



LIFTING ATHLETICS OUT OF LOCKDOWN

#StaySafe

Return to Providing Facility Use [V11 18/06/21]

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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. 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

Return to activity phases

Element of the sport	Lockdown	Red Phase 1	Amber Phase 2	Green Phase 3
Facilities	All Facilities closed.	Limited availability of outdoor facilities. Local access only.	All facilities able to open with restrictions in line with Public Health Wales & Welsh Government guidance.	All facilities open with restrictions in line with Public Health Wales & Welsh Government guidance.

This initial guidance document is for **facility providers** and covers:

- **Before Opening**
- **Facilities and Equipment**
- **Health, Safety and Hygiene**
- **Working with Clubs and Individual Users**
- **Preparing for the potential return of Club Activity / Training**

Before Opening:

- Opening outdoor track and field facilities is at the discretion and consent of the facility provider / operator.
- The track operator should have completed the relevant [COVID-19 Risk Assessments](#) and put implemented the relevant Risk Management programme in relation to operating during this time.
- Operators will need to have considered clarifying insurance cover for re-opening during this time.
- It is recommended that deep cleans have been conducted of all areas of the facility and equipment.
- All staff and volunteers should have been fully briefed and updated with the latest guidelines and recommendations.

Facilities and Equipment:

- Many outdoor track and facilities are currently open.

- There is the potential for changing and toilet facilities to be opened however this should be avoided wherever possible. If there is a requirement for them to be made available particular care should be taken by those using them and those cleaning them. Where they are open, ensure soap and hot water is provided along with hand sanitizer if possible.
- Clubhouses: Clubs that operate at a facility are permitted to open. Opening should be in line with Welsh Government guidelines (and the Guidelines for opening indoor hospitality where appropriate) for opening with social distancing in place and no more than six people from six different households in any gathering and the use of face coverings where applicable.
- All fixed and movable equipment should have a clear ongoing hygiene plan in place, that outlines if the equipment is to be used and pre and post cleaning of equipment.
- Operators should remove any other unnecessary equipment and items from tracks.

Health, Safety & Hygiene

- Operators should ensure that usual access to First Aid provision and emergency equipment is maintained (note: in some cases this may require limited access to restricted areas) and that there is a clear plan for dealing with all accidents and emergencies.
- Where possible, operators should make hand sanitizers or wipes available for use at entrance/exit to venue/tracks area and any equipment if in use.
- All common touchpoint surfaces should be cleaned regularly in line with the latest government and industry guidelines.
- Plans should be in place to minimise encounters between users and to ensure that social distancing guidelines can be maintained. This may, for example, involve having protocols in place for car parking areas, communal areas, entry and exit to the facility, one-way systems in place, etc.
- Operators should also consider additional signage to remind users of the restriction in place.
- Entry points: these should be marked, and queuing protocols adopted where there may be congestion. Social distancing should always be maintained. If payments are being taken it is advised that these are done using contactless technology (note: it may be necessary to communicate this to all potential users in advance).
- Athletes and all users should be encouraged to bring their own equipment. Where shared equipment is used, this must be cleaned before and after use in line with the latest guidance.

- It may be necessary, and good practice, to manage the number and flow of users at the facility. Alternatively, a telephone booking system could be adopted.
- It might be possible on the track to have more than one unit training at any one point, this would need to be carried out in line with government guidelines and social distancing at all points within the facility, including the track.
- The facility operators should communicate with the club and all individual users/customers clearly and regularly, making them aware in advance of the measures you are putting in place at the venue, and guidelines they will be asked to follow.
- Ensure signage on guidelines for taking part safely and promoting hygiene measures is clearly displayed at all times (and ensure these remain up-to-date as restrictions change).
- Where possible, spectating should be kept to a minimum with social distancing protocols observed at all times. Where attendance of a parent/guardian (non-participant) or a carer for a disabled athlete is required, it should be limited to one per athlete where possible, again, with social distancing strictly observed while watching the sessions.
- The latest government guidelines in relation to COVID-19 cleaning protocols should be adhered to at all times.

Indoor Facilities:

It is now possible for indoor athletics venues to open. Due to the size and nature of indoor athletics facilities it is possible to significantly increase the number users of an indoor space.

