

# Coronavirus (COVID-19)

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*Page updated 6th November 2020*

# Coronavirus Testing & Tracking

## Coronavirus Testing

All local government employees, including those employed by local councils are eligible for testing if they have symptoms of the virus.

[Click here to view Robert Jenrick's letter regarding COVID-19 testing for council staff](#)

## Councils given key role in tracking

The LocalGov website reports that the government is to hand over £300m to principal authorities in England to support track and trace work in order that any future outbreaks be managed locally. Under the plans, councils have been asked to submit detailed virus control plans by the end of June to demonstrate how they would manage a localised outbreak including infection prevention strategies and ensuring effective testing capacity. The work will be led by Local Resilience Forums and council appointed boards and data will be shared with the Joint Biosecurity Centre allowing a more detailed local response should a further lockdown become necessary. Health and Social Care secretary, Matt Hancock MP, said: 'Test and trace will work at its best with central government working side by side with local authorities. We will work with them to reduce the spread of coronavirus in their area, harnessing their local knowledge and mobilising boots on the ground.'

[Click here to read the full article.](#)

## Creating a coronavirus NHS QR code for your venue

You should create and display a QR code if you:

Have a physical location that is open to the public  
Hosting an event which is taking place in a physical location  
If you have more than one venue, you need to create a separate QR code for each location.

Visitors should scan the QR code when they arrive using the NHS COVID-19 app. This is to help trace and stop the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19).

Creating a QR code takes less than five minutes and is a very simple process.

You will need the post code of the venue and will be asked to provide your name, a contact telephone number and email address.

[Click on this link and follow the instructions \(English\)](#)

[Click on this link and follow the instructions \(Welsh\)](#)

## Face Coverings

From 15 June, face coverings will be required while using public transport in England.

If you can, wear a face covering in an enclosed space where social distancing isn't possible and where you will come into contact with people you do not normally meet. This is most relevant for short periods indoors in crowded areas, for example, on public transport or in some shops.

Evidence suggests that wearing a face covering does not protect you. However, if you are infected but have not yet developed symptoms, it may provide some protection for others you come into close contact with.

Face coverings do not replace social distancing. If you have symptoms of COVID-19 (cough and/or high temperature), you and your household must isolate at home: wearing a face covering does not change this.

A face covering is not the same as the surgical masks or respirators used by healthcare and other workers as part of personal protective equipment. These should continue to be reserved for those who need them to protect against risks in their workplace, such as health and care workers, and those in industrial settings, like those exposed to dust hazards.

Face coverings should not be used by children under the age of 2 or those who may find it difficult to manage them correctly. For example, primary age children unassisted, or those with respiratory conditions.

It is important to use face coverings properly and wash your hands before putting them on and taking them off.

The Government is encouraging people to make their own face coverings. The key thing is it should cover the mouth and nose.

## Council Meetings

### Council Meetings

The advice around face to face council meetings remains unaltered. NALC's view with which the SLCC agrees, is that it's worth highlighting that councils should not be holding meetings in person and wherever possible staff should work from home. If a council needs to meet, for example to approve the accounts and AGAR, then this should be done remotely.

## Holding Local Council Meetings

The government issued regulations that make a handful of amendments to The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 ('the Primary Regulations'). These amendments took effect from 1 August 2020.

Of relevance to our sector, the first amendment of note is that "parish meetings" have been added to the definition of "local authority" in the Primary Regulations. In simple terms this means that Sch 12 Pt III LGA 1972 parish meetings are now also subject to those rules that have applied to meetings of a parish council regarding remote access, frequency of such meetings, and public and press access.

The changes to Part II of the Principal Regulations of relevance to parish councils are as follows:

The requirement for parish councils to hold an annual meeting in each year has been disapplied (as the Principal Regulations are currently drafted to only apply to meetings that are required to be held, or held, before 7<sup>th</sup> May 2021, as matters currently stand this will still mean there will still be a legal requirement to hold an annual meeting on or after 7<sup>th</sup> May 2021).

The requirement to fix, at least three clear days before a meeting of a parish council, a time and place notice in some conspicuous place in the parish (*aka 'the walk of death requirement'*) has been disapplied.

