

Covid-19 guidance – latest advice and Risk Check List for outdoor activities

The Third Age Trust has put together its guidance on coronavirus as relates to the movement. We continue to follow the government and NHS advice and will keep you updated with regular mailings when the advice changes.

Advice in England

As from Monday 1 June 2020 Government guidance for **England** about Covid19 will be changing.

The whole advice can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing>

Key Points from Government Website:

For the general public who are fit and well

In line with scientific advice that the risk of transmitting the virus is much lower outside, the Government is permitting more social activity outside. You can spend time outdoors with members of your own household and, from Monday 1 June, you can meet in a gathering of up to six people you do not live with. This can be in a public outdoor space, or in a private garden or uncovered yard or terrace.

The more people you have interactions with, the more chances we give the virus to spread. When seeing friends and family outdoors:

It would be sensible to keep the total number of people you see limited - especially over short periods of time

When you leave your home, you should follow the guidelines on staying safe outside your home.

Most importantly, this includes the key advice that you should stay two metres apart from anyone outside of your household.

Face coverings can help us protect each other and reduce the spread of the disease if you are in an enclosed space where social distancing is difficult and where you will come into contact with people you do not normally meet.

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If you are showing coronavirus symptoms, or if you or any of your household are self-isolating (including if you have been contacted by the test and trace programme), you should stay at home - this is critical to staying safe and saving lives.

People aged over 70 and those who are clinically vulnerable

Some people, including those aged 70 and over, those with specific chronic pre-existing conditions and pregnant women, are clinically vulnerable, meaning they are at higher risk of severe illness from coronavirus. As we begin to ease restrictions, this group who are clinically vulnerable should continue to take particular care to minimise contact with others outside their household.

People who are defined as extremely clinically vulnerable

There is a further group of people who are defined, also on medical grounds, as clinically extremely vulnerable to coronavirus – that is, people with specific serious health conditions. They are advised to continue shielding to keep themselves safe by staying at home and avoiding gatherings or, if individuals wish to spend time outdoors, to take extra care to minimise contact with others by keeping two metres apart at all times.

Points to Note:

- The government is still asking all people to consider the amount of contact that they have with others even within the six person limitation.
- There are further considerations as to the amount of external contact if you are over 70 or clinically vulnerable or clinically extremely vulnerable.
- It is important to consider any activity against this government advice which for everyone is to minimize contact with others as much as possible.

Risk assessment:

To make an assessment of whether you should undertake any activity our advice is that it is important to carry out a risk assessment as you would do for any U3A activity.

In the case of resuming an outdoor U3A exercise activity there would be two elements to any risk assessment to be considered. It is strongly advised that you record any assessment before taking part in activity.

The first part of the risk assessment is to identify the overall hazards and risks involved in the actual activity you intend taking part in and how the Government guidelines are accommodates in how you will undertake the activity. In particular the clear advice from Government about ensuring social distancing and how this will be maintained throughout the activity.

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Secondly we would strongly advise that each person participating undertakes a personal participation risk assessment considering the Covid-19 risks and hazards that taking part poses to the individual. Our advice is that It is imperative that everyone completes a personal assessment of this nature and records it.

This is important because there are differing requirements for

- people with different health conditions - clinically vulnerable, or clinically extremely vulnerable
- people of different ages
- members living in a household where there is someone who is considered clinically vulnerable, or clinically extremely vulnerable and therefore has limitations on contact with others.

Our advice is that a personal participation risk assessment should take into consideration a person's physical health and any underlying issues, age and the health and circumstances of those they may be living with or isolating with in their household.

For your assistance in this matter and to enable you to make a thorough assessment of your own and the activity risks involved, please find attached a sample Risk Assessment Checklist which everyone should view and complete including the personal section before considering taking part.

Advice in Wales

Full changes can be found here <https://gov.wales/guidance-changes-coronavirus-regulations-1-june>

From 1 June 2020 Coronavirus restrictions in Wales will allow people from two different households to meet each other outdoors.

They will still need to stay two metres apart

They should remain within five miles of their home.

Advice on Wales Government website

Seeing people from other households outdoors

As of 1 June, people from one household will be permitted to meet outdoors with people from one other household at a time provided they stay local. It is important however that advice on social distancing (staying at least two metres apart) and personal hygiene should be followed.

There is no limit to the number of people from each household who can meet outdoors. If you are part of a household of five people, for example, your entire household could meet another family of five. However, you should be aware that while meeting outdoors is considered to be low risk if other advice is followed, risk cannot of course be eliminated, and the risk does increase as larger numbers gather.

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Carers are considered for these purposes to be members of a household – so if for example one person in each household had a carer, both of those carers could also be part of a gathering between the two households.

You may only meet up to one household outdoors at a time. However, you may meet members of more than one household in a day, as long as those meetings are separate.

However, gatherings outdoors which include members of more than two households are still illegal, and you can be fined or prosecuted for participating in such a gathering.

There are no time limits for any such outdoor meetings or gatherings, or legal limits on the activities that can be undertaken outdoors so long as physical distancing can be observed.

People who have been shielding

People who have been shielding can now take exercise outdoors and meet people from another household, as long as it takes place outdoors.

There are two changes to the advice for this group:

outdoor exercise is unlimited, as long as individuals strictly follow social distancing rules and hygiene practices

those who are shielding can meet outside with people from another household – but should not go into another person's house or share food with them.

Risk Assessment

It is not clear that any U3A activity could easily take place within these restrictions.

Advice in Scotland

Advice can be found on the Scottish Government website: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-staying-at-home-and-away-from-others/pages/staying-at-home/>

Advice on Scotland Government Website

You should stay at home as much as possible. You should only leave the house for very limited purposes, for example:

- shopping for basic necessities (such as food and medicine) and at other shops that are open
- exercise and other outdoor activity alone or with members of 1 other household at a time

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- to use outdoor spaces for other recreational purposes, for example to sit or relax alone or with members of 1 other household at a time
- to ensure basic animal welfare needs are met, including taking dogs out when necessary
- any medical need, including to donate blood, avoid or escape risk of injury or harm, or to provide care or to help a vulnerable person
- travelling for work purposes, but only where you cannot work from home
- to access recycling or waste disposal services, for example, local authority household waste recycling centres

When doing these activities, you should ensure you are 2 metres apart from anyone outside of your household.

Risk Assessment

It is not clear that any U3A activity could easily take place within these restrictions.

Advice in Northern Ireland

Extract from Open Letter from the Northern Ireland Executive: <https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/execoffice/fm-dfm-covid-19-open-letter-230520.pdf>

As long as you can stay 2 metres away from people who are not part of your household and observe good hygiene, you may now:

- Meet in groups of up to six people outdoors
- Take part in certain outdoor activities, such as tennis, golf and angling
- Visit a place of worship for individual prayer
- Go to a garden centre
- Go to a recycling centre
- Attend drive-in cinemas, church services and live music or theatre performances. You must stay in your vehicle and can only share a vehicle with members of your own household

Risk Assessment

This should follow the same assessment process as identified under the England section.

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