GUIDANCE FOR
YOUTH WORK ORGANISATIONS

Informed by the Government's *Resilience & Recovery 2020-2021: Plan for Living with COVID-19*

18th September 2020

Contents

> It is important to note that this guidance is intended to be a living document to be updated as Government advice is updated. To facilitate this process the Department has convened an Oversight Group, comprising a number of sectoral representatives and Departmental officials, who will meet regularly to review and update this document. Youth organisations and groups should develop their own protocols in line with this high-level guidance.

Part 1 – Background and Context

This guidance succeeds and replaces previous youth sector guidance and is prepared in the broader context of the Government's *Resilience & Recovery 2020-2021: Plan for Living with COVID-19*[1], and the Return to Work Safely Protocol[2]. This guidance should be read in conjunction with those documents, and any future Government advice in relation to COVID-19.

The Department has worked with a range of youth sector stakeholders to draw up this sector specific guidance in line with the Government's *Resilience & Recovery 2020-2021: Plan for Living with COVID-19* which follows the Roadmap for Reopening Society and Business.

This youth sector guidance encapsulates the key elements of the ongoing approach set out in the Government's *Resilience & Recovery 2020-2021: Plan for Living with COVID-19,* and reflects each of the five levels*.* The guidance is high level and by its nature cannot capture every eventuality. Each organisation should prepare its own organisational plans for each level, in line with this guidance. These organisational plans should be informed by each organisation's individual circumstances, in keeping with its accountability and governance structures.

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[1] https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/resilience-recovery-2020-2021-plan-for-living-with-covid-19/
[2] https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/22829a-return-to-work-safely-protocol/

Part 2 – Overarching Guidance

Youth services must have regard to current Government advice relating to the management of the COVID-19 pandemic. Key priorities for individuals and groups, which underpin every level, are summarised below:

Key Priorities	
Individually	**Collectively**
• Frequent handwashing; cough and sneeze etiquette, avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth, regularly cleaning and disinfecting surfaces • Keep a safe distance of 2 metres from other people, especially those not among your close contacts • Minimise your number of close contacts as much as possible and keep a record of your daily contacts • Wear a face covering when using public transport, in retail settings or any other indoor setting where physical distancing cannot be maintained • Follow public health advice on restricting the number of visitors to private homes • Know and self-monitor for the symptoms of COVID-19. If you have symptoms, self-isolate and contact your GP without delay • Stay informed of the current situation through trusted information sources and follow official public health advice • Avoid all non-essential travel overseas and reduce personal non-essential travel	• Ensure that gatherings of people are kept to a minimum, and in any event limited to the maximum numbers set out in the prevailing public health advice. • Maintain physical distancing at all gatherings. • At gatherings take all reasonable steps to ensure that a record of those attending is kept in order to facilitate rapid contact tracing • Businesses, organisations and workplaces should continue to adhere to public health advice and guidance relevant to their sector and should develop dedicated plans for all levels • Workers and businesses that can work remotely from home should continue to do so
Youth Sector	

Remain vigilant in relation to public health advice, specifically on hand hygiene, cough etiquette, physical distancing, face coverings and, how to identify and respond to signs and symptoms of COVID-19. Effectively communicate such advice to workers, volunteers and young people connected to the service.
 	
All activities should have regard to all other relevant requirements and good practice e.g. child protection, safety and wellbeing of staff and volunteers.
 	
Physical Distancing
A distance of 1 metre should be maintained between individual young people and youth workers in a youth work setting consistent with advice for schools. Youth services may wish to consider the follow options to support physical distancing:
 	
    1. Reconfigure spaces to maximise physical distancing;
    2. Utilise and reconfigure all available space in order to maximise physical distancing;	

3. Review operating times;
4. Reconfigure groups;
5. Consider use of live streaming; and
6. Access available spaces within the local community

Where working with physical distances of 1 metre, face coverings should be used.