The requirements for parish meetings to assemble annually between 1 March and 1 June every year, or twice yearly where there is no separate parish council, and no earlier than 1800 hrs, have all been disapplied (again, because the Principal Regulations apply only to meetings that are required to be held, or held before 7<sup>th</sup> May 2021, this may leave a relatively short window of 22 days in which to hold a parish meeting: this may of course change, but in any event, with the changes regarding public and press access, it is anticipated that this will not make such meetings an impossibility).

The public notice requirements of parish meetings have been disapplied.

The changes to Part III of the Principal Regulations address certain issues relating to public and press access to meetings (i.e. meetings of parish councils, and now also parish meetings). From 1 August 2020:

Any public notice of the time and place of meetings will now have to also include details of remote access by public and press to such meetings by electronic means, including by telephone conference, video conference, live webcasts, and live interacting streaming; and

The obligation to post such notices on 'the website of the principal council' has been amended so that such notices can now be posted on the parish council's own website (the option to publish such notice on the principal council's website still remains).

The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) has released guidance to help you to use video conferencing, such as Zoom and Skype, securely. [The guidance can be viewed here.](#)

In response to the new regulations SLCC has launched free webinar training for members and non-members on how to hold council meetings by webinar.

The pre-recorded 60 minute session will be presented by Andrew Maliphant and is an invaluable resource in assisting clerks facilitate their first virtual meetings.

[Click here to read the advice note.](#)

[Click here to access the free webinar training.](#)

The LGA Hub also provides a range of resources which although aimed at principal authorities may be of interest.

For more advice on council meetings please see the FAQ section below.

## FAQ's

### How do I give notice of a virtual meeting?

Regulation 13 amends Section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960. The existing requirements of the public notice of the time and place of meetings is amended so that this obligation is met if notice is published on the website of the principal council within the meaning of the Local Government Act 1972. We suspect this is a drafting error and that the intention was for this to require posting on the parish council website – aside from the fact that it could be problematic to post notice of such a meeting on the principal council's website, it of course makes sense for such postings to be on the parish council website. However, as the legislation currently stands, solely posting on the parish council website will not satisfy this requirement.

**The position of the SLCC, and having discussed this with our colleagues at NALC, is that posting on the parish council website will suffice for the purpose of these Regulations.** If you can additionally post notice of such meetings on the principal council website, then it is prudent to do so. It is further hoped that there will be an amendment in the near future to rectify this.

Additionally, there appears to be a further anomaly within the Regulations. As the 10(2) legal obligation in Part II of Schedule 12 of LGA 1972 has NOT been disapplied, this would suggest that the general requirements regarding the fixing of any notice of meetings three clear days before a meeting of the parish council 'in some conspicuous place in the parish' and the signature obligations will continue to apply. Again we have discussed the matter with our colleagues at NALC and the SLCC's position is that a purposive and common sense approach to this will probably not be met with much criticism by the judiciary if circumstances dictate that due to health and safety matters etc this cannot be complied with to the letter. Once again we would welcome an amendment to the Regulations to reflect this, and again in the meantime if you are able to comply with the requirements of 10(2) and with minimum risk to health and safety then you may consider it prudent to do so in any event. [Click here to view the 'Virtual Meetings in England' advice note.](#)

### Holding Meetings by Webinar – Free training

Following the regulations which enable town and parish councils to conduct 'virtual meetings', the SLCC has launched free webinar training for members and non-members on how to hold council meetings by webinar.

[Click here to view the pre-recorded 60 minute session.](#)

### How can we take decisions?

Local authorities are required to hold meetings to make decisions. The Local Government Act 1972 requires members to be physically present in order for a meeting to take place. This applies to councils in all tiers. The exception to that rule is in Wales, where for principal authorities only remote attendance is allowed under the circumstances provided by section 4 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 provided there is a quorum of 30% physically present. This measure does not apply to community councils and may confuse dual hatted councillors.

Given that these times are indeed exceptional (and a declared pandemic should meet the test for this), most Councils will cancel their usual meetings and these need to be replaced with alternative decision making processes. The lawful way to do this is that a decision, that would otherwise have been on the agenda for a committee or Council, is now made by an officer. To ensure that this remains inclusive of elected members, the officer is advised in their decision-making seek the views of members of the committee/Council. This could be by email, SKYPE, telephone (not the best as there is no permanent record).

