

Recovery Community & Mutual Aid Groups COVID-19 Guidance

Considerations for Returning to Indoor Community
Venues & Resuming Person to Person Activities

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Further information & updates on Scottish Government rules for staying safe and protecting others to help suppress the virus, are readily available on their website:

www.gov.scot

Introduction

On 23rd March 2020, Scottish Government announced the implementation of a national 'lockdown', in a bid to flatten the curve of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, since this time recovery groups and/or activities have had to move online. Over the past few months Scotland has begun to ease these restrictions through phased measures with community venues due to reopen in the coming days, in order to resume activities safely which offer various supports to people across Scotland.

In order to move online recovery meetings back to in person meetings and safely reopen community venues (such as community centres and church halls), we have created this guidance document to help support this transition whilst implementing **Scotland's Route Map and current guidelines from Scottish Government - these should be read in conjunction with this document.**

Links to relevant the Scottish Government websites regarding guidance and Scotland's Route Map are listed provided under the Useful Websites section of this document.

Guidance Aim

This guidance has been developed to support groups planning to restart delivery of recovery-based activities within community venues across Scotland. Since the outbreak of COVID-19, visible recovery communities, twelve step fellowships and mutual aid groups, who have curtailed physical meetings and migrated much of their recovery support online. The aim of this document is to ensure that all mentioned groups can restart recovery support activities within community venues and continue to deliver essential support to people in recovery during the challenging circumstances surrounding the coronavirus pandemic.

This guidance has been designed to support recovery groups to understand the issues that they face in regards to Scottish Government guidelines and how best to follow these guidelines to continue to deliver essential support to people in recovery in a way that keeps themselves, volunteers and participants safe during this time.

Planning your Activities

In this section we provide information on best practice for planning your activities within a community venue and what needs to be considered in relation to general information surrounding COVID-19, including physical distancing, face coverings and hygiene.

You should familiarise yourself with the information available on the **NHS Inform website** surrounding COVID-19, including who is most at risk, signs and symptoms and on physical distancing, face coverings and hygiene.

Links to Scottish Government and NHS Inform websites are provided under the Useful Websites section of this document.

Activity Areas

You need to consider how you can organise activity areas so that people can follow the guidelines on social distancing (recommended at 2 meters). Where possible you should:

- Physically arrange areas so people can physically distance;
- Mark areas using tape or signs to help people socially distance;
- Provide signage to remind people to keep physical distance;
- Avoid people working face-to-face or working side-by-side.

Where you cannot physically distance, you need to consider:

- Assigning one person to oversee any activity areas;
- Reducing the number of people in any activity area;
- Assigning and keeping people to households (maximum of three households indoors), that is people who identify as being part of a household or extended household, to limit social interaction;
- Keeping the number of people who cannot socially distance to a minimum;
- Using screens to create a physical barrier between people;
- Use face coverings to reduce the risk of spreading the virus.

You need to consider how to keep the activity areas clean and prevent transmission by touching contaminated surfaces:

- Decide on how frequently you need to clean the work area and/or equipment, for example: cleaning at the end of each use if equipment is shared between people or between activity changeovers;
- Identify objects and surfaces that are touched regularly and decide how frequently you clean them;
- Provide hand sanitiser for people coming in and out of activities, if they are unable to wash their hands.

Moving Around

You need to consider how people travel through community venues to activity areas:

- Permit only essential trips within community venues to maintain physical distancing as much as possible;
- Restrict the amount that people rotate between activities and equipment;
- Reduce the number of people in high traffic areas including lifts, corridors, and walkways;
- The venue should have areas marked using floor paint or tape to help people physical distance;
- Ensure participants follow guidance in place by community venue regarding direction of travel.

Common Areas

You should risk assess in partnership with the community venue all commonly used areas, including cafe, rest areas and toilets. You need to consider:

- Moving tables/chairs so people can physical distance;
- Staggering breacktimes with other groups using the venue so that people are not using cafes, rest areas or toilets at the same time to maintain physical distancing;
- Where this is not possible, creating additional space for people to take their breaks in;
- Marking areas using signage to help people physically distance;
- Using outside areas for breaks if the locations are suitable and it is safe to do so;
- Encouraging participants to stay in designated areas decided in cooperation with community venue.

Where you cannot physical distance, you need to consider how to keep common areas you are using clean and prevent transmission by touching contaminated surfaces:

- How frequently you need to clean these common areas;
- Identifying objects and surfaces that are touched regularly and decide how frequently you clean them;
- Setting clear guidance for the use of café, rest areas, and toilets to make sure they are kept clean;
- Where physical distancing isn't possible face coverings should be worn.

Hygiene

You need to consider:

- Ensuring that you have handwashing facilities that provide running water, soap and paper towels;
- Providing hand sanitiser in addition to washing facilities;
- Use signs and posters to increase awareness of good handwashing technique;
- Providing regular reminders on avoiding touching your face and to cough/sneeze into your arm;
- Providing hand sanitiser in multiple locations in addition to activity area;
- Setting clear guidance for the cleaning of activity area and any other areas the participants are using to make sure they are kept clean;
- Setting clear guidance on how to handle equipment and materials and when cleaning procedures need to be followed.

