

Covid-19 Restrictions

Step 2 of the Roadmap

Valid From 12 April 2021

Information for Voluntary,
Community Faith and Social
Enterprises

Covid-19 Frequently Asked Questions for Voluntary, Community Faith and Social Enterprises

Date valid – 12 April 2021

Introduction

The Government has published a [roadmap](#) out of Covid-19 restrictions. This is summarised in a [BVSC guidance document](#). From 12 April until at least 17 May we are at Step 2 on the roadmap. This document is intended to support Voluntary, Community and Faith organisations and Social Enterprises in Birmingham to understand what is permissible currently under Step 2 of the Covid-19 restrictions.

Much voluntary sector activity in the city is still allowed and we can continue to support those in need in the city. In most cases, you need to follow the government guidance for that activity. Some activities do not clearly fall into a set of guidance. In such circumstances an appropriate gauge for the type of activity you are delivering is how would your activity be viewed by a 'reasonable person' and how does this look against the requirements. The rule of thumb here should be that if in all aspects the activity resembles a prohibited activity it should be considered as such. This may mean you need to adapt your activity to design out the aspects that are now not permitted or that you need to suspend your activity until the regulations change.

This document sets out the understanding of the current situation from BVSC, but each venue, organisation and activity lead needs to consider their own circumstances and the official guidance, much of which is linked to in this document.

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Overall guidance

Whilst we are at Step 2 [this is the overarching guidance](#) that applies and this is also in 12 community languages and an easy read version. [You can click through on all the guidance underlined to read the documents referred to.] In addition, the law is set out in [these regulations](#), with some [minor amendments](#).

You are now allowed to meet outside for any purpose within:

- a group of six people from any number of households. Children of any age have to be counted; or
- two households or [household bubbles](#) (support bubbles).

The [guidance](#) sets out a number of exceptions to this rule of six including:

- Where a group includes someone covered by such an exception (for example, someone who is working), they are not generally counted as part of the gatherings limit.
- People from different households can gather in groups larger than six people *“for work, volunteering to provide voluntary or charitable services.”*

This document will explain that a range of other activities and services can be held with more than six people. It is based on guidance on the national Government website. A list of [government guidance documents](#) is available, as is [guidance](#) relating to different work types.

Key Changes

Although Coronavirus cases are reducing across the country, to continue to control the spread of the virus we are still asked to continue to work from home where you can and keep socially distanced from people outside of our households. However, travel within the UK is now allowed for all purposes under the law, although guidance still asks us to continue to minimise the amount that you travel where possible.

The first steps in the Government’s Roadmap out of Lockdown have already brought about some changes (Step 1) and further relaxations came in on 12 April (Step 2). The key changes this brings are:

Step 1

- Children can attend indoor childcare or supervised activities to allow parents or carers to work, seek work, attend education, seek medical attention or attend a support group. This also applies to vulnerable children and those on free school meals;
- All children can attend outdoor childcare and supervised activities;
- Care home residents will be allowed one regular visitor provided they are tested and wear PPE (guidance for visitors is [here](#));
- As well as taking exercise people can also leave home for recreation outdoors such as a coffee or picnic;
- Able to meet outside in a group of six or two households;
- Outdoor sport and leisure facilities can reopen and organised outdoor sport allowed (children and adults); and
- Outdoor parent & child groups (up to 15 parents).

Step 2

- Indoor leisure (including gyms) now open for individuals or household bubbles;
- Outdoor attractions such as drive-in cinemas;
- Libraries and community centres can reopen for permitted activities;
- Personal care premises can reopen;
- All retail (including charity shops) can reopen;
- Outdoor seating allowed for cafes and other hospitality venues;
- All children's activities can restart, including those inside;
- Parent and child groups can now meet inside (up to 15 parents);
- Funerals remain at 30 attendees and wakes, weddings and receptions increase to 15; and
- Some events can take place.

We are allowed to meet in gardens again in groups of up to six or two household bubbles. The guidance makes clear that you are allowed to go through a house to the garden if you sanitise your hands and wear a mask. You are also allowed to use a bathroom if you go outside again as soon as you have done so.

Given there are regional and some local elections in May, campaigning is also permitted.

