



Level 5 Restrictions

Updated Information Note regarding Level 5 of the Government Plan for Living with COVID-19

05 01 2020

At its meeting of 22 December 2020, Government decided to reintroduce Level 5 restrictions to urgently address rapidly rising infection rates in the country and the worsening international situation. As such, from close of business on 24 December 2020, the country was placed on level 5 of the Government's *Resilience and Recovery 2020 – 2021: Plan for Living with COVID-19*. A further Cabinet meeting was held on December 30 following continued deterioration in Covid-19 infection and hospitalisation rates. As a result the Government introduced a number of additional Level 5 restrictions including:

- Stay at home except for travel for work, education or other essential purposes, or to take exercise within 5km of home;
- Household visits not permitted from midnight December 30;
- Non-essential retail to close on December 31;
- No indoor or outdoor training in groups permitted;
- Outdoor golf and tennis are not permitted;
- Gyms, swimming pools etc. to close on December 31;
- Level 5 restrictions to stay in place until January 31 2021.

This note contains the following:

- Section 1: General Information
- Section 2: Overview of Restrictions
- Section 3: Measures introduced to support our Sectors
- Section 4: Frequently Asked Questions
- Section 5: Guidance Available

Section 1. General Information

Level 5 of the *Plan for Living with COVID-19* means that the virus poses a serious threat and the rate of infection is increasing significantly in the community. The more we work together to reduce the level of the virus, the more activity we will be able to have in our communities. This is a key principle underpinning the 5 levels of the Government's Plan for Living with COVID-19. As such, the following arrangements, apply under the Level 5 restrictions announced on 22 and 30 December 2020:

General Provisions

- Travel outside a person's county of residence was suspended from 27 December, from 31 December people are advised to stay home except for travel for work, education or other essential purposes, or to take exercise within 5km of home;;
- From 31 December non-essential retail services are closed, personal services e.g. hairdressers were closed on December 27;
- There should be no organised indoor or outdoor events;
- Gyms, swimming pools closed on December 31;
- Outdoor tennis and golf is not permitted;

- People should work from home other than for essential purposes only; and
- A double rate of CRSS will be paid for two weeks to businesses that are forced to close as a direct result of the Government restrictions.

Cultural Activities

- Cinemas, theatres, museums, libraries, galleries and other cultural attractions are closed.

Tourism and Hospitality Services

- Hotels may only open for essential, non-social and non-tourist purposes except for guests who already have a booking and were resident on 26 December;
- Restaurants and pubs operating as restaurants closed from 15.00 on 24 December. Hotels may provide food and bar services to guests only after that date;
- Restaurants, cafés and pubs operating as restaurants may provide takeaway and delivery services;
- Up to 6 guests, excluding the couple, will be allowed for weddings from 3 January. Until that date, a transitional arrangement will apply to facilitate weddings with 25 guests, excluding the couple; and
- Up to 10 mourners will be allowed at funerals.

Sporting Activities

- Gyms, leisure centres and swimming pools to close on December 31.
- No indoor exercise or dance classes are permitted;
- Tennis and golf, including outdoors, are not permitted;
- No indoor or outdoor group training allowed;
- No matches/events should take place except for professional and elite sports, horse racing and greyhound racing, and approved equestrian events behind closed doors.

Section 2. Overview of Level 5 Public Health Measures and Exemptions

The following table sets out the conditions under Level 5 of the Plan in more detail, including some of the additional adjustments decided by Government on 22 December and 30 December.

ACTIVITY	LEVEL 5	Additional Information
Organised Indoor Gatherings	No organised indoor gatherings should take place.	Exemption for the Abbey Theatre's <i>Theatre for One and a Little One</i> from 28-30 December.
Organised Outdoor Gatherings	No organised outdoor gatherings should take place.	
Weddings Regardless of venue.	From 3 January, up to 6 guests for ceremony and reception (excluding couple and staff).	Inter-county travel is allowed to attend a wedding. A transitional arrangement will apply whereby weddings with 25 guests, plus couple, may take place between 24 December and 2 January.
Funerals	Up to 10 mourners	
Exercise & Sporting Events	Individual training only. No exercise or dance classes.	Gyms, Leisure Centres and Swimming Pools closed from December 31.

