



BRIDGEND TOWN COUNCIL REOPENING OF CARNEGIE HOUSE RISK ASSESSMENT REPORT

On May 5th Facilities Manager Rhiannon Stone and Community Engagement and Events Manager Sharlene Lewis conducted a Covid-19 Risk Assessment to ascertain the feasibility of the reopening of Carnegie House. This was done whilst consulting the latest government guidance on <https://gov.wales/safe-use-multi-purpose-community-centres-covid-19>

A survey was also sent to all tutors and class participants to attain their thoughts and feelings on returning to inhouse classes at Carnegie House within the coming weeks.

Core principles for safely reopening community facilities

The government state that “any reopening plans should be consistent with:

- taking all [reasonable measures](#) to minimise the risk of exposure to and the spread of coronavirus by those who have been at the premises
- [core public health guidance](#) regarding health, [cleaning](#), hand and respiratory hygiene, and [social distancing](#)
- [safe workplace guidelines](#), to ensure employees are safe to return to work.

Anyone with control of non-domestic premises (such as a community centre, village or community hall) has legal responsibilities under health and safety law, and must take reasonable measures to ensure the premises, access to it, and any equipment or substances provided are safe for people using it, so far as is reasonably practicable.

To help decide which actions to take prior to reopening the building for permitted activity, a **COVID-19 risk assessment should be completed**”

On the 5th May 2021 a full Covid- 19 Risk Assessment was completed by the Facilities Manager and the Community Engagement and Event Manager at Carnegie House following the above guidance.

Social distancing and capacity

The Welsh Government guidance states “that Measures should be in place to ensure all users of community facilities follow the up to date guidelines on [staying safe and social distancing](#). A distance of 2 metres is specified as the most appropriate minimum physical distance and must be followed wherever reasonable to do so. Guidance on [how to support social distancing](#) is available. It is accepted that there might be some, limited circumstances where a distance of 2 metres cannot reasonably be maintained. In such circumstances you must consider other reasonable steps to minimise risk of exposure to coronavirus by taking

appropriate [mitigation measures](#). However, if 2 metres can reasonably be maintained then you are under a duty to take measures to do so.

The size and circumstance of the premises will determine the maximum number of people and the number of activities that can be accommodated while also facilitating physical distancing. In defining the number of people that can reasonably follow 2 metre distancing guidelines the total floor space as well as likely pinch points and busy areas should be taken into account (e.g. entrances, exits) and where possible alternative or one-way routes introduced to prevent the congregation of people in areas of high usage.

A risk assessment should determine the maximum capacity of a hall or hire space whilst able to maintain physical distancing according to the relevant guidelines. It should also identify points of high risk in the building (such as entrances, waiting areas etc) and mitigating actions to address the identified risks. Read the [risk assessment tool guidance](#). Those managing and using the centre should also consider what changes might be needed to enable safe access to the building. These may include:

Making use of multiple exit and entry points: to introduce a one-way flow in and out of the premises, with appropriate floor markings or signage. Any changes to entrances, exits and queues should take into account the need to make reasonable adjustments for those who need them, such as disabled people.

Managing the arrival and departure times of different groups to reduce the pressure at exits and entrances.

Queue management: the flow of groups in and out of the premises should be carefully controlled to reduce the risk of congestion. It may be necessary to introduce physically distanced queuing systems.

You must have regard to the guidance to ensure you are [taking all reasonable measures to minimise the risk of exposure to coronavirus in the workplace and premises open to the public.](#)"

The Covid -19 Risk Assessment carried out by the Facilities Manager and Community Engagement Manager identified that the maximum capacity of the downstairs of Carnegie House with 2 metres social distancing and all of the above considerations in place, were six for students seated at a desk plus one tutor or eight for those standing or seated in a chair plus one tutor.

Face coverings

The Welsh Government states "everyone over the age of 11 attending a community centre is required to wear a face covering, as it is an indoor public place. There are some limited exceptions to this requirement. The wearing of visors does not meet this requirement. The Regulations require the face covering to cover the nose and mouth. Information about the use of face coverings can be found here: [Face coverings: guidance for the public](#). Staff should also wear face coverings, please see the guidance on face coverings for employers and managers of premises.

