions. This is outlined in the table below:

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
No restrictions.	No restrictions.	Stay in your county (or other defined geographical area) other than for work, education and other essential purposes.	Stay in your county (or other defined geographical area) other than for work, education and other essential purposes.	Stay at home (exercise within 5km of home).

3 GUIDANCE: CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION IN ARTS AND CULTURE

Recent research has highlighted that young people are among the groups most impacted by Covid-19.

Throughout the restrictions, arts and culture providers have worked hard, innovated and adapted in order to maintain supports, particularly to vulnerable, disadvantaged and marginalised children and young people. Recognising these efforts, the table below provides guidance for the operation of activities where each of the five levels is in force, either at a national or a local level.

Arts and culture services and activities for children and young people conducted outside early learning and care, formal education and youth work are currently not set out in a particular category within the [COVID-19 Resilience and Recovery 2021: The Path Ahead](#). The guidance offered in this document is therefore based on best practice and available information from similar sectors and industries – e.g. children's sports activities.

Arts and culture providers will need to remain alert to which of the five levels applies at any given time and to any changes that occur during these periods. They will need to have individual protocols in place in respect of each level so that they can quickly adapt in a time of uncertainty.

Note: the following measures shall be in place as of 26 April 2021

- Subject to public-health advice at the time, outdoor sports facilities can reopen (e.g. pitches, golf courses, tennis courts and other facilities as permitted). Activities should take place between a maximum of two households. Facilities including clubhouses and any indoor facilities (e.g. changing rooms, showers, kitchens, meeting rooms), other than essential toilet facilities, must remain closed. There should not be any return to team sports or training activities for adults.
- Underage non-contact outdoor training in pods of fifteen can recommence, subject to public-health advice at the time.

3.1 Activity-specific Considerations

Activity	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
<u>Organised cultural activities for young people</u> (includes music, drama, speech & drama, art classes, workshops, etc.)	<u>INDOOR</u> Normal training sessions and activities indoors with protective measures. Contact permitted.	<u>INDOOR</u> Pods of up to 6. Contact permitted.	<u>INDOOR</u> No conventional classes permitted.	<u>INDOOR</u> No conventional classes permitted.	<u>INDOOR</u> No conventional classes permitted.
	<u>OUTDOOR</u> Normal training sessions and activities outdoors with protective measures. Contact permitted.	<u>OUTDOOR</u> Pods of up to 15. Contact permitted.	<u>OUTDOOR</u> Pods of up to 15. Contact not permitted.	<u>OUTDOOR</u> Pods of up to 15. Contact not permitted.	<u>OUTDOOR</u> No conventional classes permitted.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities should be carried out in accordance with public-health advice outlined in this guidance. • Online work should be carried out where possible throughout all levels. • Remember, vocal projection and singing and certain instruments create greater risk of aerosol spray, which requires additional physical distancing, protective measures and ventilation. See section 5.3 below. • Remember, aerobic exercise and activities produce higher aerosol spray, which requires additional physical distancing, protective measures and ventilation. Service providers must ensure that appropriate buffer space between participants is provided so as to maintain physical distancing. • Possible exemptions may be made ahead of each restriction change depending on the prevailing health situation at the time. 					

Activity	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
<u>Dance</u>	<p align="center"><u>INDOOR</u></p> <p>Normal training sessions and activities indoors with protective measures. Contact permitted.</p>	<p align="center"><u>INDOOR</u></p> <p>Pods of up to 6. Contact permitted.</p>	<p align="center"><u>INDOOR</u></p> <p>No conventional classes permitted.</p>	<p align="center"><u>INDOOR</u></p> <p>No conventional classes permitted.</p>	<p align="center"><u>INDOOR</u></p> <p>No conventional classes permitted.</p>
	<p align="center"><u>OUTDOOR</u></p> <p>Normal training sessions and activities outdoors with protective measures. Contact permitted.</p>	<p align="center"><u>OUTDOOR</u></p> <p>Pods of up to 15. Contact permitted.</p>	<p align="center"><u>OUTDOOR</u></p> <p>Pods of up to 15. Contact not permitted.</p>	<p align="center"><u>OUTDOOR</u></p> <p>Pods of up to 15. Contact not permitted.</p>	<p align="center"><u>OUTDOOR</u></p> <p>No conventional classes permitted.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities should be carried out in accordance with public-health advice outlined in this guidance. • Online work should be carried out where possible throughout all levels. • Remember aerobic exercise and activities produce higher aerosol spray, which requires additional physical distancing, protective measures and ventilation. Service providers must ensure that appropriate buffer space between participants is provided so as to maintain physical distancing. • Possible exemptions may be made ahead of each restriction change depending on the prevailing health situation at the time. • From 26 April 2021, underage non-contact outdoor training in pods of fifteen can recommence, subject to public-health advice at the time. 					

Activity	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Performances for live streaming and broadcasting*	<u>INDOOR</u> Permitted	<u>INDOOR</u> Permitted	<u>INDOOR</u> Permitted	<u>INDOOR</u> Permitted	<u>INDOOR</u> Permitted
	<u>OUTDOOR</u> Permitted	<u>OUTDOOR</u> Permitted	<u>OUTDOOR</u> Permitted	<u>OUTDOOR</u> Permitted	<u>OUTDOOR</u> Permitted
<p>*The Health Act 1947 (Section 31A – Temporary Restrictions) (COVID-19) (No. 8) Regulations 2020 give effect to the level-5 restrictions set out in the government's plan for living with COVID-19. Under these regulations the following activities are considered an essential service:</p> <p><i>‘the production of television and radio programmes, video, sound, digital or other electronic content and the broadcast or publication of the same to the public or a portion of the public’ and</i></p> <p><i>‘the filming, or other recording of performances in a theatre, concert hall, museum or art gallery, without an audience present, for the purposes of broadcasting such performances on the internet, radio or television.’</i></p> <p>Under the Broadcasting Act 2009, broadcast is defined as the transmission, relaying or distribution by an electronic communications network.</p>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any activity under either of these provisions should only proceed with strict adherence to the Work Safely Protocol published by the government. As such, these workplaces should be controlled environments with a named event organiser, owner or manager, and with full protective measures in place. Government guidance on the Health Act 1947 (Section 31A – Temporary Restrictions) (COVID-19) (No. 8) Regulations 2020 are available HERE. See Return to Production Guidelines for the Creative Screen Industry published by Screen Producers Ireland. 					

Activity	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
<p><u>Organised events</u> Including performances, competitions, meets and camps</p>	<p><u>INDOOR</u> Up to 100 people with protective measures. Up to 200 people permitted for larger venues where strict 2-metre seated physical distancing and one-way controls for entry and exit can be implemented.</p>	<p><u>INDOOR</u> Up to 50 people with protective measures. Up to 100 people permitted for larger venues where strict 2-metre seated physical distancing and one-way controls for entry and exit can be implemented.</p>	<p><u>INDOOR</u> No organised indoor gatherings.</p>	<p><u>INDOOR</u> No organised indoor gatherings.</p>	<p><u>INDOOR</u> No organised indoor gatherings.</p>
	<p><u>OUTDOOR</u> Up to 200 people with protective measures.</p>	<p><u>OUTDOOR</u> Up to 100 people with protective measures.</p>	<p><u>OUTDOOR</u> Gatherings of up to 15 people.</p>	<p><u>OUTDOOR</u> Gatherings of up to 15 people.</p>	<p><u>OUTDOOR</u> No organised outdoor gatherings.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities should be carried out in accordance with public-health advice outlined in this guidance. • Arts and culture providers must ensure that activities satisfy the requirements of a ‘controlled environment’ (see Glossary). 					

Activity	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
<u>One-to-one tuition</u> (includes dance, music, drama, speech & drama, art classes, etc.)	<u>INDOOR</u> Permitted	<u>INDOOR</u> Permitted	<u>INDOOR</u> Not permitted	<u>INDOOR</u> Not permitted	<u>INDOOR</u> Not permitted
	<u>OUTDOOR</u> Permitted	<u>OUTDOOR</u> Permitted	<u>OUTDOOR</u> Permitted	<u>OUTDOOR</u> Permitted	<u>OUTDOOR</u> Not permitted
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities should be carried out in accordance with public-health advice outlined in this guidance. • See section 5.3.4 of this document for further information on individual training and one-to-one tuition. • Possible exemptions may be made ahead of each restriction change depending on the prevailing health situation at the time. 					

