A guide to the re-opening of creative ageing activities in Scotland

Luminate is Scotland's creative ageing organisation. Our vision is that all older people can take part in high quality arts and creative activities, whatever their background and circumstances, and wherever they live.

If you would like to find out more about what we do, sign up to receive our newsletter, or have a question to ask:

- Visit our website at www.luminatescotland.org
- Email us at info@luminatescotland.org
- Telephone us on 0131 668 8066

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Introduction

This guide has been created as an aid to support your return to organising in-person and face-to-face creative ageing activities, as COVID-19 restrictions ease. We have researched links to Scottish Government guidance and other advice which we think will help you to plan. We have also shared some examples of approaches from other organisations which you may find helpful, though we do not take responsibility for the accuracy of the information and guidance supplied on these websites.

The guide is designed to give general information on restarting creative activities in any art form that are run with, by and for older people. Please note that we have focused on information about work with adults and have not included specific advice relating to work with children or young people, though some of the links we provide do cover work with young people too.

While this guide is an aid to supporting the planning of a wide range of creative ageing activities, it is not intended to be an exhaustive guide and does not consider the individual needs of any specific project, its organisers, leaders or participants. You are responsible for ensuring that your own activities are run safely, and that you are operating within the law and government guidance. You may need to take additional advice beyond this guide to ensure that you have considered everything that is relevant to your individual situation and the safety and well-being of your staff and group participants.

Finally, please note that this guide relates to activities in Scotland only.

Why have we produced this guide?

Scotland used a system of levels of COVID-19 restrictions from November 2020 until 9 August 2021. Most restrictions have now been lifted, and things are starting to feel much closer to the way life was before the pandemic. Many groups are planning to restart activities, so we have pulled together information covering some of the key areas for you to consider as you make plans. Despite the increasing feeling of normality COVID-19 has not gone away, so it's important that you plan your activities to take account of this.

Who is this for?

This guide is for people who organise, lead and/or teach creative activities with, by and for older people. We hope it will be useful for professional artists who work in the community, creative programme organisers and adult education tutors. The guide is designed to support work that takes place in community settings, and not in health or social care settings where specific guidance is in place.

Many of the organisations and artists who Luminate works with lead or host creative activities in care homes or day centres, so we have provided links to some useful guidance for the social care sector below.

Future changes

It is possible that guidance will change again over the coming weeks and months, and additional restrictions may be put in place either nationally or locally if there are future COVID outbreaks. It is important to make sure that you are following the most recent guidance available, so please make sure that you check the most up-to-date legislation and Scottish Government guidance.

The situation from August 2021

You can now organise group activities indoors and outdoors, following Scottish Government guidance.

The two key restrictions that are still required by law (as at the date of this guidance) are:

- Everyone must wear a face covering in most indoor places, unless they are exempt; and
- Everyone must continue to follow the Test and Protect rules, which include self-isolating immediately if you get symptoms or are told to self-isolate by Test and Protect.

The following measures are not legally required, but are strongly encouraged in the Scottish Government guidance:

- Get the vaccine when you are offered it
- Clean hands and surfaces regularly
- Avoid crowded places and keep your distance from other people where possible
- Meet outside if you can, and open windows when indoors (see below for guidance on ventilation)
- If you have any symptoms of COVID-19, book a PCR test and stay at home
- Take regular tests even if you don't have any symptoms
- Use the Protect Scotland and Check-in Scotland apps
- Work from home, or do a mixture of home and office working if you can

There are no longer any limits to the number of people who can take part in activities, unless you plan to run a very large event (2,000 indoors or 5,000 outdoors), in which case you need to apply for permission.

Navigating the guidance

The Scottish Government has several guidance notes that can be referred to as you plan to return to creative ageing activities. This first step is about understanding where you can go to find the guidance you need. Please note that while the links provided below are currently live, they could expire and you should therefore also continue to check the guidance on the Scottish government website (https://www.gov.scot) regularly for updates.

