

Connecting with young people.

Guidance change overview for December 2020.

As we move from the national lockdown to a tiered system of restrictions, the guidelines for youthwork activities has been updated, allowing for in person group meetings in some circumstances.

Online meetings are still a great way to catch-up with young people and provide safe discipleship opportunities. It's a great time to begin if you haven't used Zoom for an online youth group session before. [Get in touch](#) for some ideas and support in planning an online meeting. You can find a Christmas online youth group session on the [Seasonal Resources webpage](#) or perhaps consider asking young people to plan their own Christmas service for friends and family. If young people linked to your congregation have not connected for a while, ask congregation members to write a personal message of encouragement. It could be a postcard or Christmas card with a verse and message as a reminder that even if they have not connected recently, they are still valued and prayed for by the wider church.

The latest guidance.

Full guidance for hosting a youth activity, meeting or event has been published by the National Youth Agency and covers most youth ministry activities outside of worship services. The new guidance allows for young people to meet together, if strict criteria safety criteria and social distancing can be followed. Here are the headlines for the new Amber Level rules across all tiers in December. Full details can be [found here](#) and a recorded webinar video can be [watched here](#).

	Readiness level	Permitted Activity Expected	COVID Local Tier
Support for under 18's	AMBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online and digital youth services • Detached/outdoor local youth services (consistent with social distancing guidelines) • 1-2-1 sessions with young people • Open access or targeted group sessions delivered indoors (bubbles of 15 + workers/leaders) 	
Support for over 18's	RED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online and digital youth services • Detached/outdoor local youth services • 1-2-1 sessions with high-need young people (indoors) • Support groups indoors are permitted for vulnerable young people. A maximum of 15 individuals per group plus workers/leaders 	

A few things to consider when planning a youth meeting:

- Review your risk assessments and safeguarding policy regularly to ensure all safety protections are in place.

Maintaining Covid security continues to be important and plans need to be tailored according to your facilities. Social distancing and mask use has become largely normalised for indoor meetings but young people will need to be aware of when your rules differ from the procedures they follow at school or college.

- Confidence of leaders.

Ensure all your adult leaders are fully involved in the planning of the meeting and consulted when making an activity safe. You can't run a youth event without leaders!

- Confidence of families.

Consult with families when planning youth activities. Ask parents and carers if they are confident for young people to attend a meeting, explaining the rules that everyone who attends will need to follow. Make sure you get parental consent and ask the young people themselves what they would like from a meeting. You can also enhance your support by responding to what young people are struggling with and what faith questions they are currently exploring. [Get in touch for topic ideas.](#)

Event ideas:

- Firepit meeting*. Wrap up warm and huddle around a firepit for some 'deep chats'.
- Online Christmas Party*. Ask young people in your church to prepare an online Advent or Christmas party for their friends with games and a message of hope.
- Sunday morning catch-up*. During or after a Sunday service, invite teens to bring a flask of their favourite hot drink to a short catch-up together with prayer and a Bible reflection.
- Prayer walk*. Get a small group together to pray around the church.
- Youth Christmas service*. Ask young people to plan a special service for the youth group or their wider friends with their own choices of music, Bible readings and prayers.
- Christmas grill a vicar*. Invite young people to ask their hardest Christmas themed questions and receive a blessing.

Links

National Youth Agency webinar

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aJON1KPzxME&t=1151s>

Full youth work guidance for tiered restrictions

<https://nya.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/0972-NYA-UPDATE-COVID-19-V4.pdf>

Church of England worship guidelines

<https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-churches>

Full Government 'Out of School Settings' guidance

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protective-measures-for-holiday-or-after-school-clubs-and-other-out-of-school-settings-for-children-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak/protective-measures-for-out-of-school-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak#who-is-this-guidance-for>

Diocesan Coronavirus resources pages

<https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/faith/living-gods-love-at-all-times/>

Youth Service resources

<https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/yac/>