Training	No “organised training”	
	No Golf and tennis, including outdoors	
Matches and Events	No matches or events to take place with the exception of professional and elite sport, equestrian, horse-racing & greyhound racing which can take place behind closed doors.	
Gyms, Leisure Centres and Swimming Pools	Gyms, leisure centres and swimming closed from 31 December.	
Museums Galleries and other cultural attractions.	All venues closed. Online services available.	This includes National Cultural Institutions, Art Galleries (other than private galleries offering artworks for sale), Museums, Concert Halls, Theatres, Tourist attractions etc.
Bars, Café’s, Restaurants (including Hotel Bars and Restaurants)	Take-away food or delivery only.	Staff canteens and hotels where people are residing on the premises are exempted.
Wet Pubs	Closed, apart from take-away or delivery only.	
Nightclubs, Discos and Casinos	Closed	
Hotels, Guesthouses, B&B’s etc.	Open but only for those with essential non-social and non-tourist purposes.	A limited exemption applies to guests with bookings made prior to 1pm on 22 December and that are due to check in prior to 27 December
Retail and Services For example hairdressers, beauticians, barbers	Non-essential retail and services closed.	
Work	Work from home unless essential for work which is an essential health, social care, or other essential service and cannot be done from home.	

Section 3. Measures introduced to support our Sectors

The Minister, recognising the challenges presented by the public health measures to the sectors under the aegis of her Department, has provided for a range of supports and measures across her sectors. This press release provides a useful summary:

<https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/ed46a-2020-department-supports-areas-among-hardest-hit-by-covid-19/>

Some of the **key measures introduced** to date to help support the tourism, arts, culture and sports sectors include:

Tourism

- The “Stay and Spend” tax credit initiative ([Press Release](#))
- A €26m Adaptation Grant for the tourism sector
- A €10m grant for coach tourism

Culture and Arts

- An additional €25m for the Arts Council ([Press Release](#))
- €5m to support key cultural organisations, arts and cultural infrastructure and digital cultural content;
- €300,000 to the National Gallery of Ireland for COVID-19 related enhancements;
- Bursaries for Gaeltacht artists to a total value of €280,000 ([Press Release](#))
- Music Industry Stimulus Package €1.7m, announced on 23 October ([Press Release](#)), and has funded 184 musicians/bands to date ([Press Release](#))
- Live Performance Support Scheme €5m – 58 successful applicants ([Press Release](#))
- Decade of Centenaries Local Authority funding €900,000 ([Press Release](#))
- IMMA €600,000 & Crawford Art Gallery €400,000 ([Press Release](#))
- Funding of €230,000 for the expansion of Minding Creative Minds service to the entire Irish creative sector, both home and abroad. ([Press Release](#))

Gaeltacht

- A €5m Company Stabilisation Support for Gaeltacht Companies: Sustaining Enterprise Equity Scheme. This scheme is run by Údarás na Gaeltacht in partnership with Enterprise Ireland to support Údarás client companies deal with the liquidity challenges posed by COVID-19 ([Press Release](#))
- A support package totalling over €4m for the Irish summer colleges sector ([Press Release](#))
- An additional allocation of €8m for Údarás na Gaeltachta under the July Stimulus package.
- €7.4m in COVID-19 supports approved by Údarás na Gaeltachta to assist Gaeltacht business.