The Scottish Government published advice on staying safe and protecting others when the country moved out of the levels system. This guidance outlines the restrictions that remain, as well as giving wider advice on the things you can do to stay safe: https://bit.ly/3AHjdNi.
(Full link: https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-staying-safe-and-protecting-others/)

It includes links to some other helpful pages, including guidance on ventilation which is an important consideration when running in-person group activities: https://bit.ly/3i0bW3v.
(Full link: https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-ventilation-guidance/)

While the levels system was in place, there was a range of guidance relating to individual sectors, activities and businesses. These sector-specific guidance notes have now been archived by the Scottish Government, and they have been replaced by new general guidance for Businesses and Workplaces – see: https://bit.ly/3CBLSDS.
(Full link: https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-general-guidance-for-safer-workplaces/pages/overview/). This gives a good overview of the protections you should think about as you move forward.

There is also Government guidance on running events: https://bit.ly/3zCtvNb.
(Full link: https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-supporting-safer-capacity-in-public-settings-and-events/pages/events/). This guidance highlights that "small events" (with less than 5,000 attendees outside and 2,000 attendees inside) can now proceed subject to any normal requirements such as licensing where relevant.

Guidance on re-opening cultural performances and events is here: https://bit.ly/39xTomS.
(Full link: https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-reopening-of-cultural-performances-and-events-guidance/pages/overview/)

Some restrictions do remain in place, including the use of face coverings which remains a legal requirement in indoor, public spaces unless an exemption applies. You will find more information about this here: https://bit.ly/3EMhJ6P.
(Full link: https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-public-use-of-face-coverings/)

The Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) has some guidance for voluntary groups and organisations here: https://bit.ly/3EL4RgX.
(Full link: https://scvo.scot/support/running-your-organisation/coronavirus-restrictions)

The Scottish Community Development Centre has produced a resource to support community organisations to carry out their work safely during the COVID-19 pandemic. Developed in partnership with Public Health Scotland, you will find the resource here: https://bit.ly/3i0seJU. (Full link: https://www.scdc.org.uk/supporting-communities-safely)

Working in social care

This guide is not designed to provide information about creative activities in social care. If you work in care homes or day centres, specific guidance for working in these sectors remains in place.

Guidance on meaningful activities in adult care homes was issued on 14 April and remains current. However, the distancing guidance in relation to meaningful activities changed in July 2021. You will find the relevant documents as links on this page: https://bit.ly/3AzXqXF. (Full link: https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-adult-care-homes-visiting-guidance/).

 Information on the revised distancing guidance from July is here: https://bit.ly/3CHs6qn. (Full link: https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-open-with-care---supporting-meaningful-contact-for-care-home-residents-at-and-after-level-0-letter-to-sector/).

It is important to note that any changes to the arrangements are risk assessed locally, so what is permitted could vary from area to area and care home to care home, therefore.

Now that we have moved beyond Level 0, there are plans for more detailed advice for care homes which reflects the current situation. For now, care homes have been advised to follow the Level 0 advice. This is explained here: https://bit.ly/3CCFDj9.
(Full link:
https://www.careinspectorate.com/images/documents/coronavirus/Care_home_visiting_-_Open_with_Care_-_Beyond_Level_0_advice_-_Letter_06-08-2021.pdf?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery).

The latest Government advice to older people's day centres is here: https://bit.ly/2XU23h9. (Full link: https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-adult-social-care-building-based-day-services/pages/purpose-and-scope/).

Planning for a return to activity

As with all activity, planning is key! This section takes you through some of the key things you need to consider as part of your planning for a return to creative ageing activities.

Consultation

It is important to ensure that you have consulted with, as far as reasonably practicable, all the people who lead, support and attend your group about plans to return to activity. This will help to create robust procedures and build confidence in your approach.

If you are a committee or trustees and are a constituted group, the decision to return should be a collective one made in accordance with your own rules on governance and decision-making, so encourage your full committee to be involved in making this decision and record this in your minutes or communications.

Find ways of involving session leaders, volunteers, carers and participants in your plans, and listen to any anxieties they may have about their safety. Give them the opportunity to contribute to your COVID-19 risk assessment (see below) and ensure that they understand the different hazards and risks and are happy that the control measures are clear, realistic and address their concerns.

