



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

Overview

This briefing summarises the current restrictions on youth work activity 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. With effect from Monday 17 May, all areas move to **Step 3**, and the **Yellow level** of the Youth Sector Readiness Framework applies, meaning that face-to-face provision can take place indoors and outdoors. Further easing of restrictions is expected at Step 4, the earliest possible date for which is 21 June.

In **Scotland** the government has also set out steps to reduce the lockdown restrictions, with progressive easing based on protection levels. **Level 3** has applied across the country since 26 April, with many areas of mainland Scotland moving to **Level 2** on 17 May.

In **Wales**, from 17 May, **Alert Level 2** applies across all areas.

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
- Where permitted, carefully planned and managed camping or residential opportunities, organised on a local, regional/national or UK-wide basis

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.

England

England moved to **Step 3** of the government roadmap on 17 May. This permits:

- outdoor gatherings up to 30 people
- social visits in the home involving 6 people or 2 households
- the reopening of indoor hospitality (bars and restaurants), play and leisure

Face-to-Face Provision

Group activity for participants aged under 18 may now be delivered in outdoor or indoor spaces. This provision is not subject to absolute maximum group sizes, but - given the requirement for social distancing to be observed - the available space, particularly indoors, will impose practical limits on the numbers that can safely be accommodated. 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. DF groups, or mixed-age groups that include participants (not volunteers) over 18, should meet outdoors only.

You should familiarise yourself with the current [NYA Guidance document](#) (Version 6) 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 sizes, 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 (indoors, by those aged 11 and over)
- Social distancing is observed
- 'Test and Trace' information is gathered from people attending

To minimise the risk of transmission, it is *strongly advised* that larger groups should work in 'bubbles' of no more than 15 young people, which should where possible mirror groups that young people are in during the school day.

The extensive measures necessary 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) will mean that it is preferable for many groups to focus on delivering programme activities outdoors throughout the summer term.

Residential Activities

Very limited overnight and residential activity is permitted by the NYA guidance at Step 3. However, the limits on group sizes imposed by the regulations make this incompatible with Woodcraft Folk's provision.

It is hoped that our camping and residential activities will be able to resume in some form when Step 4 is reached, but it is still likely that this will be very different to Woodcraft Folk's normal practice.

Groups are *strongly advised* not to make detailed plans or significant financial commitments in respect of camps or residentials before more detailed guidance is made available.

Plans for age group camps at Biblins are still being progressed; these camps for Pioneers (1-7 August) and Venturers (8-14 August) 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](#).

Scotland

Scotland's system of Protection Levels means that restrictions vary based on the infection rates and other metrics, by local authority area. Currently, most areas of the Scottish mainland are at **Level 2**, while **Level 3** is still in force across the City of Glasgow.

Face-to-Face Provision

Guidance from YouthLink Scotland permits face-to-face provision at all both levels:

- At Level 3, provision should be **outdoors only**, including a maximum of 30 participants (15 people where the young people benefitting include those aged 18 and over)
- At Level 2 and below, provision may be **indoors or outdoors**, including a maximum of 30 participants (15 people where the young people benefitting include those aged 18 and over)

It is important to note that both young people *and* adult volunteers count towards the maximum numbers for delivery outlined above.

Before resuming face-to-face sessions with your group you should ensure that you are familiar with the latest version of YouthLink Scotland's [Guiding Framework](#), and that you are adhering to the government's [FACTS guidance](#).

Delivery in an outdoor setting can include a maximum of 15 participants; group leaders and other volunteers are *included* in this maximum.

Group leaders need to ensure that they can meet the **Expectations Before Delivery** outlined in the Guiding Framework, which include:

- Confirming delivery plans are compatible with current government public health guidance, scientific and medical advice
- An up-to-date risk assessment for your activity
- Appropriate infection control, cleaning and hygiene procedures
- Face coverings worn when required by law (indoors for those aged 12 or above)
- Physical distancing is observed (except for those aged under 12)
- Procedures to adhere to 'Test and Protect' are in place
- Measures to protect those at higher risk from Covid-19
- Clear communication with all participants, volunteers, parents/carers

Residential Activities

Camping and other residential activities are now permitted, provided both the group's home base and their destination are in areas at Level 2 or below. Such trips are subject to the same maximum number of participants as face-to-face sessions, and the expectations before delivery outlined above.

