



## Lockdown 2.0 Guidance for Youth Theatres 4<sup>th</sup> November 2020

This guidance is a condensed version of the regulations posted by the National Youth Agency on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2020 with specific considerations made to its applications to Youth Theatre. For a fuller picture, please visit [www.nya.org.uk](http://www.nya.org.uk).

Please note this is applicable in ENGLAND only.

The NYA 'readiness framework' has now switched back to RED. The headlines of this are as follows:

### 2 Red readiness level

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The **RED** readiness level allows the following activities only, subject to a COVID Secure Action Plan and Risk Assessment:

- Online and digital youth services
- Detached/outdoor local youth services
- 1-2-1 sessions with high-need young people (indoors)
- Small group work session indoors with high need young people. (consistent with social distancing guidelines)

Youth sector providers are allowed to provide support and services to young people indoors during periods of **RED** readiness. Youth sector providers should work within the spirit of lockdown and must not provide open access/drop-in services at this time.

The key message for our sector here is therefore

**All mainstream regular Youth Theatre should suspend and switch to online delivery where possible until the lockdown period ends.**

**HOWEVER... there are some exceptions to this**

As stated in the guidance above, small group sessions may continue indoors for 'high need' or 'vulnerable' young people. This activity falls under the exception for 'support groups' listed in Section 8 of the Government guidance published on 2<sup>nd</sup> November.

Some definitions to help...

**VULNERABLE** There is no statutory definition of a 'vulnerable' child or young person according to these rules. The NYA have worked with government to build in an element of worker discretion here to enable those of us who know the young people well to make that decision ourselves. We recognise that all young people could be classed as vulnerable in some senses but for the purposes of this case, we ask that you consider specific needs your young people may experience such as Learning Disability/ ASD, Mental Health, Looked After Children, at risk of exploitation or crime.



### **What will activity delivered under 'Support Groups' look like?**

- It must be targeted NOT open access. In other words, you must know who is attending and they must have been invited or have a booking to attend. This doesn't need to be formal or in writing.
- It must take place in a bubble of 15 *inclusive* of staff and support workers for young people who need 1 2 1 (note that this is a change).
- You must be abiding by all the previous COVID-safe guidance (check Version 3 of the NYA guidance if you need an update). Remember that over 11s and staff must be wearing face coverings unless they are exempt.
- Only 1 bubble of 15 should be in the building at any one time unless you have VERY separate spaces, different entrance and exits and the groups never have a chance to meet.
- You can still run back to back sessions with cleaning time in between.
- You should maintain a consistent bubble and not admit any new young people for the duration of the lockdown.
- Vulnerable young people attending sessions may travel across Local Authority boundaries and supported travel can be used.
- Sessions will be really well planned with a focus on activities not socialising to help structure the time in the space.

### **A note on buildings**

Only buildings classed as 'community use' are able to be used for support group activity. Community centres, libraries, places of worship are all fine. Leisure centres are not included. Guidance on cultural venues is limited and we would suggest contacting your local council to ask what classification your building comes over if you are unsure.

### **Triage**

Something you may wish to consider is a triage service for your young people. This is where you are able to meet them in a COVID-safe manner 1 2 1 to check up on wellbeing and establish need for additional services. If you are concerned about your young people's mental health and wellbeing and have the resource to do this then it could be really helpful in guiding what your offer looks like.

### **Ethical Considerations**

The main message coming out of these guidance is very much about the discretion of workers in making decisions about the vulnerability and need of their young people. We recognise the importance of our work in supporting young people, particularly in this tough time. However, we advise you to think carefully about any decisions you make, protect your staff, your young people and their families and think about whether your service is supportive first or theatre first. If it's the former, go ahead and do great work; if the latter, re-consider.