

Readiness toolkit

Safely planning youth activities
and spaces during COVID 19



June 2020

Foreword

Youth sector activities provide an essential service and are a vital lifeline to many young people. The pandemic has amplified vulnerabilities and exposed the needs of more young people. Many youth services have adapted their practice to include, for example, digital and online activities. However the closure of youth centres, cancellation of residential trips and restricted access to wider provision is a cause of great concern for young people, youth workers and the army of volunteers – just at the time when the youth sector is needed most.

Yet despite the pressure on services and voluntary sector organisations in particular, and the constraints on young people's activities through lockdown and social distancing measures, it is crucial that any and all activity with young people has their safety and wellbeing at its heart. Our duty of care includes the safety of young people and their families, staff, volunteers and wider public health considerations.

Formal guidance has been published by the National Youth Agency (NYA) on youth sector activity during COVID-19 in line with government public health and safety measures. National associations for specific types of organisations may have additional advice and guidance for youth sector activities and in related areas of sports, culture and the arts, for example. Each organisation and local group will have its own existing safeguarding and welfare policies and procedures.

Therefore, to help inform decision-making of local activities which draws on the guidance and information available, NYA has co-produced this complementary set of planning tools and resources with youth sector partners. This includes a readiness framework for contextualised advice as to the nature of safe youth activity and appropriate levels and types of activities at any given time. Crucially, this will be updated on a regular basis in line with the latest government guidance and is available on NYA's website.

The youth sector is a diverse and vibrant range of organisations and services, dedicated to support for and work with young people. In all its forms, through our combined efforts youth sector activities will adapt and are vital in helping the nation to recover with opportunities for young people to thrive in the months and years ahead.



Leigh Middleton, Chief Executive
National Youth Agency

Legal statement

NYA cannot be held accountable for local decisions reached based on this toolkit and resources. NYA takes no responsibility for how users of this document interpret or apply the information provided.

Youth sector readiness framework

The framework below aligns with the NYA's published readiness level, which is updated on a weekly basis in line with government guidance and is available on the NYA's website. The readiness level will change as and when government advice changes. For this reason, youth sector organisations and groups are advised to monitor the readiness level on a weekly basis and cross reference this level with the guidance provided on the permitted youth sector activity. The NYA readiness framework only applies to England.

If the readiness level falls, this will signal that more face-to-face youth sector activity will be recommended. If the readiness level increases (due to increased levels of the virus), youth sector activity will be recommended to reduce in line with the framework and changes to the law. Existing online or digital youth sector provision can continue to take place at any level of the readiness system.

You can check the current readiness level here:

<https://nya.org.uk>

The objective of the NYA's readiness level is to enable as much youth sector activity as possible to take place at each level as and when it is safe to do so and to allow youth sector leaders to make plans in accordance with the status of COVID-19 in the community.

Organisations must make their own judgements and undertake comprehensive risk assessments to decide if it is possible to comply with the guidance provided in this document. These judgements should not be informal or lightly taken decisions, rather they should be within your organisation's health and safety framework/policy and show due consideration to national guidance and insurance regulations.

Key parts of these measures are underpinned by law, which sets out clearly what you must and must not do – every person in the country must continue to comply with this. The relevant authorities, including the police, have the powers to enforce the law – including through fines and dispersing gatherings.

The following must be in place:

- Assessment that the risk to workers, young people and the community can be safely managed
- Ability to meet core government guidance
- Effective safeguarding arrangements
- All children and young people should be safeguarded
- Enhanced cleaning arrangements are in place
- Ability to comply with social distancing requirements which is underpinned by UK law
- Ability to ensure hygiene levels are maintained, including for frequent hand washing/cleansing with alcohol gel
- The risk to workers, young people and the community being safely managed
- Whether the most vulnerable in society can be effectively safeguarded

If you feel your local situation cannot be managed in a safe way, you should not re-open until you have put sufficient measures in place. This is essential for avoiding unnecessary risks to your staff, young people and the community.

The framework provided explains the types of activities that are expected to be allowed at each level as the national restrictions are eased or tightened. These exist to support providers of youth sector activities to prepare for the next level up or down. It takes time to develop action plans, risk assessments, staff training and prepare venues so the framework is provided as a guide to what you can prepare for next.

The NYA strictly follows the requirements set out by the government and Public Health England. If the size of groups allowed to meet in a socially distanced manner indoors or outdoors changes, so will the advice from the NYA.

You should follow the week's readiness level and the permitted activity advice provided on the NYA website. This will show the current alert level and the exact permitted activity within the law.

Prior to changing your activities in line with the alert level, you must review, amend and update your action plan and risk assessments. These should be approved in line with your national association's policy on implementing the readiness framework. NYA will seek to provide national associations with advanced notice of planned changes to the readiness level.

Readiness Level

Permitted Activity Expected

RED	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Online and digital youth services• Detached local youth services• 1-2-1 sessions with high-need young people (outdoors only)
AMBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Online and digital youth services• Detached local youth activities (consistent with social distancing guidelines)• 1-2-1 sessions with young people indoors• Small group sessions delivered indoors (consistent with social distancing guidelines)
YELLOW	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Indoor group work sessions (consistent with social distancing guidelines)• Multiple sessions (1-2-1 or group work) within social distancing guidelines
GREEN	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All services open as per normal yearly operations• Overnight trips and visits• International travel allowed within FCO advice



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