COVID-19: Guidance to support youth work services with a safe and phased increase of operations

Contents

Introduction

This guidance is for those involved in the delivery of youth work services across the voluntary sector, local authorities, or in partnership in Wales. It aims to support them to safely plan for a gradual increase of operations on a phased basis, and as the public health context allows. For the purpose of this document, youth work services are those using youth work approaches to 'enable young people to develop holistically, working with them to facilitate their personal, social and educational development, to enable them to develop their voice, influence and place in society and to reach their full potential' (National Occupational Standards). It has been developed in the context of our strategic aims for youth work in Wales. This guidance is of a general nature and should be treated as a guide. In the event of any conflict between any applicable legislation (including the health and safety legislation) and this guidance, the applicable legislation shall prevail.

Scope

Any decision to increase operations is up to, and at the risk of, each organisation providing youth work services, be they voluntary sector or local authority led. While this document offers a useful guide, any decisions taken must be consistent with applicable legislation, including that related to COVID-19, relevant statutory guidance documents, and in line with your own organisation's policies and procedures.

This guidance is not exhaustive, nor directive, but offers high-level principles to consider. It is a living document that will be updated as required, should the public health context and latest government guidance change.

This document is intended to be inclusive and reflective of the contributions made by both voluntary sector and local authority youth work services. If in doubt, references to the workforce should be interpreted as including volunteer and paid professionals.

Further, and as with all services aimed at supporting young people, their voice and participation is key. This document does not therefore seek to replace the need for all youth work services to engage with and incorporate the voice and views of the young people they work with in their developing plans for increased operations.

This guidance should be read alongside the supporting information in Annexes A and B, which contain a checklist to support planning and a summary of scientific information of Coronavirus.

1. Background

Youth work services deliver vital preventative interventions and have a significant contribution to make to the post-COVID recovery and reconstruction efforts in Wales. Offering young people safe spaces, strengthened relationships with their peers and trusted adults, and championing their rights and responsibilities, youth work helps young people build confidence, develop skills, and maintain their physical and mental health. Quality youth work practice and approaches role model the expectations and behaviours identified in the Well-being of Future Generations Act (2015), contribute to the well-being goals and deliver in line with the sustainable development principles. Having pioneered new approaches to youth work delivery through outreach and digital means since lockdown began, and supported young people in a range of settings, this guidance now seeks to support youth work services with their planning for a phased increase of COVID-secure operations in line with the current public health context.

2. Informing planning and the decision-making process

An identified need for an increase in youth work services is not the only determining factor in assessing and agreeing if an increase in operations can be delivered. In fact, this decision is much more likely to be informed by the types of activities involved, the service users and in what setting the activities take place. As a result, in making any decision about increasing operations **you may need to consider and reflect the requirements set out in other guidance documents and the relevant legislation governing their delivery**. Youth work services in Wales are diverse and it is not possible to accurately reflect or account for all of the various delivery models with a one size fits all approach.

For example: a youth work service's normal or preferred delivery model may include sports, be based in a community centre, or involve group work with young people over a certain number. In these instances, in addition to this guidance, you would also need to consider sector-specific guidance and social distancing advice:

Sport, recreation and leisure: guidance for a phased return

Guidance for the safe use of multi-purpose community centre

Social distancing (The law, guidance and frequently asked questions)

What appears in the following section is therefore not exhaustive and will depend on the type of service you intend on delivering. It can, however, help you to adapt your delivery model, by directing you to relevant guidance documents governing different sectors and contexts, helping you determine what may be right for you. Any decision to increase operations must carefully balance the risks of increased transmission with those associated with inaction or non-delivery of activity with young people, including the most vulnerable or marginalised among them.

Who makes the decision about an increase of operations?

In the current public health context, and at this stage of lockdown easements, voluntary sector and local authority youth work services are individually responsible for taking decisions about any increase of operations of the services they deliver. They are also responsible for decision making about the increased use of any settings, centres or buildings they propose delivery from, and which belong to them. In being responsible for making these decisions they are also liable for them and should therefore ensure they are familiar with any and all legislative/health and safety requirements placed on them, that they have taken steps to meet these requirements, and that their proposal represents COVID-secure delivery.

