



LIFTING ATHLETICS OUT OF LOCKDOWN

#StaySafe

Return to Providing Facility Use [V12 26/07/21]

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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? 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 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**

Update (Version 12):

The announcement by the First Minister on Wednesday 14th July regarding the easing of COVID restrictions in Wales was a huge boost for the sport. From Saturday 17th July, Wales fully entered alert level one, the easing of restrictions at this time means that; there is **no limit** on the number of people that can meet outdoors and **formal social distancing rules (outdoors) have come to an end.**

Organised indoor activities can also continue to take place with increased limits of up to 1000 seated and 200 standing (note: social distancing must still be maintained in indoor settings at this time).

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>

Before Opening:

- All facilities across Wales are now able to open however this is 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.
- 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.
- 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.

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. 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. Note: there is however no legal requirement for people to social distance outdoors.

- Operators should also consider additional signage to remind users of any remaining restrictions that are in place.
- Entry points: these should be marked, and queuing protocols adopted where there may be congestion. 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).
- 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.
- There is currently no limit on the number of people that can meet in an outdoor setting. It is feasible to have multiple groups and users operating in a facility at any one time, especially as and when there is space to do so safely.
- 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).
- The latest government guidelines in relation to COVID-19 cleaning protocols should be adhered to at all times.

Indoor Facilities:

It is 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.

Latest guidelines mean that organised indoor activities can also continue to take place with increased limits of up to 1000 seated and 200 standing (note: social distancing must still be maintained in indoor settings at this time).

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:

As detailed above; the announcement by the First Minister on Wednesday 14th July regarding the easing of COVID restrictions in Wales was a huge boost for the sport. From Saturday 17th July, Wales fully entered alert level one, the easing of restrictions at this time means that; there is **no limit** on the number of people that can meet outdoors and **formal social distancing rules (outdoors) have come to an end.**

Organised indoor activities can also continue to take place with increased limits of up to 1000 seated and 200 standing (note: social distancing must still be maintained in indoor settings at this time).

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>

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).

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 where possible however the legal requirement to social distance whilst operating outdoors has been removed at this time.
- 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:

- Ideally, 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.
- 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 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.

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 and the appropriate risk assessment in place. There is currently no limit on the number of people that can meet in an outdoor setting and no legal requirement to social distance.

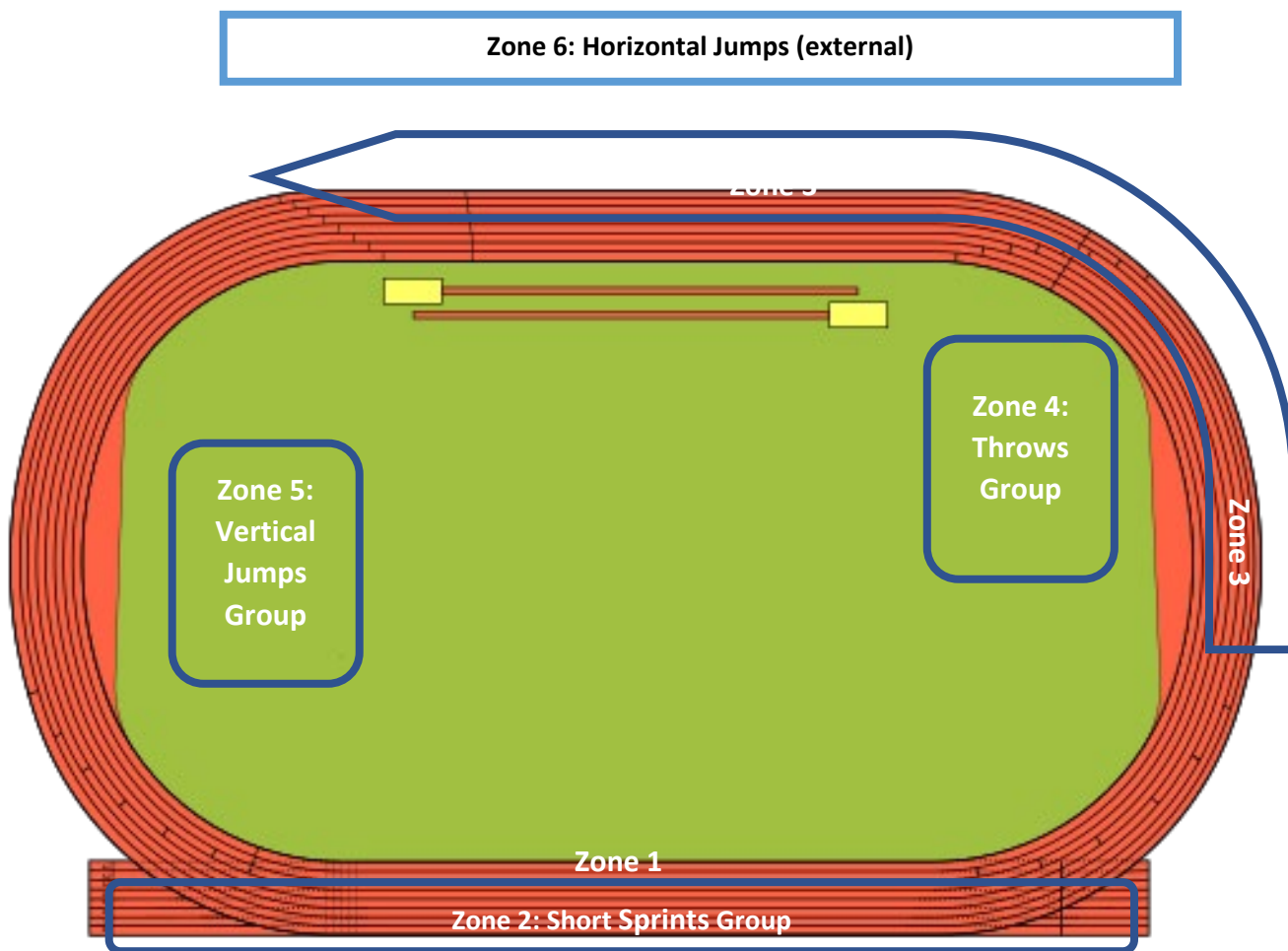
Consideration needs to be given that a typical outdoor athletics facility in between 12,000 and 20,000 square metres in total surface area it is therefore perfectly feasible for multiple groups to operate independently within a facility at any one time.

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 protocols to allow for high levels of usage within a facility at any particular. (Note: There is currently no limit on the number of people that can meet in an outdoor setting and no legal requirement to maintain social distancing).

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.