



# LIFTING ATHLETICS OUT OF LOCKDOWN

#StaySafe

## Return to Providing Facility use [V5 07/10/20]

Contents:

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<b>GUIDING PRINCIPLES .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>RETURN TO ACTIVITY PHASES .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>BEFORE OPENING:.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT:.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>HEALTH, SAFETY &amp; HYGIENE.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>WORKING WITH CLUBS AND INDIVIDUAL USERS OF THE FACILITY: .....</b>	<b>5</b>
• Clubs: .....	5
• Individual Users:.....	5
• Preparing for the potential return of Club Activity / Training: .....	6
• Running.....	6
• Jumping .....	6
• Throwing.....	8
<b>LINK TO RELATED GUIDANCE .....</b>	<b>9</b>

## 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 undertaken<sup>1</sup>.

<b>Health first</b>	<b>If you have any doubts or concerns about the risk to your health or that of others, stop and re-assess</b>
<b>Stay up to date</b>	How will you make sure you, and those you're with, are following the latest guidance? <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Check the latest Welsh Government Guidance here.</a></li></ul>
<b>Think ahead: Before, during, &amp; after</b>	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 level<sup>2</sup>:

- 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.

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

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/lifting-lockdown-how-approach-coronavirus-exit-strategy\\_0.pdf](https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/lifting-lockdown-how-approach-coronavirus-exit-strategy_0.pdf)

## Return to activity phases

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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:

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- **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. Indoor facilities can now open in line with the latest Welsh Government guidelines.

- 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 / communal areas should only be opened if necessary and in a limited way for operational activity only.
- 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 al 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).
- Spectating should be actively discouraged. 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, with social distancing strictly observed while watching the sessions (consider marking out specific boxes/areas for this purpose).
- The latest government guidelines in relation to COVID-19 cleaning protocols should be adhered to at all times.

## **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](mailto: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 Activity / Training:**

In a welcomed boost for the sport, from July the Welsh Government regulation changed to allow for larger gatherings, outdoors of up to 30 people where these are organised and supervised by a responsible person. We have now been informed that, where a facility has space, multiple groups are permissible within a facility and therefore the total number of people operating in / using a facility **can exceed 30**. This is as long as the multiple groups operate independently and do not mix for the duration of the activity. Consideration should be given to the flow of all users and groups and how they enter or exit the facility. This should be reflected and recorded in the associated risk assessment\*.

In all cases the club should have carried out a thorough \*Risk Assessment and put in place associated risk management protocols including implementing any requirements relating to maintaining social distancing and hygiene.

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.
- A reminder that, a single lane gap is not sufficient to meet current social distancing regulations.
- There is the potential to use hurdles and steeplechase barriers (as well as the water jump) provided the equipment is thoroughly cleaned according to the latest guidance before and after each session.
- 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.
- It is also advised that, where possible, athletes should wear long sleeves and leggings to minimise contact with the landing mats and sand.
- 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 use of landing mats is restricted to a maximum group of 6 (1 coach with up to 5 athletes).
- 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 use of landing pits is restricted to a maximum group of 6 (1 coach with up to 5 athletes).
- 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:**

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This guidance has been prepared by Welsh Athletics Ltd, 2020

[Link to related guidance](#)