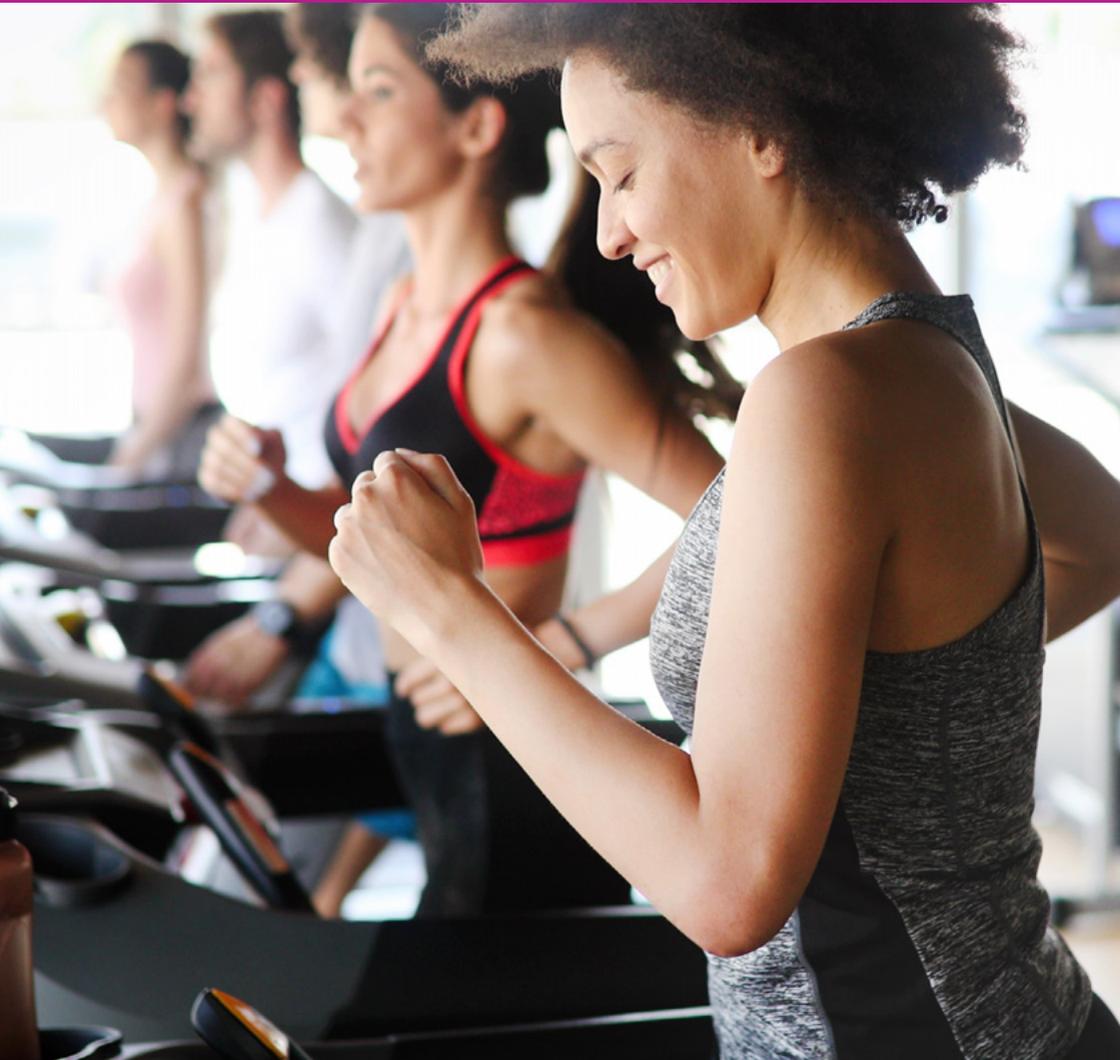




APSE Sports and Leisure Services remobilisation report



About this Report

The restrictions implemented in responses to the COVID-19 pandemic are being lifted and local government services are now looking to remobilise in response.

The APSE Leisure re-mobilisation group was established to explore the plans that councils are implementing to remobilise the service over the coming months

This report details these plans and focuses on four key areas: -

- Continued Closure
- Operational staffing and safety
- Facility remobilisation
- Pool specifics

Budget, finance and commercial considerations are rapidly evolving and will be considered separately. Financial considerations for in-house leisure are likely to be substantially different to those for Trusts and external contracts.

Published July 2020

1.0 Introduction:

On 20th March 2020, all Leisure facilities were required to close their doors, leaving large numbers of staff unable to continue in their roles as pool attendants and gym instructors. It also meant that thousands of gym members were paying Direct Debits for a service that was no longer available. The response has been twofold. Those facilities that have sufficient space have been repurposed as community hubs supplying food and essentials to those residents deemed vulnerable. (Nottingham City Council being a great example) A significant number of leisure staff have been redeployed into support roles.

In the main, regular maintenance and servicing has continued as normal, ensuring that showers are sluiced to prevent legionella, swimming pool plant is run regularly and PAT testing completed. Some have taken the opportunity to repair and service gym equipment and deep clean their facilities. The Government's arrangements for furlough were initially unclear for local authorities, but staff were eligible to be furloughed where their salary was covered by visitor and membership income, rather than grant or council tax. However as there was some initial confusion over this issue, in terms of its application to local authorities, where furlough has not been applied to employees between the 1 March and the 30 June 2020, for at least three consecutive weeks, they would fall outside of the scheme, leaving the employing authority unable to reclaim the furlough scheme payments. Many however have successfully applied the scheme.

