

Frequently Asked Questions about the reopening of Glasgow Life's venues and services

Friday 3 July 2020

What's happening?

We have set out a phased approach to the reopening of some of the city's public buildings in response to Phase 3 of the Scottish Government's route map. This includes a timeline for the venues and facilities we plan to reopen between July and October.

What does this mean for customers?

Between August and October, we will begin to reopen selected libraries, community centres, museums, sport facilities, and cultural venues on a phased basis.

Why aren't all venues reopening straight away, or on 15 July in line with the Scottish Government's guidance?

As venues have been closed for several months, we have to plan their reopening in line with the Scottish Government's guidance. Adapting our venues to meet social distancing requirements will take time and we have a responsibility to get it right from the outset. We will consider the individual requirements of each venue and create new operating practices which prioritise the health and wellbeing of our staff and customers.

This means that we can't just simply reopen our doors: we need to undertake risk assessments, test key building systems, install public sanitizer stations and screens where appropriate, deliver revised hygiene and safety training to our staff, implement new booking systems, and engage with our trade unions.

How much income does Glasgow Life expect to lose as a result of closures due to Covid-19?

To date, Glasgow Life has lost in the region of £9 million as a result of closures due to Covid-19. We had budgeted for income of £38 million in the current financial year and we will be unable to compensate fully for our anticipated losses this year, which could run into tens of millions of pounds in the unstable financial landscape going forward. While the government's Job Retention Scheme has allowed us to offset some of our losses, we are still 'topping-up' furloughed salaries to ensure our staff receive 100% of their pay.

When will you be reopening the rest of your venues/facilities?

Our financial and staffing constraints are unlike anything we've ever faced and mean we're not able to operate all of our venues and services just now; it's simply not possible.

Following this phased reopening between August and October, we will continue to work with Glasgow City Council to review and prioritise which venues and services we can restart or reopen and when.

Although Glasgow City Council has agreed to support us financially during this difficult period, there are no easy solutions and we haven't got all the answers about what Glasgow Life's service provision will look like during or after this transitional period. Covid-19 has had a significant financial impact on Glasgow Life and this must be taken into account when we consider reopening venues. We will continue to keep in touch with our members and customers as and when any decisions on future service provision are made.

Why aren't you reopening all venues?

We are initially prioritising childcare and education to help maintain vital services in local communities and to support the city's recovery from the impact of coronavirus in the longer-term. Reopening venues is a complex process and requires careful planning, and some Glasgow Life venues cannot accommodate social distancing requirements as set out in the Scottish Government's guidance.

Like every organisation, Glasgow Life is facing a significant loss of income as a result of Covid-19. The complete shutdown of Glasgow's museums, libraries and sports venues for more than three months, together with the cancellation of most of the city's events and festivals this year means the millions of pounds of income which supports our services has been wiped out.

Current social distancing guidelines also mean that a large proportion of our venues are unable to reopen safely, and we may need more staff than before to be working at the venues we're looking to reopen to ensure current restrictions are followed. As it has been from the outset, the safety of the public and our staff will remain at the heart of our decision-making.

Which venues are already open?

In June, we reopened some outdoor sporting venues: Knightswood and Lethamhill golf courses; Kelvingrove, Knightswood, Queen's Park and Drumchapel tennis courts; and Kelvingrove, Queen's Park and Knightswood bowling greens.

What cleaning procedures will you have in place?

Buildings are being cleaned prior to opening to the public and we will have regular cleaning procedures in place which are appropriate to each venue. Also before reopening, all staff will undertake revised training to ensure best practice.

Our museums which are reopening are in the process of achieving the official 'We're Good to Go' mark. This is a signal which shows a UK tourism and hospitality business has worked hard to follow government and industry Covid-19 guidelines and has a process in place to maintain cleanliness and aid social distancing.

For customers attending our sport facilities, we'll be operating a stricter 'wiping down' policy in addition to existing staff cleaning procedures, and we'll update members on these new policies before venues reopen.

Will you provide customers with hand washing/sanitisation stations?

Yes – hand sanitisation stations will be available in reopened venues, though we still advise customers to follow current government guidelines and to wash their hands thoroughly and regularly with soap and water and/or hand sanitizer.

Will toilet facilities be available in reopened venues?

Yes – although, as with all areas in our facilities, social distancing measures will be in place.

Do I need to wear a mask in venues?

Current Scottish Government guidance advises face masks are worn in public places, but this is not mandatory. If this advice changes, we will follow government guidelines.

Will I have to book to attend venues?

Some activities such as museum attendance, gym sessions and fitness classes will require to be pre-booked in order to allow us to keep social distancing in place within venues. The booking systems will look different for each service (e.g. Glasgow Museums and Glasgow Club), and so we will be in touch with customers directly regarding each of these new procedures before venues reopen.

Will café and retail facilities be available in venues which reopen?

There will be no catering or retail (gift shop) facilities available in venues when they reopen.

Will a full timetable of activities be available at my fitness centre/library/museum?

Upon reopening, venues will be operating at reduced capacity and we will be unable to offer the full timetable of services and activities which were available pre-lockdown. Activities and timetables will be confirmed closer to the opening date of each venue, and these will be shared when available.