

TEMPLATE

REVIEW OF SPECIFIC COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

Part 1, to be completed by initiating Department	
Department initiating review	DAERA
Description of restriction or requirement	<p>Leaving home to take part in an outdoor activity is now permissible under the Regulations provided it does not result in a gathering of more than 6 persons from different households. The term ‘outdoor activity’ is not, however, defined. There is uncertainty as to whether it includes outdoor activities which involve animals/birds such as pigeon racing, equine training, horse riding classes.</p> <p>It is also not clear whether it is implicit that in leaving home to take part in an outdoor activity, persons are permitted to travel to participate in the outdoor activity. For some outdoor activities involving animals/birds, it is necessary to travel and transport the animal/bird to take part in the activity.</p>
Legislation reference	Regulation 5(2)(o) to the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020.
Proposed change	<p>Define what is meant by the term ‘outdoor activity’ as used in Regulation 5(2)(o) to provide non-exhaustive examples which includes pigeon racing and training of equines.</p> <p>Amend Regulation 5(2)(o) to expressly provide that travel to take part in the outdoor activity is permitted.</p> <p>Consideration may need to be how this amendment would sit with DAERA proposed amendment on leaving home to meet the needs of animals.</p>
NI Departments with the most direct policy interest	<p>Department of Health.</p> <p>Department of Economy.</p> <p>Department for the Communities.</p>
Advice received from these Departments	N/A
Summary of evidence – quantitative or qualitative – that has been considered	DAERA has received a number of queries from individuals involved with sporting animals (such as horses, grey hounds and pigeons) about whether they can train/exercise their animals during the pandemic. There have also been queries from horse riding schools about whether they can operate during the pandemic. This would involve travel by customers to avail of their services.
Summary of detrimental impacts of restriction or requirement, including references to evidence considered, and therefore benefits of removing or modifying the provision	
- Health	Current restriction provide for maximum protection to public health by reducing travel as appropriate.

- Society	Animals provide positive societal benefit for wellbeing. Allowing individuals to engage with their animals could have wider societal impact.
- Economy	Some individual engaged in sport activities with animals cannot operate effectively under the legislation and this may impact on the economy.
Summary of assessment of risks associated with removal or proposed modification	
- Health	It is unclear how many journeys the new suggested provision would add to the NI total. It is unclear whether or not that these activities could take place in a safe manner without promoting the mixing of households and increase the chance of infections spreading.
- Society	Animals provide positive societal benefit for wellbeing. Protecting the welfare of animals, therefore, has wider societal benefits.
- Economy	Allowing these businesses to open may reduce the need for these business to access funding support schemes.
Steps to mitigate any risks identified	Reinforcement of message of need to adhere to PHA guidance. Effective enforcement by HSE.
Commentary	
Current position on this restriction	
- England	Unclear if exercising/training non-farmed animals other than dogs is permitted.
- Scotland	All non-essential travel not permitted. Advice expected on opening of dog grooming.
- Wales	All non-essential travel not permitted.
- RoI, if applicable	U/K
Conclusion	
Date:	
Part 2, to be completed by DoH	
DoH assessment including expected effect on R0 of removal or proposed change	
Date:	