

Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council Community Centre/Facility Usage Policy

Background

Community Centres provide a focus to support community development, a sense of well-being and quality of life in our local communities. Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council has approximately 30 Community Buildings which range in size and use. Of these, 15 would be considered multi-use Community Centres. The County Council invests in the physical infrastructure as well as community activities to support the development and delivery of services in line with local community needs.

These Community Centres play an important role in our communities. They provide places where people can interact, learn, engage in recreational activities, be supported and grow. In many areas, they are the focus of socially sustainable communities.

These Centres are in the main operated and run under an Operating Agreement by a Voluntary Committee/Board of Management. The **Community Centre/Facility Usage Policy** has been prepared with input from the operators of Community Centres who asked for guidelines to support them in the effective operation and use of Community Centres to address community needs and objectives.

1. Aim:

To provide a place to meet, hold social, cultural, educational and recreational activities across all ages and sections of a community; to enable people to get involved in their community and enhance their quality of life.

2. Objectives:

- i.** To provide a range of facilities to meet the needs of the local community, including the provision of meeting rooms and assembly halls, whether for hire or otherwise, for meetings or events.
- ii.** To provide services to all sections of our diverse community irrespective of age, race, gender, religion, ethnicity or nationality, physical ability, sexual orientation or membership of the Travelling Community.
- iii.** To support and advance education and learning opportunities, including life-long learning, social and educational leisure pursuits.
- iv.** To support and promote community well-being, inclusiveness, solidarity and interactivity through volunteerism and civic engagement.
- v.** To provide and facilitate the provision of a local service in a sustainable and locally responsive environment for the benefit of all in the community.

3. Facilities:

- i.** The facilities provided by Community Centres differ throughout the County and therefore, each meeting room, assembly hall or other facility is provided subject to terms and conditions appropriate to the size, capacity, function and layout of each Community Centre.



- ii. The use of the facilities provided by Community Centres is at the discretion of the management in accordance with County Council Policy.
- iii. The facilities provided by Community Centres may not be used for commercial or business purposes, including the use of a mailbox facility.
- iv. The management may, in consultation with Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council, permit the use of the facility by social enterprises established to meet a specified need of the local community or sections thereof.
- v. The facilities provided by Community Centres may be used as a base of operation by community based non-profit organisations, including the use of mailbox facilities, with the prior consent of the management.
- vi. Fundraising events for charitable purposes organised by local community groups are permissible.

4. Booking Procedures:

- i. Each Community Centre has a formal booking procedure that must be followed by all applicants seeking to use the facilities.
- ii. Reservations for facilities are confirmed on a "first come, first served" basis in the interests of equity and fairness.
- iii. All applicants must sign the Terms and Conditions of use on application.
- iv. Organisations with a governing instrument (constitution) may be required to submit a copy with their first application.
- v. Evidence of Public Liability Insurance may be requested by the management.
- vi. The management reserve the right to seek further lawful and reasonable information on any application and failure to provide such will automatically cancel the application.
- vii. Serious omission or misleading information provided on an application may cause the booking to be refused or cancelled by the management.
- viii. The management reserves the right to seek a non-refundable booking deposit.

5. Confirmation, Cancellation & Payments:

- i. All bookings will be confirmed in writing, preferably by email, by the management.
- ii. All cancellations should be made in writing, preferably by email, and shall be acknowledged by the management.
- iii. Receipts will be issued for all payments.



- iv. Refunds will be issued by cheque or by electronic bank transfer.

6. Health & Safety Matters:

- i. The management of the Community Centres will set clear limits on the capacity of each meeting room or assembly hall and limit the attendance according.
- ii. Bookings may be cancelled in the interest of public safety and every effort will be made by the management to provide advance notices of any cancellation.
- iii. The management will familiarise each applicant (group leader or contact person) with the emergency evacuation procedures, emergency exits and outside assembly points. The applicant will be expected to advise their organisation or group accordingly.
- iv. In the event of emergency or emergency evacuation the applicant and their attendees shall follow all lawful instructions of the management and staff to provide for the safe and speedy evacuation of the building.
- v. A reporting mechanism with an identifiable contact person will be posted in each Community Centre to facilitate the reporting, recording and remedying of defective equipment or health and safety matters generally.

7. Public Liability Insurance:

- i. It is the policy of the County Council and its Community Centres to require organisations using the facilities to have appropriate Public Liability Insurance and to produce a copy of such on request by the management.
- ii. Organisations using the facility on a regular basis, whether under contact or otherwise, will be required to indemnify the management of the Community Centre and Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council.
- iii. Public Representatives (Members of the European Parliament, Teachtaí Dála, Senators and County Councillors) holding meetings or clinics in the Community Centres shall be required to submit evidence of the Public Liability Insurance policy held and indemnify Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council.
- iv. The management, at its discretion, may waive the requirement to have Public Liability Insurance for small community groups using the Community Centres as such will be covered by the Public Liability Insurance held by the Community Centre.
- v. Failure to produce the appropriate evidence of Public Liability Insurance on request by the management will result in the cancellation of the booking and the forfeiture of any booking deposit paid.

8. Code of Conduct:

- i. All users of the Community Centres are expected to obey the rules governing the facility and its equipment and to treat management, staff and other users with respect.



ii. Users of the Community Centres must not disturb, impede or endanger other users of the facility or interfere with the management or staff undertaking their duties.

iii. All users of the Community Centres are expected to respect the residents and businesses in the immediate vicinity of the facility and to enter and exit the Community Centre quietly and in an orderly fashion.

iv. Verbal abuse, disruptive or violent behaviour will not be tolerated by the management and will be reported to An Garda Síochána.

v. County Councillors using the Community Centres for meetings or events shall be subject to the '**Code of Conduct for Councillors**' in accordance with the **Local Government Act, 2001**, and other such instruments as may, from time to time, be introduced by Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council or the government.

9. Complaints Procedure:

i. The management of the Community Centre shall establish a complaints procedure whereby details of all complaints by staff, users or visitors are duly recorded.

ii. All complaints shall be investigated in a timely fashion in consultation with the appropriate officials of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council.

iii. Statutory reporting procedures shall apply in respect of the serious matters covered by such.

10. Regular Review of Use:

i. The management, in the interest of fairness and equity of access, shall undertake periodic reviews of the regular usage of the facility.

ii. The regular reviews of usage should examine the demographic, sectoral and locality factors to ensure that the Community Centre continues to cater for the needs of a diverse community.

iii. Consultation with regular users should be on-going and structured to assist the management in the effective and efficient operation of the Community Centre.

iv. A general statistical report on the use of the Community Centre will be produced by the management and published electronically at the end of each calendar year.