Any youth work services using a community centre space would need to consider this guidance and liaise with the community centre manager, who would have to give regard to the community centre guidance, consider the activity being proposed, and seek permission from the local authority. Those services hiring private sector spaces to deliver activities can do so, providing the organisation they are hiring from is operating in line with their own sector-specific guidance and overarching social distancing requirements and the activity they propose is COVID-secure. Any youth work services can deliver outdoor activity/outreach, providing they meet overarching social distancing requirements and deliver in a COVID-secure way.

3. Operational guidance for youth work services

Youth work services are diverse and may look even more different as lockdown eases. This diversity requires organisations to consider their proposed delivery models in the context of their unique circumstances, as well as alongside any obligations placed on them as part of COVID-19 restrictions or legislation, to ensure they are operating safely. Due to this diversity, this document will not offer a one-size fits all approach. Instead it attempts to draw together key areas you may wish to consider as a minimum to help ensure your proposals are COVID-secure, and provides a checklist to support you in your planning (Annex A).

A. Engaging with young people, the workforce and partners

Clear communication and engagement, and adopting participatory approaches where appropriate, will be key to understanding how young people are feeling and what they want to see as part of any planned increase of operations. It can help them better understand the science behind COVID-19 and their role in reducing the risk of transmission. Furthermore, once a delivery model has begun to be established, good engagement will help in communicating any additional steps you are taking to safeguard their well-being, as well as in ensuring that any new rules or procedures are well-understood. This might include clarifying how young people can register their interest to attend, and how you will respond to young people just turning up, both of which will help you better plan your offer and ensure staff availability. It will also help ensure they are aware of what procedures or steps will be taken if someone falls ill.

These principles should be adapted with other stakeholders to ensure their voices are heard and that they feel part of the planning and decision-making process, including staff, volunteers, managers, trustees, and other key partners.

You should engage and agree cross-organisation protocols if facilities are shared with multiple partners. Lastly, you should liaise with relevant insurance providers to ensure appropriate cover is in place and it is up to each individual organisation to take responsibility for this.

B. Key responsibilities and core principles

It is everyone's responsibility to understand their role in helping reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 and some additional information that may support your understanding is at Annex B. In addition to this, youth work services should take into account any of their responsibilities as employers. Businesses that are permitted to operate, or premises that are allowed to open, must do so safely in a way that complies with the COVID regulations, in addition to other legal obligations imposed on employers (such as health and safety legislation).

Youth work services may also have a duty of care to volunteers to ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, they are not exposed to risks to their health and safety and are afforded the same level of protection as employees and the self-employed – see government information on coronavirus volunteering and how to help safely. Volunteers and other individuals who are shielding should continue to follow the government's advice on shielding.

Any reopening plans should also be consistent with [core public health COVID guidance](#) regarding health, hygiene and [social distancing](#), and [safe workplace guidelines,](#) to ensure employees and colleagues are safe to return to work.

Anyone with control of non-domestic premises (such as a community centre, village or community hall) has legal responsibilities; these may arise under health and safety legislation or duties of care. They should take reasonable measures to ensure the premises, access to it, and any equipment or substances provided are safe for people using it, so far as is reasonably practicable. Providers of youth work services will also need to consider what legal responsibilities they may have under the COVID regulations in undertaking activities in other spaces, including the outdoors or hired venues. Providers will need to undertake suitable and sufficient risk assessments and to put in place measures that comply with the COVID regulations.

C. Risk assessment

To help decide which actions to take prior to increasing operations, a **COVID-19 risk assessment should be completed**, taking account of the core guidance on social distancing and the points set out below – see guidance on [completing a risk assessment.](#)

Those responsible for a youth work services setting or activity should undertake their own risk assessment, taking account of any guidance relevant to their specific activity or sector.

D. Social distancing and determining capacity

Measures should be in place to ensure all users of settings follow the up-to-date guidelines on [staying safe and social distancing](#). You should consider and set out the mitigations you will introduce in your risk assessment.

If considering opening a physical premises, the size and circumstance of the building will determine the maximum number of people and the number of activities that can be accommodated while also facilitating social distancing. In defining the number of people that can reasonably follow distancing guidelines, the total floor space as well as likely pinch points and busy areas should be taken into account (e.g. entrances and exits) and where possible alternative or one-way routes introduced.

