



Managing youth sector activities and spaces during COVID-19

8 August 2020
Version 2.0

NYA
National Youth Agency

Forewords

When young people have a sense of belonging our communities are stronger. Youth sector activities provide somewhere to go, something to do and someone to talk to. They represent a rich and varied range of youth and community organisations, professional youth workers and volunteers. With young people at their heart, youth services are a vital lifeline to many vulnerable or disadvantaged young people in particular.

Most easily recognised in youth clubs, uniformed groups, residential centres, youth councils and community projects, youth sector activities include volunteering, social action, skills and enterprise, peer support groups and young people led campaigns. Activities take place in community buildings, are street-based, in parks, outward bound and online. All provide a safe space for young people to come together with friends, explore their identity, learn new skills and have fun.

The sector has faced significant challenges in response to COVID-19 pandemic. Much of the regular provision has stopped or adapted with reduced levels of activity, youth and community centres closed, residential trips cancelled. Therefore, NYA has published this guidance on youth sector activities to ensure the safety of young people.

We are grateful for the insights and time given by others to help produce this guidance in support of such a vital and vibrant youth sector.

Leigh Middleton, Chief Executive
National Youth Agency

Youth work can be transformational and youth sector activities provide an essential service for young people and communities. Thousands of youth workers and volunteers make a valuable difference to young people's lives - they build trusted relationships and create opportunities for them to thrive. Our youth services allow young people to develop the confidence to make decisions and act on issues that affect their lives, lives of others, their communities and civil society.

As we look to return to "normal", now more than ever we value the contributions of young people, as volunteers supporting others, and the hard work and dedication of the youth sector. Their combined efforts will be vital in helping us recover and adapt in the months to come.

Baroness Barran MBE
Minister for Civil Society
Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport



The NYA is the Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) for youth work in England and as such is the national partner for the government, the Local Government Association and non-governmental bodies, and with relevant bodies in related professions (such as teaching, policing and social care).

The NYA sets the standards for youth sector organisations in recognition of practice, qualifications and the youth work curriculum and convenes the National Youth Advisory Body for policy advice and guidance. We have worked with an expert group of youth work practitioners, national youth organisations and young people to shape this document.



Public Health
England



Health & Safety
Executive

This document has been prepared in consultation with Public Health England (PHE), the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport.

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1.0 Introduction

The youth sector is diverse and includes statutory, voluntary, uniformed and private organisations as funders, commissioners and providers of activities and spaces for young people. These organisations provide services and activities outside of but often complementary to other statutory services, such as schools, colleges and child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS).

This guidance is only intended for use in England. There is current advice and guidance that should be adhered to for the formal, statutory services and national guidance from Public Health England (PHE) on social distancing, travel and other measures for COVID-19. This guidance is complementary and contextualised for youth sector organisations and is intended to support organisations as they prepare for the appropriate reopening of services. Youth sector organisations should follow this guidance and not the out of school settings guidance. The youth sector has specific and unique challenges and needs, and this guidance has been developed to support your practice.

Youth sector organisations typically work with young people aged 8 to 25 years, although other age groups are recognised. This guidance takes into consideration the safety and support needed for young people, staff and volunteers and wider public health considerations for youth services and activities.

There is a wide range of youth provision, normally defined as 'youth work', which includes open-access work through youth centres, community projects, volunteering and youth social action, alongside targeted services and specialist groups for vulnerable young people. Such activities are run by local groups, community organisations and local authorities or as part of national programmes. The types of activity include, for example, youth clubs, street-based youth work, peer-led youth groups, uniformed youth groups, youth councils, outdoor education and residential trips.

National associations for specific types of organisations (uniformed, etc.) and activities may have additional advice and guidance to safeguard young people and in related areas of sports, culture and the arts, which are included in or make use of facilities for youth activities.

This guidance is intended to support councils, local voluntary providers, leaders, volunteers and young people to remain safe when engaging in youth sector activities. This guidance must be used in conjunction with your existing safeguarding and welfare policies and procedures.



We expect that this document will be updated over time. This version is up-to-date as of 08 August 2020. You can check for updates at www.nya.org.uk If you have any feedback for us, please email guidance@nya.org.uk

2.0 How to use this guide

This document is intended to support the youth sector's response as lockdown rules change. It is recognised that the level of lockdown will vary over time and by location if local restrictions are applied. To support youth sector organisations when reacting to these changes a readiness framework and level is provided. Changes are published weekly on the [NYA's website](#) and provides guidance as to the nature and capacity of activity recommended at each level.

At all times, youth sector organisations must follow current Public Health England and Health and Safety Executive advice. Organisations should follow the current permitted activity guidance on the NYA website. Please note, there will be a deliberate delay between the government easing restrictions and the NYA updating our website. This is to allow organisations time to prepare, assess risks and safely manage any needed changes. Organisations should follow the latest statement on our website at all times.

Alongside adhering to the framework's guidance, all proposed activities and changes must be subject to a risk assessment, which should be enhanced when physical spaces/buildings /land are to be used.

All providers of youth provisions and services must complete a COVID-19 action plan (see details below). These plans are intended to ensure that you have considered all reasonable aspects of activities before opening provision at a local level.



More information to support your plans with check lists and templates can be found at <https://youthworksupport.co.uk>. The templates can be adapted to fit your context and are provided as best practice tools.



If you wish to learn of changes and amendments to our guidance and local lockdowns, we recommend joining the NYA Network. The network is free and gives all members access to the NYA's resources library and regular newsletters. Join here: <https://nya.org.uk/register/>.