- The numbers of children and young people (those aged 18 and under) is currently not restricted.
- Indoor organised activities for up to 30 adults are permitted however this is relating to organised group activity.

The number of individual adults accessing an indoor facility are only restricted by the numbers that the facility deems safe (in line with any associated risk assessment). The suggested UK Active Guidance - basing maximum occupancy on the formula of **3sq m (or 100sq ft) per person** should be used to calculate maximum occupancy at any one time. Venues should consider the operational and social distancing requirements and it should be noted that maximum occupancy does not necessarily equate to recommended occupancy.

Working with Clubs and Individual Users of the facility:

Clubs:

Welsh Athletics has advised clubs to work closely with facility providers / operators in order to ensure a safe return of the sport to using dedicated athletics facilities.

Whilst each facility is unique in its operations, there is the potential for some degree of continuity in delivery during these times.

Whilst these are challenging times, it is anticipated that whilst each facility will have their own guidelines and working practices clubs can work alongside these guidelines and implement key control measures to work towards the safest return to use protocols. As with usual club activity / training, return to use should be based on the assumption that all necessary Risk Assessments have been carried out by clubs and coaches and the appropriate Risk Management measures will be implemented. As the facility operator, you should work with the club to ensure that risk assessments are shared, understood and adhered to**.

Note: UKA provide a Health and Safety Helpline, supported by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents. If clubs need support with producing a policy or risk assessments you can call 0121 248 2235 or email athleticsafety@RoSPA.com

Individual Users:

These are much easier to control and manage. Individual users are likely to use the facility via the relevant booking or predetermined hire arrangements in place.

Preparing for the potential return of Club or Small Group Activity:

From **Saturday 27th March**, outdoor organised activities for children and young people aged 18 (or persons who were aged under 18 on 31 August 2020) were allowed and there is no limit on the number of children and young people that can attend these activities however organisers should be mindful of the space available. In relation to social distancing; guidance states that wherever possible efforts should be made to socially distance, and the numbers in attendance should always reflect the space available. Note: Adults should always social distance from one another. Further information can be found by visiting the [Welsh Government guidance and FAQ's related to organised children's outdoor activities.](#)

From **Monday 17th May**, Wales moved to Alert Level 2 therefore the numbers permitted to take part in organised activities has increased to 50 people in outdoors and 30 people indoors. This will allow for a wider return to club and group activity in both indoor and outdoor settings. Those organising training sessions should follow this guidance and communicate clearly with participants what to expect and encourage compliance with any and all risk mitigation measures put in place.

It should be noted that multiple groups are permitted to use a facility therefore consideration will need to be given (via risk assessment) to the use of space available

(ensuring that within the area / areas being used, numbers do not exceed those outlined in Welsh Government guidance and are operating safely, independently with social distancing measures in place where applicable). Further information can be found in both Appendix 1 of this document (pages 10 & 11) as well as in the ['Welsh Government: Sport, recreation and leisure: guidance for a safe return'](#) (version updated 10th May).

From **Monday 7th June**, Welsh Government restrictions eased to allow up to 4000 people at an event or organised activity. As a result the numbers attending athletics training activities can increase and the numbers of athletes and spectators can increase significantly (note: all activities should be reflected in the associated Risk Assessment) and social distancing should be maintained at all times.

Clubs have been issued with [Return to Training guidance](#) in order to help assist in the safe return to activity.

Running

- All users (coaches and athletes) should ensure they maintain social distancing, in line with the government guidelines at all times.
- Due to the nature of the event and the minimal contact made, athletes and coaches can use hurdles and steeplechase barriers. The equipment should be cleaned / thoroughly wiped down before and after each training session and in line with the latest guidance.
- Athletes should be encouraged to use their own / personal starting blocks where possible. When this is not possible, any equipment used should be used by just one athlete and thoroughly cleaned according to the latest guidance before and after each session.

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 ensure they maintain social distancing at all times as well as maintaining social distancing from any other coaches and athletes using adjacent spaces. Only agreed staff, coaches, athletes, officials and volunteers should be allowed into the jumping areas.
- Athletes should use hand sanitiser and clean equipment with disinfectant solution* between jumps. All athletes must follow hygiene guidelines for the cleaning of hands prior to commencing any training activity.
- All athletes should ensure they have no allergies or intolerances to the cleaning substances being used.

