**Inclusion**

Throughout the pandemic it is essential that we maintain our culture of inclusion, delivering Scouting for all as detailed in our [Equal Opportunities Policy](https://www.scouts.org.uk/por/2-key-policies/equal-opportunities-policy/). Fundamental information can be found within the [Inclusion and Diversity](https://www.scouts.org.uk/volunteers/inclusion-and-diversity/) pages of our national website.

Inclusion considers many aspects, as summarised by our FLAGS acronym:

* F – Faith and Spiritual
* L – LGBTQ+
* A – Additional Needs
* G – Gender Equality
* S – Socio-Economic

You may be well aware of pre-existing inclusion considerations in your Group or Section, for both Young People and Adults. However, a range of new scenarios are likely to emerge during the pandemic and it may be necessary to adapt your approach for established scenarios. As Leaders, you should do your best to anticipate and plan for these.

As always, it is important to deliver a balanced programme - this may well be a blend, including both face-to-face and online Scouting. Remember, if you have any Leaders or Young People who are unable to attend face-to-face sessions but are keen to stay in the section and feel part of Scouting, then it's really important to continue to provide online opportunities.

If a Leader or Young Person appears to be disengaging, it is important to consider why. It may be because their needs are not being met by the programme offered - whether this is their perception or reality. Through discussion and/or adjustment, it may be possible to encourage them to continue.

There is lots of useful information within: [‘Supporting Those Made Most Vulnerable by the Crisis’](https://prep-cms.scouts.org.uk/media/7103/supporting-those-made-most-vulnerable-by-the-crisis.pdf). This considers the needs and Scouting provision for a range of young and adult members, signposting additional resources and support. The potential risks and mitigating actions for people who are shielding or have underlying medical conditions are tabulated for each of the readiness levels. Some additional risk factors are considered (e.g age, gender, geography, ethnicity and socioeconomic situation) and there is guidance on supporting our members with mental health concerns or making safeguarding disclosures.

It is important to establish good communication within the Leadership team and with the parents/carers and young people. As it will be more difficult for parents/carers to have an informal ‘quiet word’ at the end of a session (whether because you’re online or social distancing), it’s important to provide other opportunities e.g. invite phone-calls or messages. Confidentiality must obviously be offered and maintained to help encourage others to disclose their concerns to you so that you can work together to develop solutions.

As many sections return to face-to-face Scouting, a few [parent/carer letter templates](https://www.scouts.org.uk/volunteers/scouts-at-home/getting-everyone-back-together-safely/guidance-for-speaking-with-parents-carers-and-young-people/) have been published which include useful wording to actively invite discussion:

*….people who are shielding or are in another vulnerable group might not be able to return to face-to-face activities at this stage. If your child’s shielding or in another vulnerable group, please contact me directly so we can chat through some options…..*

*….We’re also aware some young people, including young people with additional needs, might need new or different reasonable adjustments putting in place to support a return to face-to-face Scouts – again, I’m happy to discuss this with you…..*

As always, if you need further help please explore with your Group, Executive and District teams. You’re welcome to contact our County support team using programme@berkshirescouts.org.uk