



SWIM WALES  
NOFIO CYMRU

# RETURN TO WATER

## GUIDANCE

# GUIDANCE FOR TECHNICAL OFFICIALS

JULY 2020

# GUIDANCE DOCUMENT FOREWORD

Our sector has faced a significant challenge over the past few months and the closure of well over 300 pools in Wales has affected many people.

Thankfully we are now seeing some easing of restrictions by Welsh Government and Swim Wales is at the centre of this process ensuring that all of our user groups are supported. To do this, we have created a suite of key guidance documents that aim to support the aquatic community in Wales in their journey back to the water.

The Swim Wales Return to Water Plans will be living and evolving documents and have been created with insight from a number of consultation and working groups in order to develop a safe return for all Technical Officials. We would like to point out that any guidance that we produce will be in step with Welsh Government and Public Health Wales and will be done to safeguard our participants, staff and the public while giving due consideration to the local communities in which we exist and operate.

We want to say thank you to our Swim Wales Technical Officials Panel, member clubs, swim schools, volunteers, staff and facility partners for your understanding and professionalism over the last few months. We hope this guidance document helps you with a safe return to what we all believe in which is Aquatics for Everyone, for life.

**Simon Clarke**

Head of Aquatic Development  
Swim Wales

# GUIDANCE FOR TECHNICAL OFFICIALS

## INTRODUCTION

The following has been developed in co-operation with industry partners.

This document aims to support officials when returning to events and will also help operators and aquatic clubs to work collaboratively to ensure officials return safely. It provides guidance on reducing the risk of Covid-19 transmission within the swimming poolside environment.

It will highlight the continued requirements for safe social distancing and enhanced hygiene regimes. As with all environments there is still a level of risk of Covid-19 transmission in aquatic settings that requires control measures to be implemented. Operators and event organisers must create their own risk assessments per event before implementing any activities.

Officials taking part in events should also familiarise themselves with the [Swim Wales RTW Guidance for Users](#) before attending.

**Due to the changing landscape as a result of COVID-19, Swim Wales will be conducting a comprehensive review of its event and competition structure including meet licensing and officiating. Consultation with key stakeholders including clubs, coaches, officials and facility operators will be a priority.**

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- **Safety first** – the safety of anyone involved in our sports and activities is paramount and will be put first in all considerations.
- **Consistent** – our guidance is across multiple activities and many stakeholders, we will seek to make it consistent and aligned to avoid creating conflict or confusion.
- **Robust** – we will ensure that our guidance is developed by experts in the sport/activity field and then reviewed internally and by a medical practitioner to ensure it is as robust as possible where applicable.
- **Evolving** – we will provide initial guidance but understand that not all factors are currently known and that circumstances will change. To that end, we will develop and improve guidance as appropriate and based on practical experience when activity recommences in the water.

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus.

Most people infected with the COVID-19 virus will experience mild to moderate respiratory illness and recover without requiring special treatment. Older people, and those with underlying medical problems like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, and cancer are more likely to develop serious illness.

The best way to prevent and slow down transmission is be well informed about the COVID-19 virus, the disease it causes and how it spreads. Protect yourself and others from infection by washing your hands or using an alcohol based rub frequently and not touching your face.

The COVID-19 virus spreads primarily through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose when an infected person coughs or sneezes, so it's important that you also practice respiratory etiquette (for example, by coughing into a flexed elbow).

More information can be found at the [World Health Organization](#)



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# WELSH GOVERNMENT CORONAVIRUS CONTROL PLAN REGULATIONS

- Welsh Government regulations must be complied with in conjunction with NGB guidance.
- Organised activity in simultaneous groups of up to 15 people (alert levels 2 and 3) and up to 50 people (alert level 1) can exercise indoors as long as the capacity is aligned to the UK Active and NGB Guidance and the groups can be separated throughout the customer's journey.
  - Children aged under 18 are not included within the group limits on numbers if they are participating or facilitating a sporting activity organised and supervised by a responsible body for the development or well-being of children. Constraints on the total number of participants allowed is based upon the capacity aligned to the UK Active and NGB Guidance and the need for sufficient adults to be present to supervise.
  - Coaches and Teachers over the age of 18 would generally be regarded as participants and would be included within the group limit for organised Sport Activity. Any individuals organising and supervising the activity such as volunteers (e.g. Covid Officer) and facility staff, are exempt from the numbers allowed to participate in organised activity.
  - Any adult not directly participating in or facilitating the activities, should not stay in the area where the activity is taking place unless they are parents or guardians of children who require their attendance for health or safeguarding reasons.
- Bookable individual activity (e.g. community/public swim) will continue to follow the UK Active Guidance to determine the capacity on both wet and dry side activities.
- Organised activity in groups of up to 30 people (alert levels 2 and 3) and up to 100 people (alert level 1) can exercise outdoors.