Risk Assessments

Undertaking, implementing and sharing risk assessments is important. There is a lot of information available. The Muslim Council of Great Britain has produced a document that provides a helpful [nine-step framework](#) for thinking about what you have to do to reopen, recommence or adapt activities. Though your context may be very different, it is useful thinking through steps from planning your plan to dealing with problems.

Social distancing remains a key element of risk assessments. There is Government [guidance](#) and the National Youth Agency [guidance](#) also sets out a wide range of mitigating actions if social distancing can not be maintained. This would be useful for other providers too.

The Government's guidance on [Working Safely During Coronavirus](#) covers many different sectors and although it focusses on your responsibilities if you are an employer, they apply to running activities too and can help in producing your risk assessments.

A useful resource for those responsible for community buildings was the [Acivico webinar](#) BVSC held. Narthex and RnR Organisation have produced a risk assessment [template](#). The City Council has an [example](#) of one for reoccupying buildings too. Unite the Union has also produced a useful [guide](#) to undertaking risk assessments (shared by [Youth Work Support](#)).

You should calculate the capacity of a venue as part of the risk assessment and need to consider not just 2 metre distancing for an activity, but also moving around the building safely, toilet capacity, one-way systems, bottlenecks, ventilation of rooms, hand sanitisers, cleaning schedules etc.

This [guidance](#) for adult learning includes a useful set of reminders about risk assessments that applies to all organisations. It says you must record details of:

- risk assessments
- the measures taken to reduce these risks
- expected outcomes

You must review your assessment if:

- it is no longer valid
- there has been a significant change

Having assessed your risk, you must work through the system of controls. Make sure the measures you put in place:

- address the risks identified
- work for your organisation
- include support for participants with disabilities.

You, therefore, also need to consider the specific needs of those you are hoping to attend. Government guidance, for instance, is that people 70 years of age and older are at increased risk of severe illness from Covid-19 and need to be particularly stringent in following government advice including social distancing. The United Reform Church has an approach which could be useful of using an [personal risk assessment](#) for its worshipers, although it was developed prior to the vaccines and this needs to be considered too. The Scottish Government have also used a scoring basis for doing work based [individual risk assessments](#). Such an approach could help you decide about how risky it might be to bring those you support together again. However, you can also take many steps to reduce the risks.

Venues have to follow [Track and Trace](#) requirements. This includes all venues (including community centres, youth centres and places of worship) having a QR code for staff, volunteers and visitors to scan when they arrive. If you are reopening a venue and do not have one you can [order one on-line](#). If you have more than one venue, you need to create a separate QR code for each.

If you run a venue in Birmingham and want support with carrying out a risk assessment for the building or outdoor space, want to check you are doing everything you can do to keep people safe in your venue or want further advice about reopening your venue BVSC and Acivico are working together to support the voluntary sector. Please email admin@bvsc.org for further information or to book some support.

Sports and Physical Exercise

[Government guidance](#) is available for running grassroots sporting activity. It has key principles for off-field activity, prior to activity, during activity and facility usage. Many national sports governing bodies have also set out guidance for running sports activities at the moment and, where these are up to date, they must be taken into account when deciding what activities can run and what needs to be covered in a risk assessment. [Sport England](#) guidance may also be helpful.

A [list](#) of many of the national governing bodies is available.

Our facilities include a sports hall or gym facility. Can we open?

Yes. In Step 2 most indoor sport and physical activity facilities can reopen. These include gyms, leisure centres, sport courts and pitches, dance and fitness studios, climbing walls, archery venues and indoor riding centres and swimming pools.

Additional government guidance sets out [guidance](#) for running a grass roots sports or gym facility which is very comprehensive and may also be helpful to other types of organisations.

We run a sports club. What can we do outside with adults?

You can run organised outdoor sport or other organised physical activity such as walking or cycling groups for adults with a Covid-secure number of number of participants. Any activity needs to:

- be formally organised (for example, by a qualified instructor, club, national governing body, company or charity)
- follow sport-specific guidance drawn up by a national governing body
- be adapted if it requires participants to be in frequent close proximity to each other (such as rugby league, rugby union, netball) and
- follow other relevant Covid-secure guidance.

This applies to organised outdoor (individual and team) sports, outdoor exercise classes, organised sports participation events and outdoor licensed physical activity. Spectators are not allowed, except in limited circumstances.

