

**Guidance Sought on
Public health measures in place right now
Questions submitted 24th & 26th August 2020
Further questions submitted 28th & 31st August and 2nd & 3rd
September**

PLEASE NOTE: These questions were answered prior to the introduction of the **Resilience and Recovery 2020-2021: Plan for Living with COVID-19 5-Level plan** and some answers may have since been superseded by newer guidelines.

September 9th 2020 – NOTE: A number of questions submitted still remain outstanding or awaiting further clarification and are not contained in this document.

September 9th 2020 - New Responses Highlighted in Grey

Response 2pm -August 27, 2020

Updated responses at 5pm -September 8th

The reference to 'we' throughout this document relates to the Dept. of Tourism and Fáilte Ireland.

1. What time on Tuesday 18th did new measures come into effect? *Awaiting a response on this*
2. Are funerals exempt? *The only exemption is for weddings. Government decided there would be no change to the existing arrangements (phase 3 of the Government roadmap for re- opening) for weddings pending a review by Government.*
3. Are Holy Communions exempt? *These are considered a gathering/event and therefore are not exempt*
4. Must ensure that all customers leave the property by 11.30pm, are residents exempt? *We have sought clarity and under current Government public health advice. Residents are not exempt; they must leave the bar/restaurant/function area by 11.30pm*
5. Health and Safety Risk Assessment might consider the requirement to have Hand sanitiser placed on all tables dangerous to children. Is this a requirement or a guidance? Will Sanitisers at entrance/exit suffice? – *This is only a recommendation and is reflected as such in the guidelines*
6. Communion and confirmations booked for this week, no gatherings with more than 6. Could they proceed at separate tables of 6? – *These are considered a gathering/event therefore under current public health advice they cannot proceed as there is potential for congregating between tables*

7. Is a communion or confirmation booking an informal event (celebration) and so hotels cannot take bookings? Or can they take the booking but limited to 6 people per table? ***These are considered a gathering/event therefore under current public health advice they cannot proceed as there is potential for congregating between tables***

8. **[Revised Question]** If a family from a single household comprises of more than 6 pax can they be seated at one table? Or can they be seated at 2 tables? Please convey to the Dept. of Health that there is significant dissatisfaction at what is perceived to be an invasion into the rights of a household unit. ***Under current public health advice a maximum of 6 from a maximum of three households only can sit at a table***

9. Health and Safety Meeting/event education and or training purposes, 12 delegates attending, 2meters physical distancing, 9am to 5pm, catering teas and coffee and sandwich lunch, no alcohol. Is this allowed? ***As per updated guidance it has been clarified that professional meeting (non-social) a training/educational programme are different to social gatherings and can take place with up to a maximum of 50 people inc staff at any one time.***

10. Slimliner (Slimming)classes, 20 attending, 2 metre+ physical distancing. Is this allowed? – ***See sports guidelines on www.gov.ie***

11. School meeting (headmaster and teachers) to discuss reopening and safety protocols, over 4 hour period. (school can't facilitate physical distancing). Is this allowed? ***As per updated guidance it has been clarified that professional meeting (non-social) a training/educational programme are different to social gatherings and can take place with up to a maximum of 50 people inc staff at any one time.***

12. County Council 24 people, ballroom capacity 500, tea and coffee, light lunch, Statutory Meeting of the Local CoCo. Council chamber can't facilitate physical distancing? ***As per updated guidance it has been clarified that professional meeting (non-social) a training/educational programme are different to social gatherings and can take place with up to a maximum of 50 people inc staff at any one time.***

13. Can essential services have formal or informal gatherings? If so what are they? ***As per updated guidance it has been clarified that professional meeting (non-social) a training/educational programme are different to social gatherings and can take place with up to a maximum of 50 people inc staff at any one time.***

14. Safe pass health and safety courses, 15 max attendance, all day event, with 2m+ physical Distancing. Can this take place? ***As per updated guidance it has been clarified that professional meeting (non-social) a training/educational programme are different to social gatherings and can take place with up to a maximum of 50 people inc staff at any one time.***

15. Are '2-day' weddings acceptable? i.e. having two sets of guests over two days with no more than 50 people in the room including staff: ***Awaiting Clarification on Answer.***