## **UK Active Guidance:**

<https://swimwales.org/pages/supporting-resources>

## **Welsh Government Coronavirus Control Plan:**

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-12/coronavirus-control-plan-alert-levels-in-wales.pdf>

# WELSH GOVERNMENT LEISURE GUIDANCE UPDATES

ALL AREAS OF THE CUSTOMER JOURNEY MUST COMPLY WITH WELSH GOVERNMENT, PUBLIC HEALTH WALES AND NGB SPECIFIC GUIDANCE, RISK ASSESSMENTS AND LEGISLATION



## PHYSICAL/SOCIAL DISTANCING

It is less important to rigidly maintain a continual 2m distance from other children and adults if the child is of primary school age or younger. However, they should still be encouraged to maintain this wherever possible.

For further information on this, please follow the link:

<https://gov.wales/sport-recreation-and-leisure-guidance-phased-return-html#section-49640>



## TEST, TRACE & PROTECT (TTP)

For swimming pools, indoor fitness studios, gyms, spas or other indoor leisure centres or facilities, it is a legal requirement to collect and retain contact information for 21 days, and in exceptional circumstances, for a longer period, e.g. where police ask for information 20 days after collection. Clubs must implement an appropriate record keeping system to support the Welsh Government's TTP strategy which complies with the associated GDPR and data protection regulations.

Further guidance on keeping records and test, trace and protect can be found in the following places:

<https://gov.wales/test-trace-protect-coronavirus>

<https://gov.wales/keeping-records-staff-customers-and-visitors-test-trace-protect>

<https://gov.wales/sport-recreation-and-leisure-guidance-phased-return-html#section-49640>

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-07/test-trace-protect-process-summary-english.pdf>



## ISOLATION

If any individual feels unwell and displays symptoms of Coronavirus, they should immediately self-isolate (as well as their household), follow the Welsh Government's [self-isolation guidelines](#), and apply for a [Coronavirus test](#). Individuals should only seek a Covid-19 test if they have symptoms or have been instructed to do so by TTP.

Displaying symptoms is not a diagnosis and any symptoms could be due to any number of other causes. It is the responsibility of TTP to contact those who may be affected. It is not lawful for anybody else to do this.



## CONTACT TRACING

NHS Wales Test, Trace & Protect Service will notify other swimmers in the club, not the club itself. TTP will contact the club's Covid-19 Lead for a list of contacts who attended shared sessions, but will contact each person who attended those sessions individually. This should protect the club from the responsibility of handling any medical data for members, which has significant GDPR and data protection regulations. TTP may not name the person who has tested positive, and instead ask for the list of attendees of a time/dated session so as to avoid breaching medical confidentiality.

For more information, follow this link:

<https://gov.wales/contact-tracing>



## COVID-19 TESTING

If an individual has received a positive test result for Covid-19 infection, they will be informed to self-isolate at home in line with the UK Government self-isolation guidance: <https://gov.wales/self-isolation-stay-home-guidance-households-possible-coronavirus>

If an individual has received a negative test result for Covid-19 infection and has been identified as a contact of someone who has tested positive of Covid-19 (with symptoms or without), they must continue to self-isolate until the 14 day incubation period is over.

If an individual has received a negative test result for Covid-19 infection, has not displayed any symptoms and has not had a known contact of someone who has tested positive of Covid-19, there is no need to self-isolate. If they subsequently become unwell, they should self-isolate, and may need a further test.

**For more information, please follow this link:**

<https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/latest-information-on-novel-coronavirus-covid-19/information-for-individuals-tested-for-covid-19-infection/>



## FACE COVERINGS

Face coverings must be worn in all indoor public places. This requirement applies to everyone aged 11 and over unless an exception applies.

If you are preparing to exercise, changing, or undertaking any activity that isn't strenuous, especially when in close contact with other people, you will need to wear a face covering.

However, there may be circumstances where the layout of the premises and the nature of the exercise you are doing mean that it would not be reasonable to expect you to wear a face covering. The World Health Organisation advises against wearing a face covering when exercising as sweat can make a face covering become wet more quickly, making it difficult to breathe and promoting the growth of microorganisms. It advises the important preventative measure during exercise is to maintain physical distance from others.

