



## COVID-19 RESUMING GB COMMUNITY GROUP ACTIVITIES Handbook 2020

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## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to provide a framework to support local GB Community Group leaders to decide on resuming activities in a safe and consistent way.

The National Youth Agency (NYA) as the Professional Statutory and Regulatory Body for youth work in England has, in consultation with Public Health England and the Health and Safety Executive, developed youth sector specific advice and guidance to support you in remaining safe when engaging in activities. You should ensure that you have read the recommendations and requirements in their document [\*\*\*'Managing youth sector activities and spaces during COVID-19'\*\*\*](#).

Our framework and guidance are designed to be complimentary to the NYA and other any national statutory and government advice and guidance and is specific for the work of Girls' Brigade Ministries local uniformed community groups operating across England and Wales. This is additional guidance in response to COVID-19 and is in addition to the guidance that should be followed for safe practice contained in [\*\*\*Life to the Full\*\*\*](#).

Different arrangements are in place in England and Wales and you must ensure that you follow statutory and national guidance from Public Health England or Public Health Wales appropriate to your location on social distancing, travel and other measures for COVID-19; youth work or social gatherings as well as specific guidance from church denominations for youth work.

You will also need to maintain awareness of your own church and any denominational guidance they are following.

Links to government and denominational guidance can be found in Annexe A.

Safeguarding measures in line with Life to the Full continue to remain in place and you should ensure that you are aware of how to respond to disclosures and of who key safeguarding contacts for your group and church are.

This document will be updated as guidance changes. Please visit the resources pages on the GBM Website regularly for updates and check [\*\*\*gov.uk\*\*\*](https://www.gov.uk) or [\*\*\*gov.wales\*\*\*](https://www.gov.wales) websites for advice on current social distancing guidelines and measures.

**All Team Leaders and District Team Leaders** are expected to read this guidance.

## FRAMEWORK FOR RESUMING GB ACTIVITIES

The framework for resuming GB activities needs to be flexible and able to respond to changes in the national Alert level for youth work and government measures in place for COVID-19, which may be applied differently in England and Wales and in some cases across regions within England. GB groups must not resume face-to-face activities until their risk assessment has been approved by the GB Support Centre then only if the appropriate Readiness Level has been reached and group sizes are adhered to.

We know that circumstances for all of our volunteer leaders are different, some may have been front line workers, others may be shielding, and we know that this may impact on your timescales for resuming face to face activities.

When volunteers feel ready to resume face-to-face activities, the following key principles will apply:

- Social distancing must be maintained in poorly ventilated rooms/areas
- Hygiene and handwashing levels maintained including enhanced cleaning arrangements
- Risks to staff, volunteers and members can be managed
- Safeguarding measures can be met
- Decision to resume face-to-face activities **must be taken in conjunction with your local church**
- You should communicate your plans to reopen your GB group with parents and carers and share with them the steps you have put in place to ensure the safety of their children and volunteers.
- You should only resume face-to-face activities once you feel safe to resume activities and sufficient measures are in place.

The reasons for this are to avoid any unnecessary risk to GB's volunteer leaders, members and their families and the wider church community to which the group belongs.

The checklist will need to be revisited each time the Readiness Level changes as each level may require different steps to be put in place to reduce the risk to volunteers and members. If your risk assessment has been approved by the GB Support Centre, there is no need to resubmit this for approval when Readiness Levels change.

Activities will be resumed in line with the NYA's readiness levels.

