



21 MAY 2021

Currently, the Republic of Ireland permits organised outdoor gatherings of up to 15 people (including leaders).

Currently, Northern Ireland permits outdoor & indoor gatherings, with certain mitigations & safeguards in place.

Firstly, it is important to acknowledge **that youth ministry never stopped!** The creative and innovative ways many churches, leaders, youth workers etc across Ireland supported and continue to support young people during the Covid-19 pandemic is a testament to their faith in God, passion, resilience, and commitment.

As we journey through this crisis, looking ahead, we can begin to look to the future and how - on a carefully managed basis - we can restart youth ministry activities over the coming weeks. It is important that we look to restarting youth ministry activities, however small, without any unnecessary delays, based on the latest government advice at the time - for the good of our young people's socialisation, faith development and mental health.

All guidance 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, in line with the Church of Ireland "***Return to In-Church Worship Protocols for Rol and NI***" resource.

<https://www.ireland.anglican.org/cmsfiles/pdf/Resources/ParishResources/PeopleCommunity/Return-to-In-Church-Worship-Protocols-04.06.20.pdf>

Before any youth activity should re-commence, it is crucial to follow the guidelines already produced by the Church of Ireland and by following your government's advice as per your jurisdiction. ***Clear planning & communication with your Rector & Select Vestry is also essential.***

This document aims to give an advisory pathway forward to practical youth ministry based on the guidance given to the public by both Rol and NI governments.

Please come back to us or your local Diocesan office for help and advice or anything more specific in the area of youth ministry.

All activities should have regard to all other relevant requirements and good practice e.g. child protection, awareness of risk, safety and wellbeing of staff and volunteers.

With gratitude and thanks to our friends and colleagues in IMYC, PCI, NYCI & EA (NI) in preparation of this document.

Planning ahead:

- Communication with volunteers, parents and young people
- Consult with volunteers and parents, some may be ready to jump back in, some may not. It is important that each person/family has the freedom to walk the journey at their own pace. It is also important people feel safe, so clear communication with volunteers and parents about the steps that are being taken to ensure a safe environment is vital.
- Consult with young people to get a sense of what they have been missing to allow that to prioritise what you might do and to find out when they are ready to come back to face to face activities.
- Carry out a walk through with volunteers before resuming activities so that everyone knows their role and the safety measures that are in place.

Programme

- Take into consideration that you may not be able to accommodate all the young people who would usually participate in your programmes or all the programmes you would normally run.
- What will you provide/do for those who for whatever reason are unable to be in the building? You might want to consider a blended approach where you are online one week, in the building the next.
- Minimize the number of people that young people and leaders come into contact with, in any given week by keeping groups small. You could have a number of small groups in one large space or in different rooms with leaders assigned to a group or lead your activities from the front. It is important that the groups and leaders stay as consistent as possible during the activities.

Practicalities

- Think through how you will keep the 2m distance between young people (you may want to be creative with chalk and tape or ask them to bring their own rug or deck chair).
- Adhere to Safeguarding ratios at all times. Consider that you may need extra leaders to ensure that all safety guidelines are able to be met. You may want to consider having an extra leader for the entrance to ensure hands are sanitised as they enter, and that social distancing is maintained as they arrive and for contact tracing logs.
- Build in extra time for arrivals, hand sanitizing and hand sanitizing on departure and think through the areas of your church that could become a 'bottleneck' at these times.
- Make sure arrangements for the use of toilets are made clear, such as only one young person or household permitted in the facilities at a time.
- Avoid shared surfaces, unless they can be wiped down between use and those who have touched them sanitize hands.
- For indoors activities, it is important to maximize the ventilation of fresh air from outside, through open windows and doors where appropriate.

Indoors

Please make sure that you can be confident that a controlled environment can be maintained.

When planning to meet with young people indoors during Sunday morning worship or for discipleship activities, the numbers are dictated by the space you have ensuring that each household or young person is spaced 2m apart.

At this stage in the pandemic our young people are accustomed to social distancing, particularly if the space and programme are well laid out and planned for them to remain so.

Currently, The Republic of Ireland government advice does not permit indoor gatherings in a youth related context.

Indoor gatherings from 24 May (Northern Ireland)

To determine maximum number that can attend, the organiser must have carried out a risk assessment. ***Indoor gatherings of 15 people or less do not require a risk assessment.***

The organiser must also take all reasonable measures to limit the risk of transmission of the coronavirus.

A person responsible for organising a gathering must, if requested to do so by a relevant person, provide:

- a copy of the risk assessment
- an account of the reasonable measures taken

• As per government advice, masks are mandatory for all indoor gatherings for those aged 13 and over and must be worn outside if social distancing cannot be maintained.

