



Providing Youth Sector Activities During COVID-19 Lockdowns

Tier FOUR Red Readiness



1.0 Introduction

On the 19th December 2020, the Prime Minister announced plans for a new Tier 4 (T4) for parts of England address an increase in COVID-19 infections. The restrictions announced for T4 areas matches those put in place during the second national lockdown. This means the youth sector in T4 areas can remain partially active within strict adherence to NYA guidance for the RED readiness level.

This paper sets out what is permitted across the youth sector in T4 areas.

Firstly, you should read the NYA's version 4 guidance in full as this fact sheet works in tandem with the NYA's main guidance document. You **MUST** read both. You can do this by going to: <https://nya.org.uk/guidance/>. T4 restrictions begin in England from 20th December 2020. Find out about the new restrictions and what you can and cannot do here:

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>



Managing youth sector activities and spaces during COVID-19



NB: The readiness level, which applies only to England, may go up or down based on government regulations (the law), local lockdowns or following consultation with the sector.

2 Red readiness level

The **RED** readiness level allows the following activities only, subject to a COVID Secure Action Plan and Risk Assessment:

- Online and digital youth services
- Detached/outdoor local youth services
- 1-2-1 sessions with vulnerable young people (indoors)
- Small group work session indoors with vulnerable young people (consistent with social distancing guidelines)

Youth sector providers are allowed to provide support and services to vulnerable young people indoors during periods of **RED** readiness. Youth sector providers should work within the spirit of lockdown and must not provide open access/drop-in services at this time.

3 Permitted Activities

Sessions can be provided via invite only during periods of lockdown:

Supporting young people online is permitted. Youth sector providers are encouraged to remain in contact with young people via digital means where possible. Additional tools and guidance can be found on <https://youthworksupport.co.uk/> (in partnership with UK Youth, Federation for Detached Youth Work and The Mix).

Targeted support group sessions are permitted indoors but must comply with the same COVID Secure guidance set out in version 3 of the NYA's COVID19 Guidance. Attendees must be formally invited to attend a support group at an agreed time and location. The new COVID19 regulations permit support only for 'vulnerable young people'. There is no definition of a vulnerable young person, this is left to local professional judgement.

- Support groups can take place if it is reasonably necessary for the group to be physically present at the session/gathering.
- Support group sessions indoors in community facilities in bubbles of between 2 and 15 persons are permitted (excluding staff/leaders/carers). Social distancing, hygiene and other COVID-secure measures are required.
- Leaders and workers are not included in the support group number (15 young people + staff is allowed).

- Providers are only allowed ONE bubble at a time in their venue regardless of the size of the venue. Other staff members can be on-site for work purposes (in an office, cleaning etc).
- Youth sector providers can offer back-to-back sessions (subject to venue cleansing in between) with the same members of staff or leaders and across multiple days of the week.
- Community centres, youth centres, libraries and places of worship can be opened and used for the purposes of providing support group activities. Private dwellings for the avoidance of doubt must not be used in any circumstances. Home visits to young people are also prohibited.

A support group is not an open access drop-in session. Whilst it is acceptable to conduct similar activities to a typical youth club session, providers need to be clear this is a defined group for a defined purpose. For example, a support group could be provided to a group of young carers or young people with SEND. Sessions should of course be engaging and fun but provided for the specific purpose of supporting a vulnerable young person's personal, social and educational development.

Triage for identifying vulnerable young people. We recognise that lockdown may impact young people differently, so drop-in support is permitted to triage young people for a formal invitation to attend an 'invite-only session'. The triage process must be provided through a 1-2-1 working format (additional staff for safeguarding purposes is acceptable) only.

1-2-1 support is permitted during **RED**. Youth sector providers may meet young people indoors and may have as many staff present as required to meet welfare and safeguarding needs.

Detached and outdoor provision is permitted. Youth sector providers and youth workers are permitted to engage with vulnerable young people via detached youth work (see additional guidance and definitions of detached/outreach youth work from NYA and Federation for Detached Youth Work here: <https://nya.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Detached-Guidance-full.pdf>).

It is possible youth workers will come across groups of young people over 15 – it is still acceptable (if safe) to engage young people in this case. Youth workers should seek to inform/educate young people of their responsibilities to socially distance and follow the lockdown requirements. However, the NYA recognises that detached work is an effective way to support and engage vulnerable young people, and if trained and safe to do so, this activity is permitted.

