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Guidance for LI branches on in-person events

October 2021 update

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Background

At the 14 September 2021 Board meeting, the LI trustees agreed that branches can hold in-person events, subject to the completion of a risk assessment and the following of prescribed guidance.

Branches who opt to hold in-person events should please note that there will be no LI staff or central resources available to support these events until the end of the financial year. The Board will revisit resourcing decisions at the end of the financial year.

The LI's obligation under its public liability and employee liability insurance requires the Institute to take reasonable precautions to avoid injury or harm to its volunteers, members, employees, officers, and the public. Non-compliance by engaging in activities in the name of the LI outside these guidelines, and any government guidelines in force at the relevant time, risks invalidating any associated insurance claim.

Therefore, this guidance must be read in conjunction with the government's guidance on managing COVID-19 risks when meeting in person. Where there is a provision in this guidance conflicting with government-issued guidance on COVID-secure in-person meetings, the government guidance would override the provisions of this guidance.

Summary Guidance

Coronavirus remains a serious health risk. It is therefore important to take steps to manage risks and protect yourself and others.

COVID-19 risk assessment

- A COVID-specific risk assessment will need to be included in the overall event management plan. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has created an example [template](#) to assist in this process, and the government provides further guidance.

- To complete a risk assessment, please follow the [guide](#) provided by HSE.

- The risk assessment should demonstrate adequate measures for each stage of the event, as well as for different audiences, such as staff and visitors, and their relative location within the event. Failure to carry out a suitable and sufficient risk assessment and put in place appropriate control measures may be considered a breach of health and safety law.

- In addition to your standard health and safety risk assessment, you will need to detail how you will mitigate the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

Risk factors to consider

- **Number of COVID-19 cases in the relevant area**. High or increasing levels of COVID-19 cases in the event location, or the locations, attendees are coming from, increase the risk of infection and spread at the event.

- **Exposure during travel**. Airports, airplanes, bus stations, buses, train stations, trains, public transport, filling stations, and rest stops are all places where physical distancing may be more difficult to maintain, and ventilation may be poor.

- **Setting of the event**. Indoor events, especially in places with poor ventilation, pose more risk than outdoor events.

- **Length of the event**. Events that last longer may pose more risk than shorter events.

- **Number and crowding of people at the event**. Events with more people increase the likelihood of exposure.

- **Behaviour of attendees during an event**. Events where people engage in behaviours such as interacting with others from outside their own household, singing, shouting, not maintaining physical distancing, or not wearing masks consistently and correctly, can increase the risk.

Monitoring and control

Although various control measures can be put in place to allow for safe distancing and hygiene practices, it is important that these are regularly monitored and controlled.

Event organisers are encouraged to:

- **Appoint a responsible person** who will be able to continually monitor the control measures identified in the risk assessment on site and provide regular feedback.

- **Keep a record sheet of practices in place**, such as cleaning and maintenance log sheets to identify areas that require more focus.

- **Allocate responsibilities for** ensuring hand sanitiser/soap is available for all people on the site or venue, and that social distancing is adhered to.

- **Ask COVID-19 related screening questions**: prior to an event or upon entry, it is recommended that all guests, visitors, volunteers, and staff are asked, and where possible complete, COVID-related screening questions. For example:

    o Have you had a recent new continuous cough?

    o Do you have a high temperature?

    o Have you noticed a loss of, or change in, normal sense of taste or smell?

Any individual who answers 'yes' to any of the above questions should be advised to not attend the event, despite how mild these symptoms may be. They should also be advised to get a COVID-19 test as soon as possible.

Face coverings

Although face coverings are not always mandatory, it is advised that individuals wear face coverings in indoor spaces, especially crowded and small enclosed areas. It is important to note that hygiene and safe distancing are the primary measures to be used to reduce the risks of COVID-19. Face coverings help prevent potential onward spread from the non-symptomatic person wearing the covering.

Maintaining a safe distance

Determining the number of guests:

The number of guests that can attend an event or a special occasion should take into consideration:

- The size of the venue or the area where the event will take place.

- The requirement for social distancing to be in place for all guests where possible.

- The space available for the movement of guests, taking into consideration fixed furniture such as tables, chairs, display stands, etc.

- Any potential 'pinch points' where further space may be needed (busier areas such as entries and exits, for instance).

Queue controls

Effective queue management should be put in place for events, regardless of whether they are held outdoors or indoors. You should consider the following:

- Staggering access times, whether for entry and exit, or for accessing a particular area of an event, such as food and drinks areas. Staggering arrival times could take place through:

    o Guest lists and invitations; for example, groups arriving at 30-minute intervals, allowing time for them to be seated prior to the next group of guests arriving.

    o Seating and/or table arrangements; for example, tables or groups accessing food and drinks at specific times.

- Separate entry and exit arrangements to prevent bottlenecks at a particular area within the venue or site. Consider if you can increase the number of entry and exit points.

- Use of event ushers and/or hosts, signage, and crowd management tools such as barriers and floor markings to influence behaviour.

Floor plans/layouts of the event

When organising an event, it is important to determine the floor layout of the venue to ensure social distancing is always maintained where possible:

- Use of one-way flow of visitor traffic, which can prevent jams as well as cross walking, and allows social distancing.

- Where possible, event floors, aisle widths, and walkway paths should be widened accordingly to allow enough space for social distancing.

- This should also include routes to the car parks and the safe route of leaving the venue or site.

Clean more often

Increase how often you clean surfaces, especially those that attendees frequently touch or otherwise interact with.

Enable people to check in at your venue

You are no longer legally required to collect attendees' contact details, but doing so will support NHS Test and Trace in reducing the spread of COVID-19. You can enable people to check in by providing an NHS QR code poster, though you do not have to ask attendees to check in or turn them away if they refuse. If you display an NHS QR code, you should also have a system to collect (and securely store) names and contact details for those who ask to check in but do not have the app.

Useful Links

- Risk Assessment: https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/working-safely/risk-assessment.htm

- Hygiene: https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/cleaning/handwashing-using-hand-sanitiser.htm

- Working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19): https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-covid-19/events-and-attractions