16. Leisure facilities such as swimming pools: How many people can be in the pool/changing rooms, etc., at the one time? ***The sports guidelines do not highlight a number - gyms/leisure centres/swimming pools/exercise and dance studios will remain open with strict distancing and other appropriate protective measures in place www.gov.ie***

17. If a bar licence extension has been granted can the wedding continue past 11.30 – **We understand that the 11.30 pm time limit will apply notwithstanding anything contained in the Licensing Acts.**

18. Can education & training sessions take place in hotels? Are there exemptions for certain sectors or organisations? **As per updated guidance it has been clarified that professional meeting (non-social) a training/educational programme are different to social gatherings and can take place with up to a maximum of 50 people inc staff at any one time.**

19. **[Revised Question– Part A]** A University seeking a large space to host a class has sought clarity from the Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science and it was confirmed to them that the new restrictions do not apply to universities, and that their sector is one of the sectors the Taoiseach referred to that have other protocols. Does this mean that the indoor gathering limit of 50 continues to apply in higher education. which continues to be governed by the Implementation Guidelines for Public Health Measures in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Can a hotel therefore accommodate a booking of this nature? **As per updated guidance it has been clarified that professional meeting (non-social) a training/educational programme are different to social gatherings and can take place with up to a maximum of 50 people inc staff at any one time.**

[Revised Question – Part B] Similarly does the Further Education and Training Sector have a similar exemption? **As per updated guidance it has been clarified that professional meeting (non-social) a training/educational programme are different to social gatherings and can take place with up to a maximum of 50 people inc staff at any one time.**

20. Query received from Irish Association of Gymnasts asking can they train in a hotel in pods of 6? **Information below taken from <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/cf9b0d-new-public-health-measures-effective-now-to-prevent-further-spread-o/>**

All necessary measures to comply with child protection still apply. Gyms/leisure centres/swimming pools/exercise and dance studios can remain open with strict distancing and other appropriate protective measures in place.

Exercise and dance classes should be limited to 6 people and observe physical distancing rules. Multiple pods may operate if sufficient space is available and strict public health protocols are in place.

Groups exercising outdoors should be limited to 15 people, including training sessions. There should be no mixing between groups.

It is recommended that those responsible for managing these facilities should have completed a risk assessment before reopening to manage the public health risk for their customers, attendees, participants, and staff.

21. Can communion/confirmation/birthdays take place provided that everyone is seated at a table for 6 max with no more than 3 households per table?

- a. In private function rooms?
- b. In restaurant settings?
- c. If tables are spaced 2 metres apart?

These are considered a gathering/event therefore under current public health advice they cannot proceed as there is potential for congregating between tables

22. Can a booking be made for multiple tables of 6 assuming social distancing is maintained and no more than 3 households are at any one table. **These are considered a gathering/event therefore under current public health advice they cannot proceed as there is potential for congregating between tables**

23. If a family of 7+ book a table (all one household) can they sit together? ***Under current public health advice a maximum of 6 from a maximum of three households only can sit at a table***

24. Can we still have live music in restaurants/bars? ***We are currently awaiting clarity on this***

25. Can a business meeting take place in a hotel function room where no food is being served?

- a. If physical distancing of 2 metres can be applied
- b. If all from different households
- c. Is there a max of 6 in this instance?

As per updated guidance it has been clarified that professional meeting (non-social) a training/educational programme are different to social gatherings and can take place with up to a maximum of 50 people inc staff at any one time.