4 ORGANISATIONAL MANAGEMENT

4.1 Guidelines

The following sets out guidance for arts and culture providers as they continue to operate during the various stages of the Governments [COVID-19 Resilience and Recovery 2021: The Path Ahead](#) and the [Work Safely Protocol](#).

This is an indicative list, and arts and culture providers should refer to additional public-health advice as appropriate.

4.2 Organisational Response

A COVID-19 response plan should be developed and designed to support workers and employers in putting infection-prevention control measures in place that will assist in avoiding the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace.

The plan should detail the policies and procedures necessary for the arts and culture provider to meet the [Work Safely Protocol](#) and public-health advice to prevent the introduction and spread of COVID-19 in the environment. Sample COVID-19 Response Plans are available on the Health and Safety Authority website [HERE](#).

Arts and culture providers may operate from premises that they do not own or control. In these instances, providers should liaise with the owner/operator to ensure that response plans are in place and all necessary guidance is followed to the satisfaction of both parties.

4.3 Health-and-safety Documentation

Prior to arts and culture providers resuming services, all existing occupational health-and-safety obligations and documentation should be reviewed to ensure they are aligned with the measures outlined in the national framework [COVID-19 Resilience and Recovery 2021: The Path Ahead](#) and government guidance with respect to COVID-19.

Arts and culture providers should review the following compliance documents:

- **Insurance**

Before continuing activities, arts and culture providers are advised to contact their insurance broker or insurance advisor for direction.

- **Safety Statement**

It is advised that arts and culture providers review their safety statement and associated risk assessments, taking into consideration COVID-19 risks and mitigating measures.

- **Risk Assessments**

Risk assessments for all arts and culture services and activities should be reviewed to address the risks associated with COVID-19, and appropriate control measures should be implemented.

- **Training**

Updates to safety and health plans, safety statement and other relevant documents will have to be communicated to all workers. All workers must complete a COVID-19 induction training before returning to work. The National Youth Council of Ireland induction is provided as an example and is available [HERE](#).

- **Safeguarding Policies**

Safeguarding policies and procedures should be reviewed and updated to address COVID-19 if necessary. Current measures must not be adversely affected as a result of COVID-19 control measures. Organisations should bear in mind that existing safeguarding provisions will continue to apply to all workplaces, including when operating online.

It is also important that organisations maintain safe use of the Internet during distance learning and assist parents and guardians to be aware of their role. Organisations may wish to review their social-media policy so that it contains some guidance on remote or distance-learning activities.

For further guidance on child-protection policies and safeguarding, see resources available at [TUSLA](#), the [National Youth Council of Ireland](#), the [Arts Council](#) and the [Irish Association of Youth Orchestras](#).

4.4 Management Considerations

4.4.1 General Considerations

Employers and workers both have a general duty of care to ensure as far as reasonably practicable the safety, health and welfare at work of workers/colleagues. A duty of care also extends to provide a reasonably safe environment for participants in activities. In line with the [Work Safely Protocol](#), employers and workers must:

- Develop risk-based plans for the preparedness and implementation of measures during each level. See section 4.5 in this document for further guidance on risk assessment.
- Update the organisation's COVID-19 Response Plan according to the [Work Safely Protocol](#). HSA resources available [HERE](#).
- Appoint a lead worker representative (LWR). More information available at the HSA [Here](#).
- Implement COVID-19 infection prevention-and-control measures to minimise risk to workers, children, young people and their families.
- Have mechanisms in place for the prompt identification and isolation of workers, volunteers or young people who may have symptoms of COVID-19, as appropriate. See section 6 for further guidance.
- Make themselves aware of the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and monitor their own well-being. Individuals should not attend if they are feeling unwell.
- Workers should complete a self-declaration return-to-work form on initial return to work, and additionally after any sick or travel absence. An HSA return-to-work template is available [HERE](#). See also section 5.2 in this document.

- A contact-tracing log should be developed and maintained by arts and culture providers for workers and participants. Workers and participants should be encouraged to download and use the COVID Tracker app.
- Workers should monitor adherence with physical distancing and other rules set out in public-health guidance.
- Face coverings and gloves should be utilised in line with government advice.
- in the event of a suspected case in the organisation, all government advice should be followed, as appropriate. See section 6 in this document for further guidance.
- Employers have an obligation to provide relevant training to workers on COVID-19 issues. The HSA employee checklist is available [HERE](#).
- Training or information should be provided to participants to make them aware of changes.
- Everyone at the workplace has a responsibility to monitor infection-prevention control measures.
- Employers should provide information to workers on how to receive public-health COVID-19 illness benefits. This information can be found on the Citizens Information website [HERE](#).

Completed forms and records should only be retained for as long as necessary by the employer, and in line with the advice from the Data Protection Commission. The current public-health requirement is for a retention period of twenty-eight days.

4.4.2 Workers, Volunteers and Young People in Higher-risk Categories According to HSE Guidelines

Special arrangements should be put in place for workers, children and young people in higher-risk categories according to HSE guidelines – e.g. workers with underlying conditions or those living with people with such conditions should be informed of their right not to undertake face-to-face work. A list of at-risk individuals is available [Here](#).

4.4.2.1 Work From Home

The government's framework, [COVID-19 Resilience and Recovery 2021: The Path Ahead](#), outlines when work should continue to be carried out at home/remotely and where attendance at work should only be for essential reasons. The responsibility for health and safety at work under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work 2005 Act rests with the employer regardless of whether an employee works from home/remotely.

Where possible, working from home should be encouraged, especially for those who fall into the higher-risk groups.

Digital/online mechanisms can be explored and utilised for this purpose. The Arts Council offers support to individuals and organisations to develop their capacity across different areas, including adapting their work to online platforms. Supports include the Agility Award for individuals and the Capacity Building Support Scheme for arts organisations. More information is available [here](#).

4.4.3 Lead Worker Representative

Each arts and culture provider should appoint at least one **Lead Worker Representative (LWR)** charged with ensuring that COVID-19 measures are strictly adhered to in their workplace. Sole traders/individual artists delivering cultural activities must take on this role.

The person(s) undertaking the role must receive the necessary training and have a structured framework to follow within the organisation to be effective in preventing the spread of the virus. Further information and a short online course on the role of Lead Worker Representatives can be found on the HSA website [HERE](#).

The number of appointed worker representatives for COVID-19 should, ideally, be proportionate to the number of workers in the workplace, and this person(s) should be clearly identifiable in the workplace. Employers and worker representatives will work together to ensure that all the actions in this protocol are fully adhered to in order to ensure the suppression of COVID-19 in the workplace.

4.4.4 COVID-19 Compliance Officers

Depending on the size and organisational structure of the organisation, it may be appropriate to appoint COVID-19 Compliance Officers in addition to the LWR. They should monitor workers, participants and parents/guardians in all areas of the venue to ensure compliance with IPCMs. They should also advise and assist stakeholders in implementing control measures. There should be a clear reporting structure for the Compliance Officers. They should have sufficient training and knowledge to carry out their duties effectively. They should be able to address any concerns with respect to COVID-19. COVID-19 Compliance Officers can be activity leaders, artists, teachers or other workers.

There must be a COVID-19 Compliance Officer or LWR onsite at all times when participants are onsite.

4.4.5 Mental Health and Well-being

Employers should put in place support for workers who may be suffering from anxiety or stress. Workers, when they return to work, may have gone through traumatic events such as the serious illness or death of a relative or friend, or be experiencing financial difficulties or problems with their personal relationships.

Workers who are returning to the workplace after a period of isolation are likely to have concerns about the risk of infection or changes to their job due to the implementation of measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Employers should provide workers with information on publicly available sources of support and advice and information about the prevention and control measures taken in the workplace to reduce the risk of infection.

Employers should ensure workers are made aware of and have access to any business-provided employee-assistance programmes or occupational health service.

The HSA has a range of supports, resources and advice, such as:

- Dealing with stress as a result of the changes in a worker's personal and/or working life during COVID-19.
- A free online risk-assessment tool for addressing work related stress: [WorkPositive](#).

