

## 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 should be completed and emailed to RDA National Office [Groupsupport@rda.org.uk](mailto: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

**From 16 August, there will be no restriction on the number of people permitted to gather outdoors in a private garden nor any restriction on number of people sitting together at a hospitality venue. There will also no longer be a need for household bubbles.**

**Current regulations require a minimum of one metre social distancing in retail and shopping centres, indoor hospitality settings and indoor visitor attractions. For outdoor venues, social distancing requirements are strongly advised. Where two metres is not viable, a minimum of one metre is recommended with consideration given to other risk mitigations. Risk mitigations should be detailed in risk assessments.**

**RDA therefore strongly recommends if you are coming into close contact (<1m) you continue to wear a face covering especially if this is for a prolonged duration (e.g. supporting someone to mount using a hoist or carriage driving). In all other scenarios face coverings are optional. Face coverings are primarily to protect others, please bear in mind we may well have participants and volunteers who may be vulnerable to COVID-19 and may be unable to be vaccinated. Face coverings may also reassure people where they are lacking in confidence in coming back. It is important you have conversations with your participants, or those that support them if relevant, if there is something that you need to do to make them feel more comfortable. If face coverings are worn, the [face covering guidance](#) must be followed.**

### RDA Sessions

Gathering limits, both indoors and outdoors for organised sport and physical activity should be based on a risk assessment. As we require groups to undertake a risk assessment prior to restarting activity, this

would satisfy this requirement. It is RDA's recommendation that even though there are no formal upper limits this should remain at 30 as there is not likely to be a situation where RDA sessions would have higher numbers than this.

We have had agreement from the Executive since 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 have also been able to also take place.

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 e.g. helping them to mount and dismount, side walk etc.

If this dispensation is used, this should be subject to a risk assessment and therefore should be included on your group's 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 permitted 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. 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.

Any behaviour which may encourage the risk of transmission around sports activities, such as car sharing, congregation of people on the side-lines and sporting celebrations, should be avoided.

## **Carriage Driving**

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

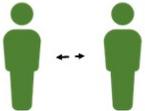
## **Vaulting**

Vaulting as individual may take place and pairs and teams is permitted as detailed in the [RDA Vaulting 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? (16 August 2021)

Category	Regulations and guidance
 <p>National guidance– SOCIAL</p>	<p>Up to ten people from three households can meet in a private home and stay overnight. Children under 12 are not counted in this number.</p> <p>Any number of people can meet in a private garden</p>
 <p>RDA meetings</p>	<p>RDA recommendation that face to face meetings do not take place unless needed (e.g. first aid) especially if can be undertaken by other means (e.g. Zoom)</p>
 <p>RDA sessions</p>	<p>RDA sessions can take place both outdoors and indoors subject to a risk assessment to determine numbers of people. <b>We are recommending this is 30 people as our sessions are unlikely to have higher numbers than this.</b> 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. 2 side walkers are also permitted from outside the rider’s household/bubble. All side walkers must wear face coverings.</p> <p>Carriage driving and vaulting can take place as per the protocols detailed on the website <a href="http://myrda.org.uk">myrda.org.uk</a></p>
 <p>Social Distance (SD)</p>	<p>For outdoor venues social distancing is strongly advised. Where 2m is not viable, a minimum of 1m is recommended giving consideration to other risk mitigations. Current regulations require a minimum of one metre social distancing in a number of settings including indoor hospitality and visitor attractions.</p> <p>A dispensation for disability allows a 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 or a coach carriage driving. 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</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><b>RDA rule: Face coverings can be worn—not a substitute for social distancing</b></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>