Readiness Level	GBM Activities
<b>Red</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Face-to-face activity is suspended</li> <li>• Online meetings and use of GB@home or posted/hand delivered resources</li> <li>• Risk assessments <b>must</b> be in place for online meetings</li> </ul>
<b>Amber</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Groups can meet indoors or outdoors once confirmed by GBM Support Centre</li> <li>• Day trips and visits may take place</li> <li>• Social distancing <b>must</b> be maintained</li> <li>• A full risk assessment including building risks <b>must</b> be completed</li> <li>• Readiness checklist sent to GBM Support Centre for authorisation with copy of risk assessment</li> <li>• May need to shorten sessions or meet in fixed smaller groups on more than one evening or alternate evenings for onsite activities</li> <li>• An adapted programme for use in groups and at home will be provided by GBM</li> </ul>
<b>Yellow</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Larger fixed groups can meet indoors or outdoors</li> <li>• Multiple concurrent sessions can take place if space permits</li> <li>• Social distancing <b>must</b> be maintained</li> <li>• A full risk assessment including building risks <b>must</b> be completed</li> <li>• Readiness checklist sent to GBM Support Centre for authorisation with copy of risk assessment</li> <li>• May need to shorten sessions or meet in fixed smaller groups on more than one evening or alternate evenings for onsite activities</li> <li>• Residential Events and visits permissible</li> </ul>
<b>Green</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities return to normal</li> <li>• Residential events and visits permissible</li> <li>• International travel allowed within FCO advice</li> </ul>

## PLANNING AND RISK ASSESSMENT

Leaders within GB have a duty of care to the children and young people who attend their activities, whether this is via online methods, face-to-face activities inside or outside or at residential or other external events. You should always follow the guidelines and procedures for safe practice in GBM activities. The team leader has a responsibility to make regular risk assessments of the premises in relation to the activities that will be undertaken and record these using templates available in the *Delivering an Evening's Programme Toolkit* which is available in the resource zone of the GBM website. However, additional measures will need to be put in place to manage the risk presented by COVID-19 and an additional risk assessment including enhanced health and hygiene and premises risks will need to be undertaken using the COVID-19 addendum to the above toolkit and the residential event toolkit.

These should be adapted to your local setting in particular you should consider, handwashing arrangements, how you will maintain social distancing, managing arrivals and departures, which activities it will be safe to undertake, cleaning and other hygiene measures, if there are leaders and/or young people who are in 'vulnerable' groups for COVID-19 and what impact this might have on staff ratios and the measures you may need to put in place to reduce risk.

You will need to consider how you can ensure equality of access to GB for young people who are shielding or at increased risk because of the virus. This may be via online provision or enabling access to weekly programme materials.

You should discuss and share your risk assessment with the GB group leadership team, including any Young Leaders, and your Church leadership. You should also ensure that you communicate with parents and carers of your group members your plans to resume activities.

You should keep your *Delivering an Evening's Programme Toolkit* risk assessment under regular review and update as required but especially if the Readiness levels or government guidance changes.

Further information around risk assessments in relation to youth work can be found in section 6 and 7 of the [\*NYA guidance\*](#).

## SOCIAL DISTANCING

Social distancing is no longer mandatory but it's expected, and highly recommended that social distancing is maintained in small poorly ventilated rooms. Care should be taken to encourage children to follow hand hygiene measures and keep close contact to a minimum wherever possible.

## FIXED GROUPS

Group size and composition e.g. fixed group definition will be determined by the additional guidance determined by the appropriate NYA Readiness level for England and by the Welsh Government guidance for youth activities. Please note that any local or regional changes put in place to manage the spread of COVID-19 would take precedence.

At Green readiness level in England and Wales the following applies:

- There are no limits on the group size for under and over 18s attending your GB group whether meeting inside or outside
- Remember that safeguarding still needs to be taken into consideration
- Shared spaces, such as kitchens etc., should be deep cleaned thoroughly between use if different fixed groups are to use them on the same day (sequentially)
- You should deep clean rooms between sequential groups



## **SHIELDED AND CLINICALLY VULNERABLE MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS**

It's important to take into account the needs of clinically extremely vulnerable individuals or those with serious underlying health conditions which put them at very high risk of severe illness from COVID-19 and discuss with the leader/young person or their parent what measures you'd need to put in place to ensure safe access to Girls' Brigade activities. This may mean continuing with social distancing or the wearing of face coverings for a further period.

You should also consider those individuals who are classed as vulnerable, due to age or to underlying health conditions.

