**Starting to meet together**

*updated 24 May 2021*

*With the rollout of the vaccine programme and the reduction in infection rates, the restrictions on social mixing are slowly being lifted. These guidelines are given as general information and will be subject to change in England, Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland, Scotland and Wales in line with the relevant public health guidance. Please check the appropriate Government websites for more detailed information.*

**Even if the relevant guidance allows for church and community facilities to be open, those with responsibility for those facilities may decide to apply additional restrictions to ensure the health and well-being of all users, or to choose to delay their opening. In such situations, these decisions must be respected.**

**Can we meet indoors?**

The current guidance is as follows:

England

Groups of up to six can meet together indoors in each other’s homes or another indoor venue such as a church hall.

Northern Ireland

Up to six people from two households can mix indoors in a private dwelling.

Republic of Ireland

Fully vaccinated people from no more than three households can meet indoors in private homes for essential purposes.

Scotland

In Level 2 areas, up to six people from three households can meet together indoors.

Wales

Indoor meetings of different households in private homes are not allowed under current regulations.

Guidelines for Mothers’ Union groups meeting in member’s homes can be found at <https://www.mothersunion.org/sites/default/files/resources/public/Meeting%20in%20peoples%20homes.docx>

**Can we meet outdoors?**

As the summer months approach, many groups may be thinking about meeting outdoors. The current guidance is as follows:

England

Most legal restrictions on meeting others outdoors were lifted on 17 May, but gatherings of over 30 people remain illegal.

Northern Ireland

Up to 15 people (including children) from no more than three households can meet up outdoors in a private garden.

Republic of Ireland

Up to six people from different households (or any number of members from three households) can meet outdoors.

Scotland

In Level 2 areas, up to eight people (from different households) can meet outdoors.

Wales

Up to six people (from different households) can meet outdoors.

**Can we have a Mothers’ Union service in church?**

If you wish to hold a specific service for Mothers’ Union members in your local church, you need to speak to the parish priest/minister and meet any requirements the church has in place to ensure this can happen safely.

At present, singing is not an option.

**Can we meet in a restaurant or coffee shop?**

There are different regulations relating to meeting in hospitality venues such as restaurants, cafés, bars or pubs.

England

No more than six people should meet together at indoor venues such as restaurants, pubs, coffee shops etc. Such premises are required to provide appropriately distanced tables, etc.

Northern Ireland

Up to six people from two households can be seated together in a hospitality venue.

Republic of Ireland

Outdoor hospitality venues are not expected to open before 7 June.

Scotland

In Level 2 areas, the maximum number of people who can meet indoors in a restaurant, café, pub or bar is six people from three households. Up to eight people from different households can meet outdoors in a restaurant, café, pub or bar.

Wales

Up to six people (from different households) can meet indoors in a restaurant, café, pub or bar.

**Can I give a lift to another member?**

Sharing a vehicle with anyone outside your household is not currently recommended.

**Risk assessment**

It is good practice to carry out your own risk assessment for meetings you may organise, especially if you are using alternative premises or meeting outdoors. A risk assessment template can be found at <https://www.mothersunion.org/sites/default/files/resources/public/Risk%20Assessment.docx>

**There can be additional restrictions imposed on local areas and Government advice across Britain & Ireland is subject to change.**

**Current advice for England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales can be found at:**

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-coronavirus-restrictions-what-you-can-and-cannot-do>

**Current advice for the Republic of Ireland can be found at:**

<https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/covid19/covid19_a_to_z.html>