Food and Drink

You need to consider:

- Participants can bring their own food and drink; however, food, drink and utensils should not be shared with other participants;
- Setting clear guidance for the disposal of food, drinks and any packaging;
- Ensuring that you have hand washing facilities that provide running water, soap and paper towels;
- Providing hand sanitiser in addition to washing facilities;
- Tea and coffee can be provided if recovery communities adhere to good hygiene, making sure all utensils are cleaned and sanitised after each individual use and disposable cups used and disposed of accordingly.

Further information surrounding food, drink and hygiene can be found on the Food Standards website, which is provided under the Useful Websites section of this document.

Participating in Activities

In this section we consider participants and how to effectively support planning activities within an indoor community venue and what information you need to be aware of regarding COVID-19, including physical distancing, face coverings and hygiene.

You should familiarise yourself with the information available on the **NHS Inform website** surrounding COVID-19, including who is most at risk, signs and symptoms and on physical distancing, face coverings and hygiene.

Links to Scottish Government and NHS Inform websites are provided under the Useful Websites section of this document.

Managing Participant Numbers

You need to consider:

- Numbers of participants at each activity (is there enough space to keep participants physically distanced?);
- Do you need a pre-booking system for activities? This could also be used for Test and Protect (further detail of this are in a later section of this document);
- Rather than one long activity having smaller activities within designated time frames allowing for more activities, and opportunities to clean areas, equipment and materials between activities;
- Awareness of venue: Are there other groups using the venue? Do you need to contact them regarding staggered break times to minimise risk of not adhering to physical distancing guidelines?

See information below on the most recent government guidance for Phase 3 Gatherings and Occasions regarding voluntary or charitable services. Although there is no limit to numbers of participants for recovery groups or activities, recovery groups need to ensure that physical distancing is in place so numbers should be dependent on venue size and the ability to meet this requirement.

Gatherings and Occasions

Public gatherings inside or outside are still prohibited except for the following exception:

- Where the gathering is for work purposes, or for the provision of voluntary or charitable services - but individuals should try to minimise all meetings and other gatherings in the workplace, and practice physical distancing, hand hygiene and cough etiquette.

Further information on Gatherings and Occasions can be found on the Scottish Government website, which is provided under the Useful Websites section of this document.

Information & Guidance

You need to consider:

- Providing people (including workers and others) with information on procedures, guidance or ways of working that have been introduced;
- Sharing this information with them before they start an activity or work;
- Sharing this information with others who are not your workers or participants - for example community venue or visitors to the group, where required (this could include signs or notices);
- Show you will pass information and guidance to people who don't have English as their first language and others who may struggle with written and verbal communication;
- Holding conversations with your workers, listening to and acting on their concerns.

If your recovery community/group is **affiliated with any mutual aid organisation you should also check their website for guidance and advice**, however this must also comply with current Scottish Government recommendations.

Test and Protect

Test and Protect is Scotland's approach to preventing the spread of coronavirus in the community and is Scotland's way of putting into practice the 'test, trace, isolate support' strategy. You need to consider:

- When will you collect the required information from participants? We recommend that you create a registration template which includes capturing the date, participants name and contact telephone number to comply and help with Test and Protect advice;
- What information is needed for Test and Protect? Please check the current online advice which is provided under the Useful Websites section of this document;
- How will you contact participants should you need to in line with the Test and Protect system;
- How long should you store relevant information? Current government guidance is 21 days.

This will prevent the spread of coronavirus in the community by:

- Identifying cases of coronavirus through testing
- Tracing the people who may have become infected by spending time in close contact with them
- Supporting those close contacts to self-isolate, so that if they have the disease, they are less likely transmit it to others

Test and Protect will allow Scottish Government to gradually change the restrictions that help to suppress the virus, and instead to contain it so that society and the economy can avoid a return to lockdown.

Links to the appropriate documents with regards to Test and Protect and how you can implement this into your strategy for safely restarting recovery activities and groups within community venues are provided under the Useful Websites section of this document.

Useful Websites

Scottish Government

Coronavirus Information and Support:

<https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Gatherings and Occasions:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-phase-3-staying-safe-and-protecting-others/pages/gatherings-and-occasions/>

Scotland's Route Map for COVID-19:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-framework-decision-making-scotlands-route-map-through-out-crisis/pages/easy-read-audio-and-translations-including-bsl/>

Test and Protect:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-test-and-protect/>

NHS Inform

General Advice:

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-covid-19-general-advice>

Physical Distancing & Face Coverings:

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-covid-19-physical-distancing>

Test and Protect:

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/campaigns/test-and-protect>

Tracing:

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19/test-and-protect/coronavirus-covid-19-contact-tracing>

Testing:

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19/test-trace-and-isolate/coronavirus-covid-19-testing>

Access to Testing:

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/self-help-guides/self-help-guide-access-to-testing-for-coronavirus>

Guidance for Households:

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19/test-and-protect/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-infection>

Food Standards Scotland

<https://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/consumers/food-safety/coronavirus/questions-and-answers-covid-19>

NHS Health Protection Scotland

https://hpspubsrepo.blob.core.windows.net/hps-website/nss/2973/documents/1_covid-19-guidance-for-non-healthcare-settings.pdf

Useful Contact Numbers

NHS 24 – 111

NHS Contact Tracing – 0800 030 8012

NHS Coronavirus Helpline – 0800 028 2816

NHS National Assistance Helpline – 0800 111 4000

NHS National Assistance Helpline (Text Contact Number) – 0800 111 4114

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