

Woodcraft Folk Group Activities: Briefing for Group Leaders, December 2020



Woodcraft Folk
Education for Social Change

**YOUTH IS
NOT WASTED
ON THE YOUNG**

Summary

This briefing summarises the current position with regard to the regulations to prevent transmission of COVID-19 which are currently in force in England, Scotland and Wales, and the effect of these on Woodcraft Folk's provision of activities for children and young people through its volunteer-led groups.

- In **England**, Local Restriction Tiers came back into force with effect from 2 December. However, youth work provision is covered by a single set of guidance which applies regardless of the tiered restrictions in your local area, permitting face-to-face sessions to resume for under 18s, subject to appropriate precautions
- **Local Protection Levels** between 0 and 4 remain in force across **Scotland**. These are subject to regular review and change, and the type of provision permitted is dependent upon the Protection Level in your local authority area.
- **National Regulations** are in force across **Wales**, which mean that face-to-face provision is permitted, subject to appropriate precautions

Woodcraft Folk's approach, like that of all youth work organisations, continues to be shaped by the guidance issued by the National Youth Agency, YouthLink Scotland and the Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Services.

We expect during this period, Woodcraft Folk groups across the UK will continue to offer, where restrictions permit, a 'blended offer' to their young members, including:

- **Remote** programme activities through #DreamBigAtHome
- **Online** programme activities, locally and nationally
- **Outdoor** activities, with social distancing, hygiene precautions and maximum numbers in place
- **Indoor** activities, with social distancing, hygiene precautions and maximum numbers in place

Even with these all the required precautions in place, face-to-face activities still carry an increased risk of transmission of COVID-19 for participants. In deciding the appropriate mix of activities for any group of young people the risks of resuming face-to-face provision need to be balanced against the benefit young members will gain. The needs and concerns of volunteers, young people and parents/carers also need to be carefully considered, and there is no expectation that volunteers *must* provide a certain form of provision just because it is no longer specifically prohibited.

Overnight youth activities, including any sleepovers, camps or residentials are not permitted in any of the nations of the UK, and Woodcraft Folk's outdoor centres remain closed to groups at the present time.

For more detail on the situation in each nation please see overleaf.

England

The National Youth Agency’s guidance to youth organisations uses a series of ‘readiness levels’ to describe the activities that can be offered as part of provision to children and young people. As of 2 December, the readiness level in **all areas of England**, regardless of the local tier, is **Amber** for provision for under 18s, and **Red** for activities for those aged 18 and over. Activities for groups where some participants are over 18 and some are not must follow the guidance for over 18s. This means that the vast majority of Woodcraft Folk’s provision should follow the **Amber** guidance, but DF groups should limit themselves to online and remote provision. Any young people over 18 must be attending groups as volunteer leaders/helpers, and should have been through Woodcraft Folk’s volunteer screening and induction process.

At the Amber level, face-to-face activities can be delivered either indoors or outdoors, provided that:

- Full risk assessments are in place
- Appropriate arrangements are in place for cleaning and handwashing
- Social distancing can be maintained in line with government guidance
- Provision is to a ‘bubble’ of a maximum of 15 young people
- Face coverings are worn during indoor activity by all participants aged 11 and over, unless medically exempt (this does not negate the need to maintain social distancing)
- Details of everyone attending (parent/guardian for under 16s) are collected for provision to the test and trace service if required

Readiness Level	Permitted Activity Expected
RED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online and digital youth services • Detached/outdoor local youth services • 1-2-1 sessions with high-need young people (indoors) • Small group work sessions indoors with high need young people. (consistent with social distancing guidelines)
AMBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online and digital youth services • Detached/outdoor local youth services (consistent with social distancing guidelines) • 1-2-1 sessions with young people • Group sessions delivered indoors
YELLOW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online and digital youth services • Detached/outdoor local youth services (consistent with social distancing guidelines) • 1-2-1 sessions with young people • Group sessions delivered indoors (consistent with social distancing guidelines) • Camping and overnight residentials
GREEN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All services open as per normal yearly operations • Overnight trips and visits • International travel allowed within Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice

In England, volunteers supporting the session do not count towards the maximum number of 15 in a bubble – however, it clearly increases the risks if additional adults attend sessions, so you will need to consider carefully how many volunteers you need to deliver any activity safely.