- The government's [In This Together Campaign](#) also provides information on minding one's mental health as well as tips on staying active and connected, and may be useful for use by employers and workers.
- HSE: ['Minding Your Mental Health During the Covid-19 Pandemic'](#).

Employers and workers should also be aware of the mental health and well-being of children and young people who may be adversely affected by the pandemic. Please see the references section for further details.

4.4.6 Contractors

In addition to usual health-and-safety management-systems contractors, suppliers or visitors should follow the arts and culture providers IPC measures and take into account public-health advice about preventing the spread of COVID-19. Contractors and visitors who come to the workplace must sign a health declaration prior to entering. They should also partake in induction training.

Suppliers and contractors should update their health-and-safety documents to include their COVID-19 response plan.

A system for recording visits to the site(s) by workers/others as well as visits by workers to other workplaces (contact log) should be put in place by employers, and completed by workers as required.

4.4.7 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

While correctly using PPE can help prevent some exposures, it should not take the place of other preventative measures. Examples of PPE include gloves, eye protection and respiratory protection.

Gloves are generally not required for infection prevention and control purposes. Where gloves are necessary, they must not be considered a substitute for hand hygiene, and hands must be cleaned whenever gloves are removed. Gloves should not create an additional occupational hazard. Limitations on wearing time and workers' individual susceptibilities (allergies, etc.) must also be considered.

Employers must ensure the provision and maintenance of PPE to ensure safety at work where it is not reasonably practicable to control or eliminate hazards. The level of PPE required for various tasks should be considered in the risk assessment. Mandatory training in the safe use and disposal of PPE should be provided.

Organisations should review PPE requirement for first-aid kits. See section 6.1.5 in this document for further details.

4.4.8 Operational Premises (Both Rented and Owned)

Where arts activities are delivered in spaces managed by others, such as arts centres, schools, theatre-studio spaces, arts and culture providers should ensure that venue management has:

- Conducted a venue risk assessment.

- Implemented infection-prevention and control measures in line with government guidance and public-health advice.
- Mechanisms in place to support physical distancing and enhanced cleaning.
- Mechanisms in place to respond to a suspected case.

Where arts and culture services are delivered in spaces with limited venue management, such as community halls, church halls and private indoor and outdoor settings, arts and culture providers must carry out the above tasks themselves and ensure measures are in place.

Indoor activity during the various levels will be dictated by whether certain facilities can open. For example, gyms/leisure centres and swimming pools are closed in levels 4 and 5.

4.4.8.1 Working From Private Homes

Arts and culture providers offering either services from their home or by attending the home of participants must do so in line with [Work Safely Protocol](#) with respect to these locations becoming a working environment, and [COVID-19 Resilience and Recovery 2021: The Path Ahead](#) with respect to restrictions on visitors to private homes. The table below outlines the current restrictions.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Up to 10 visitors from up to 3 households.	Visitors from 1 other household only or up to 6 visitors from 2 other households or 3 other households.	Visitors from 1 other household only. Or* own household only. <i>* Or is qualified by an announcement at the time of the change</i>	Own household only.	Own household only.

4.4.9 Accessibility

Arts and culture providers and venue management must ensure that COVID-19 IPCMs do not compromise the rights or quality of the experience for participants or workers with disabilities. The COVID-19 response plan should have regard to the requirements of participants or workers with disabilities and regard for equality and inclusion legislation.

Factors to be considered include:

- Control measures should not prevent a person with a disability from attending arts and culture activities.
- Arts and culture providers cannot restrict people from attending activities for reasons of disability. It is for the individual or their parents/guardians to carry out their own personal risk assessment and determine the appropriateness of their attendance.

- Children and young people with disabilities often require attendance with a companion or aid. This will need to be taken into consideration when determining capacity and physical distancing.
- Reconfiguration of workplaces and additional infrastructure should not impede the access or circulation route for people with disabilities.
- Positions and legibility of signage should have regard for people with different disabilities.
- Hand sanitisers should be accessible to people with a range of abilities.
- Hand sanitisers, barriers and other infrastructure should contrast visually with surrounding surfaces so that they are easily identifiable to people with vision impairment.

Suspected case and first-aid procedures need to take into account individuals with varying disabilities to ensure they can be implemented appropriately.

4.4.10 Communications

Arts and culture providers should ensure that they have in place a plan to communicate the guidance, return-to-work procedures and additional public-health measures required in line with the most recent public-health guidelines to their stakeholders, including workers, participants, parents and guardians, and venue management.

The key to a safe and continued return to cultural activities is strong communication and a shared collaborative approach between employers, workers, participants and parents.

Tailored communications for young people and their families should be developed.

4.4.11 Duties of Parents and Guardians

Parents and guardians play an important role in the process of returning safely to children's and young people's cultural activities. They will be critical in communicating and reinforcing good behaviours in participants, and instilling good habits with respect to hygiene and respiratory etiquette.

Parents and guardians should also:

- Make themselves aware of the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and monitor the well-being of the children and young people in their care and others in direct contact with family members. They should not permit participants to attend if they display symptoms.
- Be open and honest if they, or any member of the household, have been in contact with a COVID-19 case or suspected case, and not attend activities.
- Restrict movements and contact their GP if they or their children or young people display any symptoms.
- Complete a 'Return to Activities' form. The form is to confirm that they, their children and any member of the household:
 - Do not have symptoms of COVID-19.
 - Are not self-isolating or restricting their movements.
 - Are not waiting on results of a COVID-19 test.
 - Have not recently returned from travel abroad.

- Ensure participants undertake any training provided by the arts and culture provider to highlight changes to the management and delivery of the programme as a result of COVID-19 IPCMs.
- Report to the COVID-19 compliance officer immediately if the child develops COVID-19 symptoms during or after attending activities.
- Read the organisation's procedures, and confirm they understand and agree to abide by them.
- Keep a contact log for children in their care.
- Do not congregate in groups when dropping off or collecting participants from activities.
- Wear a face covering at all times when on the premises or at the venue.

Parents/guardians may also be worried about allowing their children to return to activities. It is important that the LWR/COVID-19 compliance officer for the arts and culture providers support them through this process as much as possible.

4.4.12 Performances and Attendees

As we move through the varying levels of the [COVID-19 Resilience and Recovery 2021: The Path Ahead](#), arts and culture providers may begin to host organised events as part of their services. These organised events must satisfy the requirements of a 'controlled environment' (see Glossary for definition of a controlled environment) and ensure the following measures are in place:

- Capacities can be managed in line with public-health restrictions.
- Contact details for attendees can be obtained for contact-tracing purposes.
- Physically distancing are maintained by all while at the venue.
- Infection-prevention and control measures in line with public-health advice as outlined in this guidance document can be implemented and monitored.

Organised events should only be held when permitted to do so by government.

5 RISK ASSESSMENT

5.1 Risk of Transmission

Risk assessments must be conducted as part of everyday safety planning for all activities. The risk assessments for each organisation needs to take account of the risk of transmission of COVID-19. Organisers must identify hazards that present a risk of a spread of infection between persons, taking into consideration all workers, participants and the general public. Other aspects to consider include:

- The length of activity.
- The numbers involved in an activity.
- Whether direct contact or close proximity is part of the activity.
- Contact-group characteristics (e.g. individual activity, team pods).
- The environment in which the activity occurs (e.g. outdoors versus indoors, shared buildings, ventilation systems).
- The type of activity (talking, singing, playing instruments, physical exertion such as dance, circus, some forms of theatre, seated activities, etc.).

Providers should consider the possible transmission routes when assessing the risks:

- Airborne.
- Surface contact.
- Personal physical contact (e.g. handshakes).

The key principles for prevention of the spread of COVID-19 involve the following:

- Physical-distancing techniques so it cannot pass from one person to another.
- Personal hygiene and respiratory etiquette to prevent spread (hand washing and face coverings).
- Enhanced cleaning and disinfecting to prevent spread.
- Health screening to prevent unwell persons from attending activities.
- Contact tracing for early intervention.