Membership retention and recruitment is an on-going challenge for any leisure facility. Most suspended direct debit payments immediately and notified their members. They have since used email and social media to offer free on-line classes, often using their own instructors and tips on continued fitness. This has helped stall any mass exodus to cancel direct debits and maintain existing membership until such time as the gyms and pools reopen.

A different set of issues arise where the service is managed by a Trust or contractor. Industry body, Community Leisure UK, estimates that most Trusts only have 6 to 8 weeks reserves and without any income, some may not survive. Whilst they have furloughed staff, the situation for some remains precarious and APSE advocates paying forward any management fees and providing holidays on any income normally received as per Policy Procurement Note 02/20. At the same time, it's crucial to maintain an open dialogue to help where possible but also determine the exit strategy should the supplier become insolvent.

APSE was aware of significant lobbying by the private sector, trusts and swimming organisations to reopen gyms and swimming pools. Councils must make their own judgement, following guidance and their own assessment of risk on the right time to recommence operations.

Post Lockdown, most in-house operators are confident that they can bring their facilities back on stream within a few days. There may have to be a phased approach if some of those centres continue to serve as community hubs and redeployed staff are still required for other duties. The bigger challenge is getting members back into the gyms and pools after a period when some may have developed alternative fitness regimes. Many are planning a range of incentives and marketing to boost that process. On a brighter note, Covid-19 has highlighted the importance of fitness and a healthy lifestyle, which should increase interest and usage of our leisure facilities

2.0 Recommencing Operations

It is increasingly likely that the next 18 months are will be particularly challenging for leisure services. Three distinct are envisaged

- Remobilisation
- Recovery
- Renewal

This briefing covers remobilisation. As the picture emerges a further briefing is envisaged covering recovery and some of the financial challenges as furlough is unwound by the end of October 2020. The Government has finally announced the timetable for the re-opening of pools, gyms and leisure centres in England.:

From 11 July:

- organised team sports outdoors - subject to the relevant sport's guidance being published
- outdoor waterparks and swimming pools
- outdoor hot tubs
- outdoor hydrotherapy pools
- outdoor whirlpools
- outdoor jacuzzis.
- outdoor sport and physical activity participation events

From 25 July:

- indoor gyms
- fitness and dance studios
- indoors sports venues and facilities
- indoor swimming pools
- indoor hot tubs
- indoor hydrotherapy pools
- indoor whirlpools
- indoor jacuzzis

Remain Closed:

Saunas and steam rooms should stay out of use for the time being as the risk of transmission is unclear.

It should be noted that the Government has given permission to reopen and whilst welcome, demand is likely to be significantly reduced at least for the first few months. Re-opening has to make operational and financial sense and many will choose to phase opening over a longer period, bringing staff back from furlough and opening facilities when best for the council and staff.

3.0 Remobilisation

3.1 Staffing

Many staff may have been furloughed or redeployed to other duties. A phased re-opening is therefore suggested as staff are brought back into the service. Pool attendants may require some refresher training to ensure certifications remain valid. Some centres have suggested that they will require more staff than normal to provide an enhanced cleaning regime and to act as concierge.

The following guidelines apply across most services including Leisure:

Social distancing	Workers should follow the guidance on social distancing. Where they cannot work from home, they must follow the same principles of social distancing whilst travelling to and from work and whilst at work
Self-isolation	Anyone who either has a high temperature or a new persistent cough or is within 14 days of the day when the first member of their household showed symptoms of Coronavirus (Covid-19) should not come to their respective depot or site, but must follow the guidance on self-isolation.
Person at increased risk	Anyone who is at increased risk of severe illness from Coronavirus (Covid19) is strongly advised to work at home and should be particularly stringent about following social distancing measures
People who are clinically extremely vulnerable	Anyone identified as clinically extremely vulnerable will be advised by their health authority and must follow the guidance on shielding and protecting clinically extremely vulnerable people

Living with a person in one of the above groups	Anyone living with a person who is at increased risk of severe illness, or a clinically extremely vulnerable person who is shielding from Coronavirus (COVID-19), should stringently follow the guidance on social distancing and minimise contact outside the home
If someone falls ill	<p>If a worker develops a high temperature or a persistent cough whilst at work, they should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure their manager or supervisor is informed • Return home immediately • Avoid touching anything • Cough or sneeze into a tissue and put it in a bin, or if they do not have tissues, cough and sneeze into the crook of their elbow. They must then follow the guidance on self-isolation and not return to work until their period of self-isolation has been completed

3.2. Guidelines: Re-opening

Government [guidance](#) was released on 10th July following that produced by several bodies, including Sport England, UKActive, Swim England etc. This briefing follows the new guidance augmented by that from other bodies where that guidance doesn't conflict.

Measures set out in the guidance include:

- Limiting the number of people using the facility at any one time, for example by using a timed booking system;
- Reducing class sizes and allowing sufficient time between each class to avoid groups waiting outside during changeover;
- Ensuring an appropriate number of people are in a swimming pool at any one time;

- Spacing out equipment or taking some out of service to maintain social distancing;
- Enhanced cleaning and providing hand sanitizer throughout venues;
- Considering how the way people walk through their venue could be adjusted to reduce contact, with queue management or one-way systems;
- Ensuring adequate ventilation;
- Encouraging the use of outdoor spaces for individual, team or group activities, making sure to comply with the latest restrictions on public gatherings;
- Exercise or dance studios should have temporary floor markings where possible to help people stay distanced during classes;
- Customers and staff should be encouraged to shower and change at home wherever possible, although changing rooms will be available.