Groups
- Where possible, areas should be allocated consistently to the same youth workers and young people rather than having spaces that are shared.
- If a gathering is divided into groups, there should be clear separation of groups to ensure there is no contact between the groups. The objective is to limit contact and sharing of common facilities between people in different groups as much as possible.
- To the greatest extent possible, young people and youth workers should consistently be in the same groups.
- Youth workers who move from group to group should be limited as much as possible

Maximum Group Sizes

The maximum size for a service should be calculated having regard to the space available. It should be based on ensuring that at least 1m physical distancing can be maintained, and take account of any other capacity restrictions, which may pertain in accordance with child protection or fire safety requirements. The table below illustrates the maximum group size allowable at each level and is inclusive of both young people and youth workers.

Level	Maximum Group Size Indoor	Maximum Group Size Outdoor
1	100	200
2	50	100
3	15	15
4	15	15
5	6	6

The maximum size applying to each service in its given venue should be calculated and published on the door or at the entryway to the venue[3].

Contact Tracing

A record of physical attendance should be kept in order to facilitate rapid contact tracing.

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[3] Youth work services are responsible for the signage on facilities they operate in. Signage should be displayed on all occasions when the facility is being used. Temporary signs are advised for non-owned facilitates.

Part 3 – Youth Sector Guidance

Recent research has highlighted that, while everyone has been impacted by COVID-19, young people have been the group most impacted. The importance of youth work for young people, in terms of giving them something meaningful to do and something to look forward in tough times, such as we are experiencing at present, is referenced in the *Research Project on the Impact of the Corona Pandemic on Youth Work in Europe* (RAY-COR). The national *How's Your Head* consultation similarly found that young people who engaged with youth clubs and services tended to be more optimistic and excited about their futures.

Youth services have worked hard, innovated and adapted in order to maintain supports, particularly to vulnerable, disadvantaged and marginalised young people, throughout the restrictions. Recognising the efforts that have been made, the table below provides guidance for the operation of services and supports where each of the five levels is in force, either at a national or a local level.

Due to the recognition of youth work as an often vital service to support young people, youth work services come under the category *Schools, Early Learning and Childcare services, and Higher and Adult Education* of the *Resilience & Recovery 2020-2021: Plan for Living with COVID-19.*

Youth services will need to remain alert to which of the five levels applies at any given time. They will need to have individual protocols in place in respect of each level so they adapt quickly in a time of uncertainty.

Please note that all guidance provided in the table below is indicative and is subject to ongoing public health advice.

Please note: Groups are inclusive of everyone involved with the group i.e. young people, youth workers, and volunteers

Heading	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Remote working i.e. online	Remote forms of service delivery should be utilised as appropriate	Remote forms of service delivery should be utilised as appropriate	Remote forms of service delivery should be utilised to limit congregation as far a possible	Remote forms of service delivery should be utilised to limit congregation as far a possible	Remote forms of service delivery are the primary means of providing support
Structured small group work	• Remotely • May operate groups of up to 100 indoors and 200 outdoors	• Remotely • May operate groups of up to 50 indoors and 100 outdoors	• Remotely • May operate groups of up to 15 • May operate multiple groups if sufficient space and strict public health protocols are in place • There should be no mixing between groups	• Remotely • May operate groups of up to 15 • May operate multiple groups if sufficient space and strict public health protocols are in place • There should be no mixing between groups	• Remotely • May operate groups of up to 6
Unscheduled interventions	Crisis work can operate	Crisis work can operate	Crisis work can operate indoors while utilising outdoor options where available	Crisis work can operate indoors while utilising outdoor options where available	Crisis work can operate remotely or outside
Structured large group work	• Remotely • May operate groups of up to 100 indoors and 200 outdoors	• Remotely • May operate groups of up to 50 indoors and 100 outdoors	• Remotely	• Remotely	• Remotely
Outreach / Detached work	• Remotely	• Remotely	• Remotely	• Remotely	• Remotely

