



# GUIDANCE FOR YOUTH ORGANISATIONS ON RESUMING FULL SERVICES AFTER COVID-19

Version 3, 29th June 2020

## Contents

Part 1 – Background and Context .....	3
Introduction .....	3
Part 2 – Overarching Guidance .....	5
Part 3 – Youth Sector Guidance .....	6
Part 4 – Organisational Guidelines.....	11
Operational Premises.....	11
Staff Management .....	11
Staff, volunteers and young people in higher risk categories according to HSE guidelines .....	12
Identification and Isolation Procedures.....	12
Occupational Health and Safety .....	13
Communications .....	13
Part 5 – Monitoring and Communications.....	14
Appendix 1 – Risk Assessment Prompt Sheet.....	15
Appendix 2 - Pre-Return to Work Questionnaire COVID-19.....	18
Appendix 3 - Return to Work Induction Meeting .....	19
Appendix 4 – Contact Tracing Log.....	20

**It is important to note that this guidance is intended to be a living document to be updated as Government advice is updated. To facilitate this process the Department has convened an Oversight Group, comprising a number of sectoral representatives and Departmental officials, who will meet regularly to review and update this document. Youth organisations and groups should develop their own protocols in line with this high-level guidance.**

## Part 1 – Background and Context

### Introduction

This guidance is prepared in the broader context of the Government’s Roadmap for Reopening Society and Business<sup>1</sup> and the Return to Work Safely Protocol<sup>2</sup> and should be read in conjunction with those documents and any future Government advice in relation to COVID-19.

It is recognised that youth services have been working to maintain supports, particularly to vulnerable young people most in need, during the restrictions. This have been achieved through the development of innovative working methods, with limited face to face provision in critical situations in accordance with Government regulations.

The Department has worked with a range of youth sector stakeholders to draw up guidance for the phased re-introduction of full service provision. This guidance includes a sequence of actions for the youth sector to consider at each of the phases set out in the *Government Roadmap for Reopening Society and Business*.

The purpose of this document is to provide high level guidance from which individual organisations should develop their own protocols. The youth sector guidance is grounded in the over-riding principles set out in the Government’s Roadmap for Reopening Society and Business, as below:

**Safe** – informed and guided by public health guidance and assessment of risk

**Logical** – sequential series of actions building upon progress made

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.ie/en/news/58bc8b-taoiseach-announces-roadmap-for-reopening-society-and-business-and-u/?referrer=/roadmap/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/22829a-return-to-work-safely-protocol/>

**Evidence Based** – uses the national government guidance and data

**Fair** – respects human dignity, autonomy and supports equality

**Open and Transparent** – decisions are clear, well communicated

Public Health Guidance from the Government is the overarching guide. Based on a three week review process, the Government Roadmap indicates that restrictions will be unlocked in four phases commencing on the following dates:

Phase 1	18 <sup>th</sup> May
Phase 2	8 <sup>th</sup> June
Phase 3	29 <sup>th</sup> June
Phase 4	20 <sup>th</sup> July

In line with the principle that this is a living document, this is **Version 3** of this guidance. It reflects the recent announcements by Government in relation to the remaining phases of the *Roadmap for Reopening Society and Business*. Please note that substantive changes are **highlighted in green** text to **illustrate changes that have been made from Version 2**.

## Part 2 – Overarching Guidance

Any re-opening of youth facilities must have regard to current Government advice relating to the management of the Covid-19 pandemic.

