Managing youth sector activities and spaces
during COVID-19

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, youth leaders and volunteers through COVID-19 and its aftermath. It complements a readiness framework alongside a set of planning tools and resources co-produced with youth sector partners to help inform decision-making in support of local activities. 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.

This document has been prepared in consultation with Public Health England (PHE) and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE)

Contents

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 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 provisions, 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 local 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 15 June 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 potentially by location. To support youth sector organisations when reacting to these changes, a new toolkit has been developed to work alongside this guidance that provides a readiness framework and level. This is 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.

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.

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 Thinking about 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 polices. 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.

7.0 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' 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 santiser.

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).
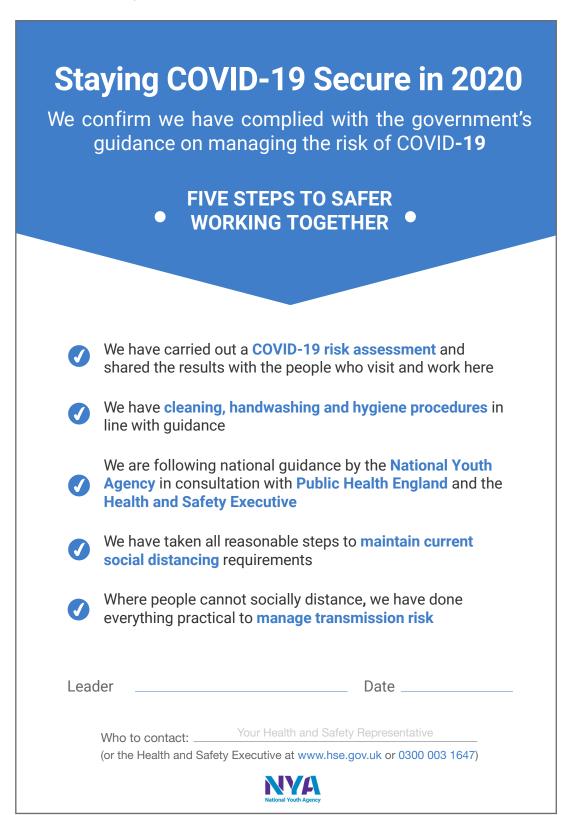
8.0 Protecting people who are at higher risk

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

9.0 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)

NYA
National Youth Agency

10.0 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 equalities 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.

11.0 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.

ℹ️ Government guidance on social distancing for young people can be found here.

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.

12.0 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.

13.0 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 cafés 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.

14.0 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.

15.0 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 extremely 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.

There are some circumstances when wearing a face covering may be marginally beneficial as a precautionary measure. The evidence suggests that wearing a face covering does not protect you, but it may protect others if you are infected and have not developed symptoms.

Wearing a face covering is optional and is not required by law in the workplace. If you choose to wear one, it is important to use face coverings properly and wash your hands before putting them on and taking them off. You should be prepared to remove your face covering if asked to do so by police officers and staff for the purposes of identification.

Organisations should support their staff and young people in using face coverings safely if they choose to wear one.

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.

Additional information on face coverings

A face covering can be very simple and may be worn in enclosed spaces where social distancing is not possible. It only needs to cover your mouth and nose and is not the same as a face mask, e.g. the surgical masks and respirators used by health and care workers. Similarly, face coverings are not the same as the PPE used to manage risks like dust and spray in an industrial context. Supplies of PPE, including face masks, must continue to be reserved for those who need them to protect against risks in their workplace, such as health and care workers and those in industrial settings who are exposed to dust hazards.

It is important to know that the evidence of the benefit of using a face covering to protect others is weak and the effect is likely to be small, therefore, face coverings are not a replacement for the other ways of managing risk, including minimising time spent in contact, using fixed teams and partnering for close-up work and increasing hand and surface washing. These other measures remain the best ways of managing risk in the workplace and the government would therefore not expect to see employers relying on face coverings as risk management for the purpose of their health and safety assessments.

16.0 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.

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: http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2020/350

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.

Notes

Notes

Notes