When in the aquatic environment (poolside), a risk assessment to determine if Teachers, Coaches and Lifeguards are required to wear face-coverings, must be completed. The warm and humid environment (which may cause sweating) coupled with regular communication will provide greater risks and should be assessed in conjunction with the mitigating risk factors both in water and air. All other users on poolside will be expected to wear face coverings.

**For more information on face coverings, please follow these links:**

<https://gov.wales/face-coverings-frequently-asked-questions>



## GATHERINGS INDOORS

Where people exercise together indoors at a fitness studio, gym, swimming pool, other indoor leisure centre, facility or any other open premises, gatherings must be compliant with Welsh Government regulations and physical distancing must be maintained. Examples of people exercising together include a group swimming lesson or fitness class, and swimming or gym sessions open to the general public.

Simultaneous gatherings of individuals and groups must be compliant with Welsh Government regulations. These are allowed within a large space such as a swimming pool, a gym, or a sports hall, as long as the space allows for physical distancing, with groups and individuals separated and managed safely. This should only be considered where space is sufficient to allow 100sqft per person on land or 3sqm per bather in a pool as set out in UK Active Guidance, where entry and exit for individuals and groups can be managed, and where the space can be partitioned so individuals and groups do not interact, without limiting the ability to allow appropriate ventilation and control environmental factors such as humidity in each space.

This will allow for more efficient usage of spaces that are large enough to operate strict physical distancing and ensure that the venue otherwise remains 'COVID safe'.

**This information can be located on this link:**

<https://gov.wales/sport-recreation-and-leisure-guidance-phased-return-html#section-49640>

## OFFICIALS CONSIDERATIONS

- For those in risk groups (or anyone with concerns), please refer to the section titled 'Health Considerations'.
- All officials must continue to follow the latest general government guidance around social distancing.
- All involved should be asked to agree and confirm in writing (via email or online) that they have read and understood the changes to leisure facility procedures, and commit to adhering to them (to be in conjunction with their registered clubs and facility operator).
- It is not compulsory for officials to return to an event and they have the option to opt-in or opt-out.
- Individuals must not attend an event if they have any Covid-19 symptoms or know they have been in contact with others that have symptoms. They should follow government guidance as should those shielding or in any vulnerable category.
- Officials must ensure they take part in the [Health Survey](#) before returning to poolside in line with facility procedures.
- As well as lead officials, clubs and coaches should regularly reiterate safety and social distancing information, for example at the start of sessions and through swift intervention if anyone in the session is breaching guidelines.
- Individuals should sign the [declaration form](#), stating that they are symptom free, will only attend an event if they remain symptom free and are returning fully aware of the risks associated with the Covid-19 virus. NB: it is of critical importance at all times that the event organiser maintains a record of this.

## HYGIENE

- Thorough hand washing with soap and/or hand-sanitiser, should be regularly undertaken by all during an event.
- Equipment should be cleaned with anti-bacterial wipes.
- All officials should arrive at the pool ready to officiate and thus minimising the transmission risk in changing rooms and following the centre guidance where appropriate.

## EQUIPMENT

- Where possible, officials should have their own clearly labelled equipment.
- Personal equipment should be cleaned with anti-viral wipes or solution before and after use, and should not be stored at the venue.
- Sharing of equipment is not be permitted and equipment should not be left at the facility.
- Individuals should avoid handling other people's kit/equipment and take these home to clean.

## PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS FOR APPLYING SOCIAL DISTANCING AND REDUCING TRANSMISSION RISK

- Officials must comply with social distance guidelines at all times.
- Officials should bring sufficient fluids to the event in their own clearly marked bottles to refrain from using vending machines or water fountains.
- All scheduled timings must be adhered to enabling arrivals and departures to take place effectively without overloading the capacity of the center/pool.
- A familiarisation video of the environment would be beneficial. This should be communicated with all officials.
- Briefings should be kept to a minimum to avoid congestion. This will vary across disciplines depending on the level of interaction required. If there is a health and/or safety concern then the event organiser should not hesitate to undertake a briefing.
- To enter the pool a one way system should be put in place, ensuring this adheres to the process the facility has in place.

## HEALTH CONSIDERATIONS

It is important that officials read this section. All information below is subject to change based on government guidance. Individuals to whom this applies should stay up-to-date with the latest government guidance. If in any doubt, seek expert/medical advice.

### 'AT RISK' GROUPS

Officials who are high risk (clinically extremely vulnerable) should follow the medical guidance issued to them. People in this category should have received a letter from the Welsh Government and NHS informing them that they are at high risk. If they have not we suggest they contact their GP or local care team. The information below is accessible on the NHS website and highlights some people who are at high risk.