A risk assessment should determine the maximum capacity of a setting, hall or hire space while being able to maintain social distancing according to the relevant guidelines. It should also identify points of high risk in the building and mitigating actions to address the identified risks. Those planning the increase of operations should also consider what changes might be needed to enable safe access to and use of the building. These may include:

Making use of multiple exit and entry points to introduce a one-way flow in and out of the premises, with appropriate floor markings or signage. Any changes to entrances, exits and queues should take into account the need to make reasonable adjustments for those who need them, such as people with disabilities.

Managing the arrival and departure times of different groups so as to reduce the pressure at exits and entrances.

Queue management – the flow of groups in and out of the premises should be carefully controlled to reduce the risk of congestion. It may be necessary to introduce socially distanced queuing systems.

Use of outdoor spaces – activities taking place outdoors are far safer than those taking place indoors and, for this reason, organisations should utilise outdoor areas wherever possible. When delivering youth work services outside you must ensure that you follow the guidance relevant for your activity and ensure social distancing protocols are in place at all times. The sports, recreation and leisure guidance may support your planning in this instance.

Ventilation when indoors – indoor activities should take place in ventilated areas of the building and with doors or windows open when possible.

Travel
Those wishing to use a youth work service should consider how far they need to travel and how they will travel to and from the building safely. Members of the same household should travel together. Where transporting young people to and from an activity where it is the only way to provide the service, full consideration must be given to social distancing guidance and the appropriate use of face masks. The Welsh Government's advice on travelling safely can be found here.

Toilets
Portable toilets and toilets inside premises should be kept open and carefully managed to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19. Guidance can be found here on how to provide safe toilets for public use.

Catering
Guidance for the hospitality sector has been developed and is available at the following link, this includes guidance on catering facilities which some may find helpful to refer to.

Water supply
If buildings have been closed or had reduced occupancy during the COVID-19 outbreak, water system stagnation can occur due to lack of use, increasing the risks of Legionnaires' disease. HSE guidance covering water management and legionella is available.

E. Hygiene, cleaning and infection control

Anyone responsible for premises open during COVID is under a duty to take reasonable measures to minimise the risk of exposure to coronavirus. This includes a duty to:

- take all reasonable measures to ensure a two metre distance is kept between individuals (other than those from the same household)

- take other reasonable measures to minimise risk of exposure (e.g. maintaining hygiene and avoiding face to face transmission)

- to provide information to those entering premises on how to minimise the risk (e.g. by providing signs and posters).

COVID-19 is mainly spread between people who are in close contact with one another and by droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It can also spread through contact with a surface or object that has the virus on it.

Cleaning to an appropriate standard helps minimise the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19). A cleaning regime should be established based on the risk assessment and use of the building. High usage areas and anything that is frequently touched, especially if it is touched by lots of people, will need more regular cleaning than normal. Guidance on cleaning to the appropriate standard can be found here. If you are cleaning because of a known or suspected case of COVID-19 in your workplace you should follow the guidance here.

Hygiene and face coverings
Practicing good hand hygiene is important. Users of the facilities should have access to soap and water to wash their hands for at least 20 seconds or access to hand sanitiser when entering and leaving the building and after coughing, sneezing, blowing their nose or being in a public area. Youth work services might also consider:

- signs and posters to build awareness of good handwashing technique, the need to increase handwashing frequency, advice to avoid touching your face and to cough or sneeze into a tissue which is binned safely, or into your arm if a tissue is not available
- providing hand sanitiser in multiple locations, such as reception areas, in addition to washrooms
- providing hand drying facilities (paper towels or electrical dryers).

More information about the use of face coverings can be found here.

Face coverings and implications for individuals with any level of hearing loss
The impact of wearing a face covering for a deaf individual with any level of hearing loss should be carefully considered, as communication for many deaf people relies in part on being able to see someone's face clearly. The National Deaf Children's Society has provided the following communication tips, which staff may find useful in this regard.

F. Test, Trace, Protect and what to do in the case of suspected or actual infection

Those experiencing coronavirus symptoms (which include those listed below) should not attend a youth work setting, or use youth work setting transportation.

- New continuous cough.
- High temperature.
- Loss of or change to your normal sense of smell or taste (anosmia).