3.0 Limitations of this guide

The youth sector is diverse and includes statutory and voluntary services, professionally qualified and volunteer youth workers/leaders and a wide range of approaches to the delivery of youth services and activities with young people. It is not possible for this guide to capture all nuanced types of practice; therefore, this document should be used as a guide to inform local decision making.

Professional and risk-informed judgements must be used to design your local COVID-19 action plans. Employers, supervisors, volunteer leaders and trustees must be satisfied that any provision proposed is safe for all involved and ensure that its authorisation to continue is subject to continual review as behaviours, needs or national guidance changes.

The templates provided are intended to support this process and keep at its core the broad consideration of the local need, the risks of providing and not providing services, the places and spaces used for service delivery, the additional health and safety steps and the safeguarding for all activity, from online to group work.

The national regulations (the law) changes regularly and the NYA is required to amend the readiness level and advice according to these regulations. The NYA will always seek to allow the maximum safe level of youth sector activity at any given time. Local lockdowns or restrictions may also be required, and the NYA will advise on these requirements via our website.

4.0 National associations

If your group is affiliated with a national association (uniformed, etc.), you should check what additional guidance or requirements they have put in place to safeguard young people. They may have developed additional specific guidance for you to consider or actions required prior to commencing delivery.

5.0 Equality

Equality is at the heart of the youth sector. We work to highlight and tackle the inequalities that exist in society and recognise that different groups and individuals experience discrimination and disadvantage that needs to be challenged. Therefore, it is important to ensure we create spaces, services and opportunities that enable everyone to engage equally.

This often requires adjustments to our working practices and approaches to ensure that everyone benefits fairly. Your organisation's equality and diversity policy should be considered at all times and especially when making decisions and judgements related to the impact on individuals and groups with protected characteristics.

When applying this guidance, organisations should be mindful of the particular needs of different groups of workers and individuals.

It is breaking the law to discriminate, directly or indirectly, against anyone because of a protected characteristic, such as age, sex, race or disability.

Employers and organisations (voluntary or otherwise) also have additional responsibilities towards disabled individuals and those who are new or expectant mothers.

6.0 Youth sector readiness framework

The readiness framework 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.

Since 08 August 2020 the readiness framework has been updated. We recommend paying close attention to the changes.

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 regulations 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, where this is applicable. 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/outdoor local youth services• 1-2-1 sessions with high-need young people (indoors)
AMBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Online and digital youth services• Detached/outdoor local youth services (consistent with social distancing guidelines)• 1-2-1 sessions• Small group sessions delivered indoors (consistent with social distancing guidelines)
YELLOW	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Online and digital youth services• Detached/outdoor local youth services (consistent with social distancing guidelines)• 1-2-1 sessions with high-need young people• Small group sessions delivered indoors (consistent with social distancing guidelines)• Camping overnight (see section 8.0)
GREEN	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All services open as per normal yearly operations• Overnight trips and visits• International travel allowed within Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice

*Camping is expected to be the first new activity to be allowed. Other residential experiences are likely to follow at a later stage. The NYA website will confirm the nature of overnight activity allowed and should be checked weekly for changes.

7.0 Local lockdowns

While this guidance applies to England, you should always consider whether there are local restrictions in place in your area. If you live or work in an area that is experiencing a local COVID-19 outbreak and where local restrictions have been imposed, different guidance and legislation will apply. Please consult the NYA website restrictions page to see if any restrictions are in place in your area.

It is expected that different parts of the country will be subject to different readiness levels based on the 'R' number in your area. The NYA works with the DCMS, Cabinet Office, Public Health England and the Joint Bio-Security Centre to inform readiness levels for each area.

Local lockdowns can be fast moving situations and the NYA will always do its best to provide accurate and timely information. Local and national decision making processes can take time to navigate and the NYA commits to allowing as much youth sector activity as possible. There may be additional local restrictions guidance provided by your local authority and its worth consulting the council's website for more details.

8.0 Group sizes and bubbles

Following completion of an action plan and risk assessment individuals may gather indoors or outdoors, provided there are no more than 15 young people per group + leader/workers. Where possible, the groups should be smaller.

It may be possible for multiple groups to convene in your venue, if all the practices stated in this document are implemented. To ensure that participants remain safe, strict adherence to the following measures is required:

- Organisers should divide young people into bubbles, with a maximum of 15 young people per bubble.
- Children/young people should be placed in age appropriate bubbles.
- Members of each bubble should adhere to the current social distancing requirements.
- Upon arrival/departure, participants should wash their hands or use hand sanitiser.
- Should any member of a bubble become unwell, all members of the bubble should contact NHS Test and Trace. All members of the bubble (including leaders/visitors) should also be suspended from attendance and requested to self-isolate for 14 days.
- Social distancing should be maintained during all activities.
- Organisers should be aware of attendees who are clinically vulnerable or clinically extremely vulnerable and should prepare their risk assessment accordingly.



NB: We advise organisers to re-open slowly. This means they should run pilot sessions with fewer than 15 attendees, to ensure it is possible to manage social distancing and hygiene measures in accordance with NYA guidelines.

9.0 COVID-19 secure venues

This guidance meets the government requirement for COVID Secure. If you comply with NYA guidance your venue is considered COVID Secure. This would permit multiple bubbles (of 15 people each) in venues that are large enough and have put in place all the measures outlined in our guidance.

This must only be considered if your venue is large enough to have multiple distinct spaces for each bubble to meet.

How do bubbles need to work?

