



WELSH ATHLETICS
ATHLETAU CYMRU

LIFTING ATHLETICS OUT OF LOCKDOWN

#StaySafe

Return to Club Activity [V6 26/03/21]

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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
Clubs	Face to Face Club activity cancelled, clubs should maintain remote engagement with members. Solo training, or with family members, at home or within walking distance of home.	Face to Face Club activity cancelled, clubs should maintain remote engagement with members. Clubs to plan for a potential return to facility use and engage with facility operators / providers where appropriate.	Return to outdoor facility usage on a limited basis. Clubs to work with facility providers to develop a safe Return to Use Plan at dedicated athletics facilities. Training with one other person or small group as facilities allow in line with published Public Health Wales & Welsh Government guidance. Athletes able to travel to facilities to train.	Face to face club activity resumes at all venues in line with Public Health Wales & Welsh Government guidance.

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, more specific guidance can be found in the '[Return to Group Running](#)' document produced by Welsh Athletics.

For athletics coaches and leaders, more detailed guidance can be found in the '[Return to Coaching](#)' document produced by Welsh Athletics.

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 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: 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

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 period may need to be limited and will need to be in line with government guidelines. The maximum number of athletes using the facility at any given time period may need to be limited and will need to be in line with government guidelines.
- From Saturday 27th March, 6 people from 2 households are permitted to exercise together (Note: under 18s are not included in this number) multiple groups are permitted within a facility therefore consideration will need to be given (via risk assessment) to the use of space (ensuring that within the small groups operating, numbers do not exceed those outlined in Welsh Government guidance and are operating safely, independently with social distancing measures in place).
- From Saturday 27th March, outdoor organised activities for children (U18s) are also allowed and there is no limit on the number of children and young children 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](#).
- The club should consider operating a booking system and allocating time slots for athletes to ensure that there is maximum opportunity for all.
- The club may need to allocate spaces / lanes for use during particular times to ensure social distancing and be practiced and maintained throughout.

- It is likely that changing facilities at the venue will be closed therefore you will need to make members aware of this prior to arrival.
- Where changing / toilet facilities are in operation this should be limited to only essential access operating on a one-in-one-out fashion with social distancing maintained at all times.
- 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.
- Athletes should also be reminded, in advance, the social distancing requirements in place in line with government guidelines, and associated restrictions on activities that will be in place as a result.
- Any users of the facility should be reminded, where possible of the hygiene requirements and where possible to bring hand sanitizer.
- 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:

- No equipment should be shared. Where possible, athletes should bring their own equipment.
- 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).
- If equipment is used, it is to be used by only one individual throughout the training session, unless there has been an agreed, safe cleaning protocol implemented which would allow for the sharing of equipment.
- All activities will need to be carried out whilst practicing social distancing and potentially using restricted space and will need to be adapted accordingly.
- A reminder that there should be no physical contact between athletes from different households at any time.
- Athletes should be encouraged to wash their hands before training and, where appropriate use hand sanitizer regularly throughout the session.

Note: Athletes may need to be reminded of social distancing requirement 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.
- Athletes should wash their hands or use hand sanitisers as soon as practically feasible after training.
- Athletes / coaches / members should not share lifts apart from with individuals of the same household.

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 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

- 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

- 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.

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, more specific guidance can be found in the '[Return to Group Running](#)' document produced by Welsh Athletics.

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

From Saturday 27th March, 6 people from 2 households are permitted to exercise together (Note: under 18s are not included in this number) therefore consideration will need to be given to the use of space within the facility (ensuring that within the small groups operating,

numbers do not exceed those outlined in Welsh Government guidance and are operating safely, independently with social distancing measures in place).

From Saturday 27th March, outdoor organised activities for children (U18s) are also allowed and there is no limit on the number of children and young children 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.](#)

In all cases the coaches and leaders should have carried out a thorough Risk Assessment and put in place associated risk management protocols relevant to the activities intended. This may include implementing protocols relating to social distancing and hygiene.

Coaches/leaders and athletes/runners should adhere to all restrictions that may be placed on a public space and are reminded that social distancing measures must be adhered to with members of the public.

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 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

[**Links to related guidance**](#)