26. Is a carvery-style service with socially distanced queuing acceptable or must all food be delivered to the table by staff? ***This can continue once all precautions are in place as outlined in the guidelines***

27. Can hotel residents be served a drink (in the residents lounge) past 11.30? ***We sought clarity. Response: Under current Government public health advice Residents are not exempt; they must leave the bar/restaurant/function area by 11.30pm***

28. Re Weddings: Does the 6 per table apply? E.G. can there be a head table for more than 6 (socially distanced where not from same household)? ***Current Government public health advice states that a maximum of 6 pax from three households are the maximum number permitted at a table***

29. Can hotels accept bookings for more than 6 people from more than 3 households to facilitate meetings and classes for ETBIs, Further Education Providers, Universities, etc.? Schools are exempt from the restricted numbers but they may need to source outside facilities for hosting meetings and classes? ***As per updated guidance it has been clarified that professional meeting (non-social) a training/educational programme are different to social gatherings and can take place with up to a maximum of 50 people inc staff at any one time.***

30. Can hotels accept bookings for Commercially run courses/classes/businesses such as Toastmasters or Slimming World? If the commercial businesses undertakes a risk assessment before proceeding? ***As per updated guidance it has been clarified that professional meeting (non-social) a training/educational programme are different to social gatherings and can take place with up to a maximum of 50 people inc staff at any one time.***

31. Can hotels accept bookings for any Public Classes, Training Classes, Health & Safety Meetings, etc. What about CPC training, Manual Handling courses, Pre-Marriage Guidance/Counselling? ***As per updated guidance it has been clarified that professional meeting (non-social) a training/educational programme are different to social gatherings and can take place with up to a maximum of 50 people inc staff at any one time.***

32. Is mandatory training exempt from the amended guidelines for essential services and if so what is deemed essential services? ***As per updated guidance it has been clarified that professional meeting (non-social) a training/educational programme are different to social gatherings and can take place with up to a maximum of 50 people inc staff at any one time.***

33. How do new measures affect meetings in hotels, e.g. businesses hiring rooms? Attendees would

not be from same household? **As per updated guidance it has been clarified that professional meeting (non-social) a training/educational programme are different to social gatherings and can take place with up to a maximum of 50 people inc staff at any one time.**

34. Is it possible to facilitate a conference for more than 6 people if social distancing of 2m can be adhered to? **As per updated guidance it has been clarified that professional meeting (non-social) a training/educational programme are different to social gatherings and can take place with up to a maximum of 50 people inc staff at any one time.**

35. How do the new measures affect accommodation bookings - e.g. if a group of 10 people book in but are staying in separate rooms, e.g. also what if booking made by one person for the 10 rooms (effectively a form of group booking). **As the bookings are for bedrooms and not gatherings there is no reason that the property (once they take all necessary precautions) cannot accept group bedroom bookings**

36. RE question above: Can these 10 people dine or sit together or do group leisure activities together? (e.g. Golf, Yoga, Horse Riding) **Gatherings, events and meetings of 6 pax from three households are the maximum number permitted**

37. Can a family gathering be facilitated in a private room operated restaurant style (with 6 per table, max 3 households per table with 2 metres social distancing)? **Gatherings, events and meetings of 6 pax from three households are the maximum number permitted**

38. Can staff meetings take place with more than 6 people in attendance? Many are essential to the running of a business and cannot be facilitated remotely? **As per updated guidance it has been clarified that professional meeting (non-social) a training/educational programme are different to social gatherings and can take place with up to a maximum of 50 people inc staff at any one time.**

39. Can formal and informal events be defined? **Government public health advice does not reference formal or informal, the references are to gatherings, events and parties.**

40. Can a funeral be hosted for more than 6 people? **Events/Gatherings and meetings of 6 pax from three households are the maximum number permitted**

41. Are balloons/party items allowed on tables of 6 or less – formal or informal event? **There is no advice provided on this**

42. Does a Vow Renewal fall under 'Weddings', if there is a ceremony with an officiant present?
Awaiting Clarification on Answer

43. Face Coverings – When informed that a staff member or customer is exempt from wearing a face covering can they be asked to produce a medical cert to this effect? How does one prove they are exempt? **This was queried with the HSA and the response received was: The regulations regarding face masks fall under public health. Please find link to HSE advice in this regard including exemptions [\[here\]](#)**

44. Can residents use the facilities of the residents lounge after 11.30? **Residents are not exempt from current Government public health advice they must leave the bar/restaurant/function area by 11.30pm**

45. Are face coverings required to be worn on the dancefloor at a wedding (even if 2 m social

distancing is being adhered to)? ***There is no advice on this however where appropriate people should wear face coverings when interacting with others.***

