



COVID-19 Guidance

Version 16/09/2020: to be updated as government guidance and local conditions change.

This is a collection of Guidance on different areas of our COVID-19 service

General Guidance

1:1 links

Volunteers and Members in 1:1 links must not start to meet up before they have had a discussion with their Branch Co-ordinator and checklists, risk assessments and safety plans have been completed.

Parents and carers should be reminded to check members for COVID-19 symptoms (new high temperature, continuous cough, loss/change of sense of taste or smell) before they go to a meeting.

Outdoor meetings are preferred, but going into shops and cafes may be allowed if the member and volunteer involved is able to reliably follow physical distancing, hygiene and face covering rules and the Premises guidelines below are followed.

Meetings requiring no transport (or carer transport) for members are preferred. If other transport is essential the Transport guidelines below must be followed.

There should be a backup plan for if unexpected situations arise, for example if a café that is usually quiet has become very busy and it looks like physical distancing is not being followed.

Group meetings

No group meetings are scheduled before October 2020 but the guidelines below have been developed to help with planning.



Covid 19 Guidance for 1:1 links going into Premises

The guidance below primarily deals with 1:1 links going into cafes and shops if meeting outdoors is not possible. Checklists, risk assessments and safety plans must be completed in advance.

Members and volunteers must be able to reliably comply with physical distancing, face covering and hygiene requirements. It is the responsibility of volunteers to ensure that members observe the requirements.

Staff should risk assess premises and satisfy themselves in following areas:

- Venue has carried out its own risk assessment.
- Adequate cleaning routine for furniture, facilities, equipment etc. For a café this would include sanitising tables between customers and cleaning toilets regularly.
- Adequate management of number of people in premises and traffic flow into/out of/within premises.
- Hand sanitiser at entrance/exit.
- Tables and chairs set up to enable physical distancing.
- Face covering rules for staff and customers are being enforced by venue (currently only exception is in café when seated at table).
- Contactless payment system

General considerations

- Volunteers should carry COVID packs.
- Volunteer preparation to include all of the above and any issues with hygiene, face covering and physical distancing rules during meeting should be reported to Interest Link staff.
- Carers to be made aware of guidelines and asked to prepare members accordingly.
- In an emergency, hygiene and physical distancing rules may be breached.



Covid 19 Guidance for Transport

Public transport should not be used and carer-provided transport (or meetings not requiring members to travel) are the preferred options.

If other transport absolutely has to be used and the risk is deemed acceptable by all involved:

- Passenger must be able to reliably comply with physical distancing, hygiene and face covering rules.
- Minimise journey times (to under 15 mins if possible) by increasing the number of vehicles being used.
- Only one passenger in vehicle and must be in rear seat. (Community transport minibuses may enable more passengers to be accommodated safely).
- Touchpoints such as door handles cleaned in between each journey.
- Passengers should sanitise their hands at beginning and end of their journey.
- Driver and passengers must wear face coverings during journeys.
- Windows should be open if possible.
- Driver instructions re behaviour must be respected and any breaches reported to Interest Link staff.
- In an emergency, hygiene and physical distancing rules may be breached.
- Carers to be made aware of guidelines and asked to prepare members accordingly.



Covid 19 Guidance for Group Activities

No groups are scheduled before October 2020.

Preparation

- Staff should ensure venues have adequate risk assessments, cleaning routines, hand washing & sanitising provision, signage and traffic management into, out of and within the venue, and should discuss how rooms and common areas are to be laid out and operated.
- Tutors, sessional workers and senior volunteers should be included in the planning of sessions, and guidelines, risk assessments and other documents discussed with them.
- The usual attendance sheet or other record of participants must be kept.
- If there are formal local lockdowns group meetings should be cancelled. If there is a local flare-up without formal restrictions being imposed then it will be sensible to postpone meetings till it is clear it has been brought under control.
- Activities with low infection risk are favoured, for example small group activities where each group member has their own equipment and materials.
- Staff should ensure they have adequate hygiene supplies generally, and ensure hand sanitiser and alcohol wipes are easily to hand for everyone during sessions.
- Everyone attending a session must be able to reliably follow distancing, face covering and hygiene rules and not require physical assistance. An exception may be made if they are accompanied by a carer who can ensure rules are followed and give any necessary assistance). It may be helpful to form sub-groups, with staff members or volunteers assigned to gently remind specific group members to physically distance, sanitise hands and keep face coverings on. Keep windows open if possible.
- Parents and carers should be reminded to check members for COVID-19 symptoms (new high temperature, continuous cough, loss/change of sense of taste or smell) before a meeting.