Individuals who are self-isolating due to a possible or confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19) in the household should not attend. Neither should they attend if they have had contact with another individual with coronavirus and have been advised to self-isolate. Guidance on self-isolation can be found here.

The advice for individuals who are extremely vulnerable and shielding or in an 'at risk group' continues to be to minimise their contact with others for their personal protection. However, they may decide, for their well-being, to attend a youth work service despite the additional risk this poses to them. In this case they and anyone with them should strictly follow the social distancing guidance.

If anyone becomes unwell with symptoms of COVID-19 in a setting, they should be sent home and advised to follow the self-isolation guidance and to apply for a coronavirus test.

If they need clinical advice they should go online to NHS 111 Wales (or call 111 if they don't have internet access). In an emergency, call 999 if they are seriously ill or injured or their life is at risk. They should not visit the GP, pharmacy, urgent care centre or a hospital.

Other people who may have been in contact with the person who has become unwell should wash their hands thoroughly after the interaction, but they do not need to take any other specific action unless they develop symptoms themselves. If they develop symptoms they should follow the self-isolation guidance and apply for a coronavirus test.

The areas used by these individuals should be thoroughly cleaned according to the guidance referenced above.

Test Trace Protect
The Welsh Government Test, Trace, Protect strategy sets out the approach to tackling coronavirus, testing people with symptoms in the community, tracing those who have come into close contact with people who have tested positive for coronavirus and protecting family, friends and our community by self-isolating. Further information about Test, Trace, Protect is available, along with guidance on keeping records of staff, customers and visitors. Guidance for employers is also available.

G. Individual considerations – colleagues and young people

It is important to account for the needs of individuals and to be clear on any new expectations. Required behaviours should be positively reinforced rather than non-compliance stigmatised. Signs of distress should be identified and supported, and intensive or specialist support sought when needed. The high standards of safeguarding youth work services held prior to lockdown must be upheld as we move into new spaces and models for delivery.

There are a whole host of new issues that may need to be taken into consideration. This can include any additional emotional, financial and psychological pressures that youth workers and young people may be under, either directly or indirectly related to the public health context. These might include worries about the virus, pressures from being furloughed or having lost work, stress from additional caring responsibilities or bereavement, or anxieties about returning.

It will therefore be important to consider your organisations' HR policies and support mechanisms and ensure they are up-to-date, reflecting the new challenges we are facing and the support that staff will require as a result. Ideas to promote welfare that

services may wish to incorporate include reflective spaces, making use of counselling, welfare breaks and giving opportunities for workers to share their experiences.

Individual risk assessments

Throughout the course of delivering services, and in preparation for them, you may wish to consider undertaking a stress risk assessment.

Further to this, and in planning for your return, the All Wales COVID-19 Workforce Risk Assessment Tool can support your planning.

The Tool uses government guidelines, and the most up-to-date research, evidence and data available to identify known risk factors, including age, sex, ethnicity, underlying health conditions, Body Mass Index (BMI) and any relevant family history in relation to COVID-19. It is a combination of these various factors coming together which contribute to the severity of infection.

The Tool was designed for those working in the NHS and Social Care in Wales, however education staff are encouraged to use the Risk Assessment, and to complete this online through the national e-learning platform Learning@Wales. Work is ongoing to develop sector specific guidance specifically for education. This will be completed in August.

You may wish to direct staff and young people to the Young person's mental health toolkit on Hwb.

H. Additional considerations

Those delivering youth work services may wish to better understand or refer to other guidance, particularly if sharing facilities with different organisations. Some examples of specific guidance and regulations are included below:

Community centres

Childcare provision

Families First and Flying Start services

Playground and play area guidance

Places of worship

Sport, recreation and leisure

Culture and heritage destinations and venues

Schools

Further education

For further reading on the scientific information which informed the development of the guidance see Annex B. To assist you in developing your own checklist to expand your services or re-open your centres see the template checklist linked to this guidance at Annex A.

Annex A: Increasing operations for youth work services in Wales – example checklist

The template below is to help you make and plan for your decision about how and when to safely re-open or expand your services. Youth work is a diverse sector and this checklist is not, therefore, an exhaustive list of everything you must take into account.

If you do not feel you can open in a managed and safe way, you should not re-open until there are appropriate processes in place.

The checklist should be read in conjunction with the Operation Guidance.