The officer cannot in law fetter (constrain) their discretion entirely, but that does not mean that they cannot give almost overwhelming weight to the views of members responding remotely to a report and officers' advice, or even after seeing written submissions by members of the public in lieu of public access.

In some councils it may be desirable to formalise which members are to be consulted e.g Chairman & Vice Chairman. This does not in the SLCC's view create a committee of 2 members and does not therefore need to meet. In political councils regard should be had to the existing protocols that the Council has established which may include the role of Leader and have reference to political proportionality.

Our colleagues at NALC have issued the following advice to councils with which SLCC completely agrees. *"NALC strongly encourages councillors and staff to follow government guidance on social distancing and self-isolation. This is particularly important if anyone is in an at risk group as identified by the guidance. We would encourage councils to consider if they need to hold scheduled meetings at all. The health and safety of councillors, staff and the public should be your primary concern. If local councils do follow government guidance on social distancing and social isolation and so they do not hold scheduled meetings, including annual council meetings, NALC's opinion is that the likelihood of a successful legal challenge is low. We are expecting government guidance on holding meetings remotely early next week, and NALC will also produce further guidance if appropriate next week. In the meantime, if local councils decide to not hold meetings and take decisions by email or other remote methods NALC feels it's likely that afterwards if there were a challenge that the courts will accept that exceptional times called for exceptional measures. In the absence of government guidance we would suggest for now only taking decisions remotely for truly urgent issues. In this case councils should evidence their decision making as best they can, for example by asking councillors to confirm their votes by email to the Clerk for the Clerk to keep as a record of the decision."* [Click here to view the dedicated NALC page](#)

## What is the latest advice on council meetings?

Following the Government announcement of further easing of lockdown restrictions from 4th July, NALC & SLCC strongly advise local councils to continue to meet remotely, without the need for face to face contact, for the present time. Local councils have the powers to hold public meetings remotely by using video or telephone conferencing technology until May 2021 and so most councils will have no need to meet in person. Furthermore, local councils have the duty to allow the public to observe council meetings without placing restrictions on the number attending, which many council meeting venues will not be able to accommodate in a safe way at this time.

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NALC & SLCC will be updating our guidance on remote meetings shortly to include information on how to approach 'hybrid meetings' where some people attend in person and others join remotely.

### Annual Parish Meeting (England) & Community Meetings (Wales)

The Local Government Act 1972 Part III requires that an annual parish meeting takes place between 1st March and 1st June each year. There is no duty for the Parish Council to convene this although it is customary that it is convened by the Parish Council Chairman at a date and time set by the Parish Council. There is no effective sanction should the Parish Council not set a date and time for this to occur or if the Chairman does not convene the meeting.

In Wales, there is no requirement for an annual community meeting however there is a procedure for electors to follow to demand one and this is set out in Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12, para 30(1), as amended.

[Click here to view the model pandemic plan \(from the CIPD\)](#) which is available to SLCC members in the Advice Library (as the situation evolves the SLCC will update its advice.)

[Join the SLCC today >](#)

## What about the Financial Year End?

### Internal Audit

Clerks should look at the agreed internal audit plan and consider whether this can be delivered by post/email/filesharing and teleconferencing thus minimising any need for face to face meetings. In larger councils this may be more of an issue. However, in smaller councils with fewer transactions a face to face meeting with the internal auditor should not be necessary.

### Approving the AGAR

Following lobbying by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC), supported by SLCC, amendments will be made to the Accounts and Audit Regulations. This applies to English parish councils. The regulations will move the statutory deadlines back by 2 months:

Accounts and AGAR to be approved and published by 31 August 2020 at the latest

Public rights period to commence on or before 1 September 2020.

Final audited accounts and external auditor report and certificate to be published by 30 November 2020

This will significantly alleviate the pressures on parish councils in producing their AGAR. SLCC encourages clerks to continue to progress their year-end accounts work as much as possible, realising that internal audit is impacted by the current restrictions and social distancing.

## Changes to accounts and audit deadlines for 2020

The Government has published regulations extending accounts and audit deadlines in England for 2020. The Regulations do not apply to Wales although we expect separate regulations.