This is summarised in the following table:

Core Concepts	
What we can each do	What we can do together
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain handwashing and respiratory hygiene</li> <li>• <b>Keep a safe 2m social distance to the greatest extent possible</b></li> <li>• <b>Face coverings should be worn on public transport, and are recommended for retail outlets, and other places where it is difficult to maintain social distancing</b></li> <li>• Be hyper-alert to, and isolate, if we have symptoms</li> <li>• Reduce close contact and duration of contact with people outside our households</li> <li>• Access advice and supports for mental wellbeing and resilience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow public health advice</li> <li>• Keep informed about disease in Ireland</li> <li>• Support vulnerable young people and maintain solidarity in your community</li> <li>• Support health care workers and health service</li> <li>• Accept that measures can only be lifted in a slow and phased manner and that previous measures may need to be reintroduced if rate of infection increases</li> </ul>
Principles underpinning Approach to Reducing Measures	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>No assurance that it is safe to reduce social distancing measures</b> and stricter measures will have to be reintroduced if there is a strong upsurge of infections</li> <li>• Measures will be reduced in a <b>slow, gradual, stepwise</b> manner over five broad phases with three weeks between each phase</li> <li>• Reductions of measures will be <b>robustly and continuously monitored</b> in terms of adherence and effect</li> <li>• Ideally a <b>‘whole of country approach’</b>, but potentially a differentiated geographic approach depending on circumstances e.g. urban/rural</li> <li>• Approaches to reducing measures will evolve as information becomes available and in line with <b>international learning and experience</b>, especially countries ahead in terms of their outbreak</li> <li>• Reducing measures <b>critically dependent</b> on health service’s ability to:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Find new cases by consistently testing and contact tracing, and utilise robust information on disease, system capacity and performance</li> <li>○ Implement mechanisms to <b>protect ‘at risk’ groups</b> particularly from outbreaks</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

## Part 3 – Youth Sector Guidance

As noted earlier, youth services have worked hard, innovated and adapted in order to maintain supports, particularly to vulnerable, disadvantaged and marginalised young people, throughout the restrictions. Certain youth services were also classified as essential services for the purposes of essential travel, including outreach services for vulnerable young people in exceptional circumstances where there is no option to provide a service remotely; work to assist another State Body in delivering essential services; and participation in community response initiatives. Recognising the efforts that have been made, the table below provides guidance for the phased resumption of full services and supports.

It is recognised that services and supports will be different as they resume in the “new normal”. Public health requirements will necessitate certain changes, while some recent innovations may be permanently embedded in order to enhance the reach and effectiveness of supports.

***NB All guidance provided in the table below is indicative and is subject to ongoing public health advice and a step by step risk assessment which should be carried out on an ongoing basis by each organisation/group. All activities should have regard to all other relevant requirements and good practice e.g. child protection, safety and wellbeing of staff and volunteers. Guidance for each phase is intended as enabling and it is recognised that different services may have different lead-in periods as they work towards full resumption of face to face service provision.***

**All phases should be carried out in line with social distancing measures as advised by Government and as may evolve over time.**

Heading	Subheading	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4
<b>On-Line / remote / digital service delivery</b>		All on-line, digital, telephone and other remote forms of service delivery should continue for as long as practicable and, where appropriate and beneficial, should be embedded in the model of service provision in the long-term.			
<b>Working with young people<sup>3</sup></b>	<i>Remote working i.e. online</i>	Should continue as long as practicable and be embedded in the long-term model of service delivery where beneficial.			
	<i>Structured small group work</i>	Online or groups no larger than 4 young people with up to 2 youth workers outdoors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online, or</li> <li>• Groups no larger than 12 young people with up to 2/3 youth workers outdoors, or</li> <li>• Groups no larger than 4 young people with up to 2 youth workers indoors</li> </ul>	Small group work can recommence – indoors or outdoors	Same as phase 3
	<i>Unscheduled interventions</i>	Crisis work can continue outside while observing social distancing rules	Recommence crisis work indoors/ on premises while utilising outdoor options where available	Continue crisis work indoors/ on premises while utilising outdoor options where available	Same as phase 3
	<i>Structured large group work</i>	Online	Same as phase 1	Indoor groups of up to 50 people (including all staff and volunteers)	Same as phase 3