- Athletes should be encouraged to use their own / personal equipment where possible (i.e. pole vault poles). When this is not possible, any equipment used should be used by just one athlete and thoroughly cleaned according to the latest guidance before and after each session.

Vertical Jumps:

- Facility operators should contact the manufacturer of the jumps mats in use at their facility to confirm whether the proposed cleaning products can be used safely on their equipment. Disinfecting landing beds effectively against Coronavirus is the responsibility of the facility operator. The high mist spray / disinfectant solution* used for this purpose must not damage or compromise the safety properties of the landing bed, or cause harm to staff, volunteers or athletes.
- If jumping areas are to be used athletes must follow hygiene guidelines for the cleaning of hands prior to commencing any training activity.
- Mats and landing areas should be thoroughly cleaned in line with government guidance, before and after each individual athlete/user.
- Disinfecting landing beds effectively against Coronavirus is the responsibility of the facility operator. The disinfectant used for this purpose must not damage or compromise the safety properties of the landing bed, or cause harm to staff, volunteers or athletes.

Note: both [Neuff Athletics](#) and [Athletics Direct](#) have issued guidance related to the cleaning of landing areas.

- The landing mat should be fully cleaned in line with manufacturers and government guidance, before and after each group use.
- A suitable adult (i.e. coach or facility operator) should perform a wipe down of bars and uprights using suitable antiviral wipes/disinfectant solution* before and after each training session. The facility operator should make it clear to all users if this cleaning will be carried out by facility staff or whether the coach/athletes will be expected to do it.
- After each session cleaning of the bed must be completed, and a minimum of 15-minute drying time must be allowed, before the next session starts.
- If an athlete coughs or sneezes directly onto the landing mat, athletes should cease further use until the mat has undergone a full cleaning process.

Horizontal Jumps:

- The landing pit should be fully cleaned by turning and raking of the sand before and after each group and raked between individual athlete/users. A facility operator may

choose to use a high mist spray of disinfecting solution* sprayed over the sand after use, as well as a turn and rake protocol.

- 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.
- After each session cleaning of the pit must be completed, and minimum of 15-minute drying time must be allowed, before the next session starts.
- Sandpits should be covered when not in use and signs positioned to ensure they are not used.

**Note: the disinfectants used should be effective against Coronavirus.*

Throwing

- All users (coaches and athletes) should ensure they maintain social distancing, in line with the government guidelines at all times.
- Athletes should be encouraged to use their own equipment where possible. When this is not possible, any equipment used should be used by just one athlete (or athletes in the same household) and thoroughly cleaned according to the latest guidance before and after each session.

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 third party which may arise out of the reliance by you or any other party of the contents of this guidance is hereby excluded to the fullest extent permitted by law. Welsh Athletics Ltd and its professional advisors accept no duty of care or liability for any loss occasioned, whether caused by negligence or otherwise, to any person acting or refraining from actions as a result of any material in this guidance. We would strongly recommend that you consult professional advisors on specific issues before acting or refraining from action on any of the contents of this guidance.

This guidance has been prepared by Welsh Athletics Ltd, 2021



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Additional Guidance: Outdoor Athletics Facility Occupancy levels

Outdoor facilities across Wales have re-opened with positive effect.

The numbers of people accessing outdoor facilities is only restricted by the size and space available.

