



## Our Covid-19 Response Update

At First Hand Experiences, we want to do everything we can to support the young people who need us most as we respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

We stopped delivery of our residential courses in March 2020. This was in line with government advice - and we continue to work to current government guidelines.

We want to let you know about some changes to our programmes (in the short/medium term) that will mean we can still safely deliver our camps to as many young people as possible.

We are unable to run our planned autumn 2020 schools programme due to social distancing constraints. The latest guidance from the Department for Education is advising schools against overnight residential for the Autumn 2020 term. We will of course support schools to follow this advice. We will be in touch with you about moving current bookings for Autumn 2020. In order to manage this as best we can we appreciate your continued flexibility.

We are also continuing to take summer camp bookings for July 2021. We are continually monitoring the COVID-19 outbreak and what this means for us. The challenges that young people face have not disappeared during this pandemic and will have undoubtedly been made worse. That's why we're working hard to operate as safely as possible during these uncertain times.

We are committed to minimising the risk of spreading the virus and are putting in measures so we can continue to work with young people.

To do this, we have carefully considered the number of young people we can safely have in and around our centres, and how we focus our programmes to make the most of the outdoors and large spaces we have access to.

This document explains how we have adapted and will continue to do so, to carry out our work in a safe and appropriate way.



In respect of all young people, teachers and employers who are due to travel to one of our centres or offices, we ask that anyone who has symptoms of coronavirus, or who is in the same household as someone who has symptoms, does not travel to Gather Green and follows government advice to self-isolate at home.

Symptoms include:

- High temperature
- New, continuous cough
- Loss or change to your sense of smell or taste

Please note: all young people attending courses should bring their own face mask with them.

To ensure we are keeping young people safe whilst at Gather Green, we will adhere to all the regulatory practice available and follow all relevant current policy and guidance. We will keep up-to-date with any changes and adapt our practices as required. We are looking and following at guidance related to:

- Education
- Travel and Transport (including travel for our own staff and young people travelling to and from our centres)
- Indoor and Outdoor Learning and Adventure
- Catering and Hospitality
- Management of Facilities and Office Environments

Our highly experienced and skilled staff are at the centre of any camp experience. Through ongoing training and guidance, we will ensure that our staff:

- Have a clear understanding of all new practice and procedures that we have put in place.
- Are confident in how a First Hand Experiences programme can be delivered safely and responsibly.



- Are given continuous updates and changes to practice as we follow guidance issued.
- Receive additional training where required in respect of young people's mental health and wellbeing.

Combining adventurous and challenging experiences in the natural environment with individual development and learning is what we always work hard to achieve. This is what makes us unique and different from other residential experiences. We aim to continue to do this whilst keeping young people safe.

- All our programmes will continue to be as adventurous as possible and immerse young people in the wild from the moment they arrive.
- Thanks to our locations, we will ensure we are in the outdoors as much as possible (it is well noted that the risk of transmission is lowest outside).
- Where close contact is necessary, we have adapted our practices to increase distancing.
- We will provide more opportunity for managed self-led activity.
- We will continue to give young people specific time for reflection and deep immersion in nature, which are already embedded into our First Hand Experiences camp programmes.
- We will continue to make the most of our unique location.
- Community living will continue to be an important part of our courses but managed in an appropriate way.
- Handwashing will be built into a formal part of the daily routine with handwashing stations clearly marked and readily available throughout the day.
- We will continually remind young people to wash their hands and think about their contact with others.
- If young people wish to wear masks this will be permitted, but not enforced.
- We will continue to focus on developing character building and understanding the needs of the whole group and each individual young person.
- We will ensure we consider mental health and wider wellbeing needs of young people and respond appropriately.
- We will allow more time for personal reflection for all young people.



- Have less intensity on focussed outcomes and more on 'letting young people be young people'.
- We will have a specific focus on hygiene, duties, tidiness, and personal responsibility.
- We will help young people learn independent living skills.

**First Hand Experiences Team**