- Organisers should divide young people into fixed bubbles, with a maximum of 15 young people (plus workers/leaders) per bubble per session.
- Bubbles should not join with other bubbles.
- Individuals should remain in the bubble they are allocated for that day and ideally over repeat attendance, though this may not be practical in some circumstances.
- As the risk of transmission is lower outdoors, activities should take place outdoors as often as possible and when it is safe to do so.
- Different bubbles should ideally enter and exit through different doors – when sessions begin, during breaks and when leaving the site. If not possible then stagger arrival and departure times where possible.
- Organisers should encourage young people to arrive only with members of their bubble and to avoid mingling before and after sessions. We understand that organisers have limited control in this regard, but we encourage you to brief young people and to educate them on social distancing requirements.
- Shared spaces such as sports halls, kitchens, etc. must be deep cleaned thoroughly between use if different bubbles are to use them on the same day (sequentially). Spaces should not be used at the same time by more than one bubble.
- Enhanced regular cleaning of commonly used surfaces, such as equipment and door handles, should be ensured.
- It is not necessary for each bubble to use separate toilets; however, efforts should be made to limit the numbers of users at a given time. Use of different toilets for each bubble is ideal. Please consider safeguarding concerns when planning and preparing your risk assessments.



NB: If you are unable to adhere to the above requirements, you should not allow more than one bubble to attend at the same time.

10.0 Outdoor learning

Many groups are keen to resume outdoor trips and residential. After consulting with sector organisations and reviewing the regulations, overnight stays will not be permitted until the yellow readiness level. Even then only camping will be permitted initially, and other forms of residential experiences will be permitted in time. The NYA's goal is to allow as much activity as possible that's safe and within the law. Rules for families and private citizens do not automatically translate to our sector.

We recommend that you keep an eye on the NYA website. Be sure to sign up to the NYA Network (via our website), to stay informed of any changes.

NB: It is the aim of the NYA to allow as much youth sector activity as possible, provided that safety is the main priority. We will continue to work with the government to clarify what youth sector activities fall within the regulations.

11.0 Travel

Youth sector activities often include travel to events, youth voice meetings or educational venues. It is recommended to ideally walk and cycle if you can. Where this is not possible, use public transport or drive. If using public transport is necessary, wearing a face covering is mandatory, unless you are exempt for health, disability or other reasons.



You should not travel at all if you:

- are experiencing any [coronavirus symptoms](#)
- are [self-isolating as a result of coronavirus symptoms or sharing a household or support bubble with somebody with symptoms](#)
- are [clinically extremely vulnerable and cannot shield during your journey](#)
- have been advised by the [NHS test and trace service](#) that you should self-isolate

You must wear a [face covering](#) on public transport and in substantially enclosed areas of transport hubs in England. You will be breaking the law if you fail to do so and could be fined.

Some people [don't have to wear a face covering](#) for health, age or equality reasons.

The risk of transmission is small at 2 metres and where possible, you should maintain 2 metres distance.

If you cannot keep a 2 metre distance, reduce the risk to yourself and others by maintaining a 1 metre distance where possible, and taking suitable precautions.

Help keep yourself, other passengers and transport staff safe by taking the following precautions:

- ensure you maintain [social distancing](#), where possible, including at busy entrances, exits, under canopies, bus stops, platforms or outside of stations
- limit the number of people that you come into contact with, for example avoid peak travel
- wash or sanitise your hands regularly
- avoid touching your face
- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or the inside of your elbow when coughing or sneezing
- travel side by side or behind other people, rather than facing them, where seating arrangements allow

- touch as few surfaces as possible
- stay outdoors, rather than indoors, where possible
- minimise the time spent close to other people, where possible
- avoid loud talking, shouting or singing
- dispose of waste safely, including items such as used disposable face coverings
- be prepared to queue or take a different entrance or exit at stations
- wait for passengers to get off first before you board
- wait for the next service if you cannot safely keep your distance on board a train, bus or coach
- avoid consuming food and drink on public transport, where possible
- respect other people's space while travelling
- be aware of pregnant, older and disabled people who may require a seat or extra space
- be aware that not all disability is visible and [some people may be exempt from wearing a face covering](#)

Treat transport staff with respect and follow instructions from your transport operator. This may include:

- notices about which seats to use or how to queue
- additional screens, barriers or floor markings
- requests to board through different doors or to move to less busy areas



Seek assistance if you need it

If you require assistance when travelling, contact your transport operator as you would normally do.

If any problems arise or you feel ill during your journey, speak to a member of transport staff. In the case of an emergency, contact the emergency services as you normally would.

If you need help, [try to keep a suitable distance from members of staff](#). If this isn't possible, try to avoid physical contact and keep the time you spend near staff as short as possible.

12.0 Understanding Risk

Everyone needs to assess and manage the risks of COVID-19. As a service provider or employer (voluntary or paid), you have a legal responsibility to protect workers, young people and others from risks to their health, safety and wellbeing. This means you need to think about the risks they face and do everything that is reasonably practicable to minimise them, recognising you cannot completely eliminate the risk of COVID-19.

A youth organisation may deliver a range of activities and types of provision, including local projects and services. We advise that each project/centre/unit completes a risk assessment and action plan document. The action plan will ensure that you have considered all reasonable points ahead of changing your delivery levels. This will also help you to identify the actions and steps you need to put in place to ensure appropriate and safe provision.

The action plan includes a risk assessment and will consider the wider organisational policies that must continue to govern your practice, including safeguarding, equality and health and safety policies. You should also check with your insurer that they will continue to cover your planned activities.

