

Getting your section back together safely.

Guidance for section leaders starting face-to-face meetings and activities

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Welcome

Background

As we move to restart face-to-face meetings and activities, there are specific things you as leaders will need to do ahead of getting approval to restart. Our number one priority is making sure that all our members are kept safe. If we don't feel we can do that, we shouldn't feel obliged to restart activities.

You should be supported in completing robust Risk Assessments before any face-to-face Scouting restarts. Remember, you are not alone. Work with your leadership team and ask for help where you need it. Executive Committees and Commissioners are responsible for making sure that face-to-face activities return safely and within a rapidly changing national framework.

Approval to restart

Most decisions to restart face-to-face activities will begin within a section. For each section starting face-to-face activities, there will be a process for the checking and approval of risk assessments and other preparations before face-to-face Scouting can begin.

Once your risk assessment is prepared, your line manager will need to check this (the Group Scout Leader for group based sections and District Explorer Scout Commissioners for Explorer Scouts) and Executive Committee. Once checked at that level, it will be passed to the Commissioner and Exec at the next level. Full details on how this will work are contained within the guidance for Exec Committees and Commissioners.

What do I need to do?

With your leadership teams, you'll need to consider how you'll operate for the current alert level. We've developed lots of guidance to help guide you through this, so review this first. Each piece of guidance is clear on where the boundaries lie for each alert level.

You'll need to use your thinking and plans to undertake a thorough risk assessment of the restart process. You'll need to do this in order to move from each level of alert and also when any significant changes occur. Therefore, if you think you will use a variety of meeting locations in the coming months, outline them all on your initial risk assessment. This way, you won't have to revise and get approval again.

We've provided a template risk assessment for you to use. This is the standard Scouts' risk assessment template and we've also helped with starting you off with common risks which all groups are likely to face when restarting face-to-face activities. Make sure you review these fully and add all additional risks relevant to your setting and circumstances. The guidance documents will help you identify the hazards. If you need support or advice, please contact your line manager, County Safety Coordinator or someone with a professional background in risk assessment or health and safety.

Once you have approval to restart you will need to make sure that you consult and communicate with all involved (including parents/carers, young people and young leaders) to ensure that everyone understands how things are going to be running, as this will be different to how things were before the lockdown. Young people's parents or carers will need to give explicit consent to section leaders to allow their children to return. More information is available in the 'Speaking with Parents, Carers and Young People' guidance.

As with any risk assessment you will need to dynamically review (keep reviewing) the situation as things change. You should also review things more formally on a monthly basis, especially as we move through the year, as the weather and circumstances will change.

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/carers, and all are encouraged to raise concerns.
2. Additional hygiene measures are in place.
3. Social Distancing will be observed (check current distance determined by your Government).
4. Maximum group sizes will be limited and determined by [scouts.org.uk](https://www.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.

Leader checklist

General

Have you read and understood the relevant guidance on the Getting back together safely webpages?	
Have you incorporated hazards and considerations identified in the relevant guidance into your risk assessment?	

People

Have you consulted with volunteers, parents, carers and young people (including Young Leaders)?	
Do you have enough volunteers to run each session safely and within ratios?*	
Are any volunteers or young people (or members of their household) vulnerable or shielding? Have you talked with them and agreed appropriate adjustments to ensure they can still be engaged (where they wish)?	
If you run multiple sessions for smaller groups, do leaders have capacity for extra sessions or would you extend programme activity in alternate weeks, with activities to be done at home for those alternate weeks?	
Do the adult leaders meeting face-to-face have the appropriate, up-to-date DBS checks (or renewing within the allowed 90 days)? Safety and safeguarding training validation complete? First Aid (where required)?	
Have you agreed what to do if there is an incident, someone is injured, or shows signs of COVID-19 during a face-to-face meeting? Do all volunteers know what this is?	
Have you got a way of recording all attendance for each face-to-face session, including adults and visitors / helpers (track & trace) and keep it secure for six weeks?	
Have you produced a plan for how you intend to communicate with parents/carers?	
Have you got a safe process for engaging and supporting any parents/carers/new volunteers who may have expressed an interest in volunteering?	

Programme

Are there good quality programme activities on offer? Is the challenge appropriate for the section? Does the programme still support young people to achieve top awards? Can these be done socially distanced/blended with online activities if needed?	
If needed, are you able to 'buddy up' with other sections/groups to ensure you can deliver a quality programme safely? Are there other volunteers in the District/County who could support you?	
Are you able to make sure any shared resources used (and surfaces and equipment) are kept clean, between users? Have you identified alternative options (such as young people bringing their own)?	
Is your programme flexible enough to be delivered both at home and face-to-face (as requirements allow)? How can those who are unable to attend face-to-face still be included and engaged?	

Places

Have you selected a proposed meeting place(s)/venue(s) for running your programme and considered how you can meet government guidelines? Including access consideration/drop off and pick up arrangements? Are there passing places or a one way system in place?	
Have you considered what facilities may be needed for handwashing, drying, alcohol hand gel and toilet facilities?	
Travel: How do volunteers and young people get to the venue? Is it within walking distance? Do people from different households usually car share or take public transport?	
Have you produced updated risk assessments for each activity and setting?	

* Both government and POR requirements.