Based on the risk assessment, IPCM considered reasonably practicable can be put in place to mitigate the hazards. It will not be possible to completely eliminate the risk of spread of infection, so the objective is to reduce it to a tolerable or acceptable level. Section 5 of this document sets out common IPCM considered reasonably practicable to help mitigate or eliminate the risk of the spread of COVID-19 in the workspace.

For further information and guidance on conducting a COVID-19 risk assessment, see HSA resources [HERE](#). If in doubt, seek the advice of a professional health-and-safety consultant.

The below table from the [British Medical Journal](#) illustrates the risk of transmission of activities carried out in particular environments. This table can assist providers when assessing the risk of their activities.

Type and level of group activity	Low occupancy				High occupancy		
	Outdoors and well ventilated	Indoors and well ventilated	Poorly ventilated		Outdoors and well ventilated	Indoors and well ventilated	Poorly ventilated
Wearing face covering, contact for short time							
Silent	Low	Low	Low		Low	Low	Medium
Speaking	Low	Low	Low		Low	Low	Medium
Shouting/ Singing	Low	Low	Medium		Medium	Medium	High
Wearing face covering, contact for prolonged time							
Silent	Low	Low	Medium		Low	Medium	High
Speaking	Low	*	Medium		*	Medium	High
Shouting/singing	Low	Medium	High		Medium	High	High
No face covering, contact for short time							
Silent	Low	Low	Medium		Medium	Medium	High
Speaking	Low	Medium	Medium		Medium	High	High
Shouting/singing	Medium	Medium	High		High	High	High
No face covering, contact for prolonged time							
Silent	Low	Medium	High		Medium	High	High
Speaking	Medium	Medium	High		High	High	High
Shouting/singing	Medium	High	High		High	High	High

**Borderline cases that are highly dependent on quantitative definitions of distancing, number of individuals and time of exposure*

Risk of transmission

Low  Medium  High 

5.2 Contingency Plans

It is also recommended that management and workers, as part of their risk assessment, explore a number of scenarios that could arise when resuming face-to-face services during the different phases – e.g.

- A larger number of young people arrive for a scheduled session than had been agreed.
- Parents are putting pressure on workers to increase services.
- How do you prioritise those young people who can access face-to-face work and who can stay in the online space?
- A work colleague is not adhering to physical distancing/hygiene guidelines.
- Working atmosphere is becoming tense due to tiredness/stress/frustration.

6 INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL (IPC)

6.1 Key Control Measures

The best way to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in a workplace or any setting is to practice physical distancing, adopt proper hand hygiene, and follow respiratory etiquette.

In the below sections, examples of infection prevention-and-control measures are outlined. It should be noted that each arts and culture service provider, activity and venue are different, including the available resources. IPC measures implemented should be based on risk assessment and be considered reasonably practicable.

Workers and participants should be encouraged to implement IPC measures while in the community setting, as well as at work.

Screening

Ensuring only healthy people attend activities.

Physical Distancing

In order to slow the transmission rate of COVID-19, physical distancing of a minimum of 2 metres is recommended by the HSE.

Hand Hygiene

Ensuring everyone is washing hands regularly and thoroughly or sanitising, and ensuring sufficient facilities are provided and maintained to allow this to happen.

Cough Etiquette/Respiratory Hygiene

Ensuring people cough/sneeze into sleeve or elbow, always cover up, and dispose of tissues. Implementing face-covering policy for workers, parents/guardians and participants.

Cleaning

Ensuring that all frequently touched objects and surfaces are regularly cleaned and disinfected, including tables, chairs and shared equipment.

Ventilation

Ensuring adequate and regular ventilation of workspaces.

Communication Plan

Arts and culture providers should ensure that they have in place a plan to communicate the guidance, return-to-work procedures, and additional public-health measures required in line with the most recent government guidelines to all stakeholders (workers, participants, parents and guardians, venue management).

6.2 Screening

The key message remains that a worker or individual should not attend if they are displaying any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 or are feeling unwell.

To minimise the likelihood of COVID-19 entering a workplace through infected individuals, it is advised that both workers and participants complete screening before visiting a workplace. The form will confirm the individual:

- Does not have symptoms of COVID-19.
- Is not self-isolating or restricting their movements.
- Is not waiting on results of a COVID-19 test.
- Has not recently returned from travel abroad.

Sample return-to-work form for workers is available [HERE](#). Additional screening methods include:

- Signage prominently located at entrances and throughout the workplace reminding individuals that they must not attend if they are unwell.
- Health-specific questions asked verbally at the access points to the workplace.
- Individuals encouraged to download the HSE [COVID Tracker app](#).

Following a risk assessment, some workplaces may wish to include contactless temperature checks for workers and/or participants coming to the workplace. All individuals should be made aware of any health checks before arrival. If an individual is experiencing a high temperature, they should be isolated and given a specific period of time to cool down as a high temperature may be a result of environmental issues. Details of [COVID-19 symptoms](#).

6.3 Physical Distancing

Physical distancing is one of the most important measures in reducing the spread of COVID-19. The current recommended distance to be maintained between people to minimise risk of transmission is 2 metres.

As far as reasonably practicable, a distance of 2 metres should be maintained between all workers and participants. Where 2 metres is not possible, other measures to protect workers and participants should be in place. This includes the wearing of face coverings, and physical barriers such as sneeze guards/plexiglass and partitions. These physical barriers need to be regularly cleaned and disinfected. Screens may be fixed or mobile depending on requirements, including emergency access.

Arts and culture providers may wish to also consider the following options to support physical distancing:

- Scheduling staggered shifts and activities will reduce the demand on facilities at start and end of shifts/activities and at breaks.
- Allocating specific times for collections, appointments and deliveries.

- Implementing one-way systems if possible to avoid pinch points and congregation of participants.
- Queue-management systems for entry/exiting and use of facilities (toilets). Floor markings and signage should be put in place where possible to encourage physical distancing while waiting.
- Conducting meetings and activities as much as possible using online remote means.
- Reducing non-essential individuals at the premises.

Youth services may wish to also consider the following options to support physical distancing:

- Utilise and reconfigure available spaces to maximise physical distancing.
- Review operating times.
- Reconfigure groups and activities.
- Consider use of live streaming.
- Access available spaces within the local community to facilitate outdoor activities or larger venues.

Additionally:

- Where possible, areas should be allocated consistently to the same workers and young people rather than having spaces that are shared.
- If a gathering/workplace is divided into groups, there should be clear separation of groups to ensure there is no contact between the groups. The objective is to limit contact and sharing of common facilities between people in different groups as much as possible.
- To the greatest extent possible, young people and youth workers* should consistently be in the same groups.
- Workers who move from group to group should be limited as much as possible.
- Activity should take place in a predefined area that is visually marked out and directionally signed.
- The space required in this area should reflect the nature and intensity of the activity.
- There should be in excess of 2 metres' minimum physical distancing between each of the predefined areas.

Note: there is very little risk if you are just passing someone. But try to keep a distance of 2 metres as much as possible.

The nature of the activity may require the provider to visit multiple locations and settings, such as schools, community hubs, outdoor settings, homes and libraries throughout the working day. The peripatetic nature could create an additional risk of transmission within the community. This risk should be factored into the planning process and reflected in risk assessments when scheduling work activities and peripatetic working environments for workers throughout the easing of restrictions.

6.3.1.1 Pods and Groups

Workers and participants should be organised into pods or groups where possible. Pod members should work together, take their breaks together, change together and, as far as possible, travel to work/activities together, etc. If one person then becomes a suspected or confirmed case, only members of their pod are considered close contacts, and the pod can be excluded, thus limiting the potential spread of the virus.

Switching of pods/groups should be kept to a minimum. If for some reason participants are required to change groups, there should be at least a fourteen-day gap before moving to another group. Organisers must ensure as far as is possible that only participants who are well (those not displaying recognised symptoms associated with COVID-19) are permitted to switch pods. The individuals should be advised to monitor their health before switching.

6.3.1.2 Contact Tracing

A contact-tracing log should be developed, updated and made available to workers. Contact details of all visitors, including participants in the workplace, should be kept, including names, contact details, next of kin, date, time in and out.

The Data Protection Commission has provided advice on processing data for contact tracing. Logs should be held for twenty-eight days, after which time they can be securely discarded. More information is available [HERE](#).