Your plan is required to be as simple or complex as your organisation's activities and plans. The NYA, UK Youth and the Federation for Detached Youth Work have provided templates, checklists and examples of action plans that are kept updated; go to <https://youthworksupport.co.uk>.

If your work is overseen by a national association (uniformed, etc.), then you should also follow their required actions and complementary advice. If your services are contracted by a local authority, you should also follow their required actions, advice and guidance. Additionally, each upper tier local authority has a duty to support young people and the local youth offer/service may be able to provide support for your work.

You must keep your plan under constant review and make responsive amendments to reflect the NYA's published **readiness level in the toolkit** that accompanies this guidance. Be ready to react if the readiness level changes week-to-week, and ensure you communicate changes to young people, staff, parents/carers and other stakeholders. Your action plan should include clear information about how your service can and will respond to different readiness levels to minimise risk.

You must make sure that the risk assessment for your provision addresses the risks of COVID-19 and that this guidance is used to inform your decisions and control measures. A risk assessment is not about creating huge amounts of paperwork, rather it is about identifying sensible measures to control the risks in your setting. Your risk assessment will help you decide if you have done everything you need to.



Youth sector organisations have a duty to consult their staff members (paid or voluntary) on health and safety issues. We would also advise engaging young people in developing your plans and risk assessments and in the discussions about the impact on themselves, their peers/families and their significant others. You can do this by listening and talking to them about the planned work and how you will manage risks from COVID-19. The people who do the work are often the best people to understand the risks in the workplace, and they will have a view on how to work safely. Involving them in making decisions shows that you take their health and safety seriously.

As is normal practice, staff, volunteers and young people should be involved in assessing workplace risks and in the development and review of workplace health and safety policies in partnership with your organisation.

If your staff have access to external representation, such as a trade union, you should ensure they have suitable opportunities to support this process. Some members of your team may have more than one role (paid or voluntary) and consideration should be given to the risks they may experience and how these could impact their capacity to safely work for your organisation. Additional supportive measures may be appropriate to support their welfare.

13.0 Managing risk

Organisations have a duty to reduce risk to the lowest reasonably practicable level by taking preventative measures. Organisations must work with all other employers and contractors (e.g. nurseries) sharing the delivery location or workplace so everyone's health and safety is protected. A collective agreement should be put in place for shared spaces to outline each party's role and responsibilities. In the context of COVID-19, this means working through these steps in order:

1. Increasing the frequency of handwashing and surface cleaning in every delivery location or workplace. Where handwashing facilities are not available, ensure adequate provision of hand sanitiser.
2. Organisations should make every reasonable effort to comply with the social distancing guidelines set out by the government [here](#).
3. Consider the security implications of any changes you intend to make to your operations and practices in response to COVID-19 as any revisions may present new or altered security risks that could need mitigation.
4. Where the social distancing guidelines cannot be followed in full for a particular activity, organisations should consider whether that activity needs to continue, and if so, take all the mitigating actions possible to reduce the risk of transmission between staff and/or young people.

Further mitigating actions include:

- Keeping the activity time as short as possible.
- Deliver activity outdoors; whilst preparing premises for future use, when it is safe and practical to do so.
- Using screens as barriers to separate people from each other.
- Using back-to-back or side-to-side working (rather than face-to-face) whenever possible – primarily in office environments.
- Reducing the number of people each person has contact with by using 'fixed teams or partnering' (so each person works with only a few others).
- If sharing equipment between individuals, routine cleaning steps should be considered before the next person uses the item(s).

Finally, if individuals must work face-to-face for a sustained period with more than a small group of fixed partners (the same people), then you will need to assess whether the activity can safely go ahead. No-one is obliged to work or engage in youth activities in an unsafe work environment. You should ensure that your staff and service users are encouraged to raise concerns about safety and that they feel comfortable doing so.

In your risk assessment, you should have particular regard for whether the people doing the work are especially vulnerable to COVID-19 or if they are supporting people who might be.

If you have not already done so, you should carry out an assessment of the risks posed by COVID-19 in your delivery location as soon as possible. If you are currently operating, you are likely to have gone through a lot of this thinking already. We recommend that you use this document to identify any further improvements you should make. You should continually monitor, review and update your risk assessments with your local stakeholders (workers/volunteers, trade unions, young people and parents/carers and other appropriate parties).

14.0 Sharing the results of your risk assessment

You should share the results of your risk assessment with your stakeholders. If possible, you should consider publishing the results on your website (and we would expect all employers with over 50 workers to do so). Below, you will find a notice you should display in your premises to show you have followed this guidance.

Staying COVID-19 Secure in 2020

We confirm we have complied with the government's guidance on managing the risk of COVID-19

• FIVE STEPS TO SAFER WORKING TOGETHER •

- ✓ We have carried out a **COVID-19 risk assessment** and shared the results with the people who visit and work here
- ✓ We have **cleaning, handwashing and hygiene procedures** in line with guidance
- ✓ We are following national guidance by the **National Youth Agency** in consultation with **Public Health England** and the **Health and Safety Executive**
- ✓ We have taken all reasonable steps to **maintain current social distancing** requirements
- ✓ Where people cannot socially distance, we have done everything practical to **manage transmission risk**

Leader _____ Date _____

Who to contact: _____ Your Health and Safety Representative
(or the Health and Safety Executive at www.hse.gov.uk or 0300 003 1647)



15.0 Protecting people who are at higher risk



Youth organisations often work with young people and trusted adults (staff, volunteers) who are at higher risk from COVID-19. It is essential to be aware of who these individuals are and how to mitigate the risk to them. Steps may be required to ensure equality of access to provision for young people who are shielding or at increased risk.