<sup>3</sup> The sub categories relate to UBU

				Outdoor groups of up to 200 people (including all staff and volunteers)  Groups should be aware of advice <sup>4</sup> related to group singing, choirs and playing certain brass musical instruments in groups	
	<i>Outreach / Detached work</i>	Online or groups no larger than 4 young people with up to 2 youth workers outdoors	Online or groups no larger than 12 young people with up to 2/3 youth workers outdoors	Outreach / Detached work can recommence – indoors or outdoors	Same as phase 3
	<i>Home visits</i>	Only to deliver essential services e.g. support of vulnerable, in crises or at risk young people who have not engaged digitally and only where home visit can take place outside	Only to deliver essential services e.g. support of vulnerable, in crises or at risk young people who have not engaged digitally. Visit can take place inside in line with public health guidance	Home visits can recommence – indoors or outdoors	Same as phase 3
	<i>Residential</i>	Should not take place	Same as phase 1	Residential activities can recommence having regard to public health advice and strict adherence to family group protocols and any requirements for the hotel/ holiday sector	Same as phase 3

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/77452/39d51b02-5633-4e2f-a070-4551a3521081.pdf#page=7>

	<i>Scouting and Guiding Camps</i>	Should not take place	Same as phase 1	Camps may take place having regard to guidance on holiday and caravan parks, public health advice and strict adherence to family group protocols and any requirements for the hotel/ holiday sector	Same as phase 3
	<i>Large group events</i>	Online only	Same as phase 1	<p>Indoor groups of up to 50 people (including all staff and volunteers)</p> <p>Outdoor groups of up to 200 people (including all staff and volunteers)</p> <p>Groups should be aware of advice<sup>5</sup> related to group singing, choirs and playing certain brass musical instruments in groups</p>	Same as phase 3
	<i>Advocacy work</i>	Remotely	Same as phase 1	Recommence work on premises where necessary	Continue work on premises where necessary and phased resumption based on public health guidance
	<i>Support of Youth Volunteer</i>	Remotely	Recommence work on premises where necessary	Continue work on premises where necessary	Phased resumption based on public health guidance

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/77452/39d51b02-5633-4e2f-a070-4551a3521081.pdf#page=7>

	<i>One to one work</i>	Online. Limited crisis intervention work by appointment can take place with prior approval of line manager and with protective measures in place	Meetings may take place in office	As phase 2	As phase 2
	<i>International youth work</i>	Online only	Same as phase 1	Same as phase 1	Same as phase 1 <sup>6</sup>
<b>Opening of premises<sup>7</sup></b>		No public access, allow access to offices for staff and volunteers for essential business related tasks	Based on a risk assessment by the organisation, some additional attendance in organisational premises could commence	Based on a risk assessment and having regard to public health guidance, phased re-opening.	Continued phased re-opening based on public health guidance
<b>Transport</b>		No transport	Same as phase 1	Phased re – commencement based on public health guidance, with particular reference to social distancing and face coverings	Same as phase 3
<b>Staff/volunteer meeting and training</b>		Remotely	Based on a risk assessment by the organisation, some additional attendance in offices could commence as necessary	Based on a risk assessment and having regard to public health guidance, phased return of staff.	Phased resumption of in person meetings and in-service training commences based on public health guidance

<sup>6</sup> The recommencement of international youth work and travel will take place in the context of emerging government advice.

<sup>7</sup> Youth organisation may operate from premises that they do not own or control. In these instances services should liaise with the owner / operators to ensure all necessary guidance is followed to the satisfaction of both parties.

## Part 4 – Organisational Guidelines

**NB – this is an indicative list and organisations/groups should refer to other Government advice as appropriate.**

The following sets out guidance for organisations as they consider resumption of full service provision during the various phases of the Government Roadmap. In this regard, **at least one lead representative should be appointed and charged with ensuring that COVID-19 measures are strictly adhered to.**

The health and wellbeing of young people, volunteers and staff is the paramount consideration when progressing phased resumption of full service provision. It is recognised that services will need to take account of the individual circumstances of staff and service users in the planning of future provision and will also need to be able to respond flexibly where individual circumstances or broader contextual factors change.