6.3.2 Capacity Analysis

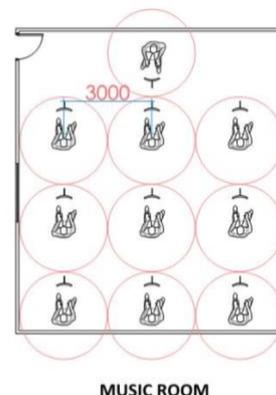
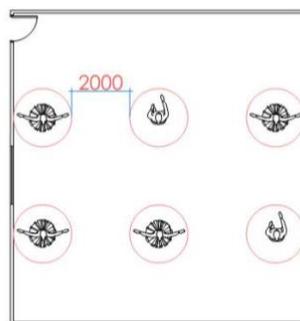
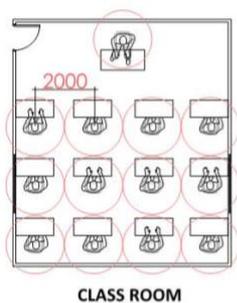
Capacity for the facility and maximum group sizes for an activity should be calculated having regard to the space available and the limitations set out by the national framework. It should be based on ensuring that at least 2 metres' physical distancing can be maintained, and take account of any other capacity restrictions that may pertain in accordance with child-protection or fire-safety requirements.

The following factors will be important to determine capacity:

- Government guidance on physical distancing.
- The specific setting for delivery and activity being delivered.
- Ability to maintain physical distancing for all users of the site/space.
- Ability to manage enhanced cleaning and personal hygiene.
- Potential needs/behaviours of children/young people.
- The age of children/young people. This is key in terms of what can be achieved and understood being determined by the children's ages.
- The size and layout of space for workers, including office space, kitchen and any corridors and entrances.
- Staffing ratios needed to supervise each space.

The maximum size applying to each service in its given venue should be calculated and published on the door or at the entryway to the venue.

The below diagrams are offered as examples of activity layouts.



6.3.3 Contact Activities vs Non-contact Activities

Prevailing public-health advice is to maintain physical distance of 2 metres and to avoid physical contact as far as is possible. This advice should be applied to all activities and be reflected in changes to activities and programming styles.

[The Path Ahead](#) framework permits contact training/activities to recommence in levels 1 and 2 with protective measures in place. Organisations considering reintroducing contact training should consider the following:

- Ensuring close contact logs are maintained.
- High levels of hand and respiratory etiquette.
- Strict pod structures and limited mingling or changing of groups working in close contact.
- Close contact work limited as much as possible.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Contact permitted	Contact permitted	Non-contact only	Non-contact only	Non-contact only

6.3.4 Indoor Individual Training

Under current restrictions, all indoor conventional classes are suspended through Level 3 - 5. However, individual training may be permitted depending on Government restrictions in place at the time of the activity. This currently applies to sport, dance and exercise training only.

In addition to measures outlined in this document the following should be considered for individual training to reduce the risk of spread of infection:

Preparation and Management of the workplace

- No equipment sharing in any circumstances.
- It will be important to ventilate the space before during and after each session. Additional time should be allocated to facilitate this.

- Travelling to and from training should be in line with current restrictions ie. Within your 5km, within your county boundary, nationally.

Before and During Training/ Instruction

- Staggered start and finish times combined with appropriate entry, exit and traffic management protocols to limit the interaction of participants at any one time.
- Reduction in the overall duration of the activity.
- Participants arrive ready to train and leave immediately (no changing room or shower use).

While these measures mean that individual activities can take place, Individual training **should not be viewed as a way** of reintroducing conventional organised classes which are specifically precluded under the current public health measures. Individual training should only take place when permitted under current Government guidance.

It should be noted that there should be **no** indoor or outdoor gatherings involving “individual training”.

6.3.5 One to One Tuition

Additional measures to reduce the risk of spread of infection for one-to-one instruction include:

- Any demonstration of equipment or technique should ensure that a minimum of 2m physical distancing is maintained.
- Individual equipment should not be shared.
- In the case of fixed equipment, cleaning of such equipment must be completed immediately after demonstration and before the individual participant uses.
- There should be no hands-on adjustments or physical contact during training sessions.

Additional Consideration:

- Safeguarding policies and procedures should be considered when holding one-to-one instruction with minors. Parents or guardians should be permitted to attend in line with public health advice (face covering, physical distancing etc.).
- Travelling to and from training should be in line with current restrictions ie. Within your 5km, within your county boundary, nationally.

One-to-one instruction should only take place when permitted under current Government guidance.

6.3.6 Choral, Brass and Wind-instrument Activities

The following advice is applicable in relation to choirs, brass and wind instruments:

- Choir practice, teaching and performance, brass and wind instrument-music group practice, teaching and performance should be:
 - Done while maintaining very strict physical distancing of a minimum of 2.5 metres nose to nose from other people.
 - Outdoors where possible.
 - Limited duration if indoor practice.
 - Carried out with frequent breaks to facilitate regular ventilation of rooms and instrument cleaning (where applicable).
- Flautists have been found to present the biggest risk of spreading COVID-19 compared to other instruments. This should be taken into consideration when planning activities. They should maintain at least 3 metres from others during activities.
- Singers, choirs and musicians of brass and some woodwind instruments should consider protective equipment and measures to minimise the potential for droplet or aerosol emission (e.g. instrument covers, screens, face coverings, etc.).
- Where group practices or performances are organised, a risk assessment should be carried out to minimise the risk to the participants, including consideration of the age profiles and risk factors of the participants.
- Consider the positioning of participants to control the aerosol spread.

6.4 Hygiene-and-respiratory Etiquette

6.4.1 Hand Hygiene

Regular hand washing with soap and water is effective for the removal of COVID-19.

Employers must:

- Ensure that appropriate hygiene facilities and materials are in place for workers' and participants' hand-hygiene measures.
- Make available advice and training on how to perform hand hygiene effectively.
- Display posters on how to wash hands in appropriate locations throughout the workplace.
- Provide hand sanitisers (alcohol or non-alcohol based) where washing facilities cannot be accessed. In choosing an alcohol-based sanitiser, a minimum of 60% alcohol is required. Note: alcohol-based hand sanitisers are highly flammable and must not be stored or used near heat or a naked flame.
- Provide sanitation stations at prominent locations, such as entrances to the facility and activity spaces.

Workers and participants must:

- Be familiar with and follow hand-hygiene guidance and advice.
- Wash their hands with soap and water or with hand sanitiser (alcohol (minimum of 60%) and/or non-alcohol based) for at least twenty seconds.
- Avoid touching their eyes, mouth or nose.
- Have access to facilities to support hand hygiene.
- Not share objects that touch their mouth – e.g. bottles or cups.
- Use their own pens and equipment.

6.4.2 Respiratory Hygiene and Face Coverings

6.4.2.1 Respiratory Hygiene

In addition to hand hygiene, good respiratory hygiene and etiquette, including the wearing of face coverings, is also necessary.

Employers must:

- Provide tissues as well as bins/bags for their disposal.
- Empty bins at regular intervals.
- Provide advice on good respiratory practice, including the safe use, storage and disposal of facemasks/face coverings and the safe cleaning of facemasks/face coverings.

Workers and participants must:

- Adopt good respiratory hygiene-and-cough etiquette.
- Be familiar with and follow respiratory-hygiene guidance.
- Follow good practice on the safe use, storage, disposal and cleaning of facemasks/coverings.
- Follow arts and culture providers' face-covering policy. See below for further guidance on face coverings.

6.4.2.2 Face Coverings

Wearing a face covering helps to prevent the spread of COVID-19. The [Work Safely Protocol](#) states that in settings where 2-metre employee separation cannot be ensured, face coverings/masks must be made available to workers in line with public-health advice. It is also recommended that face coverings should be worn by workers in participant-facing roles where no other protective measures are in place.

Additionally, by law (S.I. No. 296/2020) face coverings must be worn on public transport and in the following locations.

- Shops, including pharmacies, shopping centres.
- Libraries, cinemas, cinema complexes.
- Theatres, concert halls, bingo halls, museums.
- Nail salons, hair salons and barbers, tattoo and piercing parlours.
- Travel agents, tour operators.
- Laundries, dry cleaners.
- Bookmakers.