Points to be aware of:

- Clinically extremely vulnerable individuals (see definition in Appendix 1) who have been strongly advised not to leave the home other than in isolation or with one other family member and only to go outside.
- Clinically vulnerable individuals who are at higher risk of severe illness (e.g. people with certain pre-existing conditions, see definition in Appendix 1) and have been asked to take extra care in observing social distancing. These people should be helped to access youth provisions. For clinically vulnerable workers, this may mean deployment to alternative duties for a period.
- If clinically vulnerable (but not extremely clinically vulnerable) individuals need to attend sessions, they should be offered the option of the safest available on-site roles/activities, enabling them to stay socially distanced from others. If there are times they can't be socially distanced from others, you should carefully assess whether this involves an acceptable level of risk. You must consider specific activities for those with protected characteristics, e.g. expectant mothers. Particular attention should also be paid to people who live with clinically extremely vulnerable individuals.
- Organisations should consider the concerns expressed by any staff who consider themselves to be at higher risk, which may include those from vulnerable groups or those from ethnic minorities, and continue to pay special attention to and support all with protected characteristics

16.0 How to raise a concern

There may be occasions where concerns persist, such as concerns about unsafe practices, safeguarding, risk management, behaviour and social distancing (please note this is not an exhaustive list). You should be able to find support via the following routes:

- Contact your line manager, an employee representative or your organisations volunteer support team.
- Contact your national association or body.
- Contact the board of trustees or executive for your organisation.
- Contact your trade union if you have one.
- Use the HSE form available at <https://www.hse.gov.uk/contact/concerns.htm>.
- Contact HSE by phone on 0300 003 1647.

Things to consider

- Understanding and considering the particular circumstances of those with different protected characteristics.
- Involving and communicating appropriately with staff and young people whose protected characteristics or needs (SEND, BAME, young carers, etc.) might expose them to a different degree of risk or might make any steps you are thinking about taking inappropriate or challenging for them.
- Deciding if you need to put any particular measures or adjustments in place to fulfil your duties under the equality's legislation.
- Making reasonable adjustments to avoid disabled staff and young people being put at a disadvantage and assessing the health and safety risks for new or expectant mothers.
- Making sure that the steps you take do not have an unjustifiable negative impact on some groups compared to others, for example, those with caring responsibilities or those with religious commitments.



17.0 Social distancing

It is essential to maintain social distancing wherever possible, including when arriving at and departing from a location, while delivering and when travelling between locations.

Things to consider

- You must maintain social distancing wherever possible.
- Where the social distancing guidelines cannot be followed in full in relation to a particular activity, organisations should consider whether that activity needs to continue for the provision to operate, and if so, take all the mitigating actions possible to reduce the risk of transmission between staff, young people and the community.

Mitigating actions include:

- Further increasing the frequency of hand washing and surface cleaning.
- Keeping the activity time involved as short as possible.
- Using screens as barriers to separate people from each other.
- Using back-to-back or side-to-side working (rather than face-to-face) whenever possible.
- Reducing the number of people each person has contact with by using 'fixed teams or partnering' (so each person works with only a few others).
- Some service users may have difficulty or challenges with the need to socially distance (for example, service users with SEND or behaviour needs). Additional support may be needed to appropriately support individuals to socially distance. Alternative provisions may need to be made to support individuals where the risks associated with their needs/ behaviours cannot be controlled effectively.
- Social distancing applies to all parts of an organisation, including pinch points such as entrances and exits, break rooms, café spaces and similar settings. These are often the most challenging areas to maintain social distancing.
- Staggered arrival and departure times for workers/volunteers and young people should be in place to reduce crowding in and out of the locations, while also considering the impact on those with protected characteristics.
- Travel to and from your venue/activities should be considered. Can staff, volunteers and young people travel safely and within current social distancing guidance? If not, you should consider any steps that can be taken to mitigate these risks (e.g. online virtual delivery). Face coverings should be worn at all times during transportation.
- Office spaces should be reviewed to ensure current social distancing guidelines are met.

- Reducing maximum occupancy for lifts, providing hand sanitiser for the operation of lifts and encouraging use of stairs wherever possible.
- Making sure that people with disabilities are able to access lifts.
- Regulating use of high traffic areas or pinch points including corridors, lifts, turnstiles and walkways to maintain social distancing.
- It may be necessary to reduce the occupancy levels of your premises to enhance social distancing for staff and volunteers; and organisations should enable people to work from home wherever possible.
- Signage should be displayed in public areas to help people maintain social distancing and handwashing/hygiene.
- Reconfiguring seating and tables to optimise spacing and reduce face-to-face interactions.

18.0 Accidents, security and other incidents

It is essential to prioritise safety during incidents and to follow your standard health and safety policies and procedures.

Things to consider

- In an emergency, for example, an accident, provision of first aid, a fire or a break-in, people do not have to stay socially distanced if it would be unsafe. If giving first aid or assistance to someone suspected of COVID-19, the first-aider should be encouraged to contact the NHS test and trace service.
- RIDDOR reporting advice should be followed for the reporting of relevant COVID-19 information.
- People involved in the provision of assistance to others should pay particular attention to sanitation measures immediately afterwards, including washing their hands.
- Reviewing your incident and emergency procedures to ensure they reflect the social distancing principles as much as possible.
- Organisations should keep a log of near misses and incidents and review this log to continually improve practices locally.
- Should a worker/volunteer or young person become unwell during a session, standard welfare measures should apply. If you suspect COVID-19, encourage them to contact the NHS test and trace service: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-how-it-works>.
- This includes individuals who have symptoms of COVID-19 as well as those who live in a household with someone who has symptoms and those who are advised to self-isolate as part of the government's test and trace program
- When preparing an action plan and risk assessment, organisations should consider the behavioural and welfare needs of young people. A clear process/plan to address any risks should be communicated to all staff/leaders within sessions.

