

# Getting back together safely.

**A framework for restarting face-to-face Scout meetings and activities**

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# 1. Introduction: helping you get back together safely

We know that many of you are keen to get to back to face-to-face Scout meetings and activities. However, we can only do that when it's safe to do so – for both young people and volunteers.

- 1.1 Scout Group themselves will make the decision about when to resume face-to-face meetings and activities, along with their volunteer line managers (or District for Explorers). These decisions need to be made within a national framework ('The Scouts' Framework') designed to help everyone stay safe.
- 1.2 The Scouts' Framework will be supported by a range of more detailed [guidance documents](#) that offer practical support to volunteers locally to meet the requirements set out in this document. To make sure everyone is working to the same standards, this framework will be a policy of The Scout Association until further notice.
- 1.3 The Scouts' Framework is aligned with government-approved guidance for the youth sector developed by the [National Youth Agency \(NYA\)](#). Whilst this NYA guidance was designed specifically for England, The Scouts' Framework will apply in every country and jurisdiction where we operate. Any variation in guidance to operate The Scouts' Framework in each different administration needs to be approved in other jurisdictions by the appropriate commissioner. For further information please see our specific guidance document on the approval process for commissioners and executive committees.
- 1.4 The other key reference point for our framework is the [National Youth Agency's website](#). This will be updated weekly, determining the COVID-readiness level for the youth sector – specifying permitted group sizes, as well as a range of other control measures referenced below. Outside of England, we will work with equivalent organisations and statutory bodies to assess the level of readiness and will replicate these on [scouts.org.uk](#). We therefore need to be prepared to be at different stages of the framework in different jurisdictions.
- 1.5 This framework is in place from June 25 2020, with an update published on September 3 2020. We expect all Scout Groups and Units to be proactively making plans together, submitting risk assessments via the [online system provided](#).
- 1.6 Section Leaders, Group Scout Leaders, Commissioners and Executive Committee members need to make sure that their plans for restarting face-to-face meetings and activities are developed so that volunteers and young people at all times:
  - have the ability to comply with social distancing requirements (determined by national government)
  - have the ability to ensure hygiene levels are maintained, including hand washing, as well as surface and equipment cleaning
  - safely manage any risk to volunteers, young people and the wider community, including a reduction in group sizes where necessary.
  - make sure vulnerable young people and adults can be effectively safeguarded, both in relation to COVID-19, as well as other risk factors.
  - Volunteers, parents and young people all clearly understand what adjustments need to be made to ensure everyone's safety, and have had a chance to inform them.
- 1.7 If volunteers locally feel that these conditions cannot be met or managed in a safe way, you should not resume face-to-face activities until sufficient control measures or mitigations are in place.
- 1.8 If a Scout Group has one or more sections, the Group Scout Leader and the Chair of the Group Executive are required to state that the group, in whole or part, is ready to restart face-to-face activity safely. Before starting, all evidence of written risk assessments must be approved and signed off by the nominee of the District Executive, and written agreement of such approval recorded. These records should also be accessible to County Commissioners and their teams.
- 1.9 This framework sets out the principles and the operating processes for local Scout Groups to be able to restart face-to-face activities. It's designed to be adaptable for activities at all levels to re-start.

- 1.10 You'll notice that throughout this framework we refer to guidance documents. These set out clear operating procedures for specific activities. Over time, these will be added to, or amended, to keep in step with NYA readiness levels and changing government advice. We'll also make improvements based on feedback from volunteers.
- 1.11 While the guidance will expand and improve over time, the requirements set out in this framework below will remain consistent. The guidance is designed to help volunteers meet the requirements of this framework, in a simple and practical way.
- 1.12 Nations and Islands with their own recognised administrations, as well as British Scouts Overseas (BSO), will be operating under different jurisdictions with different government guidance. Scout Groups in these areas need to apply this framework against the current government approach in each nation or jurisdiction. If in doubt, they should contact the relevant commissioner.
- 1.13 While in most cases, the guidance documents will be applicable in every nation, there will be occasions when this is not this case. For the avoidance of doubt, whilst the framework can be applied in any territory or nation, the specific guidance documents are in all cases applicable in England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, Guernsey, Jersey, Isle of Man, and BSO and Branches. Commissioners will support volunteers with additional guidance or amendments for those instances that their government's guidance contradicts or varies from the guidance for England.