### PEOPLE DEEMED AT HIGH RISK (CLINICALLY EXTREMELY VULNERABLE)

(Important - the list below may not include everyone who is at higher risk from coronavirus and may change as we learn more about the virus).

People at [high risk from Covid-19](#) include people who:

- Have had an organ transplant
- Are having chemotherapy or antibody treatment for cancer, including immunotherapy
- Are having an intense course of radiotherapy (radical radiotherapy) for lung cancer
- Are having targeted cancer treatments that can affect the immune system (such as protein kinase inhibitors or PARP inhibitors)
- Have blood or bone marrow cancer (such as leukemia, lymphoma or myeloma)
- Have had a bone marrow or stem cell transplant in the past 6 months, or are still taking immunosuppressant medicine
- Have been told by a doctor they have a severe lung condition (such as cystic fibrosis, severe asthma or severe COPD)
- Have a condition that means they have a very high risk of getting infections (such as SCID or sickle cell)
- Are taking medicine that makes them much more likely to get infections (such as high doses of steroids or immunosuppressant medicine)
- Have a serious heart condition and are pregnant.

### PEOPLE DEEMED AT MODERATE RISK (CLINICALLY VULNERABLE)

(Important - the list below may not include everyone who is at higher risk from coronavirus and may change as we learn more about the virus).

Officials at moderate risk from coronavirus can go to school/work (if they cannot work from home) and for things like getting food or exercising but they should try to stay at home as much as possible. It is very important they follow the general advice on social distancing. Unlike people at high risk, they will not get a letter from the NHS.

The information below is accessible on the [NHS website](#) and highlights some people who are at moderate risk:

- Are 70 or older
- Are pregnant
- Have a lung condition that's not severe (such as asthma, COPD, emphysema or bronchitis)
- Have heart disease (such as heart failure)
- Have diabetes
- Have chronic kidney disease
- Have liver disease (such as hepatitis)
- Have a condition affecting the brain or nerves (such as Parkinson's disease, motor neurone disease, multiple sclerosis or cerebral palsy)
- Have a condition that means they have a high risk of getting infections
- Are taking medicine that can affect the immune system (such as low doses of steroids)
- Are very obese (a BMI of 40 or above).

## DISCLAIMER:

When referring to any documents and associated attachments in this guidance, please note the following:

1. Reliance upon the guidance or use of the content of this website will constitute your acceptance of these conditions.
2. The term guidance should be taken to imply the standards and best practice solutions that are acceptable to Swim Wales.
3. The documents and any associated drawing material are intended for information only.
4. Amendments, alterations and updates of documents and drawings may take place from time to time and it's recommended that they are reviewed at the time of use to ensure the most up-to-date versions are being referred to.
5. All downloadable drawings, images and photographs are intended solely to illustrate how elements of a facility can apply Swim Wales's suggestions and should be read in conjunction with any relevant design guidance, British and European Standards, Health and Safety Legislation and guidance, building regulations, planning and the principles of the Equality Act 2010.
6. The drawings are not 'site specific' and are outline proposals. They are not intended for, and should not be used in conjunction with, the procurement of building work, construction, obtaining statutory approvals, or any other services in connection with building works.
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8. The views expressed are not intended to take away or diminish the responsibility of the user to comply with appropriate current or future legislation or standards and if there are any conflicts between the views expressed in any of Swim Wales's design guidance material and other appropriate current or future legislation, the latter shall take precedence.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

Swim Wales would like to thank everyone involved in the creation of this guidance, in particular:

*Swim Wales Technical Officials Panel*

# RETURN TO THE WATER

## COVID-19 Guidance



**Please adhere to social distancing guidelines**

Cadwch at ganllawiau pellhau cymdeithasol



**Follow operator guidance on changing facilities**

Dilynwch gyfarwyddyd y gweithredwr ar gyfleusterau newid



**Wash your hands & ensure good hygiene throughout**

Golchwch eich dwylo a sicrhewch hylendid da drwy'r amser

**#GETINTOWATER**



**Do not enter the facility if you are displaying any symptoms**

Peidiwch a mynd i mewn i'r cyfleuster os ydych chi'n arddangos unrhyw symptomau



**Face coverings must be worn in communal areas**

Rhaid gwisgo gorchuddion wyneb mewn mannau cymunedol



**Follow all signage & guidance at facility**

Dilynwch yr holl arwyddion a chanllawiau yn y cyfleuster



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