19.0 Managing people

All youth sector organisations need to take the requirement to minimise the contact resulting from visits to centres/units seriously. Sessions should only open when your action plan and risk assessments mean you are satisfied that you can safely socially distance and minimise risk to vulnerable groups. The youth work support website has templates and checklists to support your decision-making process.

Things to consider

- Limiting the number of individuals in delivery spaces (indoors or outdoors), overall and in any congestion areas, e.g. doorways between outside and inside spaces.
- Encouraging staff and young people to use hand sanitiser or handwashing to reduce the risk of transmission.
- Looking at how people walk through your premises and how you could adjust this to reduce congestion and contact between staff and young people, e.g. queue management or a one-way flow where possible.
- We know many people are also keen to return to or contribute to volunteering. Organisations have a duty of care to volunteers to ensure as far as reasonably practicable that they are not exposed to risks to their health and safety. This guidance for working safely during the COVID-19 pandemic should ensure that volunteers are afforded the same level of protection of their health and safety as employees and the self-employed.
- Ensuring any changes to entries and exits and any queue management systems to outdoor locations and facilities and to consider reasonable adjustments for those who need them, including disabled staff, young people and visitors.
- Managing outside queues to ensure they do not cause a risk to individuals or other businesses.
- Continuing to keep café/coffee bar spaces closed until further notice, apart from when offering hot or cold food to be consumed off the premises. Organisations are permitted to open these services in line with government guidance for high street café's and restaurants.
- Individuals who are advised to stay at home under existing government guidance do not physically come to work/sessions. This includes individuals who have symptoms of COVID-19 as well as those who live in a household with someone who has symptoms.

20.0 Cleaning

Before reopening, make sure that any site or location that has been closed or partially operated is clean and ready to restart, including:

- An assessment for all sites, or parts of sites, that have been closed before restarting work.
- Cleaning procedures and/or providing hand sanitiser before restarting activity.
- Completing a deep clean if the premises have been closed for a long duration.
- Considering risks from legionella and taking precautions.

Keeping the workplace clean is essential for preventing transmission via contaminated surfaces. If your premises are shared with other organisations/contractors, a collective agreement should be put in place to outline each party's role and responsibilities.

Things to consider

- Frequent cleaning of work areas and equipment between uses using your usual cleaning products.
- Frequent cleaning of objects and surfaces that are touched regularly, e.g. kitchens and sports and ICT equipment.
- Clearing workspaces and removing waste and belongings from the work area at the end of a session.

If you are cleaning after a known or suspected case of COVID-19, refer to the specific guidance.

Organisations will need to ensure good levels of hygiene are maintained, this includes handwashing, sanitation facilities and toilets. Additional Public Health England advice on cleaning non-healthcare settings can be found [here](#).

Things to consider

- Using signs and posters to build awareness of good handwashing technique, the need to increase handwashing frequency, avoiding touching your face and coughing and sneezing into a tissue that is binned safely or into your arm if a tissue is not available.
- Providing regular reminders and signage to maintain hygiene standards.
- Providing hand sanitiser in multiple locations in addition to washrooms.
- Setting clear use and cleaning guidance for toilets to ensure they are kept clean and that social distancing is achieved as much as possible.
- Enhancing cleaning for busy areas.
- Providing hand drying facilities with either paper towels or electrical dryers.

21.0 Face Coverings

In England, face coverings are now required by law to be worn in shops, supermarkets, indoor transport hubs, indoor shopping centres, banks, building societies, post offices, on public transport and importantly community centres. **The law now requires all those over 11 yrs to wear a face covering unless with good reason when attending youth sector activities.** We strongly recommend that you wear a face covering in any enclosed public space where there are people you do not normally meet.

There are also settings where you must wear a face covering by law. A full list of where you must wear a face covering in England is available on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk). Specific requirements in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales are available on the websites of the devolved administrations.

Please be mindful that some individuals and groups have reasonable excuses for not wearing a face covering due to age, health or other conditions which are not always visible.

Why you should wear a face covering: Scientific evidence

Coronavirus (COVID-19) usually spreads by droplets from coughs, sneezes and speaking. These droplets can also be picked up from surfaces, if you touch a surface and then your face without washing your hands first. This is why social distancing, regular hand hygiene, and covering coughs and sneezes is so important in controlling the spread of the virus.

The best available scientific evidence is that, when used correctly, wearing a face covering may reduce the spread of coronavirus droplets in certain circumstances, helping to protect others.

Because face coverings are mainly intended to protect others, not the wearer, from coronavirus (COVID-19) they are not a replacement for social distancing and regular hand washing. It is important to follow all the other government advice on coronavirus (COVID-19) including staying safe outside your home.

If you have recent onset of any of the most important symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19), you and your household must isolate at home: wearing a face covering does not change this. You should arrange to have a test to see if you have COVID-19:

- a new continuous cough
- a high temperature
- a loss of, or change in, your normal sense of smell or taste (anosmia)

22.0 Personal protective equipment (PPE)

PPE protects the user against health or safety risks at work. If you were already using PPE in your work activity to protect against non-COVID-19 risks, you should continue to do so. This may be the case for supporting young people with personal care needs.