	• May operate groups of up to 15	• May operate groups of up to 15	• May operate groups of up to 15	• May operate groups of up to 15	• May operate groups of up to 6
Home visits	Home visits can take place	Home visits can take place	Home visits can take place	Home visits can take place	Only to deliver essential services e.g. support of vulnerable, in crises or at risk young people
Residential	Further guidance to be provided	Further guidance to be provided	Should not take place	Should not take place	Should not take place
Scouting and Guiding Camps	• May operate outdoor camps of up to 200 participants	• May operate outdoor camps of up to 100 participants	• May operate outdoor camps of up to 15 participants • May operate multiple groups if sufficient space is available. • There should be no mixing between groups	• May operate outdoor camps of up to 15 participants • May operate multiple groups if sufficient space is available. • There should be no mixing between groups	Should not take place
Large group events	• Remotely • Groups of up to 100 indoors • Groups of up to 200 outdoors	• Remotely • Groups of up to 50 indoors • Groups of up to 100 outdoors	• Remotely	• Remotely	Remotely
Advocacy work	Should take place remotely if possible	Should take place remotely if possible	Should take place remotely unless office attendance is absolutely essential	Should take place remotely unless office attendance is absolutely essential	Remotely
Support and training of youth worker / volunteer	• Remotely • In person training of groups of up to 15 with 2m physical distance	• Remotely • In person training of groups of up to 15 with 2m physical distance	• Move primarily online • Limit congregation as far as possible	• Move primarily online • Only essential attendance on site	Remotely

Work meetings	Should take place remotely if possible	Should take place remotely if possible	Should take place remotely unless attendance is absolutely essential	Should take place remotely unless attendance is absolutely essential	Remotely
One to one work	• Remotely • Meetings may take place	• Remotely • Meetings may take place	• Remotely • Meetings may take place	• Remotely • Meetings may take place	• Remotely • Limited crisis intervention work by appointment can take place with prior approval of line manager
International youth work	Remotely	Remotely	Remotely	Remotely	Remotely
Opening of premises[4]	Based on a risk assessment and having regard to public health guidance the premises may open	Based on a risk assessment and having regard to public health guidance the premises may open	Based on a risk assessment and having regard to public health guidance the premises may open	Based on a risk assessment and having regard to public health guidance the premises may open	• No public access • Allow access to offices for staff and volunteers for essential business related tasks
Transport	Youth service transport can operate with additional measures as below: • Individuals should physically distance • Pre-assigned seating to ensure that individuals are seated beside siblings or group mates	Youth service transport can operate with additional measures as below: • Individuals should physically distance • Pre-assigned seating to ensure that individuals are seated beside siblings or group mates	Youth service transport can operate with additional measures as below: • Individuals should physically distance • Pre-assigned seating to ensure that individuals are seated beside siblings or group mates	Youth service transport can operate with additional measures as below: • Individuals should physically distance • Pre-assigned seating to ensure that individuals are seated beside siblings or group mates	Essential purposes only

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[4] Youth organisation may operate from premises that they do not own or control. In these instances, services should liaise with the owner / operators to ensure all necessary guidance is followed to the satisfaction of both parties.

• Additional hygiene and cleaning measures on board buses, including availability of sanitiser • Wearing of face coverings for young people over 13 years of age, with limited exceptions for medical reasons or special needs • Contact tracing log must be in operation	• Additional hygiene and cleaning measures on board buses, including availability of sanitiser • Wearing of face coverings for young people over 13 years of age, with limited exceptions for medical reasons or special needs • Contact tracing log must be in operation	• Additional hygiene and cleaning measures on board buses, including availability of sanitiser • Wearing of face coverings for young people over 13 years of age, with limited exceptions for medical reasons or special needs • Contact tracing log must be in operation	• Additional hygiene and cleaning measures on board buses, including availability of sanitiser • Wearing of face coverings for young people over 13 years of age, with limited exceptions for medical reasons or special needs • Contact tracing log must be in operation

Part 4 – Organisational Guidelines

This is an indicative list and organisations should refer to other Government advice as appropriate.

