

Guidance for support groups

COVID-19 transmission rates remain very high in Kirklees. In light of the national lockdown which began on 5 November you must:

- stay at home and reduce contact with other people as much as possible
- make use of technology and telephones to run services and provide support
- not make face-to-face contact unless in exceptional circumstances, where if the meeting did not take place there would be an **imminent and serious risk of harm**

Reducing social contact is the best way to protect ourselves, our loved ones and the wider community.

We learnt a huge amount about how we can provide support at a distance, using technology in the initial lockdown – and I ask you to continue to use these methods and to **keep face-to-face contact to an absolute minimum.**

The new regulations relating to the current national lockdown do allow a number of exceptions relating to support groups but face-to-face support should only take place when it would be **more harmful to stay at home than physically go to the support group.**

In line with national regulations, and only in certain circumstances, will gatherings be permitted.

What counts as a support group?

A support group means a group or one-to-one support which is organised by a business, a charitable, benevolent or philanthropic institution or a public body to provide mutual aid, therapy or support to its members or those who attend meetings. The legislation is clear that the support groups who are allowed in exceptional circumstances to still meet face-to-face are those providing critical support to groups that include, but are not limited to:

- victims of crime
- people in drug and alcohol recovery
- new parents and guardians
- people with long-term illnesses
- people facing issues relating to their sexuality or gender
- people who have suffered bereavement

If you have carried out a risk assessment and you decide you still need to provide face-to-face support:

It is the responsibility of the support group to make sure that the service is delivered in a COVID secure environment. If you require a risk assessment template please contact Bridget Hughes (bridget@tslkirklees.org.uk) and/or Becky Bracey (Becky@tslkirklees.org.uk) at Third Sector Leaders (TSL).

You may be asked to provide evidence that you have completed a risk assessment. **Please ensure this information is kept on site and is accessible.**

We would strongly recommend you do not open for face-to-face support for the next 4 weeks to keep people as safe as we can and to reduce infection rates.

Points of Contact

Safeguarding:

If you are concerned about a child, a family or an individual please follow the usual safeguarding procedures:

The following are phone numbers for Children's Services Duty and Advice Team. If you have an immediate concern for a child's safety call the police on 999.

For professionals (24 hours): 01484 414 960

For members of the public (9am-5pm office hours): 01484 456848

The following are phone numbers for safeguarding concerns for adults. If you have an immediate concern for an adult's safety call the police on 999.

For members of the public and professionals (24 hours): 01484 414933

www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/adult-protection/report-abuse.aspx

Health:

Primary Care Services continue to remain open. Pharmacies are open to offer medical advice and treatment for minor illnesses like colds, rashes, aches and pains and they are also administering flu jabs.

GP practices are open to provide advice and support on a wide range of health concerns. Appointments are available 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Contact your practice online, via an app or telephone for an appointment.

Thriving Kirklees is a partnership of local health and wellbeing providers, all working together to support children, young people and their families to thrive and be healthy:

www.thrivingkirklees.org.uk

Urgent support is available for those experiencing a mental health crisis:

www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/health-and-well-being/mental-health-in-a-crisis.aspx

Kirklees Council:

To stay up-to-date with local information and guidance please visit the Kirklees Council's website:

www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/health-and-well-being/covid19-restrictions.aspx

We will update the Kirklees Community Response blog with wellbeing content for groups to share as it becomes available.

www.communityresponsekirklees.com



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