The NYA is not providing a firm definition of 'high need' or 'vulnerable' young people. This is likely to be unique to each young person, their family or community (geographical or thematic community). Youth workers/providers may use their judgement to ensure high need/vulnerable young people remain able to access their services (subject to an updated organisational risk assessment). The common reality is all young people are vulnerable at some point, and the NYA working with government recognises that it's important to ensure young people have access to a trusted adult and support when they need it most.

4 Travel during lockdown

Young people and staff in T4 areas should avoid travel where possible.

During periods of lockdown young people are permitted to travel between towns/council areas if the need to in order to attend a youth sector support group. In general, the regulations prohibit travel for the general population except for clearly defined reasons (travel to work, medical appointments, for welfare reasons etc), however, a young person who needs to travel to a different area to be able to access support is permitted to do so.

No trips, visits or residentials are permitted during periods of lockdown or RED.

5 Opening community spaces for young people

Youth Sector providers are allowed to provide safe spaces for support groups indoors. Although the regulations require closure of most public spaces (Leisure Centres etc) community centres, youth centres, places of worship and libraries are permitted to open to provide the services listed in this document. All the COVID Secure requirements in the NYA's version 3 guidance must be followed.

The provision of youth sector support to young people in schools, colleges or health centres is at the discretion of their leadership and youth sector providers must comply with their requirements if allowed.

6 Remaining COVID Secure



Groups/Bubbles are manageable
(age appropriate)

Bubbles need to remain no larger than 15 young people (plus staff) and should be structured as organised group work sessions and not open access sessions. Young people should be placed in consistent bubbles for regular sessions and should not swap bubbles during this period unless absolutely necessary. Support/key workers (i.e. for SEND young people) are allowed in addition to bubble of 15 young people.



Action plan in place
(roles and responsibilities)

All youth sector providers should review, update and implement their COVID Secure Action Plan. More details on developing your action plan can be found in our main version 3 guidance document here: <https://nya.org.uk/guidance/>.



Risk Assessment are up-to-date

Risk assessments must be reviewed regularly and kept up to date with the changes to NYA guidance. If providers plan to offer 1-2-1/targeted youth sector activity during lockdown, then it's essential their risk assessments are reviewed and updated to reflect new group management processes.

NB: Sector providers must ensure their safeguarding policy is current and used to protect young people from harm.



Social distancing is in place

Social distancing must be maintained at all times. Young people and staff/leaders need to remain 1m plus (ideally 2m) apart at all times. The exceptions are to meet any welfare or health and safety needs.



Face coverings are worn when needed

Face coverings are required at all times (unless previously exempt) indoors by all attendees over 11 years of age (the day following their 11th birthday). This includes both staff/leaders and young people. Exemptions to wearing a face covering are recognised and detail is provided in version 3 of the NYA COVID Guidance.



Venue is clean and kept clean

To minimise the spread of COVID-19, all venues need to be kept hygienically clean. All commonly used touch points and surfaces need to be cleaned frequently. This includes any equipment, stationery or resources passed between individuals. Venues should be thoroughly cleaned between sessions.



Hygiene is robust – handwashing etc

It's vital both young people and staff/leaders ensure they clean their hands regularly. Soap and water are best when used for 20 seconds. Hand sanitiser is acceptable in addition to good hand hygiene.

The NYA provides this guidance to explain what is permitted and how to provide vital support to young people when they need it most. Providers should conduct their own risk assessments and judge for themselves if it is safe or appropriate to open. If you are not certain, then withdrawing from face-to-face provision is the safest course of action. If you feel you can manage the risks and support young people in person, then this guidance should support you to do so safely.

7 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 that they operate within the law, that they adhere to social distancing guidelines, and that they meet their specific duties and responsibilities to stakeholders. It is the responsibility of each organisational unit to make its own decisions on how to apply the advice included herein. NYA cannot be held accountable for local decisions based on this guidance. Organisations must ensure they have suitable action plans and risk assessments, and that they are 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, which should be considered 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 assist you in deciding which actions to take, an appropriate COVID-19 risk assessment should be carried out, as is the case for other health and safety hazards. This risk assessment must be done in consultation with unions or workers.



Users should ensure they are referring to the most up-to-date version of the document, which can be found on the NYA website: www.nya.org.uk



www.nya.org.uk

 [@natyouthagency](https://twitter.com/natyouthagency)

 nya@nya.org.uk

 0116 242 7350

Registration No. 2912597 | Charity No. 1035804
National Youth Agency, 9 Newarke Steet, Leicester LE1 5SN