The [Government guidance](#) covers the following headings:

Introduction

How to use guidance

1. Thinking about Risk
2. Keeping your customers and user of sports and gym/leisure safe
3. Who should go to work/volunteer
4. Social distancing in the sports or gym/leisure facility
5. Ventilation of indoor gym and leisure facilities
6. Cleaning the workplace/facility
7. Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) and face coverings
8. Workforce Management
9. Inbound and outbound goods
10. Further guidance for clubs, community sports organisations and deployers of volunteers

Where to obtain guidance

Appendix

3.3 General Guidance

Much of the guidance is generic and that around cleaning and social distancing common across offices and workplaces.

Cleaning

- Continue rigorous cleaning procedures.
- If there is a COVID-19 case in the facility, the operator will follow the PHE Guidance – [COVID-19 – Cleaning in non-healthcare settings](#) while cleaning all areas of the facility.
- Staff will carry out regular cleaning of high-contact touch points throughout the premises.

APSE has produced further guidance regarding cleaning in non-healthcare settings. Details can be accessed by the following link:- [APSE Briefing 20-22 COVID-19 Cleaning in non-healthcare settings](#)

3.4 Specific Guidance

The Government guidance however is specific in certain aspects:

Air extraction and ventilation measures

The guidance states:

Ventilation is an important part of mitigating against the transmission of COVID-19. Ventilation into the building should be optimised to ensure a fresh air supply is provided to all areas of the facility and increased wherever possible. Particular attention should be given to areas where high intensity exercise activity takes place.

To achieve this, specific measures should be implemented:

- **The maximum occupancy of each gym should be limited by providing a minimum of 100sqft (9.29 square metres) per person.** For this figure, the area is the net useable gym space available to members to use, including changing rooms, toilet and wash facilities. Reducing capacity in this way whilst sustaining

ventilation flows, will increase the typical current 10l/s/p flow rate of ventilation to at least 20l/s/p, as fewer people are being served by the ventilation system.

- **Ventilation systems should provide 100% fresh air and not recirculate air from one space to another.**

You should also consider:

- Increasing the existing ventilation rate by fully opening dampers and running fans on full speed
- **Operating the ventilation system 24 hours a day**
- Increase the frequency of filter changes
- In the absence of known ventilation rates, a carbon dioxide sensor shall be used as a surrogate indicator to switch on additional mechanical ventilation or open windows.

Further guidance is provided in the CIBSE COVID-19 Ventilation guidance.

APSE challenge

Achieving this standard may cause a problem. At the required volumes, existing air-conditioning systems may struggle to cool 100% fresh air to the recommended 16-18oC ideal gym temperature suggested by Sport England when external temperatures are more than 5oC above this and conversely heating systems may struggle should the temperature fall 5oC below. 24 hour a day running will be significantly more energy intensive than currently.

In a pool setting, the air temperature is ideally 1oC above the pool temperature and humidity controlled. A typical recirculation value might be 20% fresh air. Unless the outside temperature is close to that required inside, systems may not have the necessary capacity

Changing Facilities

All venues should encourage attendees to arrive at the facility in sports kit and where possible to travel home to change / shower. Use of changing rooms and showering facilities should in general be avoided where possible, although these must be available for participants with disabilities or special needs and are likely to be needed after swimming.

Pool Loading

The guidance suggests a loading of 3m² per bather. This is double that was envisaged by Swim England. For a 25m x 10m pool that would be over 80 swimmers, more than the average attendance prior to lockdown.

Fitness Spaces

Pieces of gym equipment to be an appropriate distance apart so as to comply with social distancing guidelines and with a suitable margin for adequate circulation or one-way routes. This can be achieved by moving equipment, using screens to separate equipment, or taking equipment out of use. Clearly visible tape should be put around pieces of gym equipment to denote social distance.

Operators are being innovative in monitoring equipment usage, Corby Borough Council propose the following:

- **No towels are allowed in the gym.** Members must use the spray and paper towels provided to clean equipment.
- **Members must clean equipment before and after use using the fragranced bactericidal cleaner and blue roll provided.** Customers must also bin paper towel after each use. (These bins will be emptied regularly, and double bagged when being disposed of)
- **When using equipment, members use the flip card system on machines to indicate whether the machines are clean and ready for use.** We have introduced a red and green flip card system so customers know if a machine has been cleaned and is ready for use. The red card indicates that the machine is not ready for use and requires cleaning. The green card indicates that the machine has been cleaned and is ready for use. To add to this security measure, we would always advise customers to wipe down again prior to use if they have any concerns.

Supporting Test and Trace

The opening up of the economy following the COVID-19 outbreak is being supported by NHS Test and Trace. You should assist this service by keeping a temporary record of your customers and visitors for 21 days, in a way that is manageable for your business, and assist NHS Test and Trace with requests for that data if needed. Collect sufficient data on each attendee (name, home phone number, mobile number, date and times of entry and exit) so that each person could be contacted if there is a case of COVID-19 connected to your facility. This could help contain clusters or outbreaks. These facilities are expected to have systems for recording their customers and visitors. If you do not already do this, you should do so to help fight the virus. We have worked with industry and relevant bodies to design a system in line with data protection legislation, details of which can be found [here](#).