The number of participants permitted will link to the national governing body's guidance. [EMD UK](#), the body for group exercise says group exercise can take place outdoors for up to 30 people including the instructor. You can download an exercise class Covid-19 risk assessment from the [EMD UK website](#) once you have submitted your email address. If holding this on, for example, City Council land, you need approval for this to be fully Covid-secure.

If sporting and physical exercise is not formally organised or if the governing body rules are not being followed then this exemption does not apply and your activity can only take place with up to six participants or two households.

Can my walking group / cycling group start to meet?

Yes, these come under the organised sports guidance. Races and organised walks and rides can take place outdoors and there is no legal limit on numbers. However they must follow the measures for organised sport participation events set out in the [guidance](#) on safe provision of grassroots sport.

Does that mean we can socialise outside at the club?

Unfortunately, not yet. Except when actively participating in the sport or exercise activity participants need to maintain social distancing. Any social interaction before and after playing any sport should only take place outdoors, and in separate groups of up to six people or two households.

Can we reopen the indoor facilities?

You can allow participants access to toilets. You can also open your changing rooms, but can discourage use and encourage participants to shower and change at home where possible, or to minimise time spent inside. Keep indoor spaces well-ventilated. Further [guidance](#) is available.

We run sports activities inside for over 18s. Can we still do that?

Whilst most indoor sport facilities can reopen they can only be used for individual activity or for activities by people from the same household (or support/childcare bubble). Group activities and exercise classes indoors are not otherwise permitted for adults.

In general, the [guidance](#) is that organised indoor team sport should only take place in groups of up to six people. Personal training and coaching can also take place one to one or within households bubbles.

The exemption is that you can run indoor sport sessions for people with disabilities as long you follow published Covid-secure guidance.

When can we restart exercise classes inside?

This will be able to happen in Step 3, which will be no earlier than 17 May. In anticipation we would suggest venues and instructors working towards the [Instructor Ready Mark](#) from EMD UK, the [National Governing Body for Group Exercise](#).

We organise sport and exercise sessions for people with disabilities. Are the rules the same?

People with disabilities are permitted to mix with people they do not live or bubble with. You can run indoor sport sessions for people with disabilities as long you follow published Covid-secure guidance. This can be in a group of more than six and from different households. People who are not disabled can not participate, except where necessary to enable the sport to take place (such as a carer).

However, you need to weigh this exception against individual's risk of catching Covid-19.

Can we return to all our usual sporting activities with under 18s?

Yes, with modifications. In Step 2 all children can take part in indoor childcare and supervised activities. This includes sport and physical activity and numbers are just restricted to what is a Covid-secure number for a venue. Although indoor skating rinks and trampolining parks remain closed to the public, activities for children can take place.

It is advised to avoid physical contact between participants in training and activities. More information is available the grassroots sport [guidance](#).

The Association for Physical Education has useful [advice](#) for schools which also apply to community based activity:

“For sport provision, outdoor sports should be prioritised where possible, and large indoor spaces used where it is not, maximising natural ventilation flows (through opening windows and doors or using air conditioning systems wherever possible), distancing between pupils, and paying scrupulous attention to cleaning and hygiene. This is particularly important in a sport setting because of the way in which people breathe during exercise.”

The Youth Sport Trust have developed a useful [planning tool](#) for reintroducing PE into schools which could be useful for other youth sporting activities too.

Some adults are reluctant to come back and restart classes or exercising. What can we do?

Sport England have produced a helpful 5 point plan around [Return to Play](#) which is summarised below.

Showcase your safety measures:

Manage limitations on numbers, enforce social-distancing measures, and use signage that encourages positive behaviour. For team sports, make the guidelines you are using very clear.

Emphasise the enjoyment factor:

Give people something to look forward to. Tailor your messages to emphasise what your activity will bring people – fun, confidence, ‘me time’, a social element, wellbeing and fresh air.

Mental health matters – but show the benefits, don’t tell:

You do not need to tell people that physical activity and sport is good for their mental health – they already know this. Messaging should centre around making small lifestyle changes and building up gradually to increase physical capability as well as confidence. Encourage people to share their own stories and celebrate the daily victories.

Ease people back in:

Encourage people to make small, manageable changes to everyday habits to increase strength and stamina, as well as confidence.

