

Preparing to Re-open your Gardening Project (03/06/2020)

Most TG projects are looking at how they can re-open to clients and are going through a process of working out how to safely do this.

Since 28th May 2020 the Scottish Government has implemented Phase 1 of its Coronavirus (COVID-19): framework for decision making , see <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-framework-decision-making-scotlands-route-map-through-out-crisis-phase-1-update/pages/3/> .

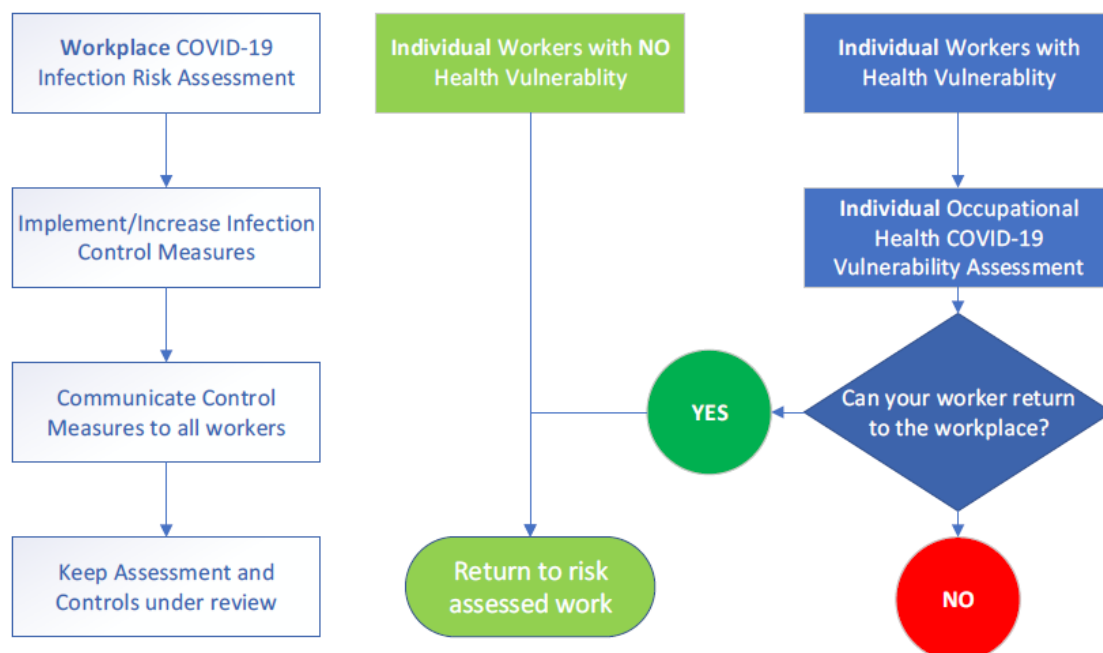
This means that in addition to the Lockdown procedures in place, including being aware of what the coronavirus symptoms are and self- isolating/hygiene/ physical distancing protocols, these Phase 1 guidelines, amongst others, now apply:

- Non- essential outdoor workplaces with physical distancing resume once relevant guidance agreed
- Beginning to safely restart NHS services, covering primary, and community services including mental health.
- Gradual resumption of key support services at the community level
- Unrestricted outdoor exercise with physical distancing measures
- Max no. 8 people can gather from 2 households, **outdoors**.

With this in mind we ask how to ease into re-opening gardening projects for clients? The Health & Safety Executive (HSE) have produced this excellent overview, of what to consider, entitled **Working Safely during the coronavirus outbreak: a Short Guide** <https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/assets/docs/working-safely-guide.pdf>

Risk Assessment is key

Figure 1 Overview of COVID-19 Workplace Risk Management



See [Stay Well and Garden](#) web page for **COVID-19 Return to Work Risk Assessment Overview, Guidance and Template**

Start by Risk Assessment at the individual level- staff members, volunteers and clients. Consider: Underlying conditions; Individuals understanding of hygiene, social distancing protocols and how well they can carry them out; Does 'staying in' outweigh the benefits of getting out to garden for this person; travel arrangements – over 5 miles? Type of transport?

Then a Risk Assessment of garden site for Coronavirus transmission risk
See HSE for guidance on how to undertake a risk assessment and template at <https://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/risk/index.htm>

Considerations/suggestions include:

A phased approach to clients returning.

(In Phase 1, Max no. 8 people can gather from **2 households, outdoors**)

- Start small perhaps with most isolated families/individuals
- Family groups /support worker (classed as part of household) can support client to garden

Using outdoor areas only

- Restricted/no access to garden buildings/glasshouses/polytunnels
- Toilets – closed
- Short sessions 60-90 mins. to negate need for toilet use

Hygiene protocols for points of shared contact e.g. door handles, tools etc.

Hand washing outdoors/lack of traditional facilities, see this at Creative Star article https://creativestarning.co.uk/early-years-outdoors/hand-hygiene-outdoors/?fbclid=IwARooNM6qkHEfAJ3V3sThpNpGGIYiu9zZU6m_6X26YQhbV8ZOfiTpnXIEhL4

Masks/face coverings – useful for indoors/public spaces and where 2m physical distance cannot be maintained/ But not generally liked/uncomfortable to wear/ barrier to communication.

Consider the use of disclaimers – risk assessment can only go so far – has to understand the needs /abilities of clients, but safety also requires that everyone has a responsibility to keep to the rules.

Take this opportunity to check the project's insurance policies e.g. Employers Liability Insurance, contents insurance etc. Now is a good time to check your insurance policies- see that they cover your employees/volunteers etc. as fully as you would wish.

Travel to work

If you are an employee and you have to travel over 5 miles to your gardening project

- Carry a form of photo identification and a letter from the garden project employer/ trustees/ governing board stating that you are required to travel to work