Things to consider:

- How to ensure equality of access to GB activities, eg what alternative ways can you use to ensure continued engagement with members through regular updates and provision of badgework resources that can be carried out at home.
- Ensure volunteers are kept up to date on plans, are there roles they could carry out safely from home e.g. ordering of uniform or badges
- If volunteers do not feel safe to return to face-to-face activities do you have sufficient ratios of adults to young people to carry out your weekly activities
- Discuss and consider if you need to maintain social distancing for a further period and how you'll ensure a safe environment for that individual.

## **ACCIDENTS, SECURITY AND OTHER INCIDENTS**

In the event of an incident GBM's health and safety guidance should be followed. In an emergency, for example an accident requiring first aid or a fire, you do not have to stay 2 metres apart if this would be unsafe.

Anyone who provides immediate assistance should pay attention to health and hygiene methods including washing of hands immediately afterwards.

## **CLEANING**

You should consult with your church or other premises management about the cleaning procedures they have in place and you should ensure that you understand what these are and what cleaning procedures they will need you to put in place during and at the end of your session. This is particularly important where the premises are shared with other groups or activities, eg pre-schools, etc.

Key things to consider are:

- Ensuring frequent cleaning of work areas and equipment between activities
- Frequent cleaning of objects and surfaces that are touched regularly eg door handles, light fittings
- Clearing away and removing waste and belongings at the end of a session. Waste should be placed in a bin liner and put into the dustbin at the end of the session.
- Cleaning at the end of the session

## **FACE COVERINGS**

Face coverings are no longer mandatory, although they may be worn if individuals wish.

## **HYGIENE MEASURES**

You will need to ensure good levels of hygiene are maintained this includes frequent handwashing and hygiene in toilets.

Things to consider are:

- Reminding young people of good handwashing technique, avoiding touching their faces, coughing, or sneezing into a tissue (and binning this safely)
- Providing hot soapy water or hand sanitiser at entry and exit points
- Setting out the use and cleaning guidance for toilets so that they are kept clean and social distancing can be maintained
- Providing paper towels or hand dryers for drying hands

Whilst we would not expect our leaders to need to wear PPE for normal GB activities, the use of disposal gloves is recommended for cleaning.

## **COVID-19 SYMPTOMS**

Anyone who is experiencing symptoms associated with COVID-19 or has tested positive for COVID-19, should be advised to follow the government guidance around testing and self-isolation. They should not attend activities whilst they are isolating.

Any member or volunteer who has a member of their household with COVID-19 symptoms should be encouraged to follow the government guidance around testing and self-isolation.

## **GIRLS' BRIGADE ACTIVITIES – ADDITIONAL THINGS TO CONSIDER**

### **Snacks, drinks, and tuck**

- Food and drinks may be offered but you should take steps to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

### **Games**

- You should minimise the risk of transmission of COVID-19 in the games that you play
- If doing games with balls and other equipment, you should thoroughly clean the equipment at the beginning and end of the game; those taking part should clean their hands before and after the activity.
- A link to guidance on specific sports can be found in Annexe A

### **Devotions**

- Holding of hands for prayers, etc should be discouraged
- Singing is now permissible but you should check with your church their stance on this

### **Travel**

- If using a minibus or coach, you should ensure that good hand hygiene measures are in place with those travelling encouraged to wash hands/use hand gel as they get on and off the vehicle.
- All measures should be included in your risk assessment.
- All vehicles should be thoroughly cleaned after use.
- Ensure that you follow the guidance in Life to the Full in relation to travel.

## **Duke of Edinburgh Expeditions**

Overnight stays are permissible for those groups undertaking Duke of Edinburgh expeditions under the Green Readiness level:

- In England and in Wales, usual DofE limits apply to group size(s)
- In England and Wales the following also apply:
  - We strongly recommend that members of a group are tested using lateral flow tests every 48 to 72 hours. This includes leaders/carers as well as young people. Anyone who receives a positive test shouldn't take part in the expedition.
  - Please ensure that you have clear plans in place in the event that:
    - There are changes to government guidance.
    - A young person or leader test positive.
    - A young person or leader needs to self-isolate if they are identified as a close contact.
    - A young person or leader shows signs of COVID-19 whilst on the expedition.
  - Please ensure you complete a risk assessment in line with DofE and GB's guidance for expeditions /residential events.