The following sets out guidance for organisations as they continue to operate during the various stages of the Governments *Resilience & Recovery 2020-2021: Plan for Living with COVID-19* and the *Return to Work Safety Protocol.*

The health and wellbeing of young people, volunteers and staff is the paramount consideration at all levels of the plan. It is recognised that services will need to take account of the individual circumstances of staff and service users in the planning of future provision and will also need to be able to respond flexibly where individual circumstances or broader contextual factors change. In this regard, at least one lead representative should be appointed and charged with ensuring that COVID-19 measures are strictly adhered to.

Operational Premises (both rented and owned)

- Appropriate signage should be prominently displayed
  - see www.gov.ie/en/collection/ee0781-covid-19-posters-for-public-use/
  - and www.hse.ie/eng/services/news/newsfeatures/covid19-updates/partner-resources/covid-19-translated-resources/
- Cleaning of work areas must be conducted at regular intervals.
- Hand hygiene should be supported through the provision of sanitiser.
- Where possible, an area should be identified and made available to isolate a person who becomes unwell on the premises.

Staff Management

- Develop risk-based plans for the preparedness and implementation of measures during each level
- Update the organisation's COVID-19 Response Plan according to section E.1 of the Return to Work Safely Protocol.
- Organisations should implement COVID-19 prevention and control measures to minimise risk to workers, volunteers and young people.
- Before moving to any new level, a risk assessment[5] process should be established and completed by management in consultation with persons accessing premises. At a minimum, this should address the following two queries:
  - Is there a real and pressing need for the person to access any of the premises for any period? – Outline the reasoning.
  - Are there any underlying health conditions or additional risks, which would make it inappropriate for the individual to access the building?
- Staff and volunteers should complete a self-declaration return to work form[6] on initial return to work, and additionally after any sick or travel absence.
- A contact tracing log should be developed, updated and made available to staff[7].
- Staff and volunteers should monitor adherence with physical distancing and other rules set out in Government guidance documents.
- Face coverings and gloves should be utilised in line with Government advice.

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[5] Template at appendix 3
[6] Template at appendix 2
[7] Template at appendix 4

- In the event of a suspected case in the organisation all Government advice should be followed, as appropriate. See the Return to Work Safety Protocol for more information https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/22829a-return-to-work-safely-protocol
- Employers have an obligation to provide relevant training to staff on COVID-19 issues.

Staff, volunteers and young people in higher risk categories according to HSE guidelines

- Special arrangements should be put in place for staff, volunteers and young people in higher risk categories according to HSE guidelines e.g. youth workers with underlying conditions, or living with people with such conditions, should be informed of their right not to undertake face-to-face work.
- Return to work and risk assessment templates might be helpful to organisations in this regard – sample templates are attached at appendix 2 and 3 respectively.

Identification and Isolation Procedures

- Organisations should update policies and procedures for prompt identification and isolation of workers, volunteers or young people who may have symptoms of COVID-19, as appropriate.
  - Organisations will:
    - Provide appropriate training, online and/or onsite, for all workers and volunteers.
    - Keep a log of contact/group work to facilitate contact tracing.
    - Inform young people, workers, volunteers and others of the purpose of the log.
    - Provide up to date information on the Public Health advice issued by the HSE and Gov.ie.
    - Provide instruction for workers and volunteers to follow if they develop signs and symptoms of COVID-19 during work or if a young person develops signs and symptoms of COVID-19 while availing of a youth service.
  - Workers and volunteers will:
    - Make themselves aware of the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and monitor their own wellbeing.
    - Self-isolate at home and contact their GP promptly for further advice if they display any signs or symptoms.
    - Report to managers immediately if any symptoms develop during the shift.

Occupational Health and Safety

- All existing Occupational Health and Safety provisions will continue to apply to all workplaces during this time and further information and advice is available on the Health and Safety Authority website www.hsa.ie

Communications

- Services should ensure that they have in place a plan to communicate the guidance, return to work procedures, and additional public health measures required in line with the most recent Government guidelines to their stakeholders.
- The key to a safe and continued return to work requires strong communication and a shared collaborative approach between employers, workers and volunteers.
- Tailored communications for young people and their families should be developed.

