An Overview of Current Guidance for Physical Activity Providers

This overview has been collated from official Government COVID-19 guidance and Sport England resources.

Please note: There is separate guidance for Out of School Activity for children. If you are providing out of school activities for children, please refer to this guidance as well.

What facilities can open?

Outdoor sports courts and other outdoor sporting activities have been permitted to reopen if those responsible for them are ready to do so and they can do so safely. This includes basketball and tennis courts, playing spaces like golf courses (public and private) and playing fields and water sports.

From 4 July outdoor gyms and playgrounds can open, as can clubhouse bars and restaurants. Indoor facilities should be kept closed, apart from toilets and throughways. Outdoor and indoor swimming pools will also remain closed to the public.

If you are a personal trainer/coach you can now work with clients outdoors, providing you are meeting no more than 5 other people from outside of your household and you follow social distancing guidelines. You can meet with different clients in a single day as long as it is in gatherings of no more than 6 (including yourself) and you are maintaining social distancing.

Who can take part?

Most people can now exercise alone, with members of their own household, or with up to 5 other people from outside their household, while observing social distancing guidelines.
Single adult households are now able to form a support bubble with one other household. For the purposes of this guidance, all references to 'households' also include their support bubble.

From 4 July, two households can meet in groups of more than 6 people, provided members of different households observe social distancing guidelines. Otherwise, gatherings of more than 6 people continue not to be permitted.

Vulnerable People

Specific guidance continues to apply to people who may be more vulnerable to Covid-19, and on who should and shouldn't be leaving their home to take part in sport and physical activity. These broadly fall into four groups, each of these groups will include children and young people, as well as adults.

1. **Self-isolating**
   Everyone in this group will be unable to leave their home to access sport and physical activity opportunities. They are self-isolating because:
   - They have, or have come into contact with, a possible or confirmed COVID-19 infection. (Further information available here) or;
   - They have recently returned to the UK (Further information available here).

2. **Shielding and clinically extremely vulnerable**

People in this group are defined, on medical grounds, as clinically extremely vulnerable to coronavirus – that is, people with specific serious health conditions - and who have been advised to 'shield'.

From 6 July, people in this group can spend time outdoors in a group of up to six people (including those outside of their household). Extra care should be taken to minimise contact with others by maintaining social distancing. (Further information available here).

3. **Clinically vulnerable**

Although this group can meet people outdoors and take part in physical activity and exercise, they should be especially careful and diligent about social distancing and hand hygiene.
From 6 July, those shielding can spend time outdoors in a group of up to 6 people (including those outside of their household). Extra care should be taken to minimise contact with others by maintaining social distancing. (More information available here).
From Saturday 1 August the guidance will be relaxed so clinically extremely vulnerable people will no longer be advised to shield.

4. **Everyone else**

Anyone who isn't in one of the first three groups will be able to access all available opportunities.

Sport England have compiled audience-specific guidance to support an inclusive phased return to sport and physical activity. This guidance applies to people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities, lower socio-economic groups, people who are LGBT+, people living with health conditions, disabled people and women.

How to protect staff and participants

Before restarting your provision, it is important that you carry out or refresh your existing risk assessment in line with the HSE guidance, identifying protective measures (such as those listed in the guidance on Working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19)). Consider the whole end-to-end 'user journey' when planning safe operating practices; this means all activities from the time of arrival on site to leaving, not just the sporting activity.

All activity should be consistent with the latest government guidance regarding health, social distancing and hygiene. That means that participants and others can follow **social distancing guidelines**, that **good hygiene practices** are in place, that **equipment is disinfected regularly**, and that it is clear that anyone who is **symptomatic or suspects they have been exposed to the virus does not take part and remains at home.**

COVID-19 is mainly passed on by person-to-person spread between people who are in close contact with one another and by droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. **Social distancing** guidelines should be followed between people from different households. From 4 July, this means a distance of 2m, or 1m plus mitigations (such as face coverings or avoiding face-to-face contact) where 2m is not possible. Providers/venues are advised to display signs clearly detailing social distancing guidance.

COVID-19 can also spread through contact with a surface or object that has the virus on it. Cleaning helps minimise the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19). Therefore, physical activity providers should enforce **strong hygiene measures** using standard disinfecting cleaning products.
Particular areas for increased cleaning include:

- Touch points (e.g. handrails, gates, handles)
- Activity areas before and after use (for example if using an outdoor gym from 4th July)
- Equipment before and after use

Providers are also advised to consider:

- Using signs and posters to build awareness of good handwashing technique, the need to increase handwashing frequency, avoid touching your face and to cough or sneeze into your arm. Consider how to ensure safety messages reach those with hearing or vision impairments

- Providing regular reminders to maintain hygiene standards
- Providing hand sanitiser in multiple locations
- Using disposable paper towels in handwashing facilities where possible
- Providing more waste facilities and more frequent rubbish collection – waste should be bagged and tied before disposal.

When managing the risk of COVID-19, additional PPE beyond what you usually wear is not beneficial. Workplaces should not encourage the precautionary use of extra PPE to protect against COVID-19 except in clinical or care settings (first aid rooms) or when responding to a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19.

Is there anything else to consider?

Communication

Organisations will need to communicate clearly and regularly with members and participants setting out what they are doing to manage risk, and what advice they are giving to individuals to do likewise.

Organisations should consider the cumulative impact of many activities/venues re-opening in a small area. For example, discussion with Sandwell Council's Parks Department to understand how many other activities might be taking place at the same time as your proposed plans.

Organisations should also communicate opening times and how people can safely access a facility, if relevant, for example through a booking or queuing system.

Supporting NHS Test and Trace

You should assist the NHS Test and Trace service by keeping a temporary record of your customers/participants and staff shift patterns for 21 days and assist with requests for that data if needed. This could help contain clusters or outbreaks. Many organisations already have systems in place to enable this. If you do not already do this, you should do so to help fight the virus.

Furloughed staff

From 1 July, employers can bring back to work employees that have previously been furloughed for any amount of time and any shift pattern, while still being able to claim a Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme grant for their normal hours not worked. (More information available here.)

The full government guidance for the phased return of sport and recreation can be found here. This overview was created on 2nd July 2020, we recommend monitoring the government guidance as there are frequent changes.

If you require further support or information relating to COVID-19, please contact our Public Health COVID-19 enquiry inbox - PHCovid19_Enquiries@sandwell.gov.uk