Sport

- In November, an unprecedented €85 million funding package was announced for the Irish sport sector, which has been significantly impacted by the various Covid-19 restrictions imposed since March 2020. In addition, as part of the July Stimulus, funding support was provided for operators of swimming pools in recognition of the particular challenges they faced. The breakdown of COVID-19 funding support allocated by Sport Ireland are set out in the table below. Full details are available on the Sport Ireland website www.sportireland.ie

Gaelic Games	€30,995,000
Other Field Sports	€31,400,000
National Governing Bodies of sport Resilience Fund	€4,030,500
Sports Club Resilience Fund	€11,997,328
NGB Restart and Renewal Fund	€2,187,500
Local Sports Partnerships Community Support Fund	€2,630,767
Disability Sport Support Fund	€494,000
Swimming Pool Support Fund	€3,200,000

Broadcasting

- Waiver of broadcasting levy for independent radio sector for first half 2020, worth €1m to sector
- COVID-19-related round of Sound and Vision Scheme for commercial radio sector ([Press Release](#))
- €750,000 Sound and Vision round for community radio
- Additional €2m in July Stimulus for Sound and Vision
- Additional TG4 funding €1.9m ([Press Release](#))

Plus – Universal supports

The universal income supports of PUP and the wage subsidy scheme have been key to supporting to all sectors through this crisis; the extension of both of these schemes has provided some much needed certainty.

The recently announced COVID Restrictions Support Scheme will also support businesses across our sectors. This support scheme is in addition to the PUP and EWSS, and is targeted at businesses that have been significantly impacted by COVID-19 restrictions i.e. that have had to close temporarily or to operate at a significantly reduced level.

As part of the range of measures designed to support business through this return to Level 5, Government has decided to provide a number of additional supports, including that the double rate of CRSS will be paid for 2 weeks to businesses that are forced to close as a direct result of the Government restrictions on December 26.

Budget 2021 ([Press Release](#))

As part of a record budget allocation of over €1 billion, the Minister announced the following measures:

- New €55m support fund for strategic tourism businesses;
- VAT on the sector reduced to 9%, will improve competitiveness and viability of businesses
- Hospitality,; accommodation and arts businesses impacted by pandemic can get rebates of up to €5,000 a week under new COVID-19 Restrictions Support Scheme (CRSS);
- New €50m support for live entertainment - a range of supports for live entertainment events to take place in 2021 in venues across the country, other measures to support music, and a new grant scheme for equipment;
- €130m for the Arts Council – a record level;
- Over €78m funding allocation for Gaeltacht and Irish language sector – up €14.8m on initial 2020 allocation;
- Funding for TG4 up to €40.733m; and

- Sport Ireland allocated €104.5m – up €36m.

Taskforces

The Minister is acutely aware of the need to support the sectors under the aegis of the Department through these challenging times. Both the Minister and her officials have been in regular and sustained contact with a broad range of stakeholders over the past weeks and months. In addition to bilateral engagements with a wide range of stakeholders and agencies under the aegis of the Department, a number of taskforces and consultative fora have been established to ensure that the Minister has the most up to date information about the difficulties facing these sectors. This includes:

- the Tourism Recovery Taskforce, (<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/be0cb-tourism-recovery-plan-2020-2023/>);
- the Tourism Hospitality Forum;
- the Arts and Culture Recovery Taskforce, (<https://www.gov.ie/en/news/e7f78-latest-updates-from-the-arts-and-culture-recovery-taskforce/>);
- the Night-time Economy Taskforce, and;
- the Sports Monitoring Group.

These involve a broad range of stakeholders with experience and insight to develop sustainable roadmaps for the recovery of these sectors. This engagement led to the very favourable outcomes achieved for these sectors in the context of the July Stimulus and Budget 2021.

Section 4. Frequently Asked Questions

Tourism FAQ's

Why has Government introduced additional restrictions on hotels and restaurants from 22 December?

Each level of the Plan for Living with Covid-19 contains a combination of measures which are intended, collectively, to contribute to lowering risk of transmission in alignment with the risk level at that time. The risk level at this time has meant that some activities which were permitted, have been reviewed given the increasing risk of virus transmission. This includes the reintroduction of restrictions on restaurants, cafés and pubs operating as restaurants which are only now permitted to operate on a take-away/delivery basis (from 3pm on 24 December). Also, hotels may only provide food and bar services to guests after 3 pm on 24 December. For accommodation services, guests who already have a booking and are due to check in prior to 27 December may still be accommodated, however, after that hotels, guesthouses and B&Bs may remain open only for essential, non-social and non-tourist purposes.