Please see the Residential Events section for additional information about being safe while undertaking residential activities

### Communicating with Parents

You should ensure that before resuming face-to-face activities parents are fully aware of what activities will be undertaken and what measures have been put in place to ensure the safety of their child. Consider how you will communicate e.g. through email, newsletter, face to face or online meeting, the measures that will be in place, particularly when you resume face-to-face meetings.

## RESIDENTIAL EVENTS

Residential events are permissible in England and Wales but the following requirements should be followed:

- There is no limit on the group size for residentials
- You should follow the COVID-19 secure guidance in place at the venue, accommodation or camp site that you are staying in. Their guidelines may differ to those set by GB but would take precedence where these place higher controls on your group.
- We strongly recommend that members of a group who are aged 11 or over are tested using lateral flow tests every 48 to 72 hours. This includes leaders/carers as well as young people. Anyone who receives a positive test shouldn't take part in the residential.
- Please ensure that you have clear plans in place in the event that:
  - There are changes to government guidance
  - A young person or leader test positive
  - A young person or leader needs to self-isolate if they're identified as a close contact
  - A young person or leader shows signs of COVID-19 while on the residential event.
- Please ensure you complete the Residential Event Toolkit providing reassurance as to how you'll manage the risks to ensure your residential is COVID-19 secure and in particular the following areas:
  - Consider how you'll manage the requirements to undertake lateral flow tests
  - What contingency plans you'll have in place in the event that anyone with the group tests positive or shows signs and symptoms of COVID-19
  - You'll need to speak with the venue to ask them to provide evidence, in advance of your visit, of how they'll meet the requirements for working safely at their venue paying particular attention to how:
    - They'll manage any COVID-19 outbreaks at the venue and what steps they'll require you to take in the event a member of your group tests positive for, or shows signs of COVID-19
    - What measures they'll put in place to ensure the cleaning of bathroom facilities, dining rooms, shared equipment or communal areas.

**ALL usual GB regulations and policies should be followed** including submission of the *Residential Event Registration Form* which MUST be submitted to GB's Support Centre at least six weeks prior to the event. GB's Support Centre will also request a copy of your completed *Residential Event Toolkit*.

## **ANNEXE A – LINKS TO GOVERNMENT AND DENOMINATIONAL GUIDANCE**

National Youth Agency COVID-19 Guidance

<https://nya.org.uk/guidance/>

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

<https://gov.wales/youth-work-services-guidance-coronavirus>

**Specific government and statutory guidance can be found here:**

UK government advice

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

UK Government advice on social distancing

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing>

UK Government guidance on local restrictions

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/local-restrictions-areas-with-an-outbreak-of-coronavirus-cov>

Welsh government guidance

<https://gov.wales/coronavirus>

Welsh government advice on social distancing

<https://gov.wales/coronavirus-social-distancing-guidance>

FAQs in relation to organised children's activities in Wales

<https://gov.wales/organised-childrens-outdoor-activity-frequently-asked-questions#section-67305>

**Denominational guidance can be found here. Please consult this as relevant to your group:**

The Baptist Union

[https://www.baptist.org.uk/Groups/338267/Essential\\_Guidance.aspx](https://www.baptist.org.uk/Groups/338267/Essential_Guidance.aspx)

The Church of England

<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-churches>

The Methodist Church

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/coronavirus/official-guidance/>

United Reformed Church

<https://urc.org.uk/coronavirus.html>

**Other guidance:**

Guidance for team sports

<https://london sport.org/covid-19/return-to-sport-and-physical-activity-guidance/>



Girls' Brigade Ministries,  
Cliff College, Calver, Hope Valley, Derbyshire, S32 3XG  
Tel: **01246 582322**  
Email: [gbc@gb-ministries.org](mailto:gbc@gb-ministries.org)  
Web: [www.girlsbrigadeministries.org.uk](http://www.girlsbrigadeministries.org.uk)

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