46. Can you confirm that wedding gatherings can proceed with live bands subject to capacity limits? ***We are currently awaiting a response on this***

47. Can a hotel allow a booking of up to 15 people to eat outdoors, e.g. on a terrace to a restaurant, provided physical distancing is maintained? ***Yes this is permitted under the current Government Public Health advice***

48. If hotel residents must leave the bar/residents lounge/function room/restaurant by 11.30 can the hotelier provide an area that does not serve alcohol, providing all other Covid-19 restrictions are maintained. ***This regulation relates to the service of intoxicating liquor only***

49. If hotel residents organise a party in their bedrooms with other residents what responsibilities does a hotelier have? What actions can hoteliers take, bearing in mind that guest bedrooms are private spaces? ***This would be considered a gathering and bound by current public health advice.***

50. Do face coverings need to be worn for Wedding Ceremonies? ***We are not aware of any specific advice on this. Face masks are required in dining facilities***

51. Do face coverings need to be worn for photographs (indoors or outdoors)? ***We are not aware of any specific advice on this. Face masks are required in dining facilities***

52. Can someone dance with a person from outside their household if wearing a face covering? ***We are not aware of any specific advice on this. Face masks are required in dining facilities***

53. Can a hotel accept a booking for a communion, confirmation, birthday, etc. provided that no more than 6 people in total are in attendance from no more than 3 households? ***Yes in the context of a booking in a restaurant or bar serving food under current public health advice***

54. Are these new measures in place until September 13th at which point they will be reviewed? ***Our understanding is these will be reviewed prior to the 14th of September***

55. Safe Pass training is essential workplace training, regulated by Solas under the remit of the Dept of Education. The hotel guidelines refer to 'meetings & events' not to the education sector, therefore how are these considered as gatherings/events? ***As per updated guidance it has been clarified that professional meeting (non-social) a training/educational programme are different to social gatherings and can take place with up to a maximum of 50 people inc staff at any one time.***

56. Driver CPC training needs to be undertaken before September 9th each year or they cannot continue to drive legally. The Road Safety Authority are encouraging drivers to complete training as soon as possible. Many of these one-day courses take place in hotel function rooms, a controlled environment. As this training is essential can it be permitted in socially distanced groups of under 50? ***As per updated guidance it has been clarified that professional meeting (non-social) a training/educational programme are different to social gatherings and can take place with up to a maximum of 50 people inc staff at any one time.***

The following queries (57 – 62) pertain to Appendices issued by Fáilte Ireland

57. If guests do not respond to communications prior to check in, can they be questioned upon arrival and can their booking be cancelled if they do not provide satisfactory answers to questions on whether they are coming from a country not on the green list or if they have been in close contact with a confirmed case? ***This will be a business decision informed by concerns for the safety of other guest and employees***

58. If a guest booking is refused at check in (e.g. they must restrict movements for 14 days and the hotel does not have this facility), are the hotel responsible for relocating the guest to another property? ***There will be a process agreed with the IHF providing details of venues accommodating guests restricting their movements if required***

59. Will hotels be provided with a list of properties providing isolation facilities to pass to the guest if required? ***The IHF have a list of these properties, the information will be available through a dedicated customer care number***

60. Dinner B&B packages do not include snacks or items from a pharmacy - are these self-isolating guests permitted to go to the shops (per restricted movements section of gov.ie) as an 'essential' trip? ***Conditions of Restricted movement apply***

61. If a guest refuses to adhere to the guidelines and is asked to leave, but refuses to leave the hotel, how is this to be escalated? Is the hotel to contact the Gardai and report a tourist in breach of the guidelines? ***This will be a business decision informed by concerns for the safety of other guest and employees***

62. Are hotels required to notify linen suppliers of batches of used linen coming from isolation rooms? ***We are not aware of specific stipulations however this is a business decision and it may be advisable to make them aware***

Note: Due to a formatting error Questions 63 and 64 were duplicated and have been answered previously.

September 9th 2020 – Question 65 remains outstanding.