Keep it cheap or free

Some groups of people have been badly hit financially during the pandemic, so consider how to offer low cost and flexible options.

Community Centres and Community Indoor and Outdoor Spaces

Are people required to wear a mask in the building we manage?

The face coverings [guidance](#) includes a list of many inside venues where it is required to wear a mask. These include community centres, youth centres and social clubs. The guidance says “*you are expected to wear a face covering before entering any of these settings and must keep it on until you leave unless there is a reasonable excuse for removing it.*” However, there are no requirements to wear face coverings for outdoor activities although you may choose to include this in your risk assessment.

What if someone refuses to wear a mask at one of our events?

If someone has a genuine medical reason not to wear a mask then it is potentially discriminatory to exclude them. However, personal safety is most important and you should reinforce the 2 metre social distancing rule for safety.

Do we have to take the names of people coming into the venue?

You have to follow the [requirements](#) for NHS Track and Trace. The guidance refers to cafes and hospitality venues and also to local authority run services such as community and youth centres being required to follow this. It is good practice and an expectation of the Public Health Team in Birmingham, however, that if you are running another community or faith space you follow that guidance as it helps to keep the citizens you work with safe. You can generate official NHS QR posters [online](#).

Can we rent out our building?

Yes, for activities that are permitted. You do need to discuss the infection protection and control measures with anyone hiring it and ensure that it will be safe to operate from. Good practice is for both parties to share their Covid-19 risk assessments – ensuring there is one for the building or premises and another for the activity.

Can we start running activities again?

Currently you are only allowed to run activities inside which form one of the exemptions covered elsewhere in these FAQs. These include running food banks, supervised activities for children, parent and toddler groups, and non-essential retail (such as indoor markets). The [guidance](#) on multi-facility facilities applies although this has not been updated yet for Step 2.

Some small outdoor events such as fetes, literary fairs, and fairgrounds can take place. You will have to take steps to ensure they are Covid-safe and groups of more than six people or two households do not mingle.

Can our centre café or monthly community lunch restart?

Yes, if you have an outdoor space you can use. Social distancing with a maximum of six people or two household bubbles still applies. You are able to allow people to come inside to order and pay and to use the toilets, baby changing rooms or breast feeding room.

There are very few exemptions where food is allowed to be eaten on the premises, but this does include extra care housing.

Can we hold meetings in our centre (committee meetings, planning meetings etc.)?

At the moment, the advice is if you can do it virtually, continue to do so. However, if you are using a venue with a risk assessment this seems to be allowed.

You can certainly hold a team meeting of your staff.

Can we rent out the building to more than one group at a time?

If you are a community venue, you can have a number of different activities taking place in different parts of the building. However, your risk assessment needs to take account of the full effect of this. For example, you should take into account access to and capacity of toilets, kitchen areas, the way in and out of the building, staggering start and finish times etc.

Can we run learning sessions for adults?

The [guidance for further education](#) references adult community learning providers and talks about learning for all ages. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume community based learning can also be run in this way. The guidance says:

“you should continue to judge the right balance between on site and remote delivery for adult students in order to provide high quality education and training.”

When students are on-site you still need to take steps to minimise contacts and mixing. The FE guidance sets out a number of measures to take, including additional protections for students and tutors if 2 metre distancing is not possible.

Students should be encouraged to carry out regular [lateral flow tests](#) to check they are not suffering from Covid-19.

Birmingham Adult Education Service may provide a good model for other community learning providers in the city. They are retaining on-line activity and running face to face teaching with small groups of six to eight students. [Further information is available](#) on their approach.

Can our choir / orchestra / performing arts group meet to practice?

Non-professional activities (including amateur choirs and orchestras) can not yet meet indoors.

Outdoors, you can run non-professional performing arts activity as long as you ensure social distancing rules are kept (including a limit of groups of over six mixing). The [performing arts guidance](#) should be followed and a risk assessment needs to be in place.

You can not currently put on performances either inside or outside (although there may be some exemptions relating to running events).

Can we run community activities such as bingo, metalworking, creative writing etc?

Not inside currently, unless as part of formal learning.

Can we run activities in our outdoor spaces (community centre garden, our sports field etc)?