Ref (from guidance)	Title	Are you assured you have this covered?	If not, what steps will you take to address any issues you have identified?
2	**Informing planning and the decision-making process** Have you read the relevant guidance documents governing your proposed activity and do you understand all additional expectations/requirements placed on you?		
3A	**Engaging with young people, the workforce and partners** Have you developed and communicated your proposals in partnership with young people, volunteer and paid professional staff, and relevant partners?		
3B	**Key responsibilities and core principles** Do you understand core public health guidance regarding health, hygiene, and social distancing, and safe workplace guidelines, to ensure employees and colleagues are safe to return to work? Do you understand your responsibilities as an employer, information on coronavirus volunteering and how to help safely, and the government's advice on shielding?		
3C	**Risk assessment** Have you undertaken relevant risk assessments?		

3D	**Social distancing and determining capacity** Have you considered the impact of social distancing requirements in the capacity of and youth work services you are able to deliver safely? Have you considered relevant engineering and administrative controls that will help reduce contact between individuals and groups? This might include, for example, managing arrival times, establishing one-way systems, floor markings or barriers as appropriate. Have you given consideration to how young people and the workforce will travel to your services and, while there, any implications regarding the use of toilets, catering, or water supply?		
3E	**3E. Hygiene, cleaning and infection control** Do you understand how COVID-19 is spread and how to clean to the appropriate standard? If you are cleaning because of a known or suspected case of COVID-19 in your workplace you should follow the guidance here. Do you understand the role of face coverings and the impact of them for individuals with any level of hearing loss?		
3F	**Test, Trace, Protect and what to do in the case of suspected or actual infection** Do you know the common COVID-19 symptoms? Do you understand the guidance on self-isolation? Are you familiar with the guidance for individuals who are extremely vulnerable and shielding or in an 'at risk group'? Do you understand how to apply for a coronavirus test and how to seek emergency or urgent care? Have you familiarised yourself with Test, Trace, Protect including guidance on keeping records of staff, customers and visitors and the guidance for employers?		
3G	**Individual considerations – colleagues and young people** Have you considered the individual needs of colleagues and young people taking part in the services you deliver? Are your HR policies and support mechanisms up to date? Have you familiarised yourself with available resources that can support individual risk assessments?		

Annex B: Supporting scientific information – understanding transmission, risks and mitigating actions (including options for phasing)

As set out, if youth work services are to plan appropriately for any increase in operations, and to secure the safety and well-being of young people, communities, and volunteer and paid professional youth work staff in doing so, it is vital all proposals are grounded in a shared understanding of COVID-19, the science behind transmission and infection, and the collective roles of individuals in the public health response. This understanding changes on a daily basis as more evidence is made available and both the Public Health Wales and Welsh Government websites should be the first port of call in terms of accessing the latest information. What follows, therefore, is a high-level summary of what is understood at the time of writing this advice.

COVID-19 related harm to the people of Wales

This can occur in four key ways and is not simply limited to the harm associated with contracting the virus.

- Firstly, through direct harm to individuals from infection and complications including for those who develop severe disease and in some cases sadly die as a result.
- Secondly, the harm caused if services including the NHS became overwhelmed due to any sudden large spike in demand from patients with COVID-19 on hospitals, critical care facilities and other key services.
- Thirdly, harm from non-COVID illness, for example if individuals do not seek medical attention for their illness early and their condition worsens, or more broadly from the necessary changes in NHS service delivery made during the pandemic in Wales to pause non-essential activity.
- Fourthly, socioeconomic and other societal harms such as the economic impact on certain socioeconomic groups of not being able to work, impacts on businesses of being closed or facing falling customer demand, psychological harm to the public of social distancing and many others.

Understanding these types of harm, and the careful job of balancing activities that may increase the risk of them occurring, will help stand organisations in good stead when planning for an increase of their operations.

Transmission

While the evidence is evolving, it is now clear that transmission is most strongly associated with close and prolonged contact in indoor environments. The highest risks of transmission are in crowded spaces over extended periods. Further to this, the most important routes for transmission are direct person-to-person via droplets and indirect via surfaces and objects. There may also be some evidence for aerosol transmission in poorly ventilated environments.

Physical distancing is one of the most important ways of preventing transmission and if two metres face-to-face distancing cannot be achieved it is strongly recommended

that additional measures including (but not limited to) face coverings and minimising duration of exposure are adopted.

