



SAFE RETURN TO SPORT

#StaySafe

Return to Club Activity [V11 26/12/21]

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Guiding Principles

The safety and wellbeing of all athletes, runners, coaches, officials, volunteers and the wider community is at the heart of any guidance that Welsh Athletics is distributing.

The guidance that follows provides sport specific advice. It is important to say that any return to activity must take account of local conditions and any risk assessment for normal activities should be undertaken as well as ensuring that all government guidance around Covid-19 is taken into account.

It is the responsibility of each athlete, coach and facility to make that assessment based on their local environment. Risk assessment must take into account mitigations and plans for when activities do not go as expected.

Health first	If you have any doubts or concerns about the risk to your health or that of others, stop and re-assess
Stay up to date	How will you make sure you, and those you're with, are following the latest guidance? Check for updates on a regular basis.
Think ahead: Before, during, & after	What do you need to do before taking part? Have you assessed the risks? How will you get to and from where you're going?

When lifting restrictions please consider the following at a local level¹:

- Can the measures be implemented effectively in practice?
- How will you clearly communicate the changes to all without disadvantaging any parties?
- Will you need to provide extra encouragement or incentives to bring people back to the sport?
- Ensure you consider any consent issues – any decision to participate should be voluntary and informed.

This guidance document for clubs will cover:

- Safety/COVID-19 Officer and Working Group
- Working with a Facility Provider / Operator
- Before Club Activity / Training
- During Club Activity / Training
- After Club Activity / Training
- Track & Field Specific Guidance
- Off Track Specific Guidance

Much of the guidance set out in this document is aimed at clubs returning to activities at dedicated athletics facilities.

For clubs that predominantly offer adult, group running activities and training sessions consideration should be given to the current government restrictions and any local action that needs to be taken in order to facilitate activity safely and in a responsible manner.

Safety / COVID-19 Officer and Working Group:

It is advisable that the club appoints a COVID-19 Officer. This person should not operate alone, rather work with the committee or a specific working group appointed to managing issues and enquiries relating to the COVID-19 pandemic as well as plan the return to club training/activity. The working group should also be responsible for the production of the [appropriate risk assessments](#) related to the return to activity. In addition, the COVID-19 Officer should;

- Be a key point of contact for the facility manager / operator in the case where clubs operate from a dedicated facility.
- Look to ensure that risk assessments and risk management protocols are being adhered to.
- Be a key point of contact for members, if they have any club related questions/concerns relating to COVID-19.
- Ensure that the club and its members are adhering to Welsh Government and Public Health Wales guidelines.
- Ensure that the club has thorough communication with its membership and the membership are updated on a regular basis. Members should be reminded of their wider responsibilities as well as the need to undertake the necessary hygiene and social distancing procedures, as appropriate, at all times.
- Ensure that the club (and / or the facility) maintains an accurate record of who is training. The club should maintain up to date contact details for all members, as this will assist with contact tracing should it be necessary.

- Communicate all Welsh Athletics updates to the club and wider membership as appropriate.
- Undertake the [COVID-19 Awareness Course](#) facilitated by the [Welsh Sports Association](#)

Working with the Facility Provider / Operator:

It is the responsibility of the club to work closely with the facility provider / operator to develop procedures and process that the club will follow to potentially allow the safe return of activity. Clubs will need to have carried out the appropriate Risk Assessments and have the appropriate Risk Management measures in place to give confidence to the provider / operator that club activities will be safe and that members will adhere to the associated restriction in place at this time.

- An example Risk Assessment template can be found [here](#)
- The club will need to work on plans to access the facility (i.e. it may not be possible to access through a building, therefore alternative arrangements may need to be made) as well as systems in place to manage users / club members throughout the period of use.

Note: In all cases, anyone accessing facilities and training venues should do so with the explicit permission of the facility owner/operator. Facilities should not be accessed if you do not have permission for use and you should, at all times, adhere to any guidance issued by Welsh Government.

Before Club Activity / Training:

- The club should organise a system of communication that keeps members informed of their responsibilities and highlights the safety of all users at the facility.
- The maximum number of athletes using the facility at any given time is not necessarily limited however, it will need to be in line with government guidelines.

Update (Version 11):

- Following the recent announcements by the First Minister from 26th December, Wales will be entering Alert Level 2. Whilst, for the most part this will not effect club activities significantly, there are some associated / additional restrictions.
- From Sunday 26th December 2021, there is a limit on the number of people who can gather in both indoor and outdoor settings. The limits announced are 30 people (indoors) and 50 people (outdoors). For club training, and where space allows, multiple groups can operate within/at a facility.
- Where clubs are using facilities for hospitality (ie. club rooms) facemasks should be worn and social distancing (2m) should be adhered to where possible.

