



Level 5 Restrictions

Updated Information Note regarding Level 5 of the Government's COVID-19 Resilience and Recovery 2021 - The Path Ahead

At its meeting of 30 March 2021, Government decided to extend Level 5 restrictions to address the high infection rates and new variants in the country. The current level 5 public health restrictions will continue up to and including 4th May, except for the following adjustments:

From 12th April:

- Two households can meet up with one another outdoors for social and recreational purposes (this does not include private gardens);
- Permitted to travel within own county or within 20km of residence if crossing county boundaries;
- In-school teaching to fully return;
- Higher, further and adult education should remain primarily online;
- Residential construction can restart as well as early-learning and childcare projects.

From 19th April:

- Inter-county training and competitive matches in the National Leagues organised by the Gaelic games associations, excluding minor and other junior age-grade competitions, with a view to matches being played from May onwards depending on the public health situation at the time;
- Certain high performing athletes, approved by Sport Ireland can resume training.

From 26th April (subject to prevailing disease situation):

- Underage non-contact outdoor training in pods of 15 or fewer can recommence, this includes dance training if conducted out of doors;
- Outdoor sports facilities can reopen (e.g. pitches, golf courses and tennis courts, other facilities as appropriate). Activities should take place between a maximum of two households. Indoor facilities e.g. changing rooms, showers, kitchens, meeting rooms must remain closed apart from essential toilets;
- Outdoor visitor attractions can reopen (i.e. zoos, open pet farms, heritage sites but not amusement parks) are permitted to open;
- Maximum attendance at funerals will increase to 25.

The Government will review the situation prior to May 4th and will consider the following, subject to the prevailing public health situation, at that time:

- Full reopening of construction activity;
- Phased return of non-essential retail commencing with click and collect and outdoor retail, for example: garden centres/nurseries;
- Recommencement of personal services on a staggered basis;
- Reopening of museums, galleries and libraries;
- Recommencement of religious services on a staggered basis.

These restrictions will remain in place until May 4th. The Government's clear message at the present time is for people to stay in their homes, unless necessary for those essential reasons set out in the public health regulations, such as essential work, essential retail or exercise.

The objectives of the recent publication of an update to the Living with COVID-19 Plan called Resilience and Recovery 2021 - The Path Ahead are set out below: are:

- To protect the most vulnerable by an efficient rollout of the vaccination programme;
- To remain vigilant and agile regarding uncertainties in the face of new variants and to capitalise on emerging evidence on available vaccines, and;
- To lay the foundations for the full recovery of social life, public services and the economy.

The public health advice is that it is too early to say how and when other restrictions should be eased given current uncertainties. Government will meet in advance of 4th May to review the level of restrictions. The focus of the assessment, based on the public health advice, will be on achieving the following before any significant easing of measures is contemplated:

1. Disease prevalence (case numbers/incidence) is brought to much lower levels that can be managed and controlled by public health and that the reproduction number ("R" number) is such that we can be confident that we can continue to suppress the disease, e.g. at or below 1.
2. Hospital and critical care occupancy are reduced to low levels to protect the health service and allow for the safe resumption of non-COVID-19 care.
3. Ongoing and steady progress on the vaccination programme such that the most vulnerable are protected through vaccination.
4. Emerging information on variants of concern.

Any easing of measures should be slow and gradual with sufficient time between phases to assess impact and to respond if the epidemiological situation were to deteriorate. It will take account of emerging international and national evidence and experience and with a specific focus on supporting mental health and wellbeing.

