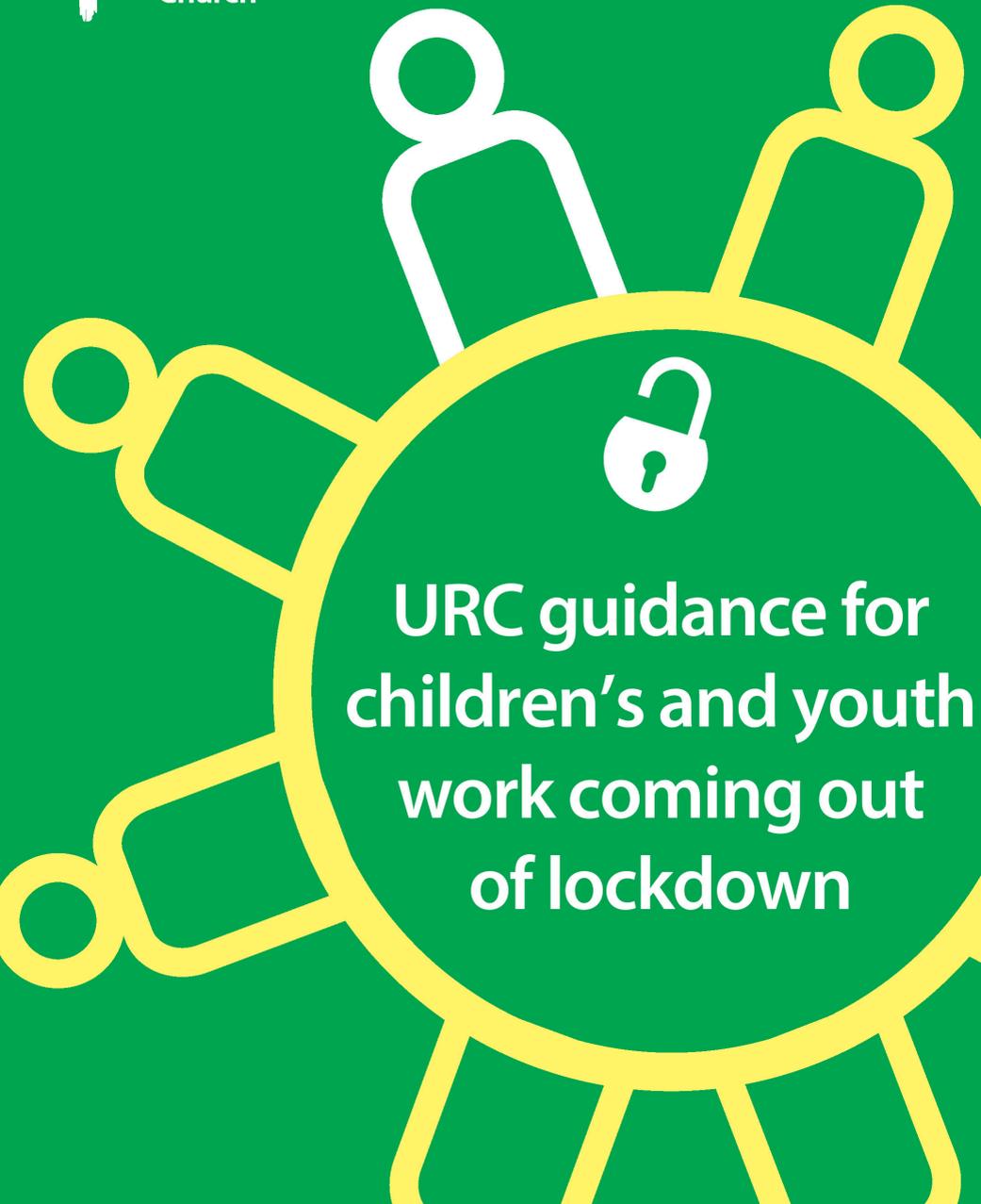




The
United
Reformed
Church



**URC guidance for
children's and youth
work coming out
of lockdown**

URC guidance for children's and youth work coming out of lockdown



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General Guidance

This guidance is for all churches, groups and settings of the URC that deliver direct work with children and young people.