Face coverings

Wearing face coverings remains a legal requirement when in an indoor, public space, unless you are exempt.

Face coverings – exemptions

There are a number of exemptions to the requirement to wear a face covering.

Someone might be exempt from wearing a mask for medical reasons. This can include hidden disabilities such as dementia or autism.

There are also exemptions from wearing face coverings where people are undertaking exercise, such as dancing, where the exercise reasonably requires that someone is not wearing a mask. In addition, there are exemptions for eating and drinking, allowing teachers and participants to have refreshments throughout the session (if this is in line with the risk assessment).

There is also an exemption from the requirement to wear a mask for anyone who is performing, rehearsing for a performance, presenting, addressing a public gathering or making a speech provided that there is a partition between each person or at least 1 metre between each person. Further details about how this exemption should be applied in practice is available here: https://bit.ly/3lSXmMl.
(Full link: https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-reopening-of-cultural-performances-and-events-guidance/pages/precautionary-measures/).

Face coverings – singing

While this guide is not primarily designed to consider individual art form needs, Luminate works with many community singing groups and we know that the requirement for face coverings is a concern. As outlined above, if you are performing or rehearsing for a performance, there is an exemption as long as participants are 1m apart or there is a partition between each person; see the link in the paragraph above for further details. If your group is not performing or working towards a performance, the exemption does not apply to you.

Venues

As you plan for the return to activities, you need to consider the venue. The Scottish Government guidance recommends that, where you can, you meet outside. However, you can also take group activities inside now.

If you are not using your own facility, you may need to consult with the venue management team at the venue that hosts your group ("remote venue"). Examples of things to consider include:

- Ensure venue management understand and are supportive of the activities you intend to put on.
- Ask for a copy of the venue's COVID-19 venue risk assessment so that you understand the new procedures that are in place and can refer to these in your own COVID-19 activity risk assessment (see below)
- Discuss with the venue management which hygiene procedures will be carried out by the venue and which hygiene procedures you will carry out
- Consider whether your previous arrangements with the venue are still suitable – ask whether a bigger room, with adequate ventilation can be arranged if necessary
- Remember to discuss the safety and well-being of your own staff and volunteers while working in the remote venue

Insurance

Talk to your insurance company to make sure that your policy has all the cover that you need when you re-open and start to run in-person activities again. Your insurance policy may provide the necessary cover, however it is very important that you check with your insurer that you do have appropriate cover in place.

COVID-19 risk assessments

A risk assessment is vital to ensure that your activity is COVID-secure; this is in addition to your normal risk assessment procedures for your activities. The COVID-19 risk assessment process will enable you to identify the actions you will take to minimise the risk of transmission of the virus. The risk assessment should not be a one-off event but should be reviewed regularly and documented.

There is guidance on Risk Assessment within the Scottish Government Business and Workplace guidance: https://bit.ly/3zzxcTQ.
(Full link: https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-general-guidance-for-safer-workplaces/pages/risk-assessment/).

The Scottish Government has also published a self-assessment tool that you can use on a regular basis to review your COVID procedures and safeguards: https://bit.ly/3EMbyj6.
(Full link: https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-compliance-self-assessment-tool/).

When drafting a COVID-19 risk assessment, remember that it must:

- identify what work, activity or situations might cause transmission of the virus
- think about who could be at risk
- decide how likely it is that someone could be exposed to the virus
- consider what practices previously existed and what might need to be modified
- identify what can be done to mitigate the risks of transmission (i.e. what will be done to reduce the risk)
- outline who is responsible for carrying out these actions
- consider when the actions need to be carried out by

Depending on the outcome of the risk assessment, you may need to implement some new measures to help limit the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Examples of additional measures you might wish to consider include:

- Voluntary limits on how many people attend the activity or are in the building;
- Taking temperature checks of everyone in attendance
- Opening windows in the room
- Making use of outdoor space
- Providing face coverings and hand sanitiser
- Floor markings to help keep people safely distanced apart
- Additional cleaning
- Using one-way systems in narrower places such as entrances and exits
- Displaying posters reminding people of good hygiene and physical distancing

If you are an activity organiser, you must produce your own risk assessments for your activity. Remember to take account of the COVID-19 risk assessments for the venues you use when devising your activity risk assessments. These will tell you what mitigations the venue has put in place that you will need to follow, and also what mitigations they won't be using that you will need to deal with yourself.