The Level 5 restrictions include:

- Stay at home except for travel for work, education or other essential purposes, or to take exercise within 5km of home (this changes to within your County from the 12th April 2021);
- Household visits not permitted; (two households can meet up with one another outdoors for social and recreational purposes from the 12th April, but not in private gardens);
- Non-essential retail to remain closed;
- No indoor or outdoor training in groups permitted;(underage non-contact outdoor training in pods of 15 can recommence from 26th April);
- Outdoor golf and tennis are permitted; (Can recommence from 26th April);
- Gyms, swimming pools etc. to remain closed;
- Level 5 restrictions to stay in place until May 4 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 COVID-19 Resilience and Recovery 2021 - The Path Ahead 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 until 4th May 2021:

General Provisions

- Everyone must stay home except for travel for work, education or other essential purposes, or to take exercise within 5km of home; (this changes to within your County from the 12th April 2021);
- Essential retail only. All other retail and personal services closed;
- There should be no organised indoor or outdoor events;
- Gyms, swimming pools remain closed;
- People should work from home other than for essential purposes only

Cultural Activities

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

Tourism and Hospitality Services

- Hotels may only open for essential, non-social and non-tourist purposes;
- Restaurants and pubs remain closed;
- 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;
- Up to 10 mourners will be allowed at funerals. (Changes to 25 mourners from the 26th April).

Sporting Activities

- Gyms, leisure centres and swimming pools closed;
- No indoor exercise or dance classes are permitted;
- Outdoor Tennis and golf are permitted from 26th April;
- No indoor or outdoor group training allowed; (underage non-contact outdoor training in pods of 15 can recommence from the 26th April);
- No matches/events should take place except for selected high performance and professional sporting activity, 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.

ACTIVITY	LEVEL 5	Additional Information
Organised Indoor Gatherings	No organised indoor gatherings should take place.	
Organised Outdoor Gatherings	No organised outdoor gatherings should take place.	From April 12 th two households may meet outdoors, but not in private gardens.
Weddings Regardless of venue.	Up to 6 guests for wedding ceremony and reception (excluding couple and staff).	Inter-county travel is allowed to attend a wedding.
Funerals	Up to 10 mourners. (Up to 25 mourners from the 26th April).	
Exercise & Sporting Events	No exercise or dance classes.	

Training	Outdoor Children's non-contact outdoor training in pods of 15, including dance training, can recommence from 26th April. Golf and outdoor tennis permitted from 26th April.
Matches and Events	No matches or events to take place with the exception of selected high performance and professional sporting activity. Equestrian, horse-racing & greyhound racing which can take place behind closed doors.
Gyms, Leisure Centres and Swimming Pools	Gyms, leisure centres and swimming pools closed.
Museums, Galleries and other Cultural Attractions	All venues closed. Consideration will be given to reopening after May 4 th depending on the public health situation at that time. Online services available.
Bars, Cafés, Restaurants (including Hotel Bars and Restaurants)	Takeaway food or delivery only. Staff canteens and hotels where people are residing on the premises are exempted.

Wet Pubs	Closed, apart from takeaway or delivery only.
Nightclubs, Discos and Casinos	Closed.
Hotels, Guesthouses, B&Bs etc.	Open but only for those with essential non-social and non-tourist purposes.
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

- A €26m Adaptation Fund for the tourism sector;
- A €17m Outdoor Dining Enhancement Scheme ([Press Release](#));
- A €10m grant for coach tourism;
- A €10m Ireland Based Inbound Agents Business Continuity Scheme
- <https://www.failteireland.ie/Business-Continuity-Scheme.aspx>)
- €8m Restart Grant Plus for B&Bs;
- A €55m Tourism Business Continuity Scheme (<https://www.failteireland.ie/Utility/News-Library/next-stage-launched-Business-Continuity-Scheme.aspx>).

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 Pilot 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](#));
- €25m new Live Performance Support Scheme ([Press Release](#));
- €14m new support scheme for live entertainment businesses;
- €5m to local authorities for outdoor live performances;
- €5m capital supports for live entertainment sector;
- €1m to St. Patrick's Festival.

Gaeltacht

- A €5m Company Stabilisation Support for Gaeltacht Companies: Sustaining Enterprise Equity Scheme. This scheme is run by Údarás na Gaeltachta 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](#))
- Additional €4.9m targeted at local radio and programmes that support live music sector ([Press Release](#))

Plus – Universal supports

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

The recently announced COVID-19 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;
- €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/>), and;
- the Sports Monitoring Group.