3.5 Additional Guidance

Swimming pools

[Swim England](#) has produced more detailed guidance This advises:

- Maximum pool capacities –recommendation that the pool operator does not permit a bather load of any less than 3 m² per participant during any activity.
- 'beach style turn up and swim' - Come ready changed (costume under clothing)
- Encouraging swimmers to shower directly before leaving home
- Recommended routing for swimmers around the changing facilities and pool

Specific guidance on Pool opening is available on the following links from the Pool Water Treatment Advisory Group. **It should be noted that the advice suggests use of 1.5mg/litre of chlorine, a higher concentration than used by many operators.**

This guidance is specifically for public pools, as defined in European Standard BS EN 15288-1 Swimming Pool Design. PWTAG have produced a series of [PWTAG Technical Notes](#) dealing with the current pandemic:

- [TN43](#) dealt with temporary pool closure;
- [TN44](#) with coronavirus disinfection;
- [TN45](#) with the immediate steps in reopening.
- [TN46](#) technical operation after Covid-19 shutdown.

Other relevant guidance from UKActive, not explicit within the Government guidance

Cafés/Restaurants

- Cafés, restaurants and bars will re-open when Government restrictions allow and will operate under any guidelines issued by PHE or other national health authorities.
- Additional signs will be put up around cleanliness and social distancing.
- Vending machines will remain in use but will be cleaned regularly.
- Government Guidance for food businesses on COVID-19 will be followed.

First Aid/Lifeguards

Although there may be heightened concerns around first aid, this will continue as normal, with the below aspects to be used when needed:

- Gloves.
- Resus masks for emergency first aid to be provided to all first aiders.
- Face masks for general first aid.
- The Resuscitation Council UK has provided specific guidance on CPR delivery.
- Where relevant, lifeguards will remain in place.

APSE Comment

APSE would like to thank all the authorities that participated in the re-mobilisation group for Leisure and contributed to the information contained in this report.

APSE has a range of services that are designed to support Member authorities through this challenging time. These include the following: -

[APSE COVID – 19 Information Hub and WhatsApp groups](#) – The hub has been set up to deal with frontline service issues as they arise; ensuring greater resilience and learning between each other during this difficult time.

[APSE Online Training](#) - APSE Training is designed to help local authorities invest in their greatest asset – their staff. With staff working at home, or remotely, APSE Training can assist staff with developing new skills during this time to help maximise opportunities

[Performance Networks](#) – The Performance Network teams have developed a variety of ways to support Councils with data collection.

[APSE Solutions](#) - Providing in-house consultancy and interim management services, available to both APSE members and non-member authorities and organisations.

[APSE Energy](#) which is working on greening frontline council services including energy management issues, which may be critical to saving money in services where budgets have been impacted by COVID-19

APSE membership resources remain committing to supporting our member local councils with the ongoing briefings service, network queries, access to Principal Advisor advice and online meetings, advisory groups and events.

There are opportunities for councils to share best practice and learning through virtual Advisory Groups and thematic sessions. Details of these sessions will be communicated APSE Members as the sessions are arranged.

For further information on the services that are available, please contact Rob Bailey, rbailey@apse.org.uk

Rob Bailey

Principal Advisor

Guidance for people who work in grassroots sport and gym/leisure facilities.

Introduction

Providers and operators of space enabling the following activities and facilities may reopen if they are allowed to do so by law (see guidance on [which businesses remain closed](#)), ready to do so and can do so safely, following public health guidance. The below activities and facilities are to be permitted (either in law or supporting guidance) from the dates listed.

From 11 July:

- organised team sports outdoors - subject to the relevant sport's guidance being published
- outdoor waterparks and swimming pools
- outdoor hot tubs
- outdoor hydrotherapy pools
- outdoor whirlpools
- outdoor spa pools
- outdoor sport and physical activity participation events

From 25 July:

- indoor gyms
- fitness and dance studios
- indoors sports venues and facilities
- indoor swimming pools
- indoor hot tubs
- indoor hydrotherapy pools
- indoor whirlpools
- indoor spa pools

The UK is currently experiencing a public health emergency as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is critical that employers, employees, the self-employed and customers take steps to keep everyone safe. This document is to help providers of physical activity, grassroots sport, gym/leisure facilities and activities, their representative bodies, clubs, their employees, volunteers and their customers in England, understand how to operate safely during the COVID-19 pandemic, keeping as many people as possible appropriately distanced from those they do not live with. This guidance only applies to permitted activities under regulation in effect. See further information on [business closures](#).

While this guidance applies to England, you should always consider whether there are additional local restrictions in place in your area. If so, you should first read the guidance relevant to your area as this may supersede guidance in this document. You can find information on the current lockdown in Leicester [here](#).

We know many people are also keen to return to or contribute to volunteering. Organisations have a duty of care to volunteers to ensure as far as reasonably practicable they are not exposed to risks to their health and safety. This guidance around working safely during COVID-19 should ensure that volunteers are afforded the same level of protection to their health and safety as others, such as workers and customers.