Part 5 – Monitoring and Communications

This guidance has been prepared by the Department in conjunction with representatives of the youth sector[8]. This Oversight Group will continue to meet following the issuance of this guidance to keep it under review, ensure it is updated and provide additional detail and clarification as appropriate. As a living document, it is anticipated that the guidance will be regularly updated in response to evolving public health guidance and emerging need.

The Department, with the support of the Oversight Group, is committed to communicating regularly with the sector. All future versions of the guidance will be circulated to the sector immediately upon approval.

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[8] The group contains representation from Crosscare, ETBI, Foróige, National Youth Council of Ireland, Scouting Ireland and Youth Work Ireland.

Appendix 1 – Risk Assessment Prompt Sheet

Risk Assessment Prompt Sheet
Risk Assessment Prompt Sheet **Re: COVID -19 – Social Distancing and Safe Workplaces**
Name of Service
Person completing assessment
Date completed
Social Distancing is keeping a 2 metre (6 feet) space between you and other people to decrease and interrupt the spread of COVID-19. You should not shake hands or make close contact where possible.
Safe Workplaces includes measures we will take prior to re-opening and whilst open.
The following is a non-exhaustive list of prompts to be considered around the resumption of full service provision. Individual services may wish to use this prompt sheet to inform their own existing risk register.

Actions prior to opening up		
No.	**Action**	**Completed**
1	In relation to legionella, if there was regular flushing/running of all water outlets then there is no need for action otherwise it would be useful to book sampling/testing now or go straight to planning to disinfect prior to full reoccupation.	
2	Ventilate all rooms.	
3	Ensure all waste collections are still taking place or do they need to be scaled back up.	
4	Check for rodent activity/droppings and set traps if necessary.	
5	Ensure heater/boiler timings have been updated to summer time.	
6	With respect to canteen facilities plan for staggered breaks and floor markings for queues.	
7	Check that dishwashers are not set on eco wash settings (low temperature).	
8	Disinfect milk cartons etc. that come into the premises before they are put in the fridge.	
9	Have designated area for post opening and gloves and letter opener and sanitiser to hand.	
10	Put a system in place for receiving deliveries	
11	Inform first aiders on new protocols in case person becomes unwell or action in event of heart attack (CPR)	
12	Write up a cleaning schedule	

Work Environment Controls				
No	**Action**	**Yes**	**No**	**N/A**
13	Is there current capacity in the service to comply with the social distancing requirements? Assess the premises based on the numbers of workers and service users/ young people that may be in the building safely at any one time If No, consider the following:			

	- Introduction of flexible shifts, staggered shifts, extended opening hours, weekend working - Redeploying staff to other appropriate buildings in the vicinity where such capacity exists - Alternate staff to work between base and home - What priority service can safely be offered to service users/ young people - Appointment-based service only in designated spaces where social distancing is possible. - Extension of telephone and online supports			
14	As far as is reasonably practicable, can non fire doors within internal buildings be left open to avoid the risk of potential contamination?			
15	Is there a documented cleaning schedule in place for each work location?			
16	Has consideration been given to additional partitioning /protective perspex screening between workstations and at reception areas where appropriate?			
17	Are there appropriate hand washing facilities available?			
18	Are there adequate supplies of hand washing materials e.g. liquid soap, disposable paper towels, anti-bac hand gel			
19	Is there an adequate number of waste bins?			
20	Has appropriate COVID-19 signage been prominently displayed throughout the work location?			

Work Practice Controls				
21	Has access to work locations been restricted to rostered staff only, as far as is reasonably practicable?			
22	Has consideration been given to floor markings to demonstrate minimum distancing between staff and others to encourage social distancing?			
23	Are work breaks staggered in order to maintain social distancing requirements?			
24	Are meetings held via teleconference to ensure compliance with social distancing requirements?			
25	Is the use of communal areas (meeting rooms) restricted to ensure social distancing is maintained?			