The period during which public rights of inspection may be exercised is now a period of 30 days commencing no later than Tuesday 1 September 2020. The rule that the period must include the first ten working days in July is disapplied. This in turn means that sections 1 and 2 of the un-audited AGAR must be approved and published on a freely accessible website, along with a notice advertising public rights, no later than Monday 31 August 2020. External auditors will provide templates as they have in previous years. Councils can of course approve and publish, and advertise public rights, at an earlier date.

There is no change to the procedure for approval and signature of sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR, so there must still be a Full Council meeting (which could perhaps be held remotely if the council has procedures in place for this and the regulations permitting this are still in force). There is no change to the rules where 'under £25,000' councils in England may declare themselves (again at a Full Council meeting) exempt from external audit.

There has been no change to the publication requirements and deadlines under the Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities (applying to councils in England where neither gross receipts nor gross payments for the year exceed £25,000). Councils should use their best endeavours to comply with the Code, if applicable, but the risk of challenge is low.

[Click here to view the advice note on Coronavirus and Local Council Money](#)

## Wales Audit Office Update & FAQ's

The Wales Audit Office (WAO) has released an update and frequently asked questions to keep members up to date with the latest information.

Current requirements of The Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations remain unchanged in regards to the approval of the accounts which must be at a meeting of the council and not delegated down to the Chair. It is expected that there will be delays in the completion of audits with the Wales Audit Office, BDO and Grant Thornton and local councils having to close their offices for the foreseeable future.

[Click here to view the WAO FAQs \(updated 30 April\)](#)

[Join the SLCC today & view more COVID-19 advice >](#)

## Where can I get advice?

The coronavirus situation is fast-moving and there is an increasing amount of misinformation online. Clerks should be using government advice to inform decisions and be checking these sites regularly. Unless otherwise stated all advice applies to both England & Wales. The SLCC continues to monitor the evolving situation and will update this advice as it changes. We are in regular communication with our colleagues at NALC and One Voice Wales. This is to ensure that advice to the sector is consistent and to support their lobbying efforts to remove some of the barriers we are currently facing.

Public Health England

Guidance from Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy assist employers and businesses in providing advice to their staff

There is advice from ACAS that is useful in considering any employment-related matters that may impact you and your staff.

## Who is vulnerable?

This group includes those who are:

aged 70 or older (regardless of medical conditions)

under 70 with an underlying health condition listed below (ie anyone instructed to get a flu jab as an adult each year on medical grounds):

chronic (long-term) respiratory diseases, such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), emphysema or bronchitis

chronic heart disease, such as heart failure

chronic kidney disease

chronic liver disease, such as hepatitis

chronic neurological conditions, such as Parkinson's disease, motor neurone disease, multiple sclerosis (MS), a learning disability or cerebral palsy

diabetes

problems with your spleen – for example, sickle cell disease or if you have had your spleen removed

a weakened immune system as the result of conditions such as HIV and AIDS, or medicines such as steroid tablets or chemotherapy

being seriously overweight (a BMI of 40 or above)

those who are pregnant

## Finance & Funding

### Changes to accounts and audit deadlines for 2020

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There has been no change to the publication requirements and deadlines under the Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities (applying to councils in England where neither gross receipts nor gross payments for the year exceed £25,000). Councils should use their best endeavours to comply with the Code, if applicable, but the risk of challenge is low.

[Click here to view the advice note on Coronavirus and Local Council Money.](#)

## Changes to the Furlough Scheme

The furlough scheme is being used by a small number of local councils where posts are not funded by the precept.

From 1 July, employers can bring back to work employees that have previously been furloughed for any amount of time and any shift pattern, while still being able to claim the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme grant for their normal hours not worked. When claiming the grant for furloughed hours employers will need to report and claim for a minimum period of a week. Until 1st July a claim must cover a minimum 3 week period and no work can be undertaken.

The scheme will close to new entrants from 30 June. From this point onwards, employers will only be able to furlough employees that they have furloughed for a full 3 week period prior to 30 June.

This means that the final date by which an employer needs to agree with their employee and ensure they place them on furlough is 10 June. Employers will have until 31 July to make any claims in respect of the period to 30 June.

From 1 July 2020, businesses will be given the flexibility to bring furloughed employees back part time. This is a month earlier than previously announced to help support people back to work. Individual employers will decide the hours and shift patterns their employees will work on their return, so that they can decide on the best approach for them – and will be responsible for paying their wages while in work.