We hope it gives you freedom within a practical framework to think about what you need to do to continue, or restart, your sport and leisure activities and facilities during the COVID-19 pandemic. We understand how important it is to operate safely and support your workers', customers' and visitors' health and wellbeing during the COVID-19 pandemic and not contribute to the spread of the virus. We know that many of these activities and businesses of this type are [currently prohibited by government regulation](#). We hope this guidance will be useful for facility owners, operators, sports and leisure participants as they develop new ways of working or to help prepare for the time when they are able to reopen. The government is clear that workers and volunteers should not be forced into an unsafe workplace and the health and safety of workers and customers, and public health, should not be put at risk.

This document has been prepared by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) with input from ukactive, Sport England, the Sport and Recreation Alliance and National Governing Bodies of sport and in consultation with Public Health England (PHE) and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

Public health is devolved in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales; this guidance should be considered alongside local public health and safety requirements and legislation in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. For advice to businesses and/or organisations in other parts of the UK please see guidance set by the Northern Ireland Executive, the Scottish Government, and the Welsh Government.

This document is one of a set of documents about how to play and work safely in different types of sport and leisure facilities. This one is designed to be relevant for providers of physical activity, grassroots sport, gym/leisure facilities and activities, their representative bodies, their employees and volunteers in England.

How to use this guidance

This document sets out guidance on how to work, operate and participate in sport and leisure activities safely while minimising the risk of spreading COVID-19. It gives practical considerations of how this can be applied in a gym/leisure facility or area of sport.

Each business and/or organisation will need to translate this into the specific actions it needs to take, depending on the nature of their business and/or organisation, including the size and type of business and/or organisation, how it is organised, operated, managed and regulated.

This guidance does not supersede any legal obligations relating to health and safety, employment or equalities and it is important that as a business and/or organisation or an employer you continue to comply with your existing obligations, including those relating to individuals with protected characteristics. It contains non-statutory guidance to take into account when complying with these existing obligations. When considering how to apply

this guidance, take into account agency workers, contractors, customers, visitors and other people, as well as your employees and volunteers.

To help you decide which actions to take, you need to carry out an appropriate COVID-19 risk assessment, just as you would for other health and safety related hazards. This risk assessment must be done in consultation with unions or workers and volunteers.

What do we mean by 'providers of grassroots sport and gym/leisure facilities'?

Providers and operators of space enabling the following activities and facilities may reopen if they are ready to do so and can do so safely, following public health guidance:

- Indoor and outdoor sports courts
- Indoor and outdoor gyms
- Indoor and outdoor swimming and diving pools, including water parks
- Other indoor and outdoor sporting activities (including but not limited to sports fields, rugby, football, hockey, cricket and other pitches, skate parks, climbing facilities, trampoline parks, boxing halls, horse stables and arenas, bowling lawns, golf courses, and snowsport facilities, watersports and sporting facilities, track and field facilities)
- Hot tubs, hydrotherapy pools, whirlpools, and spa pools

Saunas and steam rooms should stay out of use for the time being as the risk of transmission is unclear.

This guidance does not apply to children's playgrounds and soft play facilities.

This guidance should be read in conjunction with [guidance](#) issued by the Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy relating to the operation of related working environments, for instance for offices, shops and branches, working outdoors and bars and restaurants.

This guidance should be read in conjunction with any sport-specific guidance issued by your national governing body.

For activities regarding school aged children, this guidance should be read in conjunction with the relevant sports safeguarding guidance and any other relevant guidance provided by the Department for Education. This guidance does not supersede any guidance provided by the Department for Education.

1. Thinking about risk

In this section

- [Managing risk](#)
- [Sharing the results of your risk assessment](#)

Objective: That all employers and operators carry out a COVID-19 risk assessment.

COVID-19 is a public health emergency. Everyone needs to assess and manage the risks of COVID-19, and in particular businesses should consider the risks to their workers / volunteers and customers.. As an employer or as an operator of sports or leisure facility, you also have a legal responsibility to protect workers, volunteers, customers and users from risk to their health and safety. This means you need to think about the risks they face and do everything reasonably practicable to minimise them, recognising you cannot completely eliminate the risk of COVID-19.

You must make sure that the risk assessment for your business and/or organisation addresses the risks of COVID-19, using this guidance to inform your decisions and control measures. You should also consider the security implications of any decisions and control measures you intend to put in place, as any revisions could present new or altered security risks that may require mitigation. A risk assessment is not about creating huge amounts of paperwork, but rather about identifying sensible measures to control the risks in your workplace. If you have fewer than five workers, or are self-employed, you don't have to write anything down as part of your risk assessment. Your risk assessment will help you decide whether you have done everything you need to. The Health and Safety Executive has [guidance for business and/or organisation on how to manage risk and risk assessment at work](#) along with [specific advice to help control the risk of coronavirus in workplaces](#).

Employers have a duty to consult their people on health and safety. You can do this by listening and talking to them about the work and how you will

manage risks from COVID-19. The people who do the work are often the best people to understand the risks in the workplace and will have a view on how to work safely. Involving them in making decisions shows that you take their health and safety seriously. You must consult with the health and safety representative selected by a recognised trade union or, if there isn't one, a representative chosen by workers. As an employer, you cannot decide who the representative will be.

At its most effective, full involvement of your workers creates a culture where relationships between employers and workers are based on collaboration, trust and joint problem solving. As is normal practice, workers should be involved in assessing workplace risks and the development and review of workplace health and safety policies in partnership with the employer.

Employers and workers should always come together to resolve issues. If concerns still cannot be resolved, see below for further steps you can take.