The difficulties these restrictions pose for businesses in the sector is well recognised, however, these restrictions are informed by public health advice and unfortunately we must prioritise some activities over others at this time. As always, these restrictions will be reviewed when the transmission of the virus reduces. In the interim, Government has announced a rate of CRSS will be paid for two weeks to businesses that are forced to close as a direct result of Government restrictions on 26 December.

Can restaurants operate under the Level 5 restrictions announced on 22 December?

From 3pm on 24 December 2020, all cafes, restaurants and pubs operating as restaurants will close for indoor and outdoor dining and may only operate on a take-away or delivery service basis only.

What services may hotels provide under the restrictions announced by Government on 22 December?

Hotels including hotel restaurants may only provide services to residents from 3pm on 24 December.

For accommodation services, guests who already have a booking and are due to check in prior to 27 December may still be accommodated, however, after that hotels, guesthouses and B&Bs may remain open only for essential, non-social and non-tourist purposes.

What is being done to support businesses during the pandemic?

Budget 2021 included a number of further substantial measures to support and strengthen the tourism sector and are supplemented by the economy-wide business supports and social welfare measures. A key measure was the provision of an additional €55m in Business Continuity funding to support strategic tourism businesses. This funding will be administered by Fáilte Ireland who are considering all sectors within tourism and are particularly mindful of those that do not qualify for the Covid19 Resilience Support Scheme (CRSS).

Government has also announced a rate of CRSS will be paid for two weeks to businesses that are forced to close as a direct result of Government restrictions on 26 December.

Additionally, is there any consideration to ease insurance costs for businesses?

On 8 December the government published the first [Action Plan for Insurance Reform](#), with actions across Government to make Ireland's insurance sector more competitive and consumer-friendly, supporting enterprise and job creation.

Weddings during the level 5 restrictions?

Weddings may proceed, but with a limit of 25 guests for ceremony and reception (irrespective of venue) until 2 January. From 3 January, there will be a limit of 6 guests, excluding the couple. These limits do not include staff at the venue. Although inter-county travel will not be permitted from 27 December 2021, couples and guests for weddings are permitted to travel for that purpose.

Can Tourism Attractions open under Level 5?

No. Tourism attractions are closed under the revised restrictions announced on 22 December 2020.

Arts/Culture FAQ's

Live Audience Test Events

A number of test live performances took place over December including a performance of the Irish Chamber Orchestra at the National Concert Hall on 19 December, and a production of Landmark Productions and Octopus Theatricals' innovative "*Theatre for One*" at the Abbey Theatre for a limited run from 18 December. The final test event in the series, *Theatre for One and a Little One* took place on 28-30 December at the Abbey Theatre..

How can we help the arts and culture sector at this time?

One of the most important things that we can all do is to comply with public health guidance, restrict the spread of the virus, and this will help to create the circumstances in which more cultural activity can take place in controlled spaces. This was an important rationale behind the recent live performance test events at the National Concert Hall and Abbey Theatre. The results of those test events will aid in planning further live events when it is safe to do so in 2021.

Can Dance Classes Take Place - General Position

Under Level 5, all dance and exercise classes remain suspended. Indoor Individual training is not permitted.

[Dance studios are also closed at this level.](#)

Are dance classes being treated differently to sport?

From 24 December, the country moved to Level 5 of the Government's Plan for Living with Covid-19. Under these restrictions, all dance and exercise classes remain suspended. From 31 December individual training is also suspended. There is no difference in the treatment of indoor sports and dance.

What guidance and support is being provided to dance teachers and organisations?

It is not currently permissible for dance classes to take place between levels 3 and 5.

Can Theatres open - Can Live Streaming Events take place under Level 5?