### Operational Premises (both rented and owned)

- Appropriate signage should be prominently displayed
  - see [www.gov.ie/en/collection/ee0781-covid-19-posters-for-public-use/](http://www.gov.ie/en/collection/ee0781-covid-19-posters-for-public-use/)
  - and [www.hse.ie/eng/services/news/newsfeatures/covid19-updates/partner-resources/covid-19-translated-resources/](http://www.hse.ie/eng/services/news/newsfeatures/covid19-updates/partner-resources/covid-19-translated-resources/)
- Cleaning of work areas must be conducted at regular intervals, including thorough and regular cleaning of frequently touched surfaces.
- Hand hygiene should be supported through the provision of sanitiser.
- Where possible, an area should be identified and made available to isolate a person becoming unwell in the service.

### Staff Management

- Develop or update the organisation’s COVID-19 Response Plan according to section E.1 of the Return to Work Safely Protocol.
- Organisations should implement COVID-19 prevention and control measures to minimise risk to workers, volunteers and young people.
- Before moving to any new phase, a risk assessment<sup>8</sup> process should be established and completed by management in consultation with persons accessing premises. At a minimum this should address the following two queries.
  - Is there a real and pressing need for the person to access any of the premises for any period of time? – Outline the reasoning.

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<sup>8</sup> Template at appendix 3

- Are there any underlying health conditions or additional risks which would make it inappropriate for the individual to access the building?
- Staff and volunteers should complete a self-declaration return to work form<sup>9</sup> on initial return to work, and additionally after any sick or travel absence.
- A contact tracing log should be developed, updated and made available to staff<sup>10</sup>. It may also be useful for facilities to implement an office attendance rota to ensure social distancing can be implemented.
- Staff and volunteers should monitor adherence with physical distancing and other rules set out in Government guidance documents.
- Face coverings and gloves should be utilised in line with Government advice.
- In the event of a suspected case in the organisation all Government advice should be followed, as appropriate.
- Employers have an obligation to provide relevant training to staff on COVID-19 issues.

### Staff, volunteers and young people in higher risk categories according to HSE guidelines

- Special arrangements should be put in place for staff, volunteers and young people in higher risk categories according to HSE guidelines e.g. youth workers with underlying conditions, or living with people with such conditions, should be informed of their right not to undertake face to face work.
- Return to work and risk assessment templates might be helpful to organisations in this regard – sample templates are attached at appendix 2 and 3 respectively.

### Identification and Isolation Procedures

- Organisations should develop or amend policies and procedures for prompt identification and isolation of workers who may have symptoms of COVID-19, as appropriate.
  - Organisations will:
    - Provide return to work training, online and/or onsite, for all workers and volunteers.
    - Keep a log of contact/group work to facilitate contact tracing.
    - Inform young people, workers, volunteers and others of the purpose of the log.
    - Provide up to date information on the Public Health advice issued by the HSE and Gov.ie.

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<sup>9</sup> Template at appendix 2

<sup>10</sup> Template at appendix 4

- Provide instruction for workers to follow if they develop signs and symptoms of COVID-19 during work.
- Workers and volunteers will:
  - Make themselves aware of the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and monitor their own wellbeing.
  - Self-isolate at home and contact their GP promptly for further advice if they display any signs or symptoms.
  - Report to managers immediately if any symptoms develop during the shift.

### Occupational Health and Safety

- All existing Occupational Health and Safety provisions will continue to apply to all workplaces during this time and further information and advice is available on the Health and Safety Authority website [www.hsa.ie](http://www.hsa.ie)

### Communications

- Services should ensure that they have in place a plan to communicate the guidance and return to work procedures to their stakeholders.
- The key to a safe and continued return to work requires strong communication and a shared collaborative approach between employers, workers and volunteers.
- Tailored communications for young people and their families should be developed and templates will be provided shortly in this regard.

