

Latest guidance for U3As July 2020

Introduction

When a Covid-19 update mailing is sent out, the U3A guidance will be included on the U3A national website in the coming days. You will find it in the advice area behind your member login in the section "Running your U3A during Covid-19. This includes a Risk Check List for outdoor activities where geographically appropriate.

The different nations and islands in Great Britain, Northern Ireland have different rules and guidance which is contained below. When traveling into another nation you must follow the guidance for that nation.

When should you stay at home?

The government says **you should not leave your home** to take part in U3A activity if you are in a category which should stay at home or if you or anyone in your household has symptoms of Coronavirus

The government advises **that, if** you or someone in your household or your support bubble (**or other** similar title e.g. Wales uses 'extended family') is showing coronavirus symptoms, everyone in your support bubble should stay **at** home. If you or a member of your support bubble is contacted as part of the test, track and trace programme, the individual contacted should stay at home. If that individual becomes symptomatic, everyone in the support bubble must then isolate. This is critical to staying safe and saving lives. It is advisable that any U3A group activities that are taking place at this time should keep a log of those participating for track and trace purposes should the need arise and you would need to advise members that this information would be shared with the relevant NHS Track and Trace team in that event.

England

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

On 19 June, the UK CMOs changed the COVID-19 alert level in England from level four to level three following a recommendation by the Joint Biosecurity Centre. This means that the virus is considered to be in general circulation but transmission is no longer high or rising exponentially. As a result, the UK Government is continuing to ease restrictions in a manner that is safe, cautious and consistent with **its** plan. However it is important to follow the general government guidance about keeping safe personally when outside your home -this can be found here

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-safe-outside-your-home/staying-safe-outside-your-home>

1.1 This meant that from 4 July

- You can meet in groups of up to two households (anyone in your support bubble counts as one household) in any location - public or private, indoors or outdoors. You do not always have to meet with the same household - you can meet with different households at different times. However, it

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remains the case - even inside someone's home - that you should socially distance from anyone not in your household or bubble.

This means it is unlikely that a U3A can operate indoors.

- when you are outside you can continue to meet in groups of up to six people from different households, following social distancing guidelines
- If you can, you should avoid using public transport, and aim to walk, cycle, or drive instead. It is not possible to social distance during car journeys and transmission of coronavirus can definitely occur in this context. So avoid travelling with someone from outside your household or, your support bubble unless you can practice social distancing. If you need to use public transport to complete your journey you should follow the guidelines in place, and must wear a face covering.

1.2 Travel Restrictions for England July 2020

There are no restrictions irrespective of distance on travel in England however if visiting other parts of the UK – Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland – you must adhere to the laws and guidance of the devolved administrations at all times.

It is not possible to social distance during car journeys and transmission of COVID-19 can definitely occur during car journeys, so avoid travelling with someone from outside your household or support bubble.(see above)

1.3 Guidance for those who are over 70 years old or deemed clinically vulnerable as of 6th July 2020

You can meet people outdoors and, from 4 July, indoors, you should be especially careful and be diligent about social distancing and hand hygiene.

1.4 Guidance for those who are extremely clinically vulnerable 2020

From 1 August advice for clinically extremely vulnerable people will move in line with advice to those who are clinically vulnerable. In practice, this means staying at home as much as possible, and if people do go out, taking particular care to minimise contact with others outside their household (unless you are in a support bubble) and robustly practising good, frequent hand washing. You should remain cautious as you are still at risk of severe illness if you catch coronavirus, so the advice is to stay at home where possible and, if you do go out, follow strict social distancing

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Guidance for Scotland 10 July 2020

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-framework-decision-making-scotlands-route-map-through-out-crisis-phase-3-update/>

Scotland moves into phase 3 of their route map.

To prevent the spread of infection you are advised to follow the FACTS:

FACTS:

Face coverings.

Avoid crowded places.

Clean hands regularly.

Two metre distance.