Where the enforcing authority, such as the HSE or your local authority, identifies employers who are not taking action to comply with the relevant public health legislation and guidance to control public health risks, they are empowered to take a range of actions to improve control of workplace risks. For example, this would cover employers not taking appropriate action to ensure social distancing, where possible.

Failure to complete a risk assessment which takes account of COVID-19, or completing a risk assessment but failing to put in place sufficient measures to manage the risk of COVID-19, could constitute a breach of health and safety law. The actions the enforcing authority can take include the provision of specific advice to employers to support them to achieve the required standard, through to issuing enforcement notices to help secure improvements.

Serious breaches and failure to comply with enforcement notices can constitute a criminal offence, with serious fines and even imprisonment for up to two years. There is also a wider system of enforcement, which includes specific obligations and conditions for licensed Premises.

Employers are expected to respond to any advice or notices issued by enforcing authorities rapidly and are required to do so within any timescales imposed by the enforcing authorities. The vast majority of employers are responsible and will join with the UK's fight against COVID-19 by working with the Government and their sector bodies to protect their workers and the public. However, inspectors are carrying out compliance checks nationwide to ensure that employers are taking the necessary steps.

How to raise a concern:

- contact your employee representative
- contact your trade union if you have one
- contact HSE at:

HSE COVID-19 enquiries

Telephone: 0300 790 6787 (Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 5pm)

Online: [working safely enquiry form](#)

1.1. Managing risk

Objective: To reduce risk to the lowest reasonably practicable level by taking preventative measures, in order of priority.

Employers and facility operators have a duty to reduce workplace risk to the lowest reasonably practicable level by taking preventative measures. Employers must work with any other employers or contractors sharing the workplace so that everybody's health and safety is protected. In the context of COVID-19 this means protecting the health and safety of your workers/ volunteers and customers by working through these steps in order:

1. In every workplace, increasing the frequency of handwashing and surface cleaning.
2. Businesses, organisations and workplaces should make every reasonable effort to enable working from home as a first option. Where working from home is not possible, workplaces should make every reasonable effort to

comply with the social distancing guidelines set out by the government.

3. Where the social distancing guidelines cannot be followed in full, in relation to a particular activity, businesses and/or organisations should consider whether that activity needs to continue for the business and/or organisation to operate, and if so, take all the mitigating actions possible to reduce the risk of transmission between their staff.
4. Further mitigating actions include:
 - increasing the frequency of hand washing and surface cleaning
 - keeping the activity time involved as short as possible
 - using screens or barriers to separate people from each other
 - using back-to-back or side-to-side working (rather than face-to-face) whenever possible
 - reducing the number of people each person has contact with by using 'fixed teams or partnering' (so each person works with only a few others)
5. Finally, if people must work face-to-face for a sustained period with more than a small group of fixed partners, then you will need to assess whether the activity can safely go ahead. No one is obliged to work in an unsafe work environment.

In your assessment you should have particular regard to whether the people doing the work are especially vulnerable to COVID-19.

The recommendations in the rest of this document are ones you must consider as you go through this process. You could also consider any advice that has been produced specifically for your sector, for example by trade associations or trades unions.

If you have not already done so, you should carry out an assessment of the risks posed by COVID-19 in your workplace as soon as possible. If you are currently operating, you are likely to have gone through a lot of this thinking already. We recommend that you use this document to identify any further improvements you should make.

1.2. Sharing the results of your risk assessment

You must share the results of your risk assessment with your workforce. If possible, you should consider publishing the results on your website (and we would expect all employers with over 50 workers to do so). Below you will find a notice you should display in your workplace to show you have followed this guidance.

[Staying COVID-19 Secure in 2020](#)

2. Keeping your customers and users of sports and gym/leisure facilities safe

In this section:

- [2.1 Manage contact](#)
- [2.2 Providing and explaining available guidance](#)

Sports and gym/leisure facilities span many different simple and complex environments where careful risk assessment of both the venue and activity is required to manage social distancing and effective infection control. Particular attention will need to be paid to clients using hydrotherapy pools and assistance they may need in doing so.

Clear communication to participants, volunteers and workers is critical to ensure that they should take all reasonable measures to comply with social distancing and hygiene measures at all times, before, after and during physical activity.

All venues should encourage attendees to arrive at the facility in sports kit and where possible to travel home to change/shower. Use of changing rooms and showering facilities should in general be avoided where possible, although these must be available for participants with disabilities or special needs and are likely to be needed after swimming.

All venues should ensure that steps are taken to avoid people needing to unduly raise their voices to each other. This includes - but is not limited to - refraining from playing music or broadcasts that may encourage shouting, including if played at a volume that makes normal conversation difficult. This is because of the potential for increased risk of transmission - particularly from aerosol and droplet transmission.

Additional detail on social distancing and sports at grassroots and community level can be found in the [outdoor sport and recreation guidance](#). Guidance set out here also applies to indoor activity.

2.1. Manage contact

Objective: To minimise contact with surfaces, workers/volunteers, other customers and contractors within facilities or while participating in sport and physical activity.

Primary control for minimising transmission through contact is through handwashing and sufficiently frequent washing and avoiding sharing of objects.

Steps that will usually be needed:

1. Informing customers and contractors of guidance about visiting the premises prior to and at the point of arrival (including information on websites, on booking forms and in entrance ways).
2. Providing handwashing and hand sanitiser and encouraging staff and customers to wash their hands regularly.
3. Contactless payments advisable throughout facility.
4. Signage to ensure workers, staff and customers are aware of the need to avoid contact throughout a facility.
5. Fixing doors open that can be safely left open where feasible (although noting ventilation requirements at 5.2).
6. Where possible, reducing the need to open other objects, for example lockers, storage compartments, trunks and drawers by making equipment that is permitted for use readily accessible.
7. Avoid paperwork being transferred by enabling such processes as bookings, rosters, ladders, etc. through online channels.