Yes. As detailed above you can hold organised sport and exercise activities outside. It is not clear in guidance currently, but it would seem reasonable to run other activities in an outdoor space if you can adhere to social distancing rules and ensure people do not mix in groups of more than six.

Can we run events outside?

Some events are allowed. The [visitor economy guidance](#) covers this.

From Step 2 (12 April 2021) you can organise an event taking place outdoors if:

- Those attending can arrive and leave in a staggered manner throughout the day; and
- there is not a single focus – attendees should not congregate for a specific activity, such as a theatre or music performance

In addition, drive-in performances and shows are permitted.

Therefore, you can now organise events, such as the following outdoors:

- flower shows
- gardening shows and events
- literary fairs
- car boot sales
- community fairs
- animal and pet shows
- funfairs and fairgrounds
- food and drink festivals

You have to ensure social distancing rules can be followed and mixing must be limited to groups of six people or two household bubbles.

You can also organise drive-in cinemas and drive-in performance events (such as theatre, music and dance shows) if those attending remain in their vehicle for the duration of the performance.

Your event needs to have fewer than 4,000 attendees per day. If you are expecting more than this you have to explain to the City Council how you will manage the site and any public transport to avoid any crowding.

You will need to get permission from the City Council if you wish to hold any event. Officers are expected to look at each event on its own merit and if they refuse you this should be based on evidence that shows you are not following the correct guidance or that your risk assessment is not robust enough. Further information is in the [guidance](#) on organised events guidance for local authorities.

Can we put up structures like gazebos and tents outside to run activities?

Yes, in some circumstances. The rules that apply to such structures come from [regulations](#) governing smoking shelters. You need to ensure the outdoor structure is not so enclosed to be considered an outside space. If it has a ceiling or roof the walls (including any structures you build it against) need to be at least half open. If it is a marquee, for example, though two sides can be closed two sides need to remain open to comply with the rules.

Supporting Vulnerable People

Can we continue supporting people in their homes?

If you are going into someone's house for work the [guidance](#) allows that, as long as a risk assessment is in place.

The guidance from Birmingham's Public Health team is that volunteers, family members, neighbours, ministers of the faith etc. can also enter homes to provide support for someone in need. For example, to change a lightbulb, put their shopping away etc. if they are unable to do that. However, this does not extend to having a cup of tea, a meal or an extended conversation.

Can we continue to meet people we are supporting one to one, such as inside cafes?

Yes. The Government [guidance](#) on close contact services may be useful to you. The British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy has also produced [guidance](#) on counselling and managing Covid-19 risks.

However, you can not meet anyone you do not live with (or are in a bubble with) inside a coffee shop, restaurant or pub whether for work or socialising. You will have to look at other inside spaces, which have meeting space such as community centres and where risk assessments are in place. However, you can also meet at an outdoor venue one to one or with a group of up to six.

Can my support group go ahead (breast cancer/ Alcoholics Anonymous etc.)? And is there a size limit?

One of the exceptions to the rule of six is support groups. The [guidance](#) says you are allowed to run support groups of up to 15. As usual, you need a risk assessment.

In practice, we understand that if you hold a support group with over 15 people and you have a risk assessment indicating that the space is Covid-safe, this would not cause concern to the authorities.

We're a housing provider and one of our residents is asking if he can bubble with his sister's family

If they live in self-contained accommodation and live alone then they are allowed to [bubble](#) with another household.

If the accommodation they live in has a shared kitchen, or shared bathroom, or both, then the residents there count as a single household. All the residents form one household and they are not able to bubble with another household.

Informal Activities

Can our informal activities restart? A group of us meets every month to discuss a book / play the guitar / knit and natter and we used to meet in someone's house.

You can not meet in someone's home. A rule of thumb is both the venue and the activity need to be part of a risk assessment. This is not possible in someone's home. If an established charity supports this and you run it in one of their venues then that would be possible, so long as social distancing could be maintained. Some activities, such as dominos, do not allow for distancing easily.

Most informal activities do not fit neatly into any guidance and care needs to be given to how they can be adapted to meet the rules. However, groups of up to six can meet outside in public spaces and in gardens to do things together.

Can my walking group meet with 12 and sit outside at a café?

If this is formally organised then yes – see [above](#). If this is an informal activity, you would have to split into two groups of six and not mix between them. Each group is allowed to stop at a café outside, so long as there is adequate space for social distancing.

