

Communal facilities guidance review

Purpose of report

On 30th June 2020 the government released guidance for multi-purpose community facilities to re-open from the 4th July 2020. A review of the decision to close communal rooms has been carried out using this guidance and all aspects of this are laid out in this report.

Overview of Guidance

The government guidance sets out the conditions that must be met for community facilities to be COVID-19 secure and therefore able to reopen. The conditions that must be met are in six areas:

- Social distancing and capacity
- Cleaning
- Track and Trace
- Hygiene and face coverings
- Vulnerable people
- Toilets

The decision 'is it safe to open?' is for the facility manager to make and once open, they remain responsible for ensuring safety measures are followed.

Feasibility of Greatwell Homes' ability to meet the conditions

The below table shows how the government guidance would make community facilities COVID-19 secure, the actions Greatwell Homes would be required to take to ensure this and the feasibility of those actions.

The actions required and the feasibility will take account of core public health guidance and core workplace guidance.

You can find a conclusion of the results at the bottom of this document.

Guidance	Action required	Feasibility
Maintain social distancing of 2 meters between people. This can be one meter where mitigation is in place i.e PPE.	<p>Review size of each room to determine a max capacity of people that can safely socially distance in the room.</p> <p>Reduce number of tables and chairs to match the max capacity of the room and arrange these at a safe distance from each other</p> <p>Tape floor to show direction to move around room to prevent need of customers to come into closer proximity than 2 metres</p>	<p>It would require at least 2-3 hours staff time for each of 8 communal rooms to assess max capacity, remove and store excess furniture and also tape a one-way system to the floor.</p> <p>The arrangement at each of the 8 would then need approval by Health and Safety Manager.</p> <p>Ongoing spot checks needed to ensure nothing had been changed i.e. chairs added, or tables moved.</p> <p>The manager of the community facility remains responsible for ensuring safety measures are</p>

		<p>adhered to. This requires the community facility being monitored by Greatwell Homes staff. This would require restrictions on opening hours to coincide with office hours and return of staff to schemes.</p> <p>This would increase risk of infection to the staff and customers.</p>
<p>Non-fire doors and all windows should be opened to improve ventilation in the premises</p>	<p>A designated person would be required to open non fire doors and all windows in the community facility prior to the room being utilised and close them afterwards.</p>	<p>With current staffing arrangements this can only be done if community facilities have defined short opening hours.</p> <p>Whilst this could be a function carried out by a customer, the manager of the community facility retains responsibility for this being carried out and so it would need to be regularly checked by Greatwell Home staff. This would increase risk of infection to the staff and customers.</p> <p>1st Reaction could be requested to patrol at the end of each day to ensure that all windows/ doors are closed. This would incur a cost of £8 plus VAT per patrol. For all 8 schemes approx. £120 per night. Consultation would be required as this would be service chargeable.</p>
<p>Interaction should be limited to only two household indoors.</p>	<p>Review size of each room to determine how many people can be present and safely socially distance. This will provide a max capacity for the room.</p> <p>Reduce number of tables and chairs to match the max capacity of the room and arrange these at a safe 2 metre distance from each other</p>	<p>The manager of the community facility remains responsible for ensuring safety measures are adhered to and so to do this would require a booking system for the community facilities. A return of staff to schemes for extended periods would increase risk of infection to the staff and customers.</p>

	<p>Tape floor to show direction to move around room to prevent need of customers to come into closer proximity than 2 metres</p> <p>No visitors from outside can be permitted to use the community facilities.</p>	<p>If 2 households in a scheme form a “support bubble” this will have to be recorded and then checked against when these households are wishing to use the community facility.</p> <p>It is likely that in some instances monitoring use of community facilities will generate resentment from customers as Greatwell Homes play the role of “policing”.</p>
<p>Multiple entrances and exits to reduce crowding</p>	<p>Where 2 entrances exist then an entrance and exit sign can be put up and the taping on the floor can be established to ensure a safe one-way system.</p> <p>Where a second exit doesn't exist then consideration would need to be given to using kitchen as 2nd route.</p>	<p>Some schemes have electric doors to allow entrance and exit but not on kitchen doors meaning those with impaired mobility won't be able to utilise this route and some schemes do not have routes out of community facility through the kitchen. These will need further assessment to see if they can be opened safely without this mitigation.</p>
<p>All surfaces, especially those most frequently touched, should be cleaned regularly</p>	<p>Prior to and after each use of community facility all surfaces are wiped down with disinfectant.</p> <p>These would be all chairs, tables, light switches, grab rails, door handles, window sills etc.</p>	<p>Should access to the community facility be permitted 24 hours a day this cannot be achieved, and it would have to be done periodically. Even with this being done periodically, for instance on a weekly basis, for all 8 community facilities this would place a much greater work load on the estates team.</p> <p>If access is organised via a booking system then the estates team could be notified prior to the community facility being used. This would reduce amount of cleaning and make it specific but would require a high level of responsiveness from the estates team that may well not be feasible.</p>