PPE in the context of this guidance refers to **medical grade PPE** (surgical face masks, visors etc). Other forms of PPE, such as that used when cooking, cleaning or during specific outdoor or craft activities, should continue to be worn as per health and safety advice.

When managing the risk of COVID-19, additional PPE beyond what you usually wear is not beneficial. This is because COVID-19 is a different type of risk to the risks you normally face in a workplace and needs to be managed through social distancing, hygiene and fixed teams or partnering, not through the use of PPE.

Organisations should not encourage the precautionary use of extra PPE to protect against COVID-19 outside clinical settings or when responding to a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19. This is the official guidance from Public Health England.

Unless you are in a situation where the risk of COVID-19 transmission is very high, your risk assessment should reflect the fact that the role of PPE in providing additional protection is limited. If your risk assessment shows that PPE is required, however, you must provide this PPE free of charge to the workers who need it. Any PPE provided must fit properly. An example of this may be face masks provided to staff when travelling with young people or to and from meetings using public transport.

Things to consider

- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser before putting a face covering on and after removing it.
- When wearing a face covering, avoid touching your face or face covering as you could contaminate them with germs from your hands.
- Change your face covering if it becomes damp or if you have touched it after putting on.
- Continue to wash your hands regularly.
- Change and wash your face covering daily.
- If the material is washable, wash in line with the manufacturer's instructions. If it is not washable, dispose of it carefully in your usual waste.
- Practise social distancing wherever possible.

23.0 NHS test and trace service

The NHS has established a new Test and Trace Service which youth sector providers need to be aware of.

The government is asking cafes, restaurants and social venues where individuals are onsite (inside or out) for more than fifteen minutes to record attendance information for the purposes of contacting individuals who may have been exposed to COVID-19.

There is new guidance from the Department for Health and Social Care here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-how-it-works>

What should you be doing?

For all activity that lasts more than fifteen minutes in duration should capture the following information on all leaders and young people in attendance:

1. Name
2. Phone number of next of kin, or the individual if over 16
3. Email address for next of kin, or the individual if over 16
4. Date and time of entrance and exit

Visitors who do not remain onsite for more than fifteen minutes do not need to be recorded.

For example: Parents for example who drop off their child or young person and leave quickly do not need to be recorded. However, a sports coach who delivers a thirty minute session would need to be recorded.



IMPORTANT: This information should be kept securely for 21 days and then destroyed if not captured as part of your standards registration processes.

The following information provided by the Office of the Information Commissioner should be followed and attendees made aware of your participation in the test and trace scheme.

Office of the Information Commissioner Statement on the Guidance Clear simple steps for businesses to take [Coronavirus dedicated web hub](#)

The test and trace scheme is not mandatory, but the NYA recommends youth providers participate to support the national effort to manage the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

24.0 Communications and training

It is essential to make sure all staff, volunteers, young people and visitors understand the COVID-19-related safety procedures put in place. The decisions made during the creation of the local action plan and risk assessment need to be communicated. This must be done in an easily understandable way that will be understood by all in attendance.

Things to consider

- Providing clear, consistent and regular communication to improve understanding and the consistency in ways of working.
- Engaging with staff, volunteers and young people through existing communication routes to explain any changes in working arrangements.
- Ideally develop clear communication and training materials for workers prior to them returning to site, especially regarding any new procedures for arriving at work.
- Awareness and focus on the importance of mental health at times of uncertainty. The government has published guidance on the mental health and wellbeing aspects of coronavirus (COVID-19).
- Explaining guidelines using images and clear language that considers groups for whom English may not be their first language.
- Using visual communications, e.g. whiteboards and signage, to explain changes to programmes, activities or opening times to reduce the need for face-to-face communications.
- You will need to recognise that materials may need to be provided in different languages and formats to support accessibility. Also, those with additional needs may need support to access information. This should be provided.
- Ensure all staff and volunteers have been inducted and trained in any new procedures or requirements following your risk assessment. Keep this under continual review.

25.0 Waste disposal

When disposing of face coverings and PPE, people should do so in a 'black bag' waste bin or litter bin. Face coverings or PPE should not be put in a recycling bin or dropped as litter.

Organisations should provide extra bins for staff and customers to dispose of single-use face coverings and PPE and should ensure that staff and customers do not use a recycling bin.

People who are self-isolating, and members of their household, should double bag face coverings and items of PPE, these should be stored for 72 hours before being disposed of in a 'black bag' waste bin. Full details on how to dispose of your personal or business waste during the coronavirus pandemic can be found on GOV.UK.

Note: The key points of the waste disposal guidance that your updates should reflect are:

- People should dispose of face coverings and PPE in a 'black bag' waste bin or litter bin. People should not put face coverings or PPE in a recycling bin or drop them as litter.
- People who are self-isolating, and members of their household, should double bag face coverings and items of PPE to be disposed of, and store them for 72 hours before putting them in a 'black bag' waste bin.
- Businesses should provide extra bins for staff and customers to throw away face coverings and PPE and should ensure that staff and customers do not use a recycling bin.

Appendix 1. Definitions

Vulnerable young people

There are two groups of vulnerable young people. The first is defined by the Department for Education as any young person or child in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, any young person with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) under the Children and Families Act 2014 or any child or young person who has been assessed as otherwise vulnerable by educational providers or local authorities.

The second group has a broader definition, with the focus being on supporting and safeguarding vulnerable young people, particularly 8–19-year-olds, through adolescence and the key stages of transitioning to adulthood. They are understood to be children and young people living in vulnerable family situations and includes those not known to formal or statutory services.