2.1.1. Manage capacity and overcrowding

Objective: To ensure distancing is possible by limiting the number of customers able to access the facilities.

Maximum capacity should be based on the government requirement for social distancing, nature of activities (i.e. if the activity is static vs. requiring a range of movement) and equipment layout and the configuration of facilities.

Particular attention should be given to ventilation and sufficient circulation space specially around equipment and between groups and classes and instructors.

Steps that will usually be needed:

1. Conducting a specific risk assessment for each facility and the proposed activities to identify:
 - The number of customers that can reasonably follow social distancing within the gym/leisure facility, taking into account total space, equipment as well as likely constraints (toilets, locker areas, changing rooms and washrooms) and pinch points
 - Encourage attendees to arrive at the facility in sports kit and where possible to travel home to change/shower. Use of changing rooms and showering facilities should in general be avoided where possible, although these must be available for participants with disabilities or special needs and are likely to be needed after swimming.
 - Activities and spaces that can be undertaken and specific measures to ensure social distancing and cleaning
 - Additional needs of any customers with physical disabilities
2. Limiting the number of customers in the gym/leisure facility overall and in any particular congestion areas, for example doorways between outside and inside spaces.
3. Enabling a booking system or other approaches to managing demand, so that no more than the desired number of customers and staff are in the building at any one time.

4. Identifying workers/volunteers as designated supervisors for each area of the sport or gym/leisure facility to ensure social distancing measures are being adhered to by customers.
5. Managing occupancy levels and changeover by reducing class sizes and amending timetabling
6. Allowing a sufficient break time between classes held in studios in order to appropriately clean the studio and equipment and to prevent waiting in groups
7. Where possible, operating on a book-in-advance basis. Online or over the phone is preferable.

2.1.2. Moving in, out and through facilities

Objective: To ensure distancing among workers/volunteers, customers and contractors when moving within and through sports and leisure facilities

Steps that will usually be needed:

1. Using signage such as ground markings or being creative with other objects to mark out required social distance to allow controlled flows of people.
2. Using markings to guide staff and customers coming into or leaving the building.
3. Defining process alternatives for entry/exit points where appropriate, for example, deactivating pass readers at turnstiles in favour of showing a pass to security personnel at a distance.
4. Reducing congestion, for example, by having more entry points to the facility. If you have more than one door, consider having one for entering the building and one for exiting.
5. Managing outside queues to ensure they do not cause a risk to individuals, other businesses or additional security risks, for example by introducing queuing systems, having staff direct customers and protecting queues from traffic by routing them behind permanent physical structures such

as street furniture, bike racks, bollards or putting up barriers.

6. Ensuring any changes to entries, exit and queue management take into account reasonable adjustments for those who need them, including disabled customers. For example, maintaining pedestrian and parking access for disabled customers.
7. Using outside premises for queuing where available and safe, for example some car parks without removing use of accessible car parking spaces for disabled users.
8. Working with your local authority or landlord to take into account the impact of your processes, including queues, on public spaces such as high streets and public car parks.
9. Looking at how people walk through the gym/leisure facility and how you could adjust this to reduce congestion and contact between customers, for example, queue management or one-way flow, where possible.
10. Introducing more one-way flow routes through buildings through signage that clearly indicate the direction of flow.
11. Organising numbers, routes, schedules for pools, golf courses and ranges, practice nets, climbing walls, similar equipment to maintain distancing.

2.1.3. Contact while using facilities

Objective: To ensure distancing among workers/volunteers and customers when using sports and leisure facilities.

Social distancing should be maintained between all users of facilities including individuals, groups, teams, teachers, trainers and coaches unless users come from the same household or to manage needs on account of a disability when additional mitigation will be essential.

Steps that will usually be needed:

1. Suspending or modifying activities that are not permitted or cannot be undertaken without contravening social distancing guidelines within available facilities.

2. Particular consideration should be taken for indoor courts and sports halls. Courts and halls can remain open for use as long as the activities can be modified in such a way that social distancing can be maintained throughout the activity.
3. Individual national governing bodies will often provide specific guidance on how their sport can be played or adapted to enable adapted to enable social distancing which must be followed.
4. Encouraging, where weather and space permits, use of outdoor spaces for individual, team or group activities. Considering where applicable government guidance on social gatherings.
5. Where possible, adapting and enabling spaces to facilitate appropriate social distancing, including government guided spacing markings on the floor at points of assembly including entrances, foyers and reception spaces:
 - Fitness spaces: Pieces of gym equipment to be an appropriate distance apart so as to comply with social distancing guidelines and with a suitable margin for adequate circulation or one-way routes. This can be achieved by moving equipment, using screens to separate equipment, or taking equipment out of use. Clearly visible tape should be put around pieces of gym equipment to denote social distance.
 - Changing rooms: particular care should be taken to manage congestion and ensure social distancing such as limiting use to alternate lockers, or ideally limiting use to those with special needs and/ or removing use of showers. Encourage attendees to arrive at the facility in sports kit and where possible to travel home to change/shower. Use of changing rooms and showering facilities should in general be avoided where possible, although these must be available for participants with disabilities or special needs and are likely to be needed after swimming.
 - Dance and exercise studios: Where possible, temporary floor marking defining required spacing per individual should be provided