Q.66 In response to a direct query from a hotelier the HSA has responded to confirm that “*The 6 person indoor limit applies to [gatherings and events](#), [exercise and dance classes](#), and [groups of people meeting at Restaurants/Cafes/Pubs](#) that serve food. This limit does not apply to the provision of educational training.*” Does this then mean that a hotel can facilitate any educational training provider looking to book a function room for up to 50 people (incl. staff) and as long as they adhere to the [Return to work Safely protocol](#)? ***As per updated guidance it has been clarified that professional meeting (non-social) a training/educational programme are different to social gatherings and can take place with up to a maximum of 50 people inc staff at any one time.***

Q.67 REF Sports, Exercise Classes, Business Meetings - The guidelines state that Indoor Exercise & Dance classes should remain at 6 only as per guidance however may operate multiple pods if sufficient space is available and strict public health protocols are in place*. There is no mention of a limit of 3 households per pod. Would it not therefore follow that any non-F&B business, such as classes, business meetings, training, exams, etc., do not need to limit attendance to 6 or a max of 3 households if social distancing and all other precautions are in place?

*[Source: <https://www.sportireland.ie/news/sport-ireland-issues-practical-guidance-for-sport-on-covid-19>]

[19-measures](#)]

Information below taken from <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/cf9b0d-new-public-health-measures-effective-now-to-prevent-further-spread-o/>

All necessary measures to comply with child protection still apply. Gyms/leisure centres/swimming pools/exercise and dance studios can remain open with strict distancing and other appropriate protective measures in place.

Exercise and dance classes should be limited to 6 people and observe physical distancing rules. Multiple pods may operate if sufficient space is available and strict public health protocols are in place.

Groups exercising outdoors should be limited to 15 people, including training sessions. There should be no mixing between groups.

It is recommended that those responsible for managing these facilities should have completed a risk assessment before reopening to manage the public health risk for their customers, attendees, participants, and staff.

Q.68 Can ACCA or other exams take place in a hotel setting? There would be less than 40 people total in attendance/in the room at any stage. The purpose of the booking is for students to take the exam only (no food/beverage). Social distancing of 2m+ and all other precautions in place. **As per updated guidance it has been clarified that professional meeting (non-social) a training/educational programme are different to social gatherings and can take place with up to a maximum of 50 people inc staff at any one time.**

Q.69 In response to a direct query from a hotelier the HSA has responded to confirm that, in relation to the numbers permitted in an interview scenario or training situation using hotel conference rooms, “The six person indoor limit does not apply to a workplace interview scenario or the provision of training. All employers must follow the Return to Work Safely Protocol [available at <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/22829a-return-to-work-safely-protocol/>] and advice in HSA checklists and templates [available at https://www.hsa.ie/eng/topics/covid-19/return_to_work_safely_templates_and_checklists/return_to_work_safely_templates_and_checklists.html] and take account of the [Public health measures in place right now](#).” Does this therefore mean that a hotel can facilitate any training or interview situation were the booking is up to 50 people (incl. staff), as long as they adhere to the [Return to work Safely protocol](#)? **As per updated guidance it has been clarified that professional meeting (non-social) a training/educational programme are different to social gatherings and can take place with up to a maximum of 50 people inc staff at any one time.**

70. We note that Statutory Instrument No. 326 of 2020 - Health Act 1947 (Section 31A – Temporary Restrictions) (Covid-19) (No. 4) Regulations 2020 (“S.I. 326/2000”) revokes the previous regulations (S.I. No. 234 of 2020) and that S.I. 326/2000 seeks to limit the numbers of people attending indoor and outdoor events, with certain exceptions. Having reviewed the provisions of S.I. 326/2000, it appears that while there are categories of events referred to as “relevant events” and there are other separate provisions for specific events (weddings, sporting events etc) there does not appear to be any reference to, or appropriate category to cover, professional/occupation/workplace events or meetings. Can you please clarify?

As per updated guidance it has been clarified that professional meeting (non-social) a training/educational programme are different to social gatherings and can take place with up to a maximum of 50 people inc staff at any one time.