From August 2020, the level of government grant provided through the job retention scheme will be slowly tapered to reflect that people will be returning to work. That means that for June and July the government will continue to pay 80% of people's salaries. In the following months, businesses will be asked to contribute, but crucially individuals will continue to receive that 80% of salary covering the time they are unable to work.

The scheme updates mean that the following will apply for the period people are furloughed:

June and July: The government will pay 80% of wages up to a cap of £2,500 as well as employer National Insurance (ER NICs) and pension contributions. Employers are not required to pay anything.

August: The government will pay 80% of wages up to a cap of £2,500. Employers will pay ER NICs and pension contributions.

September: The government will pay 70% of wages up to a cap of £2,187.50. Employers will pay ER NICs and pension contributions and 10% of wages to make up 80% total up to a cap of £2,500.

October: The government will pay 60% of wages up to a cap of £1,875. Employers will pay ER NICs and pension contributions and 20% of wages to make up 80% total up to a cap of £2,500. For the average claim, this represents 23% of the gross employment costs the employer would have incurred had the employee not been furloughed. An employer can still choose to make wages up to 100%.

#### Claim for wages through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

[Claim for some of your employee's wages if you have put them on furlough or flexible furlough because of coronavirus \(COVID-19\).](#)

## Emergency funding for local councils

On 28 April 2020, MHCLG released the figures relating to emergency funding for local councils. The SLCC is seeking clarification as to whether any of these funds will be cascaded through to town and parish councils and will update members with information as soon as it is available. [Click here to access this information.](#)

## HMRC guidance on expenses and benefits provided to employees during coronavirus

HMRC have published guidance on the tax treatment of certain expenses and benefits provided to employees (including employees of local councils) during the current emergency. The guidance largely reflects existing law and practice but there are a few concessions. [Click here to view the guidance.](#)

There is also guidance on the tax treatment of expenses reimbursed to employees who work from home. This again largely reflects existing law and practice. [This guidance can be found here.](#)

## Latest Government Advice

### Local COVID alert levels: what you need to know

Local COVID alert levels set out information for local authorities, residents and workers about what to do and how to manage the outbreak in their area. Local COVID alert levels are sometimes called 'tiers' or known as a 'local lockdown'.

Find out what you can and cannot do if you live, work or travel in each local COVID alert level.

[Check the local COVID alert level of your local area to see which level applies to you.](#)

## Planning

## Planning Update

In response to the spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19), the Government has published an update on temporary and other measures aimed to make it easier to operate the planning system. These measures include the greater use of social media, delegated powers and representative groups.

[Click here for further information.](#)

This issue will be explored in more detail in the July edition of The Clerk magazine.

## Neighbourhood Planning Consultation

The Government has amended its guidance on neighbourhood planning by including additional paragraph (107) on public consultation during the coronavirus crisis. This states, 'The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 require neighbourhood planning groups and local planning authorities to undertake publicity in a manner that is likely to bring it to the attention of people who live, work or carry on business in the neighbourhood area at particular stages of the process. It is not mandatory that engagement is undertaken using face-to-face methods. However, to demonstrate that all groups in the community have been sufficiently engaged, such as with those without internet access, more targeted methods may be needed including by telephone or in writing. Local planning authorities may be able to advise neighbourhood planning groups on suitable methods and how to reach certain groups in the community'. [Click here to view the updated guidance](#)

## Regulations Update

### Amendment to The Local Authorities and Police & Crime Panels (Coronavirus) Regulations

The government has now issued regulations that make a handful of amendments to The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 ('the Primary Regulations'). These amendment will take effect as from 1 August 2020.

Of relevance to our sector, the first amendment of note is that "parish meetings" have been added to the definition of "local authority" in the Primary Regulations. In simple terms this means that Sch 12 Pt III LGA 1972 parish meetings are now also subject to those rules that have applied to meetings of a parish council regarding remote access, frequency of such meetings, and public and press access.

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The requirement to fix, at least three clear days before a meeting of a parish council, a time and place notice in some conspicuous place in the parish has been disapplied.

The requirements for parish meetings to assemble annually between 1 March and 1 June every year, or twice yearly where there is no separate parish council, and no earlier than 1800 hrs, have all been disapplied (again, because the Principal Regulations apply only to meetings that are required to be held, or held before 7th May 2021, this may leave a relatively short window of 22 days in which to hold a parish meeting: this may of course change, but in any event, with the changes regarding public and press access, it is anticipated that this will not make such meetings an impossibility).

