



LIFTING ATHLETICS OUT OF LOCKDOWN

#StaySafe

Preparing to Return to Club Activity [V1 15/03/2021]

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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. Planning scenarios around, for example, an injury occurring to an athlete and the need to support that athlete while social distancing should be undertaken¹.

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? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Check the latest Welsh Government Guidance here.
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 level²:

- 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.

¹ <https://www.englandathletics.org/athletics-and-running/news/guidance-update-for-restricted-return-to-activity-for-coaches-leaders-athletes-runners-and-facilities/>

² https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/lifting-lockdown-how-approach-coronavirus-exit-strategy_0.pdf

In line with the Welsh Government announcements, from Saturday 27th March athletics and running activities (including club activities and training) for children and young people under the age of 18 (aged 17 and under) can resume (pending favourable public health conditions).

In line with this, clubs will shortly be permitted to return to activity and clubs training. Welsh Athletics recommends that, as was in place at the end of 2020 (before the latest lockdown restrictions were imposed), clubs work closely with facility providers to ensure there is a smooth and effective re-opening of the sport.

Clubs should return in line with the appropriate measures in place, this will include;

- Ensuring that the club has an appointed and trained COVID-19 Officer
- The club has established a COVID-19 Working Group
- The club may also have established a COVID-19 Action Plan**
- All appropriate Risk Assessments have been completed
- Risk Management protocols are identified and ready to be implemented
- A booking system or registration system is in place to comply with Track and Trace requirements
- All members are updated and informed of key communications in relation to the return to club activity
- Further advice and support can be found in the Return to Club Activity guidance document (version 6)

****COVID-19 Action Plan:**

Club COVID-19 risk assessments and actions plans will be dependent upon each individual club situation and local facility set up. In your action plan you will need reference procedures that show your members how the club plan to manage the number of training groups and number of athletes or runners. You will need to consider the following;

- A booking system (if applicable) that complies with Welsh Government Track and Trace requirements,
- Access to the facility / site, toilets and first aid when determining overall training session capacity,
- Arrive & Departure of club members to avoid large groups congregating,
- Parent or carer pick up and drops off points,
- Details of specific procedures relating to the use of equipment and facilities and appropriate cleaning and hygiene protocols as identified in the COVID-19 Risk Assessment,

- The allocation of certain areas of 'zones' within the facility to ensure that athletes and training groups can operate independently, and social distancing requirements are adhered to,
- Time and gaps between sessions / activities to be able to maintain social distancing and adequate cleaning of equipment / facilities to be carried out,
- An allocated and dedicated spectator area,
- Spectating space is clearly marked or sectioned off, for parents or carers who need to stay at a training session for safeguarding or welfare reasons,
- Appropriate signage at club training sessions that reinforces key messages in relation to social distancing, sanitising, cleaning, and hygiene,
- All of the club's coaches are licenced and have up to date DBS checks in place.

NOTE: Welsh Athletics is not imposing a limit to the number of participants that can be at a facility at any given time as part of a club training session due to the diverse nature of training facilities and will depend on a multitude of factors, some of which are outlined above.

Welcoming members back to your club

Good communication is key to supporting members back to activity. Whilst some members will be excited and full of enthusiasm others may feel anxious and unsure about returning. Reassuring members and letting them know what is happening will be important in welcoming your members back.

When returning to activity and training we would strongly recommend that training intensity is phased in over a period of time and that full consideration is given to what the athletes need in order return to training safely. There has been an extended period which has seen many athletes unable to access facilities or undertake the same level of training and conditioning therefore there may be a natural level of anxiety related to returning to the sport.

Top 'Share' Communication Tips for Clubs:

Share what is happening within your club...

- Share communications about details like upcoming training sessions, including virtual ones, facility use plans as well as any plans that the club has for future competitions or social events. It may be a good time to promote future volunteering opportunities in the club.

Share how members will be kept safe...

- Share any new advice from Welsh Athletics, Welsh Government or the Welsh Sports Association in relation to the return to activity and always advocate that members / individuals follow the latest government guidelines relating to COVID-19 and adhere /

operate within any restrictions that are in place. There may also be the opportunity to share the risk assessments and risk management protocols that the club has in place in order to keep members as safe as possible.

Share how the rules will be enforced...

- Make people aware of how new rules will be enforced including how you will hold people account if they do not adhere to them.

Share the latest guidance...

- Highlight any new advice from Welsh Athletics, Welsh Government or the Welsh Sports Association in relation to the return to activity and always advocate that members / individuals follow the latest government guidelines relating to COVID-19 and adhere to and operate within any restrictions that are in place.

Share the positive elements that are happening within your clubs...

- Remind people why they love athletics and running and your club by sharing quotes from individuals and images of fun sessions or events. Celebrate the volunteers within the club and share positive new and good stories.

Disclaimer:

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This guidance has been prepared by Welsh Athletics Ltd, 2020

[Links to related guidance](#)