Some face-to-face children's and youth work MAY take place in circumstances where the risk level is **AMBER** or lower (See the grid on page 4) – this is not to say that we should rush into anything, and there are many things that MUST be put in place to ensure everything offered is as safe as possible.

Please consider WHY carefully before restarting previous activities or launching new ones. Always ask WHO will be excluded if we do this, and WHO will be excluded if we do not do this. Bear in mind that Parents/Guardians are being encouraged to limit the number of settings their children attend, so do not put pressure on any child or young person to attend your particular group (see national government guidance for parents).

All organised activities need to follow the government guidance for out of schools settings and have the following in place to prevent

the spread of infection (in addition to all normal safeguarding measures, see our safeguarding policy [Good Practice 5](#)):

- ✓ Risk assessment of the premises or outdoor location – this **must** be Covid19 ready (for URC premises use [Covid-19 Risk Assessment](#) (PDF) or the editable version [Covid-19 Risk Assessment](#)).
- ✓ Risk assessment of the activity – how social distancing will be maintained, how group size will be managed, how materials will be used and cleaned etc (see national government guidance for out of schools settings and [Appendix I A guide to risk assessment](#)).
- ✓ Risk assessment of the participants and leaders – awareness of personal levels of vulnerability to infection, track and trace information, willingness to self-isolate following [NHS guidance](#) in case of a reported case within the group (use [Personal Risk Assessment](#)).

Risk of infection is impacted by proximity (how close people are together), duration (how long people are together), environment (how well ventilated) and contact with infected surfaces (furniture, washrooms, materials, door handles etc). There should be no sharing of food or drink, crockery or cutlery. Ensure good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach, and clean frequently touched surfaces more often than usual. Increase frequency of cleaning of toilets and washrooms and encourage everyone to clean their hands more often than usual.

Risk assessments need to be approved by the Elders / Church Secretary or equivalent group with governance responsibility for the church.

Starting up activities should be in line with the local church's or LEP's safeguarding policy (see [Emerging into the "new normal"](#)).

Assess the risk level according to government guidance for your nation and locality at any given time:

Threat Level	URC guidance – children’s work		URC guidance – youth work
<p>RED Rate of infection is remaining consistent or growing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No face-to-face activity or meetings No residential activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online and digital children’s and family sessions and support Pastoral visit with single household outdoors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online and digital youth sessions and support 1-2-1 sessions with vulnerable young people outdoors
<p>AMBER Rate of infection is reducing consistently in all parts of the country</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No provision for under 5s No residential activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online and digital children’s and family sessions and support Pastoral visit with single household outdoors / indoors if permitted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online and digital youth sessions and support Small group* sessions can take place with social distancing indoors Small group* sessions can take place outdoors with social distancing
<p>YELLOW Number of cases low and decreasing, full Track and Trace system in place</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online and digital children’s and family sessions and support Pastoral visit with household outdoors / indoors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indoor group sessions can take place in bubble/cohorts# Outdoor learning, trips and visits bubble/cohorts#
<p>GREEN No new cases or a vaccine is readily available</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All activities and programmes open as per normal yearly operations Overnight trips and visits allowed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All activities and programmes open as per normal yearly operations Overnight trips and visits allowed International travel allowed within FCO advice All activities can resume in line with government guidance
<p>COVID19 FREE Not present in population</p>		As above	As above

This grid is based on information from the [National Youth Agency](#) updated 6.7.20 (and the level of risk in England is displayed here).

*please note information below

- Groups of children and young people should be kept in groups of no more than 15 including leaders in England, 8 in Scotland, Wales awaiting guidance (correct as of 25th July 2020 – please check for updates for all nations).
- Social distancing guidelines of 2m distance or 1m when extra measures are put into place should be maintained. This of course may significantly reduce the maximum group size.
- Where possible, groups should not mix, neither within any one event nor from week to week.
- Move groups outside wherever possible as this reduces risk of COVID-19 transmission. If off the premises altogether, general guidance applies – meaning the maximum group size is six people from different households.
- Multiple groups cannot use the same part of the building after one other without the area being cleaned in between.