It is generally recommended that in public settings cloth face coverings should be worn, especially where the wearer is at a high level (standing) than those potentially exposed at a lower level (sitting).

Office locations are not currently listed as locations where face coverings must be worn. However, consideration may be given to wearing face coverings in places or situations where it may be difficult to achieve or maintain 2 metres' physical distancing. This might include:

- When entering and exiting buildings.
- Public-access areas in buildings, including receptions/foyers.
- When moving throughout buildings to toilets, photocopiers, on stairwells, etc.

- Canteens and kitchen areas (prior to and after eating) or when using facilities such as boilers and toasters.

The risk assessment should determine the requirement for face coverings/masks in all activities. Consideration will have to be made for higher-risk activities such as singing and the playing of brass and woodwind instruments.

Face coverings are not recommended for children under the age of thirteen, but some children may choose to wear one. Also, individuals may not be able to wear face coverings because of a physical or mental illness or disability. Arts and culture providers must ensure that they are familiar with the reasons as to why a worker or participant may not be able or required to wear a face covering/mask. Further details can be found [HERE](#).

Consideration should be given to keeping a supply of facemasks at entrances to give to individuals who may have forgotten to bring their own.

The wearing of face coverings or masks is not a substitute for other IPC measures, but they may be used in addition to these protective measures.

Face coverings are advised in the following arts and culture settings with respect to children and youth activities:

- All workers for the duration of activities.
- All participants over the age of thirteen before, during and after activities. This is dependent on the activity being carried out.
- All parents and guardians when on the premises or dropping off/collecting.

For more information on the safe use, storage and disposal of face coverings/masks, please click [HERE](#).

Note: visors are not advised for protecting yourself and others from COVID-19. Visors may stop some spread of droplets from your nose or mouth – this is better than not wearing any face covering. Visors should only be worn if you have an illness or impairment that makes wearing a face covering difficult or if you are dealing with people with particular needs (e.g. hard of hearing). Where visors are used, they should cover the entire face (above the eyes to below the chin and wrap around from ear to ear) and be correctly worn. Reusable visors should be cleaned after each use and then stored in a clean place until needed.

6.5 Cleaning to Prevent Contamination

Enhanced cleaning measures are a fundamental factor in efforts to stop the spread of COVID-19. Employers and workers should implement thorough and regular cleaning of the workplace to reduce the risk of the spread of COVID-19 and to prevent cross-contamination at shared touch points in work during the activity and in communal areas.

Contact/touch surfaces, communal changing/sanitary and catering facilities should be cleaned at least twice daily and whenever facilities are visibly dirty. Frequently touched surfaces include:

- Door handles, push plates.

- Handrails for stairs, ramps, escalators.
- Elevator buttons – inside and out.
- Reception desks, telephones.
- Tables, chairs.
- Beverage stations, water fountains, vending and ice machines.
- Bins.
- Sink faucets and counters, toilet handles.
- Soap dispensers, towel-dispenser handles.
- Baby-changing stations.
- Cleaning tools and buckets.

Common touch points should be minimised with a 'hands-free' approach where possible.

Activity areas should be cleaned before and after each group, including:

- Tables, chairs.
- Art materials.
- Musical instruments.
- Props, equipment.
- Door handles.

Participants who bring their own equipment are responsible for ensuring they are appropriately disinfected. These should not be shared between participants.

Shared equipment and tools must be cleaned and disinfected before, during and after each activity or anytime the equipment is transferred to another person. This includes items such as phones, computers, instruments, materials, etc.

Soap and hand-sanitiser dispensers, disposable tissue dispensers and other similar devices must be regularly checked to ensure sufficient supply, cleaning and maintenance.

Enhanced diligence in maintaining cleaning logs should be encouraged to ensure the cleaning regime is strictly adhered to.

Employers should provide workers with essential cleaning materials to keep their own workspace clean (e.g. wipes/disinfection products, paper towels, waste bins/bags).

The number of waste-collection points should be increased as necessary. These should be emptied regularly throughout and at the end of each day.

For venues with consecutive groups the venue must be cleaned before and after each group, paying particular attention to frequently touched surfaces and shared equipment. Additional time should be allocated to facilitate this. Clear instruction on roles and responsibility with respect to cleaning should be provided.

If disinfection of an area is required, it must be performed in addition to cleaning, never as a substitute for cleaning. Cleaning should be carried out in accordance with [European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control \(ECDC\) guidelines](#).

Disinfectants

In non-health-care settings, sodium hypochlorite (bleach/chlorine) may be used at a recommended concentration of 0.1% or 1,000ppm (1 part of 5%-strength household bleach to 49 parts of water). Alcohol at 70–90% can also be used for surface disinfection. Surfaces must be cleaned with water and soap or a detergent first to remove dirt, followed by disinfection. Cleaning should always start from the least-soiled (cleanest) area to the most-soiled (dirtiest) area in order to not spread dirt to areas that are less soiled.

All disinfectant solutions should be stored in opaque containers in a well-ventilated, covered area that is not exposed to direct sunlight, and ideally should be freshly prepared every day.

In indoor spaces, routine application of disinfectants to surfaces via spraying is not recommended for COVID-19. If disinfectants are to be applied, these should be via a cloth or wipe that is soaked in the disinfectant.

The cleaning of facilities should be conducted in accordance with the government's most recent [Work Safely Protocol](#) (see *Work Safely Protocol*, section D10, page 20). Cleaning of the space should be carried out after each training session. Additional time should be allocated to facilitate this.

Contaminated Waste Removal

Waste services should be treated as normal waste utilising best practice for reuse/recycling except where there has been a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19. Waste material produced during the cleaning process should be placed in the appropriate waste bins, which should be pedal operated and lidded. Where an area within a venue is suspected or confirmed of being contaminated with COVID-19, general cleaning principles and cleaning guidance from the Health Protection Surveillance Centre should be followed. These are available [HERE](#).

6.6 Heating/Ventilation/Air-conditioning Systems

The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 states employers must make sure there is an adequate supply of fresh air (ventilation) in enclosed areas of the workplace. This has not changed during the pandemic. According to the [ECDC](#), poor ventilation in confined indoor spaces is associated with increased transmission of respiratory infections. Below are steps to consider that can improve indoor ventilation.

Ventilation is vital for all activities. However, it is particularly important for activities with high aerosol spray such as vocalisation, wind instruments and aerobic exercises.

Arts and culture providers should consider ventilation alongside other control measures needed to reduce risks of transmission as part of making your workplace COVID-19 protected, such as physical distancing, keeping your workplace clean, and frequent hand-washing. Arts and culture providers should:

- Provide activities out of doors where possible.
- Assess the risk from aerosol transmission in enclosed areas.
- Identify poorly ventilated areas.

- Decide on the steps that can be taken to improve ventilation.

Natural and mechanical ventilation should be considered to improve ventilation for indoor activities.

Natural ventilation can be improved by fully or partially opening windows, air vents and doors. The arts and culture providers may also carry out purging (airing rooms) by opening all the doors and windows fully to maximise the ventilation in a room. It may be better to do this when the room is unoccupied.

Mechanical ventilation brings fresh air from outside into a building. Arts and culture providers should speak to the individuals who manage the day-to-day operations of the workplace ventilation systems to:

- Understand how they operate.
- Make sure the system is supplying fresh air into an area and establish how much.
- Make sure the system is maintained in line with manufacturers' instructions.

Additional considerations include:

- Increasing the percentage of outdoor air.
- Increasing total airflow supply.
- Disabling demand-control ventilation controls that reduce air supply based on temperature or occupancy.
- Improving central air filtration.
- Increasing air filtration to as high as possible without diminishing design airflow.
- Ensuring exhaust fans are operating at full capacity.

The above steps for mechanical systems should be considered in consultation with a heating, ventilation and air-conditioning professional.

Activity spaces should be ventilated before and after each group and during activities if possible. However, providing adequate ventilation does not mean you have to make your workplace feels cold. There are simple steps you can take to make sure your workplace is adequately ventilated without being too cold:

- Opening windows and doors partially can still provide acceptable ventilation while keeping the workplace comfortable. Opening higher-level windows will probably create fewer draughts.
- If the area is cold, advise workers and participants to wear extra layers and warmer clothing.
- Use fan convactor heaters. Note: you can only use fan convactor heaters if the area is well ventilated.