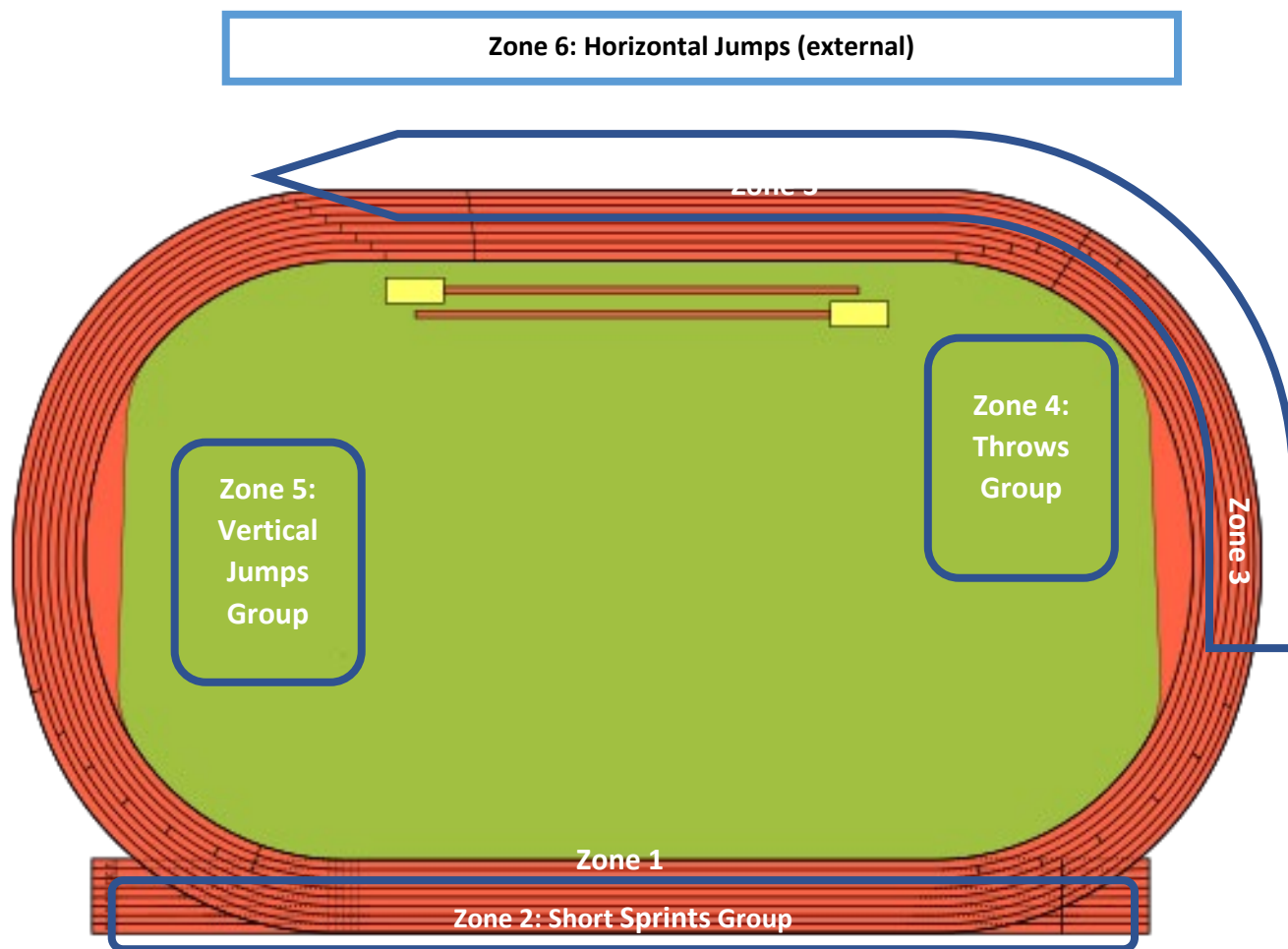
Consideration needs to be given that a typical outdoor athletics facility in between 12,000 and 20,000 square metres in total surface area it is therefore perfectly feasible for multiple groups to operate independently within a facility at any one time.

Clubs across Wales have successfully worked with facility providers to facilitate an increased return to activity and training by splitting the areas available into different zones.

- An example of this is detailed in **figure 1 (below)**.

Using this method, in line with the appropriate risk assessment, clubs have been successful in identifying safe activities for close to 100 people within a facility at any one time (Note: there is currently no restriction on the number of children and young people (aged 18 and under) that can attend organised activities such as club training).

Figure 1: Typical Athletics Track Layout



1. Zone 1: Lanes 1 & 2 (400m) for the Endurance / Middle Distance Group to operate
2. Zone 2: Home straight Lanes 4-6/8 for a short Sprints / Hurdles Group to operate
3. Zone 3: Bend 1 and Back Straight for a longer Sprints Group to operate
4. Zone 4: D1 for a Throws Group to operate
5. Zone 5: D2 for a horizontal Jumps Group
6. Zone 6: (external) for a horizontal Jumps Group to operate

NB. Obviously, any additional external areas could also be utilised by other groups as appropriate.