## 2. Our principles

- 2.1. Our guidance is based on the following principles:
- Our priority is to keep young people and adult volunteers safe.
  - A national framework will help volunteers locally to focus on delivering high quality programme activities to meet the needs of their young people.
  - We actively consider inclusion and accessibility for all in our decisions to resume in line with our values and equality legislation.
  - Returning to face-to-face Scout meetings and activities is voluntary and needs to be with consent of volunteers, parents and young people.
  - Our approach will be solutions-focussed and in line with government guidance and health and safety legislation.

This framework contains the following areas:

- Permissions process including sign off
- Key considerations to be ready to restart face-to-face activities and how these will be phased
- Legal and liability conditions
- Key control measures ('the COVID code') for everyone to follow, as shown below:

Getting back together safely: The COVID Code

1. A COVID-safe risk assessment has been completed and we have communicated control measures to volunteers, young people and parents and all are encouraged to raise concerns
2. Additional hygiene measures are in place
3. Social Distancing will be observed **where possible** (check current distance determined by your Government)
4. Maximum group sizes will be limited and determined by scouts.org.uk and members will be consistent where possible
5. Make adjustments for young people and adults vulnerable or affected by COVID, and consult to make sure return plans are accessible and inclusive

# 3. How we delegate decision-making

- 3.1. The District Commissioner and District Executive have recognised roles for health and safety in a defined geographical community. They need to be assured that all necessary checks, controls and preparations have been considered and adopted before agreeing that any face-to-face Scout meetings or activities may take place in each Scout Group and Unit within their District.
- 3.2. We expect these tasks to be spread between individuals at District level, however each approver should have the delegated authority to do so from the District Executive. Checklists and guidance documents will be provided to ensure that this task can be taken on by a range of roles.
- 3.2. The operating guidelines referenced in this framework document are the minimum required to allow a Scout Group or Unit to restart. Districts should not arbitrarily apply additional requirements, except where those are jointly agreed by both parties and are sensible and reasonable.
- 3.3. Everyone needs to assess and manage the risks of COVID-19. Volunteer line managers have a legal responsibility to protect other volunteers, young people and those who come into contact with the groups from risk to their health. This means they need to assess the risks they face and do everything reasonably practicable to minimise them. At the same time, we need to recognise that we cannot completely eliminate the risk of COVID-19. Districts are responsible for supporting leaders to have rigorous written assessments and achievable action plans.
- 3.4. As Scouts, we deliver a range of activities in a range of environments. Each group must complete a written risk assessment and action plan for each section and for every environment they wish to operate in. The risk assessments used to authorise re-starting face-to-face activities are for the place or environment a section is planning to operate in. If that environment or place changes significantly enough for the risks to change, a new risk assessment must be completed and authorisation sought. These risk assessments do not replace regular weekly risk assessments in relation to specific activities, these should be complementary.

## 4. Taking things a step at a time: a phased return

4.1. In line with government-approved Youth Sector Guidance, we expect to see a phased approach to returning to face-to-face Scout meetings and activities. This is broken down by four levels:

- Red, for when the rate of infection remains consistent or growing
- Amber, for when the rate of infection is reducing consistently
- Yellow, for when there are very few cases in the population and a full track and trace system is operational
- Green, for when there are no new cases or there is a vaccine readily available.