6.7 Communications

Clear and concise communication with workers, participants and parents and guardians is an essential part of managing risk. A comprehensive and reliable communication plan can be utilised to inform all stakeholders as to what measures have been put in place for their safety, and to inform them of what is expected of them. Measures that can be utilised include:

- Induction training and daily briefings.

- Website for the venue or organisation.
- Social-media channels for the venue or organisation.
- Emails and push notifications reminding participants, parents and guardians of health rules and expectations that can be sent at regular intervals.
- Signage throughout the workplace can be effective as a further reminder, especially if it is visually attractive and located at prominent locations.
- Verbal instruction.

Signage

Appropriate signage should be installed in key locations (entrances, circulation spaces, activity spaces, toilets, etc.) to remind all workers and participants of their responsibilities. The signage should be placed in prominent positions and be clear and legible.

Signage should be regularly reviewed to ensure it is displaying the current public-health advice.

Signage may take the form of the following:

- Vertical signage prominently mounted in key locations indicating physical distancing, face-covering protocols and other relevant information, advice and guidance.
- Floor markings indicating physical distancing.

Signage should be appropriate for children and all participants. To accommodate non-English-speaking attendees, all signage to be pictographic where possible.

7 SUSPECTED-CASE RESPONSE PLAN

7.1 SUSPECTED CASE

7.1.1 Reporting and Response Plan

Employers are responsible for ensuring mechanisms are in place to respond to a suspected case while in work. This plan should include a defined response structure that identifies the team(s) responsible for responding to a suspected case and appointing a case manager/designated contact person(s) for dealing with suspected cases.

Employers must also consider actions required if there is an outbreak as a result of their activities. An outbreak of COVID-19 is when two or more cases of the disease are linked by time, place or person.

The management of an outbreak is managed by the local departments of public health to enable the outbreak to be brought under control as quickly as possible. It also requires close engagement and cooperation between the employer, the LWR, the workers, participants and, in particular, the individual(s) affected. Outbreaks in a single workplace that are not managed and brought under control quickly can rapidly spread to other workplaces and/or the wider community.

7.1.2 Initial Response

The key message is that workers and participants should not attend if they are displaying any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 or are feeling unwell. The prompt identification and isolation of potentially infectious individuals is a crucial step in protecting the individual involved, together with workers, participants and their families.

The first-aider or other pre-designated responder should be contacted if an individual feels unwell and is displaying recognised symptoms of COVID-19. The symptomatic individual should be allowed to make their way home if they are feeling well enough and can do so safely. If they cannot immediately make their way home, the designated responder should escort them to the isolation area, remaining 2 metres away from the symptomatic person and ensuring that all other individuals on the premises maintain a 2-metre distance.

The patient should be given a disposable facemask, if not already wearing one, while walking to the isolation area and when exiting the workspace. They should be advised not to touch any surfaces, objects or people.

Once in the isolation area, the first-aider can assess the individual to see if they are well enough to return home. For minors and individuals with disabilities, their parents/guardians should be contacted. They should be instructed to contact their GP by phone from home and to isolate there.

If the person is not well enough to travel home, their parents/guardians should contact their GP by phone (preferably using their own mobile phone) to discuss the next steps. Anyone showing symptoms of COVID-19 should not use public transport, and an alternative method of transport should be organised.

There may be a requirement to have multiple versions of a suspected-case response plan depending on the individual displaying symptoms and their specific requirements. This might include:

- Workers.
- Minors and vulnerable persons.

- Individuals with varying disabilities.

Response plans should incorporate current safeguarding policies and procedures with respect to supervision and accompanying a participant.

Note: there is no requirement for an employer to notify the HSA if a worker contracts COVID-19 if working outside a healthcare setting.

7.1.3 Isolation Areas

A suitable isolation area should be identified in advance of it being required. This will be the location to which a person experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 can be brought in order to isolate the individual from other people and to minimise the risk of contact with others on the premises. The isolation area/room should be easily accessible, bearing in mind that it may need to be accessed by young people as well as workers, and be accessible for those with disabilities.

An isolation area should ideally be a room where the door can be closed and has a window for ventilation. Where a closed-door area is not possible, an area away from others could be used. Be mindful not to inadvertently contaminate additional areas by selecting an isolation area that is far away from the activity space or the main exit.

Employers should take into account the possibility of one or more persons displaying the signs of COVID-19 and have additional isolation areas available or another contingency plan for dealing with same.

Only the minimum amount of furniture should be placed in the room so as to facilitate easier cleaning and disinfecting when the room has been used, and should contain the following:

- Adequate ventilation.
- Tissues, hand sanitiser, disinfectant and/or wipes.
- PPE, including gloves and surgical facemask.
- Waste bags or waste bin with lid (pedal bin or non-touch mechanism).

7.1.4 COVID-19 Contact-tracing Log for Suspected Case

The designated contact person/case manager should carry out an assessment of the incident and complete an incident-report form. The designated person should also ensure contact-tracing logs are completed for the individual for the time they were in the venue or at the activity.

7.1.5 First Aid/Medical Provision for Suspected Case

On-site first-aiders will need to provide initial treatment as necessary, or until the emergency services arrive. Management should ensure first-aiders receive any necessary training updates and are confident that they can help someone injured or ill. See section 4.6 for further details.

7.1.6 Cleaning Guidelines After the Presence of a Suspected Case of COVID-19

The following are recommendations for cleaning/disinfecting a room after the presence of a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 – e.g. following the use of an isolation room:

- As soon as the suspected case has left the room, open windows if possible and keep the door to the room closed for one hour.
- Carefully clean all surfaces and furniture in the room with a neutral detergent (the scale goes from 0 to 14: in the middle is 7, considered to be neutral; anything below 7 is acidic; anything above 7 is considered alkaline; dish soap comes closest to being a neutral cleaner), followed by decontamination of surfaces using a disinfectant effective against viruses. Disposable cleaning cloths are recommended. Open the window in the room while cleaning is in progress.
- Staff responsible for cleaning after a suspected or confirmed COVID-19-infected person was present should wear disposable single use non-sterile nitrile gloves and a disposable plastic apron, and should avoid touching their face during the cleaning procedure. If an area has been heavily contaminated, such as with visible bodily fluids from a person with suspected or confirmed COVID-19, use protection for the eyes, mouth and nose, as well as wearing gloves and an apron. Avoid creating splashes and spray when cleaning.
- Do not allow anyone to use a potentially contaminated room until it has been cleaned/disinfected and all surfaces are dry.

Further information on cleaning in non-healthcare settings is available from the [ECDC](#) website.

8 FIRST AID

8.1 How COVID-19 Spreads

The SARS NCOV2 virus that causes COVID-19 infects through droplets and contact with the mucous membranes. It does not infect through the skin.

The greatest element of risk for a healthcare worker (responder or practitioner) is transfer of the virus to the mucous membranes by contact of contaminated hands (including contaminated gloved hands) with the eyes, nose or mouth. The key interventions to manage this risk are to minimise hand contamination (keep your hands to yourself when possible), avoid touching your face and to clean your hands frequently (with soap and water or alcohol hand-rub).

There is also a significant risk of direct transfer of the virus to mucous membranes by droplet transmission – i.e. by direct impact of larger infectious virus droplets generated from the patient’s respiratory tract landing directly in your eyes, nose or mouth. This is more likely to happen the closer you are to the patient. This risk is managed by use of appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE: surgical facemask, gloves, long-sleeved gown and eye protection) and by requesting the patient to wear a surgical facemask and cover their nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing.

8.2 First Aid in the Workplace

In the event that first aid is required in the workplace, it may not be possible to maintain a distance of 2 metres. Workers with a specific role in acting as first responders should be provided with updated training on infection prevention-and-control principles, including performance of hand hygiene and appropriate use of PPE when delivering first aid.

Further advice on first aid is available from the Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council (PHECC), which have provided advice in relation to return to work and first aid. Information is available [HERE](#).