No, theatres must remain closed. Under the regulations they can produce events for live streaming with no audience present.

Can National Cultural Institutions, Museums, Galleries and Cultural Attractions open?

No, Museums, Galleries, cultural attractions and Libraries are closed.

Can Cinemas open under Level 5?

No, cinemas are closed under the revised restrictions announced by Government on 22 December.

Sport FAQ's

Category	Examples	Public Health Restrictions	Protective measures
Individual Sports Training – Outdoors	Golf, tennis	Not Permitted	
Individual Sports Training – Indoors	Gymnastics, martial arts on a non-contact basis.	Not Permitted –	
Team Sports Training – Outdoors	Gaelic games, Soccer, rugby	Not Permitted Exemption for professional and elite athletes.	
Team Sports Training – Indoors	Basketball, volleyball	Not permitted -	
Matches and Competitive Events	Golf competitions, soccer matches	Not permitted	
Professional & Elite Sports,	Professional sport, and Sport Ireland supported high performance only	Training and matches / competitive events permitted	Strict compliance with enhanced Return to Sport protocols Matches held behind closed doors
Gyms		Not permitted to open	
Exercise classes	Yoga, Pilates	Not permitted	
Swimming Pools and Leisure Centres		Not permitted to open	
Swimming Lessons		One-to-one lessons and school PE classes permitted	Comprehensive protocols developed by Irish Water Safety, Swim Ireland and Ireland Active

Can schools PE activities e.g. swimming classes take place in premises other than the school?

Swimming classes from schools as part of school day may take place.

Education is considered essential under the Plan. As such, some exercise, and sporting activities may take place where they are required to comply with the national curriculum for primary and post-primary education or as part of a specific, state-supported course of education and where, in relation to higher or further education, it is not possible for the class to take place remotely.

Examples of the types of activities which are provided for include swimming classes at a local pool as part of PE class, or sporting activities as part of PE class delivered as part of the recognised school curriculum or a sports development programme. For these activities under the curriculum/as part of a specific course of education, the Department of Education's Roadmap for the Reopening of Schools and associated guidance should be applied. It should be noted that these arrangements do not include classes which

- do not take place on school premises or in a recognised state-sponsored education setting, other than where the activity is part of the curriculum and must take place at another location e.g. a community centre or swimming pool;

- are extra-curricular classes i.e. those which an individual is pursuing outside of the school day for their own personal development;
- are courses of additional study outside of the school day but which relate to the curriculum e.g. grinds.

Can training take place under Level 5?

No training can take place apart from professional, elite athletes.

Can matches and events take place under Level 5?

No matches or other sporting events should take place, with the exception of approved professional, elite, approved equestrian, horse racing and greyhound racing, which should all take place behind closed doors. For details on approved events, contact should be made with Sport Ireland or with the relevant National Governing Body of Sport.

Can Horse Racing and Greyhound racing continue?

Approved equestrian events, horse-racing and greyhound racing may continue behind closed doors.

Can gyms, leisure centres and swimming pools open under Level 5 restrictions?

Gyms, leisure centres and swimming pools are closed from December 31st.

Section 6 Guidance available to support activity/reopening

There is a broad range of sectoral guidance available relevant to the current level of restrictions set out in the following table:

SECTOR	GUIDANCE AVAILABLE	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
SPORT	<p>Sport Ireland has prepared a broad range of guidance to support NGBs and sporting organisations. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Older People, Children/Youth – People with Disabilities – Outdoors – Competition – Training – Individual indoor training <p>https://www.sportireland.ie/covid19</p>	Further guidance is currently being developed by Active Ireland in respect of commercial gyms and leisure centres
TOURISM	<p>Fáilte Ireland has prepared a range of sector specific guidance for hotels, B&B's, restaurants, bars etc.</p> <p>https://covid19.failteireland.ie/</p>	
ARTS & CULTURE	<p>The Arts Council has developed guidance on individual dance training:</p> <p>http://www.artscouncil.ie/covid-19/latest-news/</p>	