Self isolate and book a test if you have symptoms

2.1 From the 10 July this will mean that:

- Face coverings are mandatory on public transport and in shops and other retail
- **Outdoors** – a household can meet up to 4 other households at a time – up to 15 people in total
- **Indoors** – a household can meet up to 2 other households at a time – up to 8 people in total. This includes overnight stays
- A household can meet up to 4 other households per day in total (this is in total – meetings indoors and/or outdoors)
- Extended households; non cohabiting partners (and any children under 18 in their households) can form an extended household without physical distancing.
- The 5 mile travel restriction for leisure purposes has been relaxed apart from a specific part of Dumfries and Galloway however you are still requested to stay as local as possible for goods, service and activities and avoid crowded places where physical distancing may be difficult.
- People who are shielding are advised to continue to do so until at least the end of July however you have been able to take part in non-contact activities outdoors such as golf, angling, kayaking and meet members of another household outdoors up to a maximum of 8 in the group. Strick social distancing must be maintained.

2.2 From Wednesday the 15 July

Of relevance to U3As and in line with guidance at that time it is expected that:

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- Museums, galleries, monuments, libraries, various other visitor attractions, cinemas (including drive-ins and venues screening films) with physical distancing and other measures (e.g. advance tickets) will begin to open

It is important to remember however that the restrictions for indoor and outdoor activities at 2.1 on numbers who can meet up as a group will still apply in these settings. It is therefore unlikely that U3A activities of more than 4 households can meet up for outdoor U3A activities or more than 2 households indoors before August.

Guidance for Wales from 6 July 2020

<https://gov.wales/topic/980/latest>

3.1 From 6 July 2020 further relaxations of rules meant that people living in Wales may:

- Travel beyond their local area for any purpose.
- Meet outdoors with people from **one** other household at a time, which includes meeting in private or shared gardens or any other privately owned outdoor spaces such as balconies
- There are still strict restrictions on people gathering indoors with others without a reasonable excuse (ie is a carer, for work, to visit health services etc). This means people should not generally enter each other's homes outside their extended household.
- From the 6 July, most outdoor visitor attractions can re-open subject to physical distancing requirements

On this basis it is unlikely that U3A activity can recommence.

The changes in Wales to date have not yet enabled face to face U3A interest group activity to resume.

Northern Ireland

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

In Northern Ireland since the 23rd June, you have been able to recommence outdoor and indoor interest groups subject to strict social distancing requirements and a limit of participants as outlined below

4.1 Outdoors

Up to 30 people can meet up outdoors but you should maintain social distancing by being at least two metres apart. Anyone who is medically shielding is strongly advised to continue following the advice that remains in place for that group until the shielding period is paused on 31 July.

Social distancing is essential to prevent further waves of the epidemic. You should avoid visiting places such as seaside resorts and popular beauty spots whenever there is a chance that large numbers of people will converge and crowds will form.

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From 10 July passengers travelling on most bus, train and ferry services in Northern Ireland will be required to wear a face covering.

4.2 Indoors

Groups of up to **six** people in Northern Ireland can meet indoors. This does not apply to people who are shielding. If you decide to meet indoors you should do so as safely as possible and follow public health advice by:

- limiting the duration of visits
- ensuring good ventilation
- Maintaining good hand hygiene
- Practicing social distancing where possible

The use of face covering is also strongly advised.

4.3 From July 9 2020

People in Northern Ireland can also:

- Visit museums, galleries and visitor attractions
- Travel to and stay at hotels, hostels, bed and breakfast accommodation, boarding houses
- Visit hotels, restaurants and bars including within members' clubs, public houses, cafes and coffee shops
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4.4 People in Northern Ireland who are shielding

Anyone who is medically shielding is strongly advised to continue following the advice that remains in place for that group until the shielding period is paused on 31 July.

Risk Assessments

Risk assessment for all locations:

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 – identify what steps Group leaders propose taking to ensure the activity is covid secure - Eg limiting numbers, taking face coverings and hand sanitisers, own refreshments, limiting time and duration of activities. This information should be shared with participants so that they can complete the next part of the risk assessment for themselves. The **s**econd part of the risk assessment is for each potential participant to undertake 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 however, a personal exercise and does not need to be shared with group leaders. It is sufficient to inform them that you have considered your personal situation and decided that you are safe to take part in the activity as arranged.

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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, you will find a sample Risk Assessment Checklist on the National Website in the Advice Section on Running Your U3A during Covid, which everyone should view and complete including the personal section before considering taking part. As previously stated, there is no requirement for you to share your personal risk assessment but that you have considered the factors for yourself and concluded that you can safely take part.