In addition to these groups a Night-time Economy Taskforce and a Future of Media Commission have been established, both of which are looking at longer term policies in respect of night time culture and media respectively.

Section 4. Frequently Asked Questions

Tourism FAQs

What are the restrictions on hotels and restaurants under level 5?

Each level of the Recovery and Renewal 2021 - The Path Ahead 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 hotels, guesthouses and B&Bs may only remain open for essential, non-social and non-tourist purposes.

This also includes restrictions on restaurants, cafés and pubs which are only permitted to operate on a takeaway/delivery basis.

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.

Can restaurants operate under the Level 5 restrictions?

All cafes, restaurants and pubs operating as restaurants will remain closed for indoor and outdoor dining and may only operate on a takeaway or delivery service basis only.

What services may hotels provide under the current restrictions?

Hotels, guesthouses and B&Bs may only remain open 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 COVID-19 Resilience Support Scheme (CRSS).

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

On 8th 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 6 guests for ceremony and reception excluding the couple. These limits do not include staff at the venue. Although inter-county travel is not permitted, couples and guests for weddings are permitted to travel for that purpose.

Can Tourism Attractions open under Level 5?

From the 26th April outdoor visitor attractions can reopen such as zoos, open pet farms, heritage sites. Amusement parks are not permitted to open. Indoor areas should remain closed and hospitality should only be open for take-away services. Robust protective measures, including appropriate capacity limits, should be in place.

Arts/Culture FAQs

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. However From the 26th April underage non-contact outdoor training in pods of 15 can recommence for all exercise activities that can be delivered outdoors including dance.

Are dance classes being treated differently to sport?

From 24th December, the country moved to Level 5 of the Government's Plan for Living with COVID-19. These restrictions have been extended to 4th May 2021. Under these restrictions, all indoor dance and exercise classes remain suspended as is individual training. However from the 26th April underage non-contact outdoor training in pods of 15 can recommence for all exercise activities that can be delivered outdoors including dance. There is no difference in the treatment of sports and dance.

Why isn't it possible for dance classes under your Department's remit to use the pod system that is in place in other Departments?

The current congregation levels provided for under specific guidance published by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth to support the funded youth work sector. This guidance recognises the importance of the youth work sector in maintaining services throughout the period of the pandemic in a manner similar to education and childcare sectors.

While it is recognised that some youth work programmes may include dance, this guidance has been developed by and for the funded youth work sector not for commercial/private operators. The funded Youth Work sectors is specifically defined under Section 3 of the Youth Work Act 2001 and only includes those organisations with a direct funding relationship to the Department of Children. Before applying this Department of Children's guidance, organisations are being advised by my Department that they should ensure that they meet the requirements of this definition around being a voluntary youth work organisation with a funding relationship to the Department of Children.

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 current restrictions.

Sport FAQs

Category	Examples	Public Health Restrictions
Individual Sports Training – Outdoors	Golf, outdoor tennis	Permitted from 26 April 2021
Individual Sports Training – Indoors	Gymnastics, martial arts on a non-contact basis.	Not Permitted –
Team Sports Training – Outdoors	Gaelic games, Soccer, rugby	Not PermittedExemption selected high performance and professional sporting activity. Inter-county training and competitive matches in the National Leagues organised by the Gaelic games associations, excluding minor and other junior age-grade competitions, with a view to matches being played from May onwards depending on the public health situation at the time;
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
Gyms		Not Permitted to open
Exercise classes	Yoga, Pilates	Not Permitted
Swimming Pools and Leisure Centres		Not Permitted to open
Swimming Lessons		School PE classes permitted

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 and from April 19th Senior Inter-county Gaelic games to recommence training, with a view to playing the national league in May. From the 26th April underage non-contact outdoor training in pods of 15 can recommence for all exercise activities that can be delivered outdoors including dance

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.

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&Bs, 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> <p>Screen Ireland have developed COVID-19 Production Guidelines for Irish Film and Television</p> <p>https://www.screenproducersireland.com/news/return-production-guidelines%C2%A0-creative-screen-industry</p>	