



Woodcraft Folk Group Activities: Briefing for Group Leaders, March 2021

Overview

This briefing summarises the current position with regard to the expected gradual lifting of restrictions in place to control the transmission of Covid-19, and the implications of these for the planning of future Woodcraft Folk group and residential activities.

In **England** the government has announced a stepped approach to the easing of restrictions. While potential dates have been widely communicated in respect of each of these steps, it is vital to remember that these are the *earliest* dates at which the steps will be implemented, and progression to the next step will always be dependent on certain data-driven thresholds being reached. There is currently no suggestion that there will be a return to regional tiers of regulation.

In **Scotland** the government has also set out steps to reduce the lockdown restrictions, but with the expectation that the country will return to differing restrictions based on **local protection levels**, allowing greater flexibility to respond to different rates of infection in different areas. It is expected that face-to-face delivery will be permitted in areas that are at level 3 or below.

In **Wales**, though schools have fully reopened to foundation phase children (aged 3-7), a review of the current stay-at-home rules will not be undertaken until 12 March. It is currently expected that older children will not return to school until after Easter, and therefore that any easing of restrictions on youth work activities will similarly not be permitted before this.

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.

For the remainder of the academic year, Woodcraft Folk expects to continue to provide a 'blended offer' of programme activities to our young members, including:

- Remote programme activities, supported by #DreamBigAtHome
- Online programme activities, locally and nationally
- Where permitted, and subject to maximum numbers, socially distanced outdoor activities
- Where permitted, and subject to maximum numbers, socially distanced indoor activities
- If permitted, carefully planned and managed camping or residential opportunities (no earlier than summer 2021)

No arrangements should be made for international exchange visits as part of Woodcraft Folk activity without the express permission of the [Chief Executive](#).

#DreamBigAtHome

Online provision via dreambigathome.uk will continue, with a mix of weekly challenges and live programme sessions. The activity pages contain a wide range of activities that are searchable by theme and by suitability for online, outdoor or socially-distanced delivery.

Supporting Young Members

As always, 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.

Resuming Face-to-Face Provision

As restrictions ease, group leaders need to consider not just what is permitted by the regulations, but balance carefully the benefits of resuming activities against the increased risks of transmission they will give rise to. This may be affected by particular circumstances, e.g. the vulnerability of young people or volunteers, leading different groups to come to different conclusions about the appropriate time to resume face-to-face provision.

So that Woodcraft Folk can provide appropriate support to groups and ensure that adequate insurance cover is in place, group leaders/co-ordinators *must* complete the [Reopening Checklist](#) before resuming any face-to-face provision. This will involve confirming that your group has registered for 2021, and sharing your risk assessment for the sessions that you intend to deliver.

If you require further support or advice please contact membership@woodcraft.org.uk.

The remainder of this document is focused on the new guidance for delivery of youth work activities in England announced by the National Youth Agency on 1 March 2021. A further briefing will be issued detailing the impact of any guidance issued in Scotland and Wales in the coming weeks.

New Guidance for England

The steps to easing the lockdown in England have been outlined by the government as follows:

<u>Step</u>	<u>Possible date</u>	<u>Main changes</u>
1a	8 March	Schools reopen to all students
1b	29 March	2 households or 6 people may meet outdoors Organised outdoor sports permitted
2	Not before 12 April	Shops & public buildings reopen Table service outdoors in restaurants & pubs Self-contained overnight stays permitted for households
3	Not before 17 May	2 households or 6 people may meet indoors Outdoor gatherings of up to 30 people Indoor hospitality venues reopen Entertainment & indoor leisure venues reopen
4	Not before 21 June	Remaining restrictions on social contact lifted

Progression to the next stage will be dependent on a number of criteria being met, and the dates above are the *earliest possible* dates on which these stages could be achieved.

In line with the NYA's guidance to youth work bodies, Woodcraft Folk provision will be permitted to resume in a phased manner, with different activities becoming possible as the different steps are reached:

<u>Step</u>	<u>NYA Level</u>	<u>Permitted activity for Woodcraft Folk groups</u>
1a	RED	Online or remote activities only - no face-to-face delivery*
1b	AMBER	Outdoor groups for up to 15 young people
2	AMBER	Outdoor or indoor groups for up to 15 young people
3	YELLOW	Camping and residential activities (in England only)
4	GREEN	International travel/exchanges

*Please note some specific types of activity can be delivered face-to-face at this time, but none of Woodcraft Folk's provision is covered by these exemptions.

Groups may therefore plan to resume activity outdoors from 29 March. While indoor groups will be possible from Step 2, NYA guidance details extensive measures that will be required to ensure the safety of volunteers and participants

in indoor spaces (including face coverings for those aged 11 or above, enhanced cleaning and hygiene routines), and as such it will be preferable for many groups to focus on delivering programme outdoors throughout the summer term.

Before commencing any face-to-face delivery, group leaders must ensure that:

- The group is fully registered with Woodcraft Folk for 2021, with your group co-ordinator and safeguarding lead for the group identified
- You have permission from the owner of your venue (whether indoors or outdoors) to start meeting again
- Your group will not exceed the maximum size permitted
- A written risk assessment has been completed for the planned activities, detailing the procedures in place for controlling all relevant risks, including transmission of Covid-19. This should be emailed to safeguarding@woodcraft.org.uk and shared with all volunteers *before* face-to-face activities commence

Failure to comply with the above expectations will mean that your activities are not covered by Woodcraft Folk's insurance.

Step 2 will see indoor activity resume, but this will be subject to additional controls (e.g. face coverings will be required for all participants aged 11 or over, unless exempt on medical grounds).

The current guidance suggests that residential activities could be undertaken when Step 3 is reached. However, detailed information on how to manage residential trips safely is not yet available, and will not be issued until the date for implementation of Step 3 has been confirmed. It is likely that we will need to approach residential and camping trips very differently to Woodcraft Folk's normal practice.

While many groups will be understandably keen to run residential trips or camps as soon as possible, you are *strongly advised* not to make detailed plans or significant financial commitments before detailed guidance on what a socially distanced residential looks like. Groups are strongly encouraged to wait until Step 4 when the need for social distancing will be reduced. Plans for age group camps at Biblins are being worked on by a small group of volunteers for the weeks of 1-7 and 8-14 August, which may be an attractive alternative to the potential risks of planning a camp as a group or district.

No arrangements should be made for international exchange visits as part of Woodcraft Folk activity without the express permission of the [Chief Executive](#).

Requirements for Resuming Face-to-Face Delivery

Before resuming face-to-face sessions with your group you should ensure that you are familiar with the latest version of the NYA's guidance

While certain activities (e.g. meeting indoors) may become possible as restrictions ease, the benefits to young people of doing so should be carefully weighed against the additional risks (especially to vulnerable young people or volunteers), and the additional measures required (e.g. cleaning routines, wearing face coverings).

While volunteers running sessions do not count towards the limits on the number of participants, greater numbers of people in a space will increase the risk of transmission - you should therefore ensure only volunteers necessary for the delivery of the session are attending.

You should familiarise yourself with the [NYA Guidance document](#) before commencing any face-to-face delivery, as it outlines the measures that you are expected to take to ensure that the risks of any activity are minimised. These include:

- An action plan in place detailing roles and responsibilities of volunteers and participants
- Up-to-date risk assessment for your activity
- Manageable groups or bubbles, with due regard to the age and support needs of young people
- Appropriate hygiene procedures (e.g. handwashing facilities)
- Procedures to keep your venue clean
- Face coverings worn as required by law
- Social distancing is observed
- 'Test and Trace' information is gathered from people attending

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