

COVID-19 What it means to Groups in Northern Ireland



Advice to all parts of UK

The guidance from different governments is getting increasingly complex with local lockdowns and restrictions coming into force as well as changes to the numbers of people who can gather. It is every group's responsibility to keep up with changes to any restrictions that affect their group and ensure they are adhering to them. This may mean a change to your protocols and risk assessment at short notice. Please consider this when developing your plans and inviting participants and volunteers to sessions.

Social distancing (2M/6FT) remains a key message for everyone not from the same household and is the most effective way to protect everyone. Hand hygiene also remains a critical defence from contamination.

Trustee checklists and Covid-19 Risk Assessment should be completed and emailed to RDA National Office Groupsupport@rda.org.uk before the group can be signed off as ready and any RDA activity can begin.

Northern Ireland – Stay safe, save lives

Update

An indicative date of 5 July has been set for further relaxation of these requirements. This will be reviewed on 1 July.

RDA Sessions

From 24 May the maximum number of participants, including coaches and support staff being involved in outdoor organised sport is limited to 500 people and the maximum number of spectators is limited to 500 people.

Risk assessments, as set out in the regulations, must be completed where there will be between 31 and 500 participants and/or spectators in attendance. The RDA risk assessment to enable your group to be signed off by National Office is sufficient for this purpose. We do not consider that RDA sessions would benefit from this as it is unlikely we would ever breach 30 in a session. It is therefore our recommendation that session sizes should be limited to 30.

We have agreement from the Executive that from 23 April equine assisted therapy and learning can resume indoors in gatherings of up to 30 people. This includes all RDA sessions.

From 24 May, all other indoor sport and physical activity can also take place. Group exercise/ training and indoor club training in squads is permitted. A risk assessment, as set out in the regulations, must be completed where there will be over 15 people taking part.

Following the protocols submitted to the Executive Office individuals are now permitted to come into closer proximity than social distancing would normally allow (2m) with a disabled person from outside their household to support them to access sport and physical activity in Northern Ireland. This is to support individuals for generally short periods e.g. helping them to mount and dismount.

If this dispensation is used, this should be subject to a risk assessment and therefore should be included on your group's COVID-19 risk assessment. There are further restrictions if you choose to do this and so please ensure you read our guidance on [Supporting Disabled People during COVID-19](#) and [face coverings](#).

You are also permitted from 17 May to have 1 side walker from outside the household/ bubble of the rider. This side walker should be on the opposite side of the equine to the leader. **From 21 June you are also permitted to have 2 side walkers from outside the household/ bubble where this is necessary. More information on side walkers can be found [here](#).**

A risk assessment is also required for this as in the situation above.

Carriage Driving

We have also had confirmation from the Executive that carriage driving can resume, following [RDA carriage driving protocols](#).

Travel

You should avoid visiting places where there is a chance that large numbers of people will gather and crowds will form. Where travel is necessary for work, education and other essential purposes, you are asked to walk, cycle or use private transport, shared only with members of your household where possible.

What can we do in Northern Ireland? (21 June 2021 onwards)

Category	Regulations and guidance
 <p>National guidance– SOCIAL</p>	<p>Up to six people from two households can meet in a private home and stay overnight. Children under 12 are not counted in this number.</p> <p>Up to 15 people (including children) from three households can meet outdoors (including a private garden) but should maintain social distancing</p>
 <p>RDA meetings</p>	<p>RDA recommendation: Recommend face to face meetings do not take place unless necessary (e.g. first aid training) especially if can be undertaken by other means (e.g. Zoom)</p>
 <p>RDA sessions</p>	<p>RDA sessions can take place both outdoors (recommended maximum 30, legal maximum 500) and indoors with up to 30 people as our activities are considered equine facilitated learning/ therapy. From 24 May, 1 side walker from outside the household/ bubble of the rider is permitted. This side walker should be on the opposite side of the equine to the leader. From 21 June 2 side walkers are permitted from outside the rider's household/bubble. All side walkers must wear face coverings.</p>
 <p>Social Distance (SD)</p>	<p>2m unless in extended household</p> <p>A dispensation for disability allows a generally short duration breach of social distancing to allow disabled participants to access sport. This includes supporting a rider to mount or dismount and longer duration support from a side walker. A specific risk assessment must be undertaken for this. Individuals would be classed as 'close contact' for Test Trace Protect and would need to self isolate if they had come into contact with a positive case</p>
 <p>Data Collection</p>	<p>Legal requirement to collect and keep details of attendees for 21 days (not required for outdoor leisure)</p>
 <p>Face coverings Outdoors</p>	<p>Face coverings must be worn if breaching social distancing for a specific purpose (see social distancing)</p> <p>RDA rule: Face coverings can be worn—not a substitute for social distancing</p>
	<p>You should avoid visiting places where there is a chance that large numbers of people will gather and crowds will form. Where travel is necessary for work, education and other essential purposes, you are asked to walk, cycle or use private transport, shared only with members of your household where possible.</p>