



Youth Scotland's Guide to Safer Community-based Youth Work

A best-practice guide on youth work delivery
post-restrictions





Contents

1. Introduction.....	3
2. Summarised changes from The Scottish Government.....	3
3. Youth work specific guidance and community-based youth work	4
Guidance on the delivery of youth work.....	4
Youth Scotland Resources	5
4. Law at Work (LAW).....	7
How to access Law at Work.....	7
5. Training and support	8
6. Resources and links mentioned in this document	9

1. Introduction

This document is a guide for community-based youth groups who are returning to delivery or transitioning from working with national COVID-19 restrictions.

Following the [First Minister's update](#) on 21/03/2022, the Scottish Government has moved to remove all covid rules and restrictions in Scotland.

Since the first lockdown began, Youth Scotland has worked to provide community-based youth work with an easy, accessible overview of the appropriate guidance for our sector. Additionally, we have provided useful resources and advice from other partners. As Scotland moves from legal requirements to a risk-based best practice model, this guide will signpost the latest official guidance, where to access Youth Scotland's risk assessment resources and any additional training and support that may be relevant to community-based youth groups.

Note: this guide is designed to offer specific support to delivery in a community-based youth work setting. It should continue to be used as a supplement to the national youth work guidance ([Guiding principles to support the safe delivery of youth work](#) and Scottish Government and Public Health Scotland guidelines (<https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/>)

The Scotland's Strategic Framework Update states: "In the future, and as far as possible, we intend to rely much less on legal requirements and more on people and organisations making and sustaining the adaptations to behaviours and physical environments that will improve our resilience to the virus and help keep it in check."

2. Summarised changes from The Scottish Government

From the Scottish Government website:

All covid rules and restrictions have been lifted in Scotland, but the virus has not gone away.

Use 'Covid sense' to help protect yourself and others:

- [get your vaccine](#) when offered to ensure you are fully protected
- open windows when socialising indoors
- wear a face covering in indoor public places and on public transport
- wash your hands to protect yourself
- take a PCR test and isolate if you have symptoms
- take an LFD test before visiting someone in a hospital or care home



Care for yourself and others to help slow down the spread of the virus and reduce pressure on our health services.

More information [can be found here](#)

3. Youth work specific guidance and community-based youth work

As we move forward from lockdowns and legal restrictions, we appreciate that members are keen to stay safe and work within appropriate recommendations. Youth Scotland suggests that member groups should remain aware of Scottish Government's and Public Health Scotland's guidance at all times and progress carefully ensuring the health and wellbeing of staff, volunteers and young people.

Following the removal of legal requirements and a move to being guided by 'Covid sense' this section collects relevant information for community-based youth groups and workers to operate as safely as they can in their activities.

Guidance on the delivery of youth work

YouthLink Scotland has published an overview of guidance for the safe delivery of youth work [Guiding principles to support the safe delivery of youth work](#). This short guide has useful general advice on safe delivery, including the following:

Guiding principles for youth work delivery

The following guiding principles are recommended good practice approaches to the safe delivery of youth work. They have been based on the existing expectations before delivery, that youth work leaders have been following for the past two years:

- Delivery of youth work will be informed by risk assessment.
- Protective measures will be in place and communicated.
- Taking a rights-based approach to delivery, including the protection of those at higher risk.
- Clear communication processes - to ensure staff, volunteers, service users and parents understand the measures you have put in place to manage risk.

Prior to resuming face-to-face youth activities

While some groups have already transitioned to face-to-face delivery or hybrid working, some are just now able to access meeting places and facilities or have been waiting for restrictions to ease. Whatever your group's situation, we would suggest some simple

points to guide any planned return or any ongoing delivery in a manner consistent with the 'Covid sense' approach.

1. **Risk assess.** Each community-based youth group is unique and nobody understands the local situation and young people like the volunteers and workers involved. Risk assess your own circumstances to stay as safe and comfortable as you need to be.
2. **Communicate.** Open communication between volunteers, workers, young people, parents, Schools and the community can ensure everyone has shared expectations and feels comfortable voicing their views or concerns.
3. **Be inclusive.** Community-based youth work is about universal access and as we renew our activities and in person meetings, it can be helpful to be guided by flexibility so the concerns or needs of the wider group or clinically vulnerable are met in your spaces. This may involve hybrid activities or just continuing to use facemasks or social distancing in your meeting place.

The Scottish Government website maintains advice for colleges, universities and CLD here [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): universities, colleges and community learning and development providers](#)

Youth Scotland Resources

Digital youth work

We expect digital youth work to remain part of community-based youth work for the foreseeable future. Some groups may be reluctant or unable to resume face-to-face youth work at this stage. Youth Scotland has some valuable resources available to support this further down this page. We also regularly run online [training to support workers](#)

Safe Online Working

The following advice and resources help support the continued use of digital youth work activities.

Advice on safe digital youth work

At the bottom of our COVID-19 webpage, you can [download a quick guide](#) on suggestions and advice for safe online youth work. We are asked: how can we reach young people digitally? How can we do it safely? What activities can we arrange online when our youth centres are closed? Safeguarding the young people, you work with and keeping yourself safe are still top priorities.



Youth Highland, our Area Association partner have produced a guide from their experience of working online. It also includes their views on social media and other digital tools - download at the foot of this page.

Cyber security advice from Police Scotland

Police Scotland have issued some very accessible cyber security videos that their colleagues in the City of London Police have shared. The videos cover: Phishing, Vishing, Multi-Factor Authentication, Passwords, Software updates, Social engineering and Securing your router. The topics may sound daunting, but the videos avoid jargon and explain things clearly. See the download at the foot of this page.