26	Are staff aware of respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette?			
27	Do staff adhere to respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette?			
28	Are staff familiar with hand washing technique/ guidelines			
29	Are all drinking cups/glasses thoroughly washed and cleaned between each use?			
30	Are waste bins emptied, cleaned and sanitised on a regular basis?			
31	Are staff instructed to bring minimal personal belongings into the workplace to avoid risk of contamination?			
32	Have staff been instructed to clean and sanitise their workstation at the start and end of each shift?			
33	Have staff been instructed to clean and sanitise communal equipment (e.g. photocopier, printer) before and after each use?			
34	Is there a protocol in place in the event an employee becomes unwell and believes they have been exposed to COVID-19			
35	Maintain sign in sheet in order to facilitate contact tracing if necessary			

Local Response Plan
Please provide a high-level overview here as to the rostering and shift patterns of workers in order to safely implement social distancing. Also detail the type of service provision to young people/ service users and how this will be done safely.

Appendix 2 - Pre-Return to Work Questionnaire COVID-19

Pre-Return to Work Questionnaire COVID-19

This questionnaire must be completed by workers at least 3 days in advance of returning to work. If the answer is Yes to any of the below questions, you are advised to seek medical advice before returning to work.

Name of Employee: _____Name of Line Manager: _____ Date: _____

	Questions	YES	NO
1.	Do you have symptoms of cough, fever, high temperature, sore throat, runny nose, breathlessness or flu like symptoms now or in the past 14 days?		
2.	Have you been diagnosed with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 infection in the last 14 days?		
3.	Are you a close contact of a person who is a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19 in the past 14 days (i.e. less than 2m for more than 15 minutes accumulative in 1 day)		
4.	Have you been advised by a doctor to self-isolate at this time?		
5.	Have you been advised by a doctor to cocoon at this time?		
6.	Have you been advised by your doctor that you are in an at risk group? If yes, please liaise with your doctor and Manager re return to work.		

I confirm, to the best of my knowledge that I have no symptoms of COVID-19, am not self-isolating or awaiting results of a COVID-19 test. Please note: The organisation is collecting this sensitive personal data for the purposes of maintaining safety within the workplace in light of the Covid-19 pandemic. The legal basis for collecting this data is based on vital public health interests and maintaining occupational health and will be held securely in line with our retention policy.

Signed: _____

Appendix 3 - Return to Work Induction Meeting

Return to Work / Induction Meeting COVID-19

Name of Employee: _____   Name of Line Manager: _____
Date: _____

	Wellbeing & Health and Safety	**Comments**
1.	General update: How are they doing, how did the pandemic affect them?	
2.	How are they feeling about returning to the workplace?	
3.	Discuss their self-care and how they are/can protect their wellbeing.	
4.	Discuss current situation in relation to sick leave policy (if relevant)	
5.	Discuss local response plan/ new measures to address risk of COVID-19 (including current advise on PPE , social distancing)	
6.	Discuss changes to health and safety practice and levels of responsibility, including what to do if a worker/young person becomes unwell.	
7	Discuss if there are any other circumstances relating to COVID-19, not included, which they need to disclose/ ask to allow their safe return to work.	

Appendix 4 – Contact Tracing Log

Contact Tracing Log

To ensure the Safety & Health of everyone, this contact log should contain details of **all persons** on site, or involved in any off-site activity, on any given day. This includes employees, service users, visitors etc. This will assist in contact tracing should a person be confirmed as positive. To protect the privacy of people's data, the entries should be completed by a worker and the log not given to non-employees. The logs are to be stored in a safe manner and a log that is more than 14 days old is to be destroyed. A new log is to be filled in daily.

Name	Reasons for being at the service? If a service user, name the worker they are coming to see	Mobile Number	Total time in the service	Was 2m distance maintained at all times? Yes /No