Outdoors

We recommend that outdoor spaces are utilized primarily at this time. Please do remember activities are best and safest when structured and well organised, as well as maintaining 2m distancing at all times.

Currently, the Republic of Ireland government advice permits “organised outdoor gatherings of up to 15 people” (including leaders).

Outdoor gatherings from 24 May (Northern Ireland)

Outdoor gatherings to take place with no more than 500 people. This limit applies to spectators at events (but does not include participants).

To determine maximum number that can attend, the organiser must have carried out a risk assessment. ***Outdoor gatherings of 30 people or less do not require a risk assessment.***

The organiser must also take all reasonable measures to limit the risk of transmission of the coronavirus.

A person responsible for organising a gathering must, if requested to do so by a relevant person, provide:

- a copy of the risk assessment
- an account of the reasonable measures taken

Up to 15 people from no more than three households can meet up outdoors in a private garden, but you should maintain social distancing. This might be useful for a pastoral garden visit to a family / small group, or perhaps two leaders could visit a family.



IDEAS!



These are just some ideas to get your youth ministry “up and running” again and should always be in line with current government advice in your jurisdiction.

- Lunch on the Lawn - meeting up with young people in a public area / church grounds – everyone could bring their own picnic
- Dropping off a card and a bag of sweets to each young person’s household / garden visit
- Drive In Movie in your church car park

- Youth Small Groups for social events or discipleship bible study outside
- Garden games like oversized Jenga, Connect 4
- Photo Scavenger Hunt

- Film Night
- Awards Night
- Make use of outside space at the church or church halls - setting up chairs in advance at the right distance for your group to gather and bring their own picnic
- Slip & Slide

- Social Action projects in your community – Streetreach style initiatives, litter picks, gardens, helping elderly etc.
- “Bible Come to Life” ideas in context – e.g. Sermon on the Mount (up a mountain) Breakfast on the Beach...
- Scavenger Hunts - find items beginning with each letter of the alphabet
- Photo Challenges - perhaps around a theme
- Yarn bombing
- Geocaching
- Kindness Rocks - painting rocks/stones with encouragements, Bible verses etc and leaving in various places.
- Junk sculptures - Collect lots of scrap including old newspapers, plastic, cardboard, fabric. You will also need scissors, Sellotape, staplers, paint, PVA glue and string. Using the scrap, make 3D junk sculptures that you could display by making your own sculpture gallery. Sculptures can be random things, animals, people, buildings or they can follow a theme.
- Prayer Walking around your community

Youth Resources

Games: Some great ideas for socially distant games – remembering it is important to make sure that guidelines are used to interpret the game for your own individual context.

<https://youthgroupgames.com.au/collection/non-contact-small-group-games>

Shaken: A resource by The Big House Ireland that is designed to help young people make good choices to live well when life shakes them. <http://www.thebighouse.org.uk>

Walk with Me: helping young people step closer to Jesus - mentoring material and app that can be used one to one or in a small group. <https://www.walkwithmejourneys.org>

Youthscape: Our friends at Youthscape have lots of great resources – you can find resources around mental health, anxiety, bible study resources and helping young people express their faith through their creativity. <https://www.youthscape.co.uk/store>

Alpha Youth: with some useful material on how to run this online <https://www.alpha.org/youth/>

NUA film series: NUA is all about exploration: it's a film series that encourages questions, acknowledges doubt, and offers an engaging perspective on the Christian faith.

<https://nuafilmseries.org/nua-store/digital>

<https://nuafilmseries.org/nua-easter-registration-form>

Websites for guidance:

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-regulations-guidance-what-restrictions-mean-you>

https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/covid19/living_with_covid19_plan.html

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/58393-guidance-for-youth-organisations-on-resuming-full-services-after-covid-19/>

National Youth Council for Ireland - <https://www.youth.ie/covid-19/>

Education Authority Northern Ireland - <https://www.youthonline.org.uk/restart/>

Risk Assessment Prompt Sheet

Risk Assessment Prompt Sheet
Re: COVID -19 – Social Distancing and Safe Workplaces
Name of Service
Person completing assessment
Date completed
Social Distancing 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.
Safe Workplaces 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.

Actions prior to opening up		
No.	Action	Completed
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	

Work Environment Controls				
No	Action	Yes	No	N/A
13	<p>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</p> <p>If No, consider the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of flexible shifts, staggered shifts, extended opening hours, weekend working • Redeploying staff to other appropriate buildings in the vicinity where such capacity exists • Alternate staff to work between base and home • What priority service can safely be offered to service users/ young people • Appointment-based service only in designated spaces where social distancing is possible. • Extension of telephone and online supports 			
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?			

Work Practice Controls				
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			