Further details can be found in the latest version of the NYA’s [guidance document for youth work organisations](#). Leaders are strongly advised to read this document before resuming any face-to-face provision.

Scotland

Scotland’s system of Local Protection Levels means that restrictions on activity vary from area to area, from Level 0 to Level 4. At the time of writing, Woodcraft Folk groups in Scotland are all based in areas under either Level 4 or Level 3 restrictions. The latest listing for your area can be found by using the [postcode search](#) available on the gov.scot website.

For all Woodcraft Folk groups, projects & centres

YouthLink Scotland supports the provision of blended offers as permitted by local restrictions. It has therefore been determined that for Woodcraft Folk groups in Scotland:

- At level 4, groups should offer **online or remote programme activities only**.
- At level 3, groups may offer **outdoor activities, online or remote activities**, or a mix of these approaches. Any face-to-face sessions must be restricted to a maximum of 30 participants (including adults and children)
- At level 2 or below, groups may run **indoor, outdoor, online or remote activities**, or a mix of these approaches.

Any face-to-face sessions, whether indoors or outdoors, can be delivered **only** if the 'Expectations Before Delivery' laid out in YouthLink Scotland's [Guiding Framework](#) document can be met, i.e.:

- That the planned session is consistent with Scottish Government scientific and medical advice
- That Scottish Government and Public Health Scotland guidance can be complied with
- That a comprehensive risk assessment has been completed
- That measures for infection prevention and control are in place, including (as necessary)
 - Adequate facilities, equipment and procedures for personal hygiene
 - Measures are in place to comply with physical distancing requirements
 - Ability to adhere to the Scottish Government Test and Protect COVID-19 guidance
 - Specific measures to protect those who are at higher risk from COVID-19
- That clear communications are in place to ensure volunteers, young people and parents understand measures in place to manage risk
- That appropriate insurance cover is in place (including venues if appropriate)
- That the above are monitored and reviewed regularly

It is highly recommended that any leaders planning to deliver indoor or outdoor sessions read the Guiding Framework document before offering face-to-face session to ensure that they fully understand their responsibilities to young people and to other volunteers.

Wales

Gwerin y Coed groups are permitted to meet face-to-face, subject to maximum numbers of **15 people in an indoor venue** and **30 in an outdoor setting**.

Gatherings of this size are only permitted for organised activities, not informal meet-ups, and the regulations are very clear that organisers are responsible for ensuring the activities planned and delivered are COVID-secure to protect those participating and reduce spread of infection in the community. This should be reflected in the risk assessment completed for any face-to-face activities planned by Gwerin y Coed groups for the foreseeable future. Social distancing guidelines must be adhered to.

As in Scotland and England, virtual meetings are still considered the safest form of provision and face-to-face sessions should ideally be offered as part of a blended offer.

The Welsh Government have published [Frequently Asked Questions](#) about the regulations, and the Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Services are making specific guidance for the youth sector available via their [Facebook page](#).

For all Woodcraft Folk groups, projects & centres

Resuming Face-to-face Sessions

All youth organisations have been advised to take a 'slow and steady' approach to resuming face-to-face provision. Indoor sessions pose the greatest risk of infection to participants, and the measures to mitigate this will be the most demanding for participants. Your group may also find that your usual venue is not yet available. Meeting outdoors is easier to make COVID-secure, but winter weather and short days will provide additional challenges, and potentially create risks that need to be mitigated.

Official guidance does not detail any activities that cannot be undertaken as part of group nights, but some activities (e.g. singing, cooking) will increase the infection risk and you should carefully weigh up the benefits of these activities against this risk, as well as putting measures in place to control risk if you choose to go ahead.

Careful planning is the key to delivering safe and successful sessions within the guidance – while many groups will be keen to meet up in person, it may be sensible to focus on planning for sessions to recommence after the Christmas break.

Online Programme Offer

Online provision via the [#DreamBigAtHome](#) site will continue, with a mix of weekly challenges and live programme sessions. If you or your group could offer a live session, please contact lauren.karstadt@woodcraft.org.uk to discuss scheduling a slot. To inspire your own programme, the site also contains a wide range of activities that are suitable for can be delivered remotely, and previous live sessions that can be watched back at your leisure.

Supporting Young Members

If you are concerned about any of the young people in the group(s) you work with, please contact Woodcraft Folk's safeguarding team by emailing safeguarding@woodcraft.org.uk so we can discuss how we can best meet their support needs.

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