#please note the information below

- Bubble refers to England and Wales – see government guidance for numbers permitted once this risk level is reached.
- Cohort refers to Scotland – please see government guidance for numbers permitted once this risk level is reached. In Scotland children aged 11 or under no longer need to physically distance indoors. Young people aged

12 to 17 must continue to physically distance. A household can meet up to 4 other households per day – this limit does not apply to under 18s. Up to 15 people can meet outdoors.



Gathering for worship with children and young people

Please note the information below. Government guidance varies across the three nations. It is sure to change with time. There may also be local restrictions at any time. What follows was correct at time of drafting.

Gathered worship in Wales – (see most recent guidance [here](#))

Gathered worship in Scotland – (see most recent guidance [here](#)).

Gathered worship in England (see [here](#)) with children and young people:

- Family groups – all under 18s are the responsibility of parents/guardian – can sit/stand together and engage with one other household/bubble (NB keep 2m distance).

- No shared items – encourage people to bring their own or supply family pack (Bible, creative resources, toys, service sheet etc).
- Clean and quarantine for 48 to 72 hours any item needed for individual use (eg service book) if not able to bring/keep own.
- Unaccompanied under 18s NOT COVERED in the government guidance – we advise churches to plan and risk assess their response in advance in case of occurrence – eg appoint an appropriate over 18 (through safer recruitment) to act in loco parentis, with a personal risk assessment for that person and way of collecting contact details for track and trace etc.
- Creche area in church – NOT PERMITTED in the government guidance – any shared facilities for children, soft furnishings and soft toys etc should be removed and put out of use.
- Sunday school / children’s group / Godly Play room / youth room – see guidance above and assess how this might apply to the space.

Places of worship in England may open for prayer, worship and religious instruction.

Church Premises refers to any property owned by the church, including church yard, carpark, church hall etc – so it is important to note that these come under the guidance for churches as places of worship rather than community buildings or public outdoor spaces. An outdoor play area is permitted

to be used (with appropriate risk assessment and cleaning). Outdoor worship within church premises, including prayer stations, labyrinth, prayer walks – is as per the guidance for indoor worship but lowers the risks.



Use of outdoor public spaces are limited to general current guidance about group sizes and social distancing. In England in July this is a maximum group of 6 people from different households including leaders.

Overnight trips – NOT PERMITTED – including camping (household rules cannot be extended to cover youth groups)



Uniformed and other URC groups

- [Boys' Brigade UK](#) – no face to face meetings allowed until reviewed after 31 August – offering virtual meetings and BB@home resources
- [Girls' Brigade England and Wales](#); [Girls Brigade Scotland](#) – no face to face meetings allowed until reviewed after 31 August – local groups offering some online contact etc
- [Scout Association UK](#) – no residential / camping until reviewed 25 September; England only small group sessions outside, all groups encouraged to continue online delivery – guidance framework bit.ly/GBTsframework
- [Girl Guiding UK](#) – indoor meetings currently suspended – to be reviewed 14 September 2020. Some units can meet outdoors if they follow local guidelines. All groups encouraged to maintain online contact
- [Pilots](#) – no face to face meetings until at least September
- [FOFA Groups](#) (Friends On Faith Adventures) – no face to face meetings until at least September
- [Messy Church](#) – no specific guidance (down to the church), lots of resources for Messy at Home
- Toddler Groups – not currently allowed
- Sports groups – see [Sport England](#), [Wales](#), [Scotland](#).
- Children's play – see [Play England](#), [Play Wales](#), [Play Scotland](#)

- Youth Work – see [NYA England](#), [YouthLink Scotland](#), [Children in Wales](#)

How else can we support children and young people?

- Appropriate online contact – eg hosted groups etc, involve children and young people in worship or other church activities.
- Household deliveries – resources, letters, pastoral visits.
- Phone calls, texts, messages etc.
- Provided activities people can do in household/bubble/ appropriate groups at different times eg prayer walk.

Please contact Synod Children and Youth Development Officer or lead worker for children's and youth work with specific questions (see [here](#)).

*This guidance will be constantly reviewed
11th August 2020*



This is one in a series of booklets designed to give information to those working and volunteering within the United Reformed Church.

The booklets can be read and downloaded at www.urc.org.uk/information-guides



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