During group activities:

- Before a session, if staff are not confident the **venue has been adequately cleaned** since last used they must clean all commonly touched objects and surfaces.
- All participants must **wash or sanitise their hands** on arrival at the venue, before and after eating/drinking, before and after activities that involved shared items or surfaces and before leaving the venue. If compatible with fire regulations, wedge doors open to reduce touchpoints.
- Coughs and sneezes must be caught by tissues or a sleeve/elbow
- All participants must wear **face coverings** at all times when in the venue apart from when eating, drinking or exercising.
- All participants must maintain 2 metres **physical distancing** at all times when in the venue. An exception is if two people are in the same household or a member is accompanied by a carer.
- If activities involve seats and tables, spacing must allow for physical distancing and group members must be allocated a specific seat for the session. If doing activities in open space indoors, tape or other floor markings should be used with venue's assistance/consent. If 2 metres cannot be maintained at all times, the time spent at closer proximity must be minimised.
- Refreshments will not be provided by Interest Link: participants should bring their own snacks and water if needed.
- In an emergency, hygiene and physical distancing rules may need to be breached.



Telephone & Video Guidance

Preparation

All involved should agree the day and time of calls in advance, ensuring that family and professional carers are aware of any support they will need to provide.

It may be a good idea to agree a maximum length for a call.

All involved should prepare for calls so that interruptions and background noise are minimised.

If the call is regular, at the close of the call try to arrange the next one. This may need to be backed up by text/email/social media and reminders near the time.

Calls should not be recorded and photos, screenshots or clips should not be taken of videocalls. For reporting purposes a member of staff may take a screenshot with the consent of all involved.

1:1 calls (There is a detailed version for volunteers in 1:1 links)

Volunteers or staff will usually ring members.

If the other person on a 1:1 call doesn't answer, try an alternative method of contact and/or ring back after 5-10 minutes. If you can't make contact, let your Branch Co-ordinator know.

Group calls on Zoom

- Meeting invitations, Links, Meeting IDs and Dial-in numbers should never be made public on social media or websites.
- A Waiting Room or Passcode should be used for all meetings.
- If a meeting is a regular one, it will usually be made Recurring so the joining details remain consistent.
- A host may mute everyone if there are problems with feedback or background noise: don't feel offended by this.

Instructions for guests who haven't used Zoom before.

You do not need to sign up for a Zoom account to join a Zoom meeting. On a computer you can use your browser or download the Zoom Client for Meetings app from <https://zoom.us/download>. For a phone or tablet download the app from the Apple or Google Play App Stores.

You can connect to a Zoom meeting by clicking on the link in an invitation email: if you have the Zoom app installed you will be asked if you want to use the app: say Yes.

You can also join by opening the Zoom app on your computer, phone or tablet, clicking on "Join Meeting" and entering the Meeting ID.

When you join the meeting, you will be asked whether you want to “Join Audio by Computer” or “Call using Internet Audio” (say yes) and you may also need to give consent for your microphone and camera to be used.

If either sound or vision don't work when you join the meeting, you need to click on/touch the screen and go to the microphone (or headphones) and camera icons that appear at the bottom left of the screen: click on “join audio” or “unmute” or “start video”.

If you can't get connected, or you have vision but no sound (or only sound one way) don't panic: you can join by ordinary phone call instead: use the phone number and Meeting ID in the invitation. When you are asked for a Participant ID just enter #. If you have dialled in because the sound on your video didn't work, you will need to mute yourself and/or turn your computer speakers off to avoid feedback.

At the end of the meeting, click on the red Leave button, usually at bottom right of screen.