4.2. This is the permitted activity at each phase:

Readiness level	NYA level	Scout level
<b>Red</b> Rate of infection is remaining consistent or growing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online and digital youth services</li> <li>• Detached youth services and 1-2-1 sessions with vulnerable young people outdoors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Digital programme delivery</li> <li>• No face-to-face activity or meetings</li> <li>• No residential activities</li> </ul>
<b>Amber</b> Rate of infection is reducing consistently in all parts of the country	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online and digital youth services</li> <li>• Small group sessions can take place</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Digital programme delivery</li> <li>• Small group sessions can take place outdoors and indoors</li> <li>• No residential activities</li> </ul>
<b>Yellow</b> Number of cases low and decreasing, full Track and Trace system in place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online and digital youth services</li> <li>• Indoor group sessions can take place</li> <li>• Outdoor learning, trips and visits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Digital programme delivery</li> <li>• Small group sessions can take place outdoors and indoors</li> <li>• Camping in the UK (or in your home country for BSO)</li> </ul>
<b>Green</b> No new cases or a vaccine is readily available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All services open as per normal yearly operations</li> <li>• Overnight trips and visits allowed</li> <li>• International travel allowed within FCO advice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All activities can resume in line with government guidance</li> </ul>

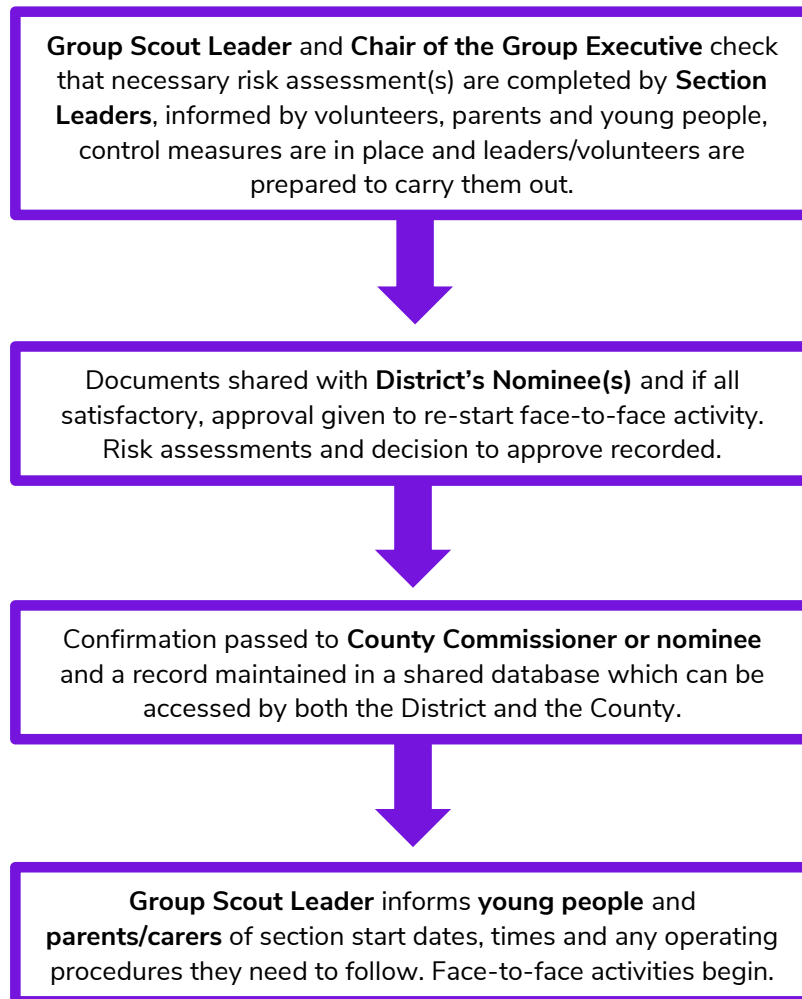
4.3. When levels change (as confirmed by the NYA and equivalents), Scout Groups will need to revisit and, if necessary, update their written risk assessments and action plans. They will also need to gain permission from their District to enter into the next phase. However, if lockdown measures increase and the readiness level escalates (e.g. Amber to Red), Groups are expected to revert back to previous practice immediately and notify line-managers, rather than ask for approval.

4.4. Adult volunteers and Network members may meet together in line with current Government Guidance regarding adults in social settings. This guidance, unless otherwise stated, applies to groups of under 18s only.

