

Managing face-to-face scouting during local lockdown or imposed restrictions.

Welcome

If you're in doubt about any of this guidance, please seek the advice of a professional.

Introduction

At any time, governments may impose lockdown on a geographical area of the United Kingdom. Governments elsewhere may do the same and this guidance will apply to BSO operating in these countries as much as it does to those groups within the four nations and island jurisdictions of the UK.

We've been able to develop this guidance document with reference to the active situations in Leicestershire, and in the north of England at the end of July 2020.

Principles

The County Commissioner (or nation equivalents) is the focal decision-maker as they will know the areas concerned, and will have direct contact with District Commissioners and other key local leaders.

In large scale lock-downs, the Regional commissioner or nation Chief Commissioners should be engaged in reaching the decision.

Indication of a lockdown may be sign-posted days in advance, or this may be sudden. Groups need to be ready and have a communication plan to alert young members and parents/carers. This communication may be done or amplified by a county or district communication.

Only in exceptional situations would communication be sent from HQ.

Process

- The relevant nation or island government will make an announcement that a local lockdown is to be applied (this is likely to be based on postcodes, or within a defined boundary). Note: it is also becoming increasingly likely that the announcements will be made by local authorities.
- The appropriate County Commissioner(s) will discuss the impact of the lockdown with HQ, through the restart project team and the Regional Commissioner. The County Commissioner and their local team will communicate with the affected groups, districts and any other relevant teams, e.g. a district Scout campsite. (Note: sometimes the scout boundaries will differ from the affected local authority boundaries and clear statements will be needed).
- The readiness table on our [website](#) will be updated by UKHQ staff to reflect the areas in lockdown, likely moving that county or part of county (or equivalent in other nations) back to RED. Where possible we will use scout geographical terms (e.g. district names) but it may be necessary to refer to local authority areas instead.
- The scout units within that area will remain at RED until informed by the County Commissioner that lockdown restrictions have eased. If they have been eased enough to do so, groups will be able to re-submit risk assessments to move back to a different readiness level. If this local lockdown has only been in place for a short amount of time, the review on this should only be a simple acknowledgment, unless a review was already due. If this period of time is substantially longer, a more rigorous discussion should take place about any necessary changes to the risk assessment or implementation plans. This decision will have involved the relevant nation Chief Commissioner before being implemented. It is likely that groups would need to move back up the readiness levels and not simply jump to wherever the rest of the country is at that time. Where practical, we expect seven days' notice to be given of the likelihood of moving back up a level.
- HQ staff will update the readiness chart again removing any restrictions that are now eased.
- Local leaders inform young people and parents of their next scheduled meeting date and proceed to run their planned programme. They will need to be ever mindful of their plans for a safely delivered programme, while also maintaining track and trace details.

It is possible that some parts of the country will enter lockdown more than once, and this will be an ongoing activity over a long period of time.

Considerations

In deciding to close or restrict scout activity in a geographical area, County Commissioners need to consider whether any neighbouring areas also need to close. For example, if a large number of members live in one district and travel to Scouts in a neighbouring district, or those living in a lockdown district participate in a still open adjacent area.

At the present time only the meeting needs to stop. However we need to watch for local guidance in relation to:

- a) Members being required to quarantine for up to 14 days from their last meeting
- b) Track and trace being activated
- c) Members being required to wear face coverings when meetings are allowed to re-start
- d) Possible reduction in the numbers that are allowed to meet when meetings re-start
- e) Other local requirements

Experience of these first few areas in the UK shows that local authorities are not implementing a complete lockdown, but they are imposing a number of strict restrictions. For example, these include households not being able to visit another household indoors or in a garden. Scout leaders should consider the perception of trying to run a section meeting that involves bringing together a number of young people, as well as accompanying adults at pick up and drop off times, whilst such restrictions are in place.