Latest evidence suggests sunlight has a key role to play in reducing the viability of the virus outdoors and that the use of outdoor spaces should be maximised. The virus survives for longer indoors and therefore regular cleaning of high-touch areas is required as well as ventilation with external air.

The current understanding is that a person may be most infectious in the two days before they have noticeable symptoms so everyone has a vital role to play in minimising exposure risk through effective behaviours and practices.

The battle against COVID-19 is most effective if everyone takes their responsibility for public health seriously and knows what to do. Engagement and communication is key.

The impact of lockdown on transmission rates
While difficult for many, and with a significant impact on the way in which we live our lives, lockdown and social distancing measures have had a significant impact on both transmission rates, infection levels, and the number of deaths. At the time of writing this guidance, the growth rate of the virus is declining and this is a direct result of social distancing and adherence to lockdown measures.

While compliance with these measures has, to date, been broadly stable, it is important to note that it takes up to three weeks before changes in transmission rates can be detected. As such, there is an ongoing need for steps that ease us out of lockdown to be taken in a carefully controlled manner with appropriate monitoring of behaviours. It is also important to forward plan approaches in response to a possible resurgence of COVID-19 at a local or national level.

Impact to different groups
Evidence to date tells us there is a disproportionate effect of the virus for certain groups of society. Chronic health conditions, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and age all have a role to play. It is important to understand these risks when planning any increase in operations so that, as well as taking steps to protect all individuals from infection, those perceived at being at a higher risk of poor outcomes as a result of infection receive specific, additional consideration in the planning process.

Combatting the spread/reducing transmission
As set out above, there are a number of factors to consider when planning services safely to ensure that any actions taken do not contribute towards increased transmission of the virus. This means a number of options are available to us and The Hierarchy of Controls identifies these by order of effectiveness.

The hierarchy of controls is a way to prioritise risk control measures based on how effective different types of control are in reducing risks. Risk reduction measures should be assessed in order of the priority given in the hierarchy; it is not a case of simply jumping to the easiest control measure to implement. Types of control higher up the hierarchy are more effective at reducing risks than those lower down.

Controls should be practical to be implemented and, ideally, should be able to be maintained easily over time.

It is critical to remember that it will only rarely be feasible to eliminate the risk completely. The combination of controls introduced should aim to reduce the risk to as low as reasonably practicable, prioritising structural, environmental interventions over individual level ones.

This of course does not simply mean considering risks of transmission, but also balancing these against risks to wider health and well-being and development. Ultimately, there will be flexibility and a bespoke approach to responding to these risks as services are able to.

When considering how to minimise the risk of transmission it is recommended that services consider the following.

1. Elimination: Redesign the activity such that the risk is removed or eliminated.

2. Substitution: Replace the activity with an activity that reduces the risk. Care is required to avoid introducing new hazards from the substitution.

3. Engineering controls: Design measures that help control or mitigate risk.

4. Administrative controls: Identifying and implementing the procedures to improve safety.

5. Having gone through this process, PPE should be used where specific guidance states or recommends this.

On the planned return to formal education
Of particular interest to youth work services will be the advice on a return to school that was published 9 July by the Technical Advisory Cell. This advice was clear – schools in Wales should plan to open in September with 100 per cent of learners physically present on school sites, subject to a continuing, steady decline in the presence of COVID-19 in the community, and appropriate measures to protect staff and children, including:

- effective contact tracing
- schools being 'COVID-secure'
- the ability to implement appropriate restriction measures where outbreaks occur
- preparations being in place to teach children remotely if needed.

While this advice provided some reassurance about what we know about children, infection rates and transmissibility, the associated risks are not uniform across the 0 to 18 age group. With youth work services working primarily with young people aged 11 to 25 this is important to note.

Transmissibility in primary school age children seems to be particularly low, and this led the Technical Advisory Cell to feeling able to recommend that these children can be COVID-secure using more flexible controls than two metre social distancing, such as seating facing in the same direction.

However, the advice also identified that secondary school age children are likely to need to reduce overall daily contacts by 40 to 60 per cent to maintain COVID-19 security, and/or require two metre social distancing, or the maintenance of class 'COVID-secure groups' up to a maximum of 10 with avoidance of mixing.