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The obligation to post such notices on 'the website of the principal council' has been amended so that such notices can now be posted on the parish council's own website (the option to publish such notice on the principal council's website still remains).

## Reopening of Council Facilities & Events

### Management of urban centres & green spaces in England

On 13th May the Government issued advice on management of urban centres and green spaces in England. [The guidance is detailed and offers practical steps for clerks to consider using a decision tree.](#)

[Chapter 5 specifically deals with green spaces.](#)

## Public Spaces & Play Areas

Play areas re-opening: From 4 July, people will be able to visit outdoor playgrounds (this also includes outdoor gyms). When attending playgrounds, people should not:



gather outdoors in a group of more than six people from different households; gatherings larger than 6 should only take place if everyone is from just two households

interact socially with anyone outside the group you are attending the playground with

The government recommends that you keep two metres away from people as a precaution or one metre when you can mitigate the risk by taking other named precautions i.e. avoid being face-to-face with people if they are outside your household, keep your hands and face as clean as possible, avoid crowded spaces, avoid shouting or singing close to someone outside your household etc. [Click here to view the government key principles for safely reopening playgrounds and outdoor gyms.](#)

SLCC will issue further guidance on this.

People may drive to outdoor open spaces irrespective of distance, so long as they respect social distancing guidance while they are there, because this does not involve contact with people outside your household.

When travelling to outdoor spaces, it is important that people respect the rules in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and do not travel to different parts of the UK where it would be inconsistent with guidance or regulations issued by the relevant devolved administration.

Clerks on the borders with Wales and Scotland need to be aware that the rules are different in those devolved administrations. Clerks with open spaces will need to review the "COVID-19 Secure" guidelines when these are published later this week.

## Reopening of council buildings

The Government has published guidelines for the safe management of council buildings. It signposts to relevant guidance on a range of different activities that can take place in these buildings, in line with the government's roadmap to ease the existing measures to tackle COVID-19. [Click here to view the guidelines.](#)

## Reopening multi-purpose community facilities

*Advice updated 6th November*

Community Centres must remain closed except for the provision of:

Essential voluntary activities or urgent public support services (including food banks or other support for the homeless or vulnerable people, blood donation sessions or support in an emergency)

Education or training

Support groups

Childcare

Supervised activities for children

## Reopening of Playgrounds & Outdoor Gyms

On 17th July 2020, the Government issued updated guidance on the safe reopening of playgrounds in England. Separate guidance was issued by the Welsh Government on 20th July setting out the requirements in Wales.

Helen Ball, Town Clerk to Shrewsbury Town Council and SLCC Director, has been working closely with the Association of Play Industries (API) to communicate the challenges presented by the Government's guidelines on the re-opening of play areas and has also represented the SLCC in the discussions with MHCLG. Helen commented 'I think this will give comfort to many clerks who struggled with the tone and language of the original guidelines. It focuses on the emphasis being to undertake a risk assessment and mitigate in line with current guidelines'.

[The guidance on the safe reopening of playgrounds in England can be viewed here.](#)

[The guidance on the safe reopening of playgrounds in Wales \(published 20th July\) can be viewed here.](#)

There are some substantive changes in the guidance around face coverings and disposal of them (section 4 – key principals) and face coverings for staff (section 6). These are linked to the wider guidance on wearing of face coverings when out in public in England.

Helen will be representing the SLCC in a roundtable discussion with MHCLG and other key stakeholders from the play industry on 10th August.

## Reopening of Public Toilets & Waste Facilities

Information has been published in a letter to local councils from Simon Clarke MP, Local Government Minister and Rebecca Pow MP, Environment Minister which includes guidelines on the opening of public toilets. The government are keen to keep public toilets open where possible in order that those people who need to make use of the facilities, which include those with specific health needs, families, outdoor workers and those exercising outside, may do so safely. [To read the full letter, please click here.](#)

[Click here to view the new Public Toilet Risk Assessment and Action Plan in the SLCC Advice Library.](#)

The Government also issued updated guidance on managing green spaces. [Click here to view the guidance.](#)

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