## Part 5 – Monitoring and Communications

This guidance has been prepared by the Department in conjunction with representatives of the youth sector<sup>11</sup>. This Oversight Group will continue to meet following the issuance of this guidance to keep it under review, ensure it is updated and provide additional detail and clarification as appropriate. As a living document, it is anticipated that the guidance will be regularly updated in response to evolving public health guidance and emerging need.

The Department, with the support of the Oversight Group, is committed to communicating regularly with the sector at each phase of the Government Roadmap. All future versions of the guidance will be circulated to the sector immediately upon approval.

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<sup>11</sup> The group contains representation from Crosscare, ETBI, Foróige, National Youth Council of Ireland, Scouting Ireland and Youth Work Ireland.

## Appendix 1 – Risk Assessment Prompt Sheet

<b>Risk Assessment Prompt Sheet</b>
<b>Re: COVID -19 – Social Distancing and Safe Workplaces</b>
<b>Name of Service</b>
<b>Person completing assessment</b>
<b>Date completed</b>
<b>Social Distancing</b> is keeping a 2 metre (6 feet) space between you and other people to decrease and interrupt the spread of COVID-19. You should not shake hands or make close contact where possible.
<b>Safe Workplaces</b> includes measures we will take prior to re-opening and whilst open.
The following is a non-exhaustive list of prompts to be considered around the resumption of full service provision. Individual services may wish to use this prompt sheet to inform their own existing risk register.

<b>Actions prior to opening up</b>		
<b>No.</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Completed</b>
1	In relation to legionella, if there was regular flushing/running of all water outlets then there is no need for action otherwise it would be useful to book sampling/testing now or go straight to planning to disinfect prior to full reoccupation.	
2	Ventilate all rooms.	
3	Ensure all waste collections are still taking place or do they need to be scaled back up.	
4	Check for rodent activity/droppings and set traps if necessary.	
5	Ensure heater/boiler timings have been updated to summer time.	
6	With respect to canteen facilities plan for staggered breaks and floor markings for queues.	
7	Check that dishwashers are not set on eco wash settings (low temperature).	
8	Disinfect milk cartons etc. that come into the premises before they are put in the fridge.	
9	Have designated area for post opening and gloves and letter opener and sanitiser to hand.	
10	Put a system in place for receiving deliveries	
11	Inform first aiders on new protocols in case person becomes unwell or action in event of heart attack ( CPR)	
12	Write up a cleaning schedule	

<b>Work Environment Controls</b>				
<b>No</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
13	Is there current capacity in the service to comply with the social distancing requirements? Assess the premises based on the numbers of workers and service users/ young people that may be in the building safely at any one time If No, consider the following:			

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction of flexible shifts, staggered shifts, extended opening hours, weekend working</li> <li>• Redeploying staff to other appropriate buildings in the vicinity where such capacity exists</li> <li>• Alternate staff to work between base and home</li> <li>• What priority service can safely be offered to service users/ young people</li> <li>• Appointment-based service only in designated spaces where social distancing is possible.</li> <li>• Extension of telephone and online supports</li> </ul>			
14	As far as is reasonably practicable, can non fire doors within internal buildings be left open to avoid the risk of potential contamination?			
15	Is there a documented cleaning schedule in place for each work location?			
16	Has consideration been given to additional partitioning /protective perspex screening between workstations and at reception areas where appropriate?			
17	Are there appropriate hand washing facilities available?			
18	Are there adequate supplies of hand washing materials e.g. liquid soap, disposable paper towels, anti-bac hand gel			
19	Is there an adequate number of waste bins?			
20	Has appropriate COVID-19 signage been prominently displayed throughout the work location?			

<b>Work Practice Controls</b>				
21	Has access to work locations been restricted to rostered staff only, as far as is reasonably practicable?			
22	Has consideration been given to floor markings to demonstrate minimum distancing between staff and others to encourage social distancing?			
23	Are work breaks staggered in order to maintain social distancing requirements?			
24	Are meetings held via teleconference to ensure compliance with social distancing requirements?			
25	Is the use of communal areas (meeting rooms) restricted to ensure social distancing is maintained?			
26	Are staff aware of respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette?			