Implications for youth work services

While more data is needed to fully understand transmissibility and the impact of infection across different age groups, and with activities beyond the school gates adding to the mixing of learners (with each other and with adults), the current advice is clear and has significant implications for youth work services. Given that youth work services deliver support to young people aged 11 to 25, at this time, **two metre social distancing will be required to help maintain COVID-19 security in youth work settings, both for young people and for staff.**

Planning for the future

Despite our best efforts, there remains the possibility of future waves of infection or isolated outbreaks, and this means we need to plan ahead so we are able to respond with agility. A second wave during the winter could lead to higher numbers of infected people because of the colder weather and increased incidence of other seasonal conditions, making COVID-19 more difficult to detect. This means there is a need to prepare plans that can be increased or decreased as the public health context allows. It also requires us to balance carefully the direct risks of infection alongside those risks to certain groups of not being able to access support.

Phasing any increase of operations and considering a blended approach to delivery

> "This time has shown that we need to be able to move quickly and work flexibility, when we come out of this period we need to be able to react quickly to new circumstances" – Voice of young person

It is clear that the scientific advice does not support a simple green light for youth work services to re-open across the country, all at once, or as they were before lockdown was implemented. While measures have eased, at the time of writing new evidence is being made available all the time and a number of social distancing measures are rightly still in place. With the potential risk of future waves of infection remaining, if youth work services are to be able to provide some kind of continuity for young people alongside possible changes in the public health context, careful planning will be required to develop delivery models that can be stepped up and stepped down as needed.

At this point, it is important to acknowledge that youth work services are diverse, and that many have unique circumstances that must be factored in to their ability to adjust or phase the delivery of different levels of activity. These circumstances may ultimately dictate their capacity to respond with agility and in line with whatever the public health context allows. This guidance, therefore, does not seek to prescribe a one-size-fits-all approach, but attempts to set out some overarching principles youth work services may wish to consider.

The simplest way of considering phases of activity is to adopt a traffic light approach to the categorisation of activity. In the example overleaf we adopt a 'Lockdown, Red, Amber, Green' system that sets out, for illustrative purposes only, how different types of youth work opportunities and experiences might be delivered safely and according to what the public health context allows at that time.

In addition to considering the need for, and planning to accommodate, a phased increase of operations, youth work services will need to also consider how a blended approach to delivery can support continuity between the different stages identified above. This might include the use of digital technology and youth information, alongside face-to-face work, so that young people are supported to engage in youth work through different mediums as the public health context changes.

Lockdown	Red	Amber	Green
The strictest of conditions imposed, with essential travel and services only and the strictest of social distancing measures in place to control the spread of the virus.	The strictest measures being eased slightly, with local movement allowed, and an increase in targeted essential services being delivered under strict social distancing rules.	Gradual introduction of more flexible rules governing movement, more non-essential public, private or voluntary services being delivered in a COVID-secure way under strict guidelines, with limitations on gatherings and social distancing measures in place.	Free movement, reintroduction of all public, private, and voluntary services (though potentially with limited capacity or additional precautions in place) providing they are COVID-secure and social distancing measures can be met.
Potential mechanisms for delivering youth work under these conditions: - Telephone. - Digital – one-to-one, small group work, online youth clubs and activities using digital media and technology. - Youth information – young person informed and developed, youth targeted information and signposting. - Youth work in partnership with emergency or essential services only if deemed appropriate and under the strictest of conditions.	Potential mechanisms for delivering youth work under these conditions: As identified in earlier stage and: - Detached youth work – primarily street based or outdoors on a one-to-one basis unless essential targeted provision required and approved. - One-to-one outdoors or by appointment only indoors if deemed absolutely essential and approved to proceed.	Potential mechanisms for delivering youth work under these conditions: As identified in earlier stage and: - Gradual introduction of more non-essential activity. - One-to-one youth work in centres/schools/community buildings in line with regulations. - Small group work in youth centres/schools/community buildings in line with regulations. - Small group work outdoors in line with regulations.	Potential mechanisms for delivering youth work under these conditions: As identified in earlier stage and: - Larger group work in youth centres/school/community settings either indoors or outdoors. - Open access youth clubs indoors. - All appropriately risk-assessed and COVID-secure activity in line with current regulations.