Toilet and washing facilities must be restricted to *single person use* at any one time. Sharing bedrooms or tents between people from different households is *not permitted*. While this may be feasible for older groups, this will make it difficult to run a safe and inclusive camp for Elfin-age participants.

A Scottish camp is currently planned for July - this may present an option for groups wishing to camp, but will be dependent on a future lifting of restrictions in the coming weeks.. Participation in age group camps at Biblins in August may also be feasible, but the value of this to Pioneer and Venturer groups will depend on changes to guidance in England.

If your group is planning to run a camp or residential before schools break up for the summer holidays, please contact me by [email](#) to discuss your plans.

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

Wales

Alert Level 2, which is now in force, means that restrictions on the general public in Wales are broadly similar to those in England, with hospitality venues, indoor play & leisure activities, and cultural attractions now able to reopen.

Face-to-Face Provision

[Guidance from Welsh Government](#) means that **Organised Children's Activity** can take place, both indoors and outdoors. There are no legal limits on the numbers of participants in group activities for under 18s, though you should be guided by the numbers that can safely be accommodated in your meeting venue while adhering to distancing guidelines.

Any provision that includes beneficiaries who are aged over 18 should include a maximum of 30 people (including volunteers).

It is a requirement of any provision that **all Reasonable Measures** are taken. For Gwerin y Coed activities this will include:

- A full risk assessment for your activities (which should be shared with all volunteers and with Folk Office)
- Face coverings worn indoors by all non-exempt participants aged 11 or over
- Cleaning of surfaces etc., hand hygiene and ventilation to prevent spread of infection
- Activities planned to enable distancing of 2m to be maintained
- Collecting contact information from participants so that it can be provided to the Test, Trace & Protect service if required

Much of the advice in the [NYA Guidance document](#) for England is consistent with the regulations in Wales, and represents good practice for Gwerin y Coed groups returning to face-to-face meetings.

Residential Activities

Camping and other residential activities are now permitted throughout Wales. As in Scotland, sleeping spaces, whether tents or dormitories, should be for single, or single household, occupancy only.

Camping at Biblins may represent a good opportunity for some Gwerin y Coed groups to engage in residential activity, but these will be subject to the restrictions in force in England in August, which may be more restrictive than those in Wales.

If your group is planning to run a camp or residential before schools break up for the summer holidays, please contact me by [email](#) to discuss your plans.

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

Appendix: Summary of Restrictions

A summary of the restrictions currently in place, by nation, is appended below. If you have any queries which are not resolved by this document or by reference to the relevant national guidance, please email membership@woodcraft.org.uk for further information.

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Appendix: Summary of current restrictions by Nation

Correct as at 21 May 2021

Nation	England	Scotland	Scotland	Wales
Regulations	Step 3	Protection Level 3	Protection Level 2	Alert Level 2
Applies to	All areas	Glasgow	Remaining mainland areas	All areas
Group sessions	Indoors or outdoors (over 18 outdoors only)	Outdoors only	Indoors or outdoors	Indoors or outdoors
Maximum numbers (Groups for under 18s)	No limit, bubbles of 15 or fewer advised	30 people, including volunteers	30 people, including volunteers	No limit
Maximum numbers (Groups including 18+)	30 people, bubbles of 15 or fewer advised	15 people, including volunteers	15 people, including volunteers	30 people, including volunteers
Face coverings	Required indoors (age 11+)	Not required	Required indoors (age 12+)	Required indoors (age 11+)
Distancing	Required for all	Required, except among under 12s	Required, except among under 12s	Required age 11+, advised for under 11s
Camps/Residentials	Not permitted	Not permitted	Permitted No shared rooms/tents between households	Permitted No shared rooms/tents between households
Detailed guidance	National Youth Agency	YouthLink Scotland	YouthLink Scotland	Gov.Wales FAQs