Children and Youth Activities

Can our out-of-school activities, wraparound childcare and youth activities continue?

Yes. From 12 April all children can attend any indoor or outdoor children's activity, including sport, whether or not they are vulnerable or their parents need the childcare to enable them to go to work. This can be drop in activities and they do not have to be pre-booked. This includes wraparound care (before and after school childcare), youth groups, children's playgroups, holiday clubs, dance classes and uniformed groups. It includes informal education such as tuition and madrassa or Sunday school. The [out of school settings guidance](#) provides advice.

The National Youth Agency advises organisers who have been closed re-open slowly. This means you should run pilot sessions with fewer than 15 attendees, to ensure it is possible to manage social distancing and hygiene measures in accordance with [NYA guidelines](#). There are a range of useful tools from Action Plan and Risk Assessment templates to Covid-safe posters on the [Youth Work Support website](#).

Bubbles and support group sizes are no longer regulated for under 18s. However, the guidance remains that for indoor activities, where possible, children should remain in the same bubble as they are in during the school day. If this is not possible, the guidance suggests keeping children from the same school together and keeping them in small groups of up to 15 children with one regular staff member. If you normally run sessions indoors, you should consider whether you can run them safely outside instead, as the risk of transmission is lower outdoors. Whilst youth leaders can move between groups to manage behaviour or for safeguarding reasons this is advised against, where possible, You also need to keep records for 21 days of the groups children have been mixing in and the staff / volunteers working with them. Page 20 of the [NYA guidance](#) sets out a number of things that need to be in place for more than one bubble to be taking place in the same building.

Whilst there is no longer a legal limit on the number of children taking part in outdoor activities, it is still advised to keep children within bubbles to minimise mixing.

The National Youth Agency (NYA) [Guidance](#) sets out requirements for each of the issues in the diagram below in order to run Covid-secure activities.



The NYA suggests activity should only recommence when the following requirements are in place:

- Assessment that the risk to workers, young people and the community can be safely managed;
- Ability to meet core government guidance;
- Effective safeguarding arrangements to ensure the most vulnerable in society and all children and young people can be safeguarded;
- Enhanced cleaning arrangements;
- Ability to comply with social distancing requirements and limits on gathering size limits;
- Ability to ensure hygiene levels are maintained, including for frequent hand washing/cleansing with alcohol gel; and
- Safely managed risk to workers, young people and the community.

For further information the NYA has a [webinar](#) on-line about Step 2 of the roadmap.

Do children have to wear face coverings inside?

Yes. If a child is 11 years old or older they do, unless they are eating or drinking, playing team sports in a large indoor space, such as a sports hall, or are exempt.

Can the nursery we run continue?

Yes. Early years settings can be open for all children. The Early Years Alliance has detailed [guidance](#), and there is Government [guidance](#). If your activities include singing, music or drama, additional information is available [here](#) to reduce risk of infection.

Am I restricted in organising sports activities for young people?

You can run [supervised](#) activities for under-18s¹, including indoor and outdoor sports and exercise groups, with more than six. You need to follow the relevant [guidance](#) and your risk assessment. Any team sport needs to have approved national governing body rules. The list of those who have this is at the end of the [guidance document](#). There is further [guidance](#) on contact sports, including bubble sizes.

However, spectators are not permitted and this includes parents of the children participating. The exemption is if someone is required to supervise under-18s that they have a responsibility for.

Can a larger group of young people just have a kick around on our pitch?

No. If there are going to be more than six (or a single household or bubble) then the sport or exercise has to be organised and a risk assessment needs to have been carried out.

Is detached youthwork allowed?

Yes. But for over 18s the rule of six applies. The NYA makes clear that you are allowed to approach a group and engage with a group that is bigger than that if you are working.

Can we visit a young person at home?

Yes. These are now allowed again, where necessary, if following Covid-safe guidelines.

¹ Rules applying to under 18s apply to those young people who were under the age of 18 on 31st August 2020

Can we run trips?

Yes, but overnight and residential experiences are not yet permitted, so trips should still be local. The NYA suggests these should only be run if you can not meet the learning outcomes in another way and that you ensure all participants have lateral flow tests before setting off.

Can we run groups for parents and children?