27	Do staff adhere to respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette?			
28	Are staff familiar with hand washing technique/ guidelines			
29	Are all drinking cups/glasses thoroughly washed and cleaned between each use?			
30	Are waste bins emptied, cleaned and sanitised on a regular basis?			
31	Are staff instructed to bring minimal personal belongings into the workplace to avoid risk of contamination?			
32	Have staff been instructed to clean and sanitise their workstation at the start and end of each shift?			
33	Have staff been instructed to clean and sanitise communal equipment (e.g. photocopier, printer) before and after each use?			
34	Is there a protocol in place in the event an employee becomes unwell and believes they have been exposed to COVID-19			
35	Maintain sign in sheet in order to facilitate contact tracing if necessary			

**Local Response Plan**

Please provide a high-level overview here as to the rostering and shift patterns of workers in order to safely implement social distancing. Also detail the type of service provision to young people/ service users and how this will be done safely.

## Appendix 2 - Pre-Return to Work Questionnaire COVID-19

### **Pre-Return to Work Questionnaire COVID-19**

This questionnaire must be completed by workers at least 3 days in advance of returning to work.

If the answer is Yes to any of the below questions, you are advised to seek medical advice before returning to work.

Name of Employee: \_\_\_\_\_ Name of Line Manager: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

	Questions	YES	NO
1.	Do you have symptoms of cough, fever, high temperature, sore throat, runny nose, breathlessness or flu like symptoms now or in the past 14 days?		
2.	Have you been diagnosed with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 infection in the last 14 days?		
3.	Are you a close contact of a person who is a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19 in the past 14 days (i.e. less than 2m for more than 15 minutes accumulative in 1 day)		
4.	Have you been advised by a doctor to self-isolate at this time?		
5.	Have you been advised by a doctor to cocoon at this time?		
6.	Have you been advised by your doctor that you are in an at risk group? If yes, please liaise with your doctor and Manager re return to work.		

I confirm, to the best of my knowledge that I have no symptoms of COVID-19, am not self-isolating or awaiting results of a COVID-19 test. Please note: The organisation is collecting this sensitive personal data for the purposes of maintaining safety within the workplace in light of the Covid-19 pandemic. The legal basis for collecting this data is based on vital public health interests and maintaining occupational health and will be held securely in line with our retention policy.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 3 - Return to Work Induction Meeting

### **Return to Work / Induction Meeting COVID-19**

Name of Employee: \_\_\_\_\_ Name of Line Manager: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

	<b>Wellbeing &amp; Health and Safety</b>	<b>Comments</b>
1.	General update: How are they doing, how did the pandemic affect them?	
2.	How are they feeling about returning to the workplace?	
3.	Discuss their self-care and how they are/can protect their wellbeing.	
4.	Discuss current situation in relation to sick leave policy (if relevant)	
5.	Discuss local response plan/ new measures to address risk of COVID-19 ( including current advise on PPE , social distancing)	
6.	Discuss changes to health and safety practice and levels of responsibility, including what to do if a worker/young person becomes unwell.	
7.	Discuss if there are any other circumstances relating to COVID-19, not included, which they need to disclose/ ask to allow their safe return to work.	

## Appendix 4 – Contact Tracing Log

### Contact Tracing Log

To ensure the Safety & Health of everyone, this contact log should contain details of **all persons** on site, **or involved in any off-site activity**, on any given day. This includes employees, service users, visitors etc. This will assist in contact tracing should a person be confirmed as positive. To protect the privacy of people's data, the entries should be completed by a worker and the log not given to non-employees. The logs are to be stored in a safe manner and a log that is more than 14 days old is to be destroyed. A new log is to be filled in daily.

Name	Reasons for being at the service? If a service user, name the worker they are coming to see	Mobile Number	Total time in the service	Was 2m distance maintained at all times? Yes /No