There are specific rules when taking part in an exercise class. A community centre is a public space so everyone will need to wear a face covering when there and keep it on depending on what they are doing. If preparing to exercise, changing or undertaking any activity that isn't strenuous, especially when in close contact with other people, a face covering must be worn."

A survey conducted by the Community Engagement and Events Manager of current students found that many would not be comfortable returning to class whilst face coverings were in place. The language classes have asked not to return whilst this restriction is in place as it is detrimental to their ability to learn.

Vulnerable people

The UK Government guidance states “certain groups of people are at increased risk of severe disease from coronavirus (COVID-19), including all people aged 70 or over. Such individuals are advised to stay at home as much as possible and, if they do go out, to take particular care to minimise contact with others outside of their household.”

The survey also highlighted that people still felt vulnerable and would prefer to return once they had their second vaccine in place, many also felt anxious.

Toilets and Cleaning

The Welsh Government states that “cleaning to an appropriate standard helps minimise the spread of COVID-19. A cleaning regime should be established based on the risk assessment and use of the building. High usage areas and anything that is frequently touched, especially if it is touched by lots of people, will need more regular cleaning than normal.”

The UK Government guidance states “public toilets, portable toilets and toilets inside premises should be kept open and carefully managed to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19.

Steps that will usually be needed:

- Using signs and posters to build awareness of good handwashing technique, the need to increase handwashing frequency and 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.
- Consider the use of social distancing marking in areas where queues normally form, and the adoption of a limited entry approach, with one in, one out (whilst avoiding the creation of additional bottlenecks).
- To enable good hand hygiene consider making hand sanitiser available on entry to toilets where safe and practical, and ensure suitable handwashing facilities including running water and liquid soap and suitable options for drying (either paper towels or hand driers) are available.
- Setting clear use and cleaning guidance for toilets, with increased frequency of cleaning in line with usage. Use normal cleaning products, paying attention to frequently hand touched surfaces, and consider use of disposable cloths or paper roll to clean all hard surfaces.
- Keep the facilities well ventilated, for example by fixing doors open where appropriate.
- Special care should be taken for cleaning of portable toilets and larger toilet blocks.
- Putting up a visible cleaning schedule can keep it up to date and visible.
- Providing more waste facilities and more frequent rubbish collection.”

The Facilities Manager noted that extra resource would be needed to maintain the extra cleaning of high use areas.

Test and Trace (collecting customer data)

The government guidance is that “The Welsh Government Test, Trace, Protect strategy sets out the approach to tackling coronavirus, testing people with symptoms in the community, tracing those who have come into close contact with people who have tested positive for coronavirus and protecting family, friends and our community by self-isolating.

Regulation 12 of the [Health Protection \(Coronavirus Restrictions\) \(No 5\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2020](#) places a duty on those responsible for the centre to collect contact information from each person at the premises or, in relation to persons from the same household, from one of them, and retaining it for 21 days for the purpose of providing it to the Welsh Ministers or to a public health officer upon either’s request.”

Community Engagement and Events Manager noted that we currently do not have a Front of House in place to oversee and coordinate the Test and Trace system. Once in place the Front of House would need to be fully trained not only in the role but also to meet government guidelines.

Considerations for the reopening:

- Staff resource would need to be increased – a Front of House would need to be appointed and additional cleaning undertaken (caretaking/ cleaning resource)
- Covid-19 Risk Assessment would need to be updated for each class to cover all risks dependant on class use
- Additional equipment would need to be purchased for safety such as Perspex screening
- A booking system and Test and Trace measures would need to be put in place
- A queuing system and one-way system managed within the building
- Classes would be operating at a financial loss – class numbers of 6 and 8 are not financially viable and would not cover the cost of the tutor before adding in the additional cost of extra staff and venue management.

Conclusion

Both the Facilities Manager and Community Engagement Manager concluded after carrying out the Covid-19 Risk Assessment that the reopening of Carnegie House is not viable whilst social distancing measures are in place and staff resource is limited. Furthermore, the feedback from class participants themselves have supported reopening once restrictions have eased further and the public feel safer to engage, particularly those who fall into the vulnerable category.

Sharlene Lewis – Community Engagement and Events Manager