- It should be noted however that all affiliated clubs, running groups and facility operators (where applicable) should continue to be mindful of the need to risk assess activities and take necessary precautions to minimise the risk of the spread of the virus in line with the latest Welsh Government regulations and guidance. The Track and Trace procedures adopted by clubs and groups throughout the pandemic should be continued as a matter of course. All activity taking place across the sport should always take into account both national and any more localised restrictions that may be applicable.
- The latest Welsh Government Restrictions can be found here: <https://gov.wales/current-restrictions>

- The club should consider safeguarding responsibilities and act in accordance with the existing safeguarding requirements in relation to athletes and coaches.
- Where possible athletes should arrive ready for training, ready to start their activities at the allocated time.
- The club will need to consider the type of First Aid provision at the venue / facility.
- The club will need to have carried out a risk assessment for all activities. A template can be found [here](#)

During Club Activity / Training:

- The club / facility provider may develop protocols in place to allow the safe use of equipment (which may include, issuing protocols, usage guidance, and subsequent cleaning protocols).
- A reminder that, whilst there is no legal requirement to social distance in an outdoor setting, athletes should avoid physical contact where possible.
- Athletes should be encouraged to wash their hands before training and, where appropriate use hand sanitizer regularly throughout the session.
- Clubhouses: Clubs that operate at a facility are permitted to open however social distancing should be maintained and there is a maximum of 6 people allowed to gather within a social bubble.

Note: Athletes may need to be reminded of their responsibility to try to maintain social distancing throughout the session / activities.

After Club Activity / Training

- Following the conclusion of the training session, athletes / coaches / members should be encouraged to leave the facility immediately to avoid gatherings in car parks / communal areas.

Track and Field Specific Guidance:

It is now permissible for multiple groups to operate within a facility there is no limit in place on the number of participants who can use a facility, this should be determined by a risk assessment which should be completed with and/or agreed with the facility operator. Naturally, consideration should be given to the flow of all users and groups and how they enter or exit the facility. The club should have carried out a thorough risk assessment and put in place associated risk management protocols including implementing any requirements connected to social distancing and hygiene.

In all cases, all users of the facility must strictly adhere to any rules, restrictions and procedures in place as well as and coaches must follow any hygiene guidance put in place by the club / facility operator.

All users (coaches and athletes) should ensure they maintain social distancing, in line with the government guidelines at all times.

Note: It is important to acknowledge that the use of any facilities, areas or equipment is at the complete discretion of the facility provider / operator.

Running

- All users (coaches and athletes) should ensure they maintain social distancing where possible however there is no legal requirement to social distance whilst outdoors.
- Due to the nature of the event and the minimal contact made, athletes and coaches can use hurdles and steeplechase barriers. Ideally, the equipment should be cleaned / thoroughly wiped down before and after each training session and in line with the latest guidance.

Jumping

- For all jumping activities, it is the responsibility of the coach leading the activity to ensure a thorough Risk Assessment has been carried out before any training session, and that all cleaning protocols have been undertaken.
- Coaches and athletes should endeavour to ensure they maintain social distancing however the legal requirement to social distance whilst operating outdoors has been removed at this time.

Vertical Jumps:

- If jumping areas are to be used athletes must follow hygiene guidelines for the cleaning of hands prior to commencing any training activity.

- Horizontal Jumps:

- Equipment such as rakes and measuring tapes should be managed by dedicated individuals (i.e. the coach) throughout a session and thoroughly cleaned prior to the next group activity / session.

Throwing

- All users (coaches and athletes) should endeavour to ensure they maintain social distancing however the legal requirement to social distance whilst operating outdoors has been removed at this time.
- Ideally, athletes should be encouraged to use their own equipment where possible. When this is not possible, any equipment used should be used by athletes with appropriate cleaning protocols adopted.

Off Track Specific Guidance:

As detailed above;

Following the recent announcements by the First Minister from 26th December, Wales will be entering Alert Level 2.

From Sunday 26th December 2021, there is a limit on the number of people who can gather in both indoor and outdoor settings. The limits announced are 30 people (indoors) and 50 people (outdoors). For club training and group running the limit remains at 50 people with multiple groups allowed to operate where there is sufficient space. Note: there is no legal requirement to social distance in an outdoor setting, however, athletes should avoid physical contact where possible.

It should be noted however that all affiliated clubs, running groups and facility operators (where applicable) should continue to be mindful of the need to risk assess activities and take necessary precautions to minimise the risk of the spread of the virus in line with the latest Welsh Government regulations and guidance. The Track and Trace procedures adopted by clubs and groups throughout the pandemic should be continued as a matter of course. All activity taking place across the sport should take into account both national and any more localised restrictions that may be applicable.

The latest Welsh Government Restrictions can be found here: <https://gov.wales/current-restrictions>

Coaches/leaders and athletes/runners running or training in a public space can now take place with significantly increased numbers.

For all activities, clubs, groups, leaders and coaches should ensure they have carried out a standard risk assessment of any training space or route, as they would normally, prior to the session taking place.

Coaches, leaders and athletes/runners aiming to access trails and mountains or public spaces a long way from assistance and emergency services should make themselves aware of any local guidance/considerations prior to travel/training. Consideration of whether this type of activity could potentially add to pressure on emergency services and health services should be given.

Disclaimer:

Please note that the subject matter covered in this guidance is in no way exhaustive and the material does not stand on its own nor is intended to be relied upon as a substitute for obtaining specific legal advice. Individual circumstances will differ. The information contained in this guidance is given in good faith but any liability of Welsh Athletics Ltd or its professional advisors (including their respective members or employees) to you or any

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This guidance has been prepared by Welsh Athletics Ltd, 2021

[Links to related guidance](#)