Yes. From Step 2 parent and child groups can meet inside, although not in homes. You are allowed to have up to 15 parents plus a leader. As children under five do not count in the 15, it would seem that children aged five and above contribute to the total of 15 people. The Early Years setting [guidance](#) will apply to such groups. This sets out a list of protective measures including steps to take on:

- completing a risk assessment
- maintaining social distancing between adults not in household bubbles
- maintaining good hand hygiene
- adults wearing face coverings
- (where permitted to be held indoors) the areas used are well ventilated with fresh air (see the section on ventilation)
- singing - it should only be the group leader and children aged under five who participate due to the risk of aerosol infection
- activities taking place separately from areas used for formal childcare
- cleaning rooms after each use
- adhering to Track and Trace requirements.

Can I provide informal childcare for my grandchildren/ best friend etc.?

Yes, this is another exception. Informal childcare arrangements for under 14s can continue in private homes. You have to create a [childcare bubble](#) between the two households. A childcare bubble is where someone in one household provides informal (unpaid and unregistered) childcare to a child aged 13 or under in another household. For any given childcare bubble, this must always be between the same two households. Other friends or family who do not live with you must not visit your home to help with childcare. Childcare bubbles are to be used to provide childcare only, and not for the purpose of social mixing between households.

Can we provide respite care?

You are allowed to provide respite care for a vulnerable person, someone with a disability and children in care.

Faith settings

Can more than six people attend worship – e.g. church / mosques / synagogues / gurdwara?

[Government guidance](#) and [Birmingham City Council guidance](#) set out the safe use of places of worship. The City Council is encouraging all faith organisations to sign up to the [Charter for Faith Settings](#) which provides a template and seeks a commitment to operate within Covid-19 controls.

It is not a legal requirement, nor are you expected to police this, but the Council's Public Health team advise that all worshipers should be encouraged, each time they attend, to take a lateral flow test on the day of attending worship or in the two days before. The Council's [website](#) has up to date information of where these can be obtained or you can [order home tests](#) from the NHS.

You are allowed to hold congregational prayer with more than six people provided there is a robust risk assessment in place that is being followed. The limit of numbers is not set out in law; it depends on the capacity of the space, the flow round the building and capacity of toilet facilities etc. Worship should still be as short as reasonably possible, alterations may have to be made to rituals and there can be no mixing of households.

Is singing allowed?

For worship inside you are now permitted to have a single small group of singers if this is essential to an act of communal worship. The [faith settings guidance](#) sets out some principles for doing this safely and the [performing arts guidance](#) also needs to be followed. This should be limited to as few singers as possible and they need to be socially distanced. Communal singing should still not take place inside due to the high risk of infection.

What are the current rules on weddings and funerals?

There are still [limits](#) to the numbers of people who can attend weddings, receptions, funerals and wakes. Weddings, civil partnership ceremonies, wakes and other commemorative events can take place with up to 15 people (plus anyone working). If indoors they can only be in venues that are allowed to open.

Wedding receptions can also take place for up to 15 people, but must take place outdoors, though not in private gardens.

Where can I find guidance about my faith setting or rituals?

[Faith Action](#) have recordings of good practice webinars and many examples of guidance from different faith organisations.

Other Questions

Can I meet a colleague in a coffee shop or cafe?

As cafes can not reopen for inside seating this is not possible, even if it is for a work meeting, but you can meet with them in an office.

Are protests allowed?

It is expressly permitted now for voluntary sector organisations, amongst others, to arrange protests, so long as the organisers have taken steps to ensure these are Covid-safe.

What if I find out someone was infected or had symptoms when they attended one of our activities or our venue?

You can contact Birmingham's Public Health Team on contacttracing@birmingham.gov.uk for advice. They are taking a supportive, rather than punitive approach – so you should not be fearful of being criticised for anything you have done, but they can advise if you need to take any steps to stop the spread of the virus.

I have read this and the Government guidance, but I am still unsure an activity we want to hold is allowed. Who can help?

If you have read through all of this and are still worried about something please contact us at BVSC. We can help you to find the information you need and can call on Birmingham's Public Health team. Email Benitaw@bvsc.org

We are also working with facilities management experts, Acivico so will be running workshops and providing one to one support around reopening community buildings. You can email us for further information, to book into an event or to request some one to one support on: admin@bvsc.org