

Rule of Six - Shooting and Hunting

Issue

1. We have considered how to ensure that shooting and hunting as a leisure activity can be exempted from the numerical limit for gatherings of no more than six people.
2. The current construction of the numerical limit in drafting is to permit a gathering of more than six to take place in public open places, provided the event is organised with a COVID-Secure assessment, or in a premises operated by a recognised entity subject to COVID-Secure guidance and enforcement. This is subject to a requirement that only smaller groups of up to six are socially interacting within this larger gathering.
3. Private dwellings including private gardens would not be permitted to host gatherings of more than six. This means that under the proposed drafting a range of activities - including shooting and hunting activity - are excluded from taking place in groups larger than six.

Options

A - Defining shooting and hunting as an organised sporting activity

4. We have looked at whether shooting and hunting could fall under the requirements for exemptions along with **organised sporting activity, but there are problems with this approach**. The proposed working definition for organised sporting activities to support drafting is that *"organised sport is a sport or physical activity organised or delivered by an organising body such as a registered instructor, club, national governing body, company or charity. These sports or physical activities can take place outdoors, or indoors where the organising body is operating in a COVID-Secure environment with the completion of a risk assessment for the activity."*
5. Game shooting and hunting are currently not considered by DCMS as a sporting activity within this definition. We have considered how we could allow shooting and hunting to fall within the definition above to allow more than six to participate in these activities. This would require the definition for organised sporting activity to be broadened to permit some forms of wider *leisure* activity (for example, where any activity is delivered under a national registered association or governing body with relevant guidance) and would conceivably allow a broad range of other leisure activities to continue without any form of exclusion, undermining the core concept of the rule of six. This option would also not permit shooting or hunting activity to take place with more than six people if on private land.

B - Permitting shooting and hunting where organised by a company/body

6. There is also an option whereby shooting and hunting could continue only where **a company or recognised body organises a shoot or hunt, and it does not take place in grounds that are part of a private dwelling**. As per other activity considered for exemptions, multiple six-person parties may participate concurrently within this provided they do not socially interact with other six person parties. Where companies provide equipment and staffing (including instructors and those employed to facilitate a shoot or hunt), these individuals would be exempt from the numerical limit under the current drafting on the basis of working during the activity.

7. This would avoid the need for an explicit exemption within legislation, but would require a considerable degree of reorganisation in how shoots and hunts are currently delivered within the sector. Only 5% of shoots are currently organised by companies in this way.

C - Creating an explicit provision within legislation for shooting and hunting

8. The simplest and most effective way of achieving the objective would be to create an **explicit provision within the legislation** to permit shooting and hunting as an activity. This could be included alongside the exemption for organised sport, but if we are to allow shooting on private land, it would need to be elsewhere alongside the 'universal' exemptions such as work. Alternatively we could create a separate class of exemption purely for shooting. This is the only way to permit shooting and hunting in larger numbers on private land. This may also lead to other representative bodies lobbying for a similar exclusion.

Would Ministers like to proceed with Option C?