On-site first-aiders will need to provide initial treatment as necessary, or until the emergency services arrive. Management should ensure first-aiders receive any necessary training updates and are confident that they can help someone injured or ill. The following should also be taken into consideration:

- Review all first-aid procedures to adapt in line with current COVID-19 guidance. PHECC has issued an update regarding COVID-19 and first-aid provision in the workplace.
- Ensure sufficient resources are available to deliver first aid, including adequate supplies of PPE. First-aiders must ensure PPE is donned and doffed correctly.
- Good hand hygiene should be practised during any first-aid situation, including hand washing with warm water and soap or the use of hand sanitiser before and after providing first-aid treatment.
- For persons with minor injuries (cuts, abrasions, minor burns), a first-aid responder, where practicable, should avoid close contact and advise the injured party what steps to take in treating their injury.
- If you suspect a person has experienced a cardiac arrest, do not listen or feel for breathing by placing your ear and cheek close to the person’s mouth. If you are in any doubt about

confirming cardiac arrest, the default position is to perform chest compressions only until help arrives.

- No reusable equipment should be returned to service without being cleaned/disinfected appropriately.

Following first-aid treatment

- Disposable PPE and any waste should be disposed of appropriately, and reusable PPE cleaned/disinfected thoroughly.
- Wash hands thoroughly with warm water and soap before putting on and after taking off PPE.
- Replenish PPE stock as appropriate. Liaise with management to ensure any issues with first-aid PPE are resolved in as timely a manner as possible.

The following PPE must be available for responding to first-aid incidents:

1. Disposable gloves (nitrile/latex).
2. FFP3 or FFP2 face masks.
3. Disposable plastic aprons.
4. Enclosed eye protection.

APPENDIX A PRE-OPENING PROMPTS

The following is a non-exhaustive list of prompts to be considered around the resumption of full-service provision. Individual services may wish to use this prompt sheet to inform their own existing risk register.

ACTIONS PRIOR TO OPENING UP		
No.	Action	Completed
1	Ventilate all rooms.	
2	Ensure all waste collections are still taking place or if they again need to be scaled up.	
3	Check for rodent activity/droppings and set traps if necessary.	
4	Ensure heater/boiler timings have been updated.	
5	Carry out building maintenance checks – e.g. fire detection and alarm system, fire extinguishers, emergency lighting.	
6	With respect to canteen facilities, plan for staggered breaks and floor markings for queues.	
7	Check that dishwashers are not set on eco-wash settings (low temperature).	
8	Disinfect milk cartons, etc. that come into the premises before they are put in the fridge.	
9	Have designated area for opening of post, and gloves, letter opener and sanitiser to hand.	
10	Put a system in place for receiving deliveries.	
11	Inform first-aiders on new protocols in case a person becomes unwell or in event of a heart attack (CPR).	
12	Write up a cleaning schedule.	

WORK ENVIRONMENT CONTROLS				
No.	Action	Yes	No	N/A
14	Is there current capacity in the service to comply with the physical-distancing requirements? Assess the premises based on the numbers of workers and young people that may be in the building safely at any one time. If 'No', consider the following:			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of flexible shifts, staggered shifts, extended opening hours, weekend working. • Redeploying workers to other appropriate buildings in the vicinity where such capacity exists. • Alternate workers to work between base and home. • Which priority service can safely be offered to young people. • Appointment-based service only in designated spaces where physical distancing is possible. • Extension of telephone and online supports. 			
15	As far as is reasonably practicable, can non-fire doors within internal buildings be left open to avoid the risk of potential contamination?			
16	Is there a documented cleaning schedule in place for each work location?			

WORK ENVIRONMENT CONTROLS				
No.	Action	Yes	No	N/A
17	Has consideration been given to additional partitioning/protective perspex screening between workstations and at reception areas where appropriate?			
18	Are there appropriate hand-washing facilities available?			
19	Are there adequate supplies of hand-washing materials – e.g. liquid soap, disposable paper towels, anti-bac hand gel?			
21	Is there an adequate number of waste bins?			
21	Has appropriate COVID-19 signage been prominently displayed throughout the work location?			

WORK PRACTICE CONTROLS				
No.	Action	Yes	No	N/A
22	Has access to work locations been restricted to rostered workers only, as far as is reasonably practicable?			
23	Has consideration been given to floor markings to demonstrate minimum distancing between workers and others to encourage physical distancing?			
24	Are work breaks staggered in order to maintain physical-distancing requirements?			
25	Are meetings held via teleconference to ensure compliance with physical-distancing requirements?			
26	Is the use of communal areas (meeting rooms) restricted to ensure physical distancing is maintained?			
27	Are workers aware of respiratory hygiene-and-cough etiquette?			
28	Do workers adhere to respiratory hygiene-and-cough etiquette?			
29	Are workers familiar with hand-washing technique/guidelines?			
30	Are all drinking cups/glasses thoroughly washed and cleaned between each use?			
31	Are waste bins emptied, cleaned and sanitised on a regular basis?			
32	Are workers instructed to bring minimal personal belongings into the workplace to avoid risk of contamination?			
33	Have workers been instructed to clean and sanitise their workstation at the start and end of each shift?			
34	Have workers been instructed to clean and sanitise communal equipment (e.g. photocopier, printer) before and after each use?			
35	Is there a protocol in place in the event an employee becomes unwell and who believes they have been exposed to COVID-19?			
36	Maintain sign-in sheet in order to facilitate contact tracing if necessary.			

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Policy References

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Research

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Government-issued Guidance

- Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, [Work Safely Protocol](#)
- Government of Ireland, [COVID-19 Resilience and Recovery 2021: The Path Ahead](#)
- Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth: *Guidance for Youth Work Organisation: Informed by the Government's Resilience & Recovery 2020-2021: Plan for Living With COVID-19* (2020)
- PHECC COVID-19 Advisory
https://www.phecit.ie/PHECC/Publications_and_Resources/Newsletters/Newsletter_Items/2020/PHECC_COVID_19_Advisory_v1.aspx

Organisational-issued Guidance

- **Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann:** [Education Module and Guidelines](#)
- **Dance Ireland:** [guide to resources and assistance](#)
- **Irish Association of Youth Orchestras:** [COVID-19 resources](#)
- **Irish Ballet Teachers Association (IBTA):** [guidance on main web page for ballet in relation to phased reopening](#)
- **Irish Museums Association:** [planning for reopening guidelines](#)
- **National Youth Council of Ireland:** [COVID-19 supporting information for youth organisations, young people and youth workers](#)
- **Screen Producers Ireland:** [Return-to-production guidelines](#)
- **Theatre Forum:** [reopening arts centres guidelines](#)
- **Youth Theatre Ireland:** [COVID-19 guidance and resources](#)

Mental Health Supports

- **A Lust for Life:** Irish mental health charity for young people <https://www.alustforlife.com/> + well-being workbook for young people. <https://www.alustforlife.com/pdf/articles/ALustforLife-WellbeingWorkbook.pdf>
- **Children's Books Ireland:** [Mind Yourself: The Mental Health and Wellbeing Reading Guide](#) for primary schools.
- **Helium Arts:** remote creative-health programme for young people living with long-term health conditions during the COVID-19 pandemic. <http://helium.ie/projects/distance-creates/>
- **HSE:** Mental Health Supports and Services During COVID. <https://www2.hse.ie/services/mental-health-supports-and-services-during-coronavirus/>
- **Jigsaw:** information and resources in the area of youth mental health. <https://jigsaw.ie/>
- **Minding Creative Minds:** an organisation established to offer a free 24/7 well-being & support programme for the Irish creative sector. <http://mindingcreativeminds.ie/>
- **National Youth Council, Ireland:** [Youth Mental Health Signposting Tool](#). Includes links to various support services and information on training programmes, community supports and children's rights.
- **Spunout:** Ireland's youth-information website created by young people for young people. Includes information on a range of topics: education, employment, health, life and opinion. <https://spunout.ie/>
- **Turn2me:** free online counselling and online support groups for young people (aged twelve to seventeen) and adults. Peer-support groups for frontline workers and professionals. <https://turn2me.ie/>
- **Waterford Healing Arts Trust:** 'surviving or thriving' COVID-19 resources aimed at artists, arts professionals and arts organisations. <http://www.waterfordhealingarts.com/surviving-or-thriving-resources/>

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