71. The LGMA (Local Government Management Agency) has issued an email to Councils which says “...with regard to the recent Government announcement on the 18th August relating to mass gatherings and events and to any affect this may have on Council meetings. Having reviewed the Government

announcement we are satisfied that references to mass gatherings and events does not encompass Council meetings having regard to their statutory and business function, however local authorities should continue to ensure appropriate COVID-19 protective and public health measures are in place for Council meetings such as physical distancing between people.” A County Council has been in contact with a hotel seeking to book a meeting space which can comply with the guidelines, such as physical distancing, for 60 people, referencing the above email. Can the hotel accept their booking?

As per updated guidance it has been clarified that professional meeting (non-social) a training/educational programme are different to social gatherings and can take place with up to a maximum of 50 people inc staff at any one time.

72. Can you please confirm that a social event with potentially 35 to 40 attendees can take place provided that the attendees are in groups of no more than 6, and that no-one in any one group will mingle with, or otherwise come into contact with, another group? **Gatherings, events and meetings of 6 pax from three households are the maximum number permitted at a social event.**

73. UEFA have confirmed that the game with Finland is proceeding on Sunday 6th. The team from Finland arrive on Saturday 5th. The relevant hotel would like to confirm that they have exempt status to accept this group as they have put all the necessary government guidelines and precautions in place along with the UEFA guidelines. **As Finland is on the Green List, there should be no issue with the Finnish soccer team visiting Ireland for the upcoming UEFA Nations League fixture. With regard to international travel for elite sport, the Department has published the following guidelines for sporting bodies, which have been approved by the Department of Health:**
<https://assets.gov.ie/86267/8a1a9675-9e01-4f3b-b3ac-4a3230b4891a.pdf> **The Department is satisfied that the UEFA protocol is aligned with our guidelines and with relevant public health advice.**

Q.74 Frontline Healthcare Sector Workers would like to hold a 2 hour conference in a hotel with physical distancing and all other precautions in place. Are they exempt from the 6 pax restriction? **As per updated guidance it has been clarified that professional meeting (non-social) a training/educational programme are different to social gatherings and can take place with up to a maximum of 50 people inc staff at any one time.**

Q.75 A hotelier has forward a response from the HSA to Slimming World regarding the limits around numbers gathering for a class. Please note highlighted section. Does this therefore mean that hotels can facilitate meetings/classes of up to 50 provided that the individual groupings within the class are limited to a max of 6 and other Covid-19 preventative measures are in place?

The government document Public Health Measures in Place Right Now (please see link <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/cf9b0d-new-public-health-measures-effective-now-to-prevent-further-spread-o/#cultural-social-and-sport-measures>) which were updated yesterday states that: *Businesses/services such as museums, cinemas, theatres and art galleries are deemed to be controlled environments, with appropriate protective measures in place such as physical distancing between people. These venues can continue to operate where appropriate physical distancing and all other protective measures can continue to be maintained. Individual groupings attending these venues must be limited to six people from no more than 3 households. Overall attendance must adhere to an overall limit of 50 people.*

Therefore, it would appear from the above, that the business/service of Slimming World Classes, which would be taking place in a controlled environment with appropriate protective measures in place such as physical distancing between people can have an overall attendance of up to 50 people. I hope that this information is of some assistance to you and should you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact us. **As per updated guidance it has been clarified that professional meeting (non-social) a training/educational programme are different to social gatherings and can take place**

with up to a maximum of 50 people inc staff at any one time.

September 9th 2020 – Questions 76 - 77 still remain outstanding.

Q.78 Can an auction take place in a Hotel setting?

The hotel provided the specification under which they would propose to host the Auction: the room would host a maximum of 15to20 pax. 12 tables within the room. 2 metre distancing between non-household members, max 6 pax/3households per table Names and information for contact tracing to be taken. No food or drink required. **As per updated guidance it has been clarified that professional meeting (non-social) a training/educational programme are different to social gatherings and can take place with up to a maximum of 50 people inc staff at any one time.**

Q.79 Can a hotel facilitate a booking for a TV production crew?

The hotel provided the following detail: 5 crew and 2 producers filming 2 people in a hotel function room. **As per updated guidance it has been clarified that professional meeting (non-social) a training/educational programme are different to social gatherings and can take place with up to a maximum of 50 people inc staff at any one time.**

September 9th 2020 – Questions 80 – 81 still remain outstanding.