We recognise that young people have other vulnerabilities and difficulties, and some may have needs that have been amplified by COVID-19. This can result in risky behaviours and crisis points in their lives. Support for the vulnerable young people who are most in need should be a priority consideration for services and support during the COVID-19 pandemic. See the NYA's 'Out of Sight?' report for examples.

Risk and safeguarding assessment

Before commencing delivery, a comprehensive risk assessment must be completed that should, at the minimum, ask:

- Is there a need for this activity to take place? Could this work happen through other means?
- How will the proposed activity be managed safely? What are the ratios of staff/young people? How will disclosures be managed?
- How will social distancing guidelines be applied?
- Are there health risks to young people or staff/trusted adults that should be considered?
- Is PPE appropriate or needed (for personal care reasons, etc.)?
- Will the activities proposed ensure safe practice?

Enhanced risk assessment

An enhanced risk assessment builds on the risk and safeguarding assessment and also factors in the physical premises involved and any additional risks they may pose to the staff or public.

Safe spaces

Safe spaces are locations or premises where youth sector activities can take place. This will often be the buildings used to house your projects or activities. Safe spaces can also be outdoor spaces, such as camp sites and residential centres.

Recommended PPE

For most youth activities, PPE will not be required except for staff working in close contact for welfare or safeguarding reasons. Otherwise, social distancing guidelines must be observed, which results in the minimal effectiveness of PPE. This advice may change at any time. PPE should be used in line with Public Health England's guidance.

Hand sanitation

Handwashing facilities must be available. Additionally, hand sanitising gel can be provided.

Clinically extremely vulnerable

Clinically extremely vulnerable people will have received a letter telling them they are in this group or will have been told by their GP. Guidance on who is in this group can be found [here](#).

Clinically vulnerable people

Clinically vulnerable people include those aged 70 years or over and those with certain underlying health conditions. All members of this group are listed in the 'clinically vulnerable' section [here](#).

Detached youth activity

Activity which takes place away from traditional youth sector premises that is informal in nature. Youth workers visiting the local park or shops to engage with young people on their own terms.

Appendix 2.

Where to find support

The following websites may provide additional support:

The NYA has teamed up with UK Youth and the Federation for Detached Youth Work to provide further support, tools, checklists and model risk assessments: <https://youthworksupport.co.uk>

UK Government coronavirus website:
<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) Regulations 2020: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2020/846/contents/made>

The Department for Education guidance can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people>

Further guidance for young people can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/stay-alert-and-safe-social-distancing-guidance-for-young-people/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing-guidance-for-young-people>

Public Health England; Disparities in the risk and outcomes of COVID-19: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/891116/disparities_review.pdf

Staying alert and safe (social distancing) guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing>

Guidance on shielding and protecting people who are clinically extremely vulnerable from COVID-19: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>

Staying at home and away from others (social distancing): <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/full-guidance-on-staying-at-home-and-away-from-others/full-guidance-on-staying-at-home-and-away-from-others>

Coronavirus (COVID-19): safer travel guidance for passengers: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers>

Health and Safety Executive (HSE) general COVID-19 website: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/coronavirus.htm>

HSE working safely during the coronavirus outbreak guidance: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/working-safely-during-coronavirus-outbreak.htm>

Guidance on social distancing for young people: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/stay-alert-and-safe-social-distancing-guidance-for-young-people/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing-guidance-for-young-people>

Travel Advice for Coronavirus: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/travel-advice-novel-coronavirus>

Staying secure during COVID-19 <https://www.cpni.gov.uk/staying-secure-during-covid-19-0>

National Council for Voluntary Organisations coronavirus webpage: <https://www.ncvo.org.uk/practical-support/information/coronavirus?carousel>

Coronavirus Work Rights | UK Advice for Coronavirus from Unite: <https://unitetheunion.org/campaigns/coronavirus-covid-19-advice/>

Coronavirus: your rights at work from Unison <https://www.unison.org.uk/coronavirus-rights-work/>

Appendix 3. Legal statement

The National Youth Agency (NYA) does not provide this document to the sector in anything less than 'guidance'. NYA takes no responsibility for how users of this document interpret or apply the guidance. Users of this guide must ensure they operate within the law, social distancing guidelines and meet their specific duties and responsibilities to stakeholders. It is for each organisational unit to make its own local decisions on how to apply the advice included. NYA cannot be held accountable for local decisions reached based on this guidance. Organisations must ensure they have suitable action plans, risk assessments and be self-satisfied that they have considered all reasonable actions to protect the welfare, health and safety of staff, volunteers, employees and service users.

This guidance does not supersede any legal obligations relating to health and safety, employment or equalities and it is important that as an organisation, charity, local authority or an employer you continue to comply with your existing obligations, including those relating to individuals with protected characteristics. This document contains non-statutory guidance to consider when complying with these obligations.

When considering how to apply this guidance, consider agency workers, contractors and other people, as well as your employees and service users/young people. To help you decide which actions to take, you need to carry out an appropriate COVID-19 risk assessment, just as you would for other health and safety hazards. This risk assessment must be done in consultation with unions or workers.

This guidance document has been drafted with the support of Public Health England and the Health and Safety Executive. Users should ensure they are using the most up-to-date version of this document and can check this at any time via the NYA website: www.nya.org.uk

This guidance document has been provided to allow the youth sector to draw its own conclusions as to the nature of safe youth activity and appropriate levels and types of activities at any given time.



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