Outdoor activities and outdoor youth work

Many groups will now be turning to outdoor delivery as spring arrives. We have produced some handy guides on detached youth work and outdoor activities.

Youth Scotland's Guide to Detached Youth Work

This pack is for youth workers who are interested in detached youth work, whether they are already a detached youth worker or wanting to develop detached youth work. This pack looks at the practicalities of detached youth work and the benefits of it.

Youth Scotland's Guide to Out and About Youth Work

This pack is for groups who are interested in outdoor activities. The outdoors can be a great place to learn and have fun and can make a significant contribution to the health and wellbeing of young people and adults. Positive experiences can generate an interest in the outdoors which goes far beyond the boundaries of your youth group.

Insurance

Please note that when planning to re-commence any activities, you need to adhere to the guidelines stipulated by the Scottish Government because should any insurance claim occur, your activities will be checked to see if they have adhered to these and if not, there would be a chance the claim will be repudiated.

Hygiene and infection control measures

As more facilities become available, you may be looking at planning for cleaning schedules, provision of washing facilities and / or hand gel, notices about how to prevent spread of infection, employee health screening and how to deal with any incidences of COVID-19 infections in their setting. You may also have to limit the use of resources such as games or sports equipment and put additional cleaning measures in place for these.

You should make contact with the owner/operator of your building if you do not have your own premises to discuss planning for hygiene and cleaning arrangements.

4. Law at Work (LAW)

You can access an extensive suite of legal advice, guidance and templates as part of your Youth Scotland membership. Law at Work have updated their COVID-19 guidance to include a Return to Work Toolkit.

As the COVID-19 restrictions are lifted, youth groups/organisations face many decisions around assessing their operations, bringing employees/volunteers back to work, and ensuring the workplace is safe.

The main challenge which should be factored into all decisions will be ensuring that workers/volunteers and young people and their families have full confidence that their health will be protected.

To help you start to think about these issues, the Law at Work Return to Work Toolkit includes documents and templates that you can use for your group including a Return to Work Checklist, Return to Work Risk Assessment, Return to Work Safety guide, Building pre-opening audit, and many more useful documents. Please note that these are general documents for employers and not specific to a youth work setting. We will aim to provide further specific guidance when it has been produced by Scottish Government.

How to access Law at Work

These services are part of the package of benefits afforded to Youth Scotland member groups. You will be required to quote your Youth Scotland Membership number and details when accessing these services. Read about [joining Youth Scotland here](#)

To register for LAW: If you have not previously registered for Law at Work, go to this [webpage](#) and have your member group details and Youth Scotland membership number handy. Your Youth Scotland membership number will begin 350. LAW will also be using your primary membership contact email address.

To login: If you have previously registered for Law at Work, go to this [webpage](#) and enter your details. You should then click into the Coronavirus: Employer's resource centre, where you will find the COVID-19 Return to Work Toolkit.

If you have any problems logging in, please contact us at Youth Scotland and we can help you access a copy of the Return to Work toolkit.

5. Training and support

Since the first lockdown, Youth Scotland has been supporting member youth groups with regularly updated information, funding, and support. Visit our [COVID-19 page for details](#)

We have also developed a comprehensive training programme for youth workers and volunteers which aims to increase youth workers' abilities and skills to support young people as we transition from legal restrictions to include more face-to-face youth work and meetings.

Digital youth work has been gaining momentum for years and the lockdowns truly brought it to the fore. Our online training focuses on young people's mental health and wellbeing, innovative adaptations to our ongoing programmes and highly-accessible training on how to deliver digital youth work.

To meet community-based youth work's changing needs as we move forward, we have developed new training to support the growing mental health crisis, digital youth work or even support on how to deliver detached youth work and outdoor learning.

This includes: -

- Child Protection training
- Modules in 'Mental Health Awareness – Positive Coping Strategies'; 'Young people and self-esteem'; 'Mindfulness' and 'Understanding Challenging Behaviour'
- 'Digital Youth Work' training which supports youth workers to provide a safe space online for young people to engage in their youth groups with their friends.
- Creative Arts and STEM in an online space
- Youth Awards support and training, including Awards at Home for our Hi5 and Dynamic Youth Awards
- Detached Youth Work training which supports youth workers to safely engage with young people outside – this will be supported by a Youth Scotland Detached Youth Work Toolkit <https://www.youthscotland.org.uk/covid-19/>
- Outdoor Learning training which supports youth workers to plan and deliver outdoor learning – this will be supported by a Youth Scotland's Guide to Out and About Youth Work <https://www.youthscotland.org.uk/covid-19/>

You can view our training programme and book your space [on Eventbrite](#) or by visiting our [events calendar](#)



6. Resources and links mentioned in this document

Coronavirus (COVID-19): Strategic Framework update - February 2021

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-strategic-framework-update-february-2021/>

COVID-19: Guiding principles to support the safe delivery of youth work.

<https://www.youthlinkscotland.org/news/april-2022/guiding-principles-to-support-the-safe-delivery-of-youth-work/>

Youth Scotland's Covid-19 resources – including risk assessment templates and examples, guides on detached, outdoor and digital youth work

<https://youthscotland.org.uk/covid-19/>

Joining Youth Scotland

<https://youthscotland.org.uk/join/>

Law At Work - membership legal advice and services

<https://www.lawatwork.co.uk/user/register>

Youth Scotland events and training

<https://www.youthscotland.org.uk/training-events/events-booking/>



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