<p>Signs provided to show good handwashing technique, the need to increase handwashing frequency, advice to avoid touching your face and to cough or sneeze into a tissue which is binned safely, or into your arm if a tissue is not available</p>	<p>Signs would need to be made or purchased and put up in relevant areas.</p> <p>A survey would be needed to ensure there are sufficient bins in the community facilities and that the estates teams scheduled regularly emptying of these.</p>	<p>This could be achieved relatively straightforwardly. The staff hours to put the signs up and a decision on how frequently to empty bins would need considering.</p>
<p>Provide hand sanitiser in multiple locations, such as community facilities.</p>	<p>Hand sanitiser would be placed at the entrance to every community facility.</p> <p>A regular check by a Greatwell Homes staff member would be required to make sure firstly it is being used, secondly it is still in situ and thirdly if it is empty and needs replacing.</p>	<p>There may be scarcities to such items and so enough provision would need to be ordered and held in stock prior to proceeding.</p> <p>The frequency of the checks on the hand sanitiser and if being used by customers places an additional burden on staff time.</p>
<p>Set clear use and cleaning guidance for toilets to ensure they are kept clean and social distancing is achieved as much as possible</p>	<p>Some community toilet facilities have these already but not specifically Covid-19 warnings.</p> <p>A survey would be required of all toilets and signage put up.</p>	<p>There is risk that paper towels used and dropped on the floor may retain germs and present a risk to the next user of the toilet. It will not be possible to mitigate this risk as the schedule of the toilet cleaning may not take place between use of the toilets.</p> <p>In terms of social distancing the toilets within schemes are single occupancy and so there won't be joint areas for simultaneous handwashing etc.</p>
<p>Everyone, including staff, should be asked to wash their hands thoroughly for at least 20 seconds using soap and water or to use hand sanitiser if hand washing facilities are not available on entering and leaving community facilities.</p>	<p>Signs could be put up to encourage this.</p> <p>Hand sanitiser could be provided to at the entrance of the community facilities to encourage use.</p> <p>Open adjacent kitchen facilities to allow access to sink for all customer to wash hands one by one as they enter communal room.</p>	<p>Hand washing is a key method of reducing spread of COVID-19. If a staff member was present, then washing hands or hand sanitiser could be a condition of entry. The burden of staff time means this wouldn't be possible.</p>

	Provide anti-bacterial handwash in all kitchen and toilets in schemes.	
Wear a face covering in enclosed public spaces, such as a community facility.	Signs could be put up to encourage this.	The guidance around face masks is vague and, in this instance, refers to more crowded venues. Given the size and number of customers involved it is not essential.
Individuals such as all people aged 70 or over are advised to stay at home as much as possible	Do not allow those who are aged over 70 or have serious heart or lung conditions to use the community facilities. Signs to be put up to advise customers of this	The ability to determine who is in the community facilities, their age and health conditions would require staff monitoring. Preventing access to community facilities based on age or health may contravene equalities legislation.
If you have felt symptoms, or been in contact with some one who has, self isolate	If it is known a customer has felt unwell or been in contact with some one who has symptoms they will not be given access to communal facilities. Signs to be put up to advise customers of this	There would be an assumption that customers would comply with this however without technology i.e a heat scanner which some premises such as schools are implementing Greatwell Homes couldn't ensure this.
Assist track and trace service by keeping a temporary record of those using the community facility for 21 days	Provide a specific sign in book for entry and exit from community facilities. Staff to collect this daily	There would be a reliance on customers complying with this if a staff member isn't present. A procedure would be required to store correctly for the 21 day period.

Conclusion

Based on the guidance, actions required and mitigation there is a large amount of resource **that would be required for Greatwell Homes to safely re-open the community facilities in Independent Living Schemes**. The guidance does not permit a return to the “old normal” where facilities are open 24 hours a day 7 days a week and customers can use freely. However, it also doesn't permit a full speed ahead with a “new normal” as **socialising indoors is still limited to two households**.