- 4.5. Remember, the levels may vary between jurisdictions, scouts.org.uk will contain a table that will be updated weekly, containing each Nation's readiness level and maximum group size.

## 5. The approval process for restarting

- 5.1. Most of the restart decisions will happen at a Scout Group level, which is why we've given the example below. However, this process may start at other levels such as a District Explorer Scout Unit or a County-led event. In each case, the approver will need to be independent and usually at the next level up in our federated structure. For District Explorer Units, we are content that the approver may be within the same District, with delegated authority from the District Executive if they are assured that there is no conflict of interest.



- 5.3. The Group Scout Leader and the District Commissioner (or their nominees) should review these risk assessments regularly, or when Government guidance and NYA readiness levels change. They should record any adjustments and update the County with the date of the latest review.

- 5.4 The risk assessment that is being approved is only in relation to being Covid-secure. (Each section remains responsible for documenting and managing risk assessments for each weekly programme. They need to simply assure the approver that they have a safe programme in hand and they do NOT need to have these weekly or section meeting programmes approved.)

5.5 Covid Risk assessments should be reviewed by their initiators regularly and submitted for re-approval when significant new risks are identified and added to the risk assessment.

- A review that identifies some changes to existing risks does not need re-approval. This could be changes in maximum numbers, changes in arrival procedure, additional hand sanitising etc.
- A review that identifies new risks should be submitted for re-approval. This could be when meeting in a very different environment, when moving indoors to meet, when getting back to residential activity etc. A new risk assessment does not need to be written; the original can have the new risks added.

## 6. Insurance and legal considerations

- 6.1. Scout Groups are insured when they comply with our rules and policies. This framework is an approved Scouts policy and therefore all steps need to be met. Trustees need to make sure that risk is regularly reviewed in and around the Scout meeting place and that controls are implemented and updated.
- 6.2. International trips, outings, camps and non-standard activities may be subject to additional or alternative insurance. Organisers should check their policies, and be certain that they are operating within the requirements of any insurance policy.
- 6.3. With non-camping residential activities and international trips only permitted at the green readiness level, these will not take place until at least three months from the publishing of version 2 of this guidance (3 December 2020).
- 6.3. There are special considerations when third parties use Scout Groups' premises or equipment, or when Scout Groups meet in premises belonging to a third party. Trustees need to have read and understand any, and all, insurance documentation relating to both parties and share their own with those third parties. Agreement on responsibilities, such as deep cleaning, provision of hand sanitiser etc. should be recorded in writing. Regular communication and reviews between the parties is expected. Please see specific guidance on this.
- 6.4. Some leaders may find that their DBS/PVG/Access NI has expired, or that their mandatory training is now out of date. Guidance is offered on that, but as a minimum all leaders should ensure their safety and safeguarding training is up to date, and complete online before resuming face-to-face Scout meetings or activities.

## 7. Guidance and resources

- 7.1. As well as providing a template risk assessment and a checklist for local group leaders and executives to complete and keep, we've also developed a suite of guidelines to support the preparation for restart of face-to-face Scout meetings and activities. These are summarised here. All will be available on the Getting Everyone Back Together Safely page on [www.scouts.org.uk](http://www.scouts.org.uk)

Planning a safe and enjoyable programme
Speaking with parents, carers and young people
Getting everyone there safely
Working safely with the public
Knowing what to do if something goes wrong
Supporting those made more vulnerable by the crisis
Protecting ourselves and others



What to do when our buildings are used by others
Keeping our buildings safe and secure
Finding a safe place to meet
Getting Scouts back into the great outdoors – campsites and activity centres
Helping others get back into the great outdoors – guidance on reopening our campsites and activity centres to the public and third parties

## 8. How we'll keep our guidance up to date: feedback, review and communications

- 8.1. Throughout the year, we'll release updated versions of guidance documents based on feedback from volunteers. You will be able to feedback using an online form that will remain open for as long as we're at Amber and Yellow readiness levels. We'll also add new guidance documents, over and above those outlined above.