Detailed guidance and template assessments are available on the Health and Safety Executive (HES) website: https://bit.ly/3CCn1jg.

(Full link: https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/working-safely/risk-assessment.htm).

Example:

The Scouts have a straightforward guide to preparing a COVID-19 risk assessment that includes a video and worked examples that can be adapted to your own circumstances:

Link to Scouts video: https://vimeo.com/440358430

Link to Scouts examples: https://bit.ly/3CvGCBI.

(Full link: https://cms.scouts.org.uk/media/11072/covid-ra-example-2.docx).

Cleaning and Hygiene

It is important to consider if and how you can put the necessary cleaning and hygiene measures in place.

Useful links:

Public Health England has produced guidance on cleaning in non-healthcare settings outside the home: https://bit.ly/3u5NUcm.

(Full link: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings).

The Health and Safety Executive (HES) has produced guidance on cleaning, hygiene and handwashing to reduce coronavirus transmission: https://bit.ly/2ZqeZf9.
(Full link: https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/cleaning/index.htm).

The Centre for Disease Control and Prevention has information on cleaning and disinfecting facilities: https://bit.ly/3lQK8zP.
(Full link: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html).

Administrative procedures

It is worth thinking about any required changes or updates to your administrative processes and procedures, including any additional training needs for staff or session leaders, that will help support your return to activity. Here are just some of the areas you might wish to consider:

- What administrative processes do you have in place to prepare for a Covid-19 incident reported within the group?
- Do your safeguarding procedures need to be adapted or modified?
- What induction processes or further training may staff or session leaders need to deliver adapted sessions (e.g. new hygiene and physical distancing measures and first aid)? Who could support you in delivering this additional training?

Guidance for employers

While many Covid-19 restrictions have been lifted, employers still have a legal duty to manage the risk of transmission of COVID-19.

The Scottish government has published some useful guidance on the principles of good practice for employers: https://bit.ly/2ZfERdq.
(Full link: https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-general-guidance-for-safer-workplaces/pages/good-practice/).

Test & Protect

Test & Protect is NHS Scotland's programme to locate, track and prevent the spread of COVID-19. It works by confidentially informing all those who have been in 'close contact' with an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19 to book a PCR (polymerase chain reaction) test and to self-isolate immediately in order to prevent the spread of the virus. As we return to face-to-face activity, it's critical that a detailed register of those attending is taken.

Details of the procedures you need to follow, including the information you need to gather and requirements for handling this data, can be found in the Scottish Government guidance here: https://bit.ly/3u6MFte.
(Full link: https://www.gov.scot/publications/test-protect-multi-sector-guidance-collection-customer-visitor-contact-details-july-2020/pages/4/).

If details are taken on entry to the premises, attendees need to be advised that about the requirement to provide their details on arrival. There also should be notices at the premises to advise attendees about this requirement, and copies of your Privacy Notice should be displayed to inform people about the purposes of collecting their data and how it will be used.

If you use or hire a venue that is not your own, do check and agree with the venue management team whether you will collect this data or if a member of the venue team will be responsible for this.

The Information Commissioners Office (ICO) has published guidance on its website that outlines your responsibilities in relation to data collection and COVID. See: https://bit.ly/39sygOR.
(Full link: https://ico.org.uk/global/data-protection-and-coronavirus-information-hub/coronavirus-recovery-data-protection-advice-for-organisations/).

Scottish Government guidance on the collection of data to assist contact tracing can also be found here: https://bit.ly/3u7ewcN.
(Full link: https://www.gov.scot/publications/test-protect-multi-sector-guidance-collection-customer-visitor-contact-details-july-2020/pages/4/).