- Pools: Swimming pools should restrict numbers to allow 3sqm per bather.
 - Saunas and steam rooms should stay out of use for the time being as the risk of transmission is unclear.
 - Pools: If flumes are available, they must be used in a socially distanced manner.
 - Hydrotherapy pools - capacity should be managed so as to take account of any special needs of the clients. If social distancing cannot be maintained for due to immediate safety concerns, close proximity contact should be kept to a minimum by those not part of the same household or social support bubble.
1. Having clearly designated positions from which colleagues or coaches/ volunteers leading activity can provide advice or assistance to customers whilst maintaining social distance.
 2. Avoiding use of shared objects e.g. towels, robes, balls, weights, rackets, balls, scoring equipment, sports clothing unless they can be cleaned or sanitised between users.
 3. Ensure that any water fountains have signage which prohibits face-to-tap drinking (no receptacle) and that these facilities are used only to refill personal bottles or containers.
 4. Operating beauty, massage and physio services in accordance with [relevant salon guidance](#).

2.1.4. Supporting Test and Trace

The opening up of the economy following the COVID-19 outbreak is being supported by NHS Test and Trace. You should assist this service by keeping a temporary record of your customers and visitors for 21 days, in a way that is manageable for your business, and assist NHS Test and Trace with requests for that data if needed. Collect sufficient data on each attendee (name, home phone number, mobile number, date and times of entry and exit) so that each person could be contacted if there is a case of COVID-19 connected to your facility. This could help contain clusters or outbreaks. These facilities

are expected to have systems for recording their customers and visitors. If you do not already do this, you should do so to help fight the virus. We have worked with industry and relevant bodies to design a system in line with data protection legislation, details of which can be found [here](#).

2.1.5. Spectators & children

Objective: To ensure distancing of spectators and children within sporting and leisure facilities

Generally attendance by spectators and non-participating children should be avoided and minimised especially within indoor facilities.

Steps that will usually be needed:

1. If allowing spectators would present challenges to maintaining decided capacity levels, consider prohibiting spectators until further notice. Chaperones to children may wait outside premises/activity area in a socially distant manner or in their car. If allowing spectators would present challenges to staying below overall maximum safe capacity levels, consider prohibiting spectators until further notice. Chaperones to children may wait outside premises / activity area in a socially distant manner or in their car unless the child has special needs.
2. Controlling spectator numbers within controlled numbers through pre-booking, ticketing and other controls at access points.
3. Ensuring spectators follow government guidance for social gatherings and maintain social distancing preferably with marked viewing spaces.
4. Reminding customers who are accompanied by children that they are responsible for supervising them at all times and should follow social distancing guidelines.
5. In cases where a child is participating in activities, permitting only one parent/carer per child to supervise their child while following social distancing.

2.1.6. Selling food, drink or merchandise

Objective: To minimise interactions with guests when selling or consuming food or drink or operating retail outlets.

Bars and restaurants, including any food or drink facilities inside a clubhouse can open in accordance with the latest [guidance](#).

Steps that will usually be needed:

1. Operating bars and restaurants in accordance with [relevant guidance](#).
2. Operating retail outlets in accordance with [relevant guidance](#).

2.2. Providing and explaining available guidance

Objective: To minimise the contact among workers/volunteers, customers and contractors resulting from visits to the sports or gym/leisure facility or venue

Steps that will usually be needed:

1. Providing clear guidance on social distancing and hygiene to people both before arrival and on arrival, for example, through signage and visual aids and on your website.
2. Providing written or spoken communication of the latest guidelines to both workers and customers inside and outside the gym/leisure facility particularly in free weights areas and around stationary equipment.
3. Considering a review of and amend to marketing, timetables and taking reasonable steps to disseminate to all sections of the catchment community with particular focus on groups less likely to participate and/or with particular needs to be addressed.
4. Reviewing external messaging to visitors and customers to make sure it does not provide information that may present a security risk, such as the location of queues or the number of people permitted in a queue.
5. Creating social distancing champions to demonstrate social distancing guidelines to customers, if helpful.
6. Consider the particular needs of those with protected characteristics, such as those who are hearing or visually impaired.

3. Who should go to work/volunteer

In this section

- [3.1 Protecting people who are at higher risk](#)
- [3.2 People who need to self-isolate](#)
- [3.3 Equality in the workplace](#)

Objective: That everyone should work from home, unless they cannot work from home. Nobody should go to work if your business and/or organisation is closed under current government regulations.

Steps that will usually be needed:

1. Considering who is essential to be on the premises; for example, back of house workers should work from home if at all possible.
2. Planning for the minimum number of people needed on site to operate safely and effectively.
3. Monitoring the wellbeing of people who are working from home and helping them stay connected to the rest of the workforce, especially if the majority of their colleagues are on-site.
4. Keeping in touch with off-site workers on their working arrangements including their welfare, mental and physical health and personal security.
5. Providing equipment for people to work from home safely and effectively, for example, remote access to work systems.

3.1. Protecting people who are at higher risk

Objective: To protect clinically vulnerable and clinically extremely vulnerable individuals.

Clinically extremely vulnerable individuals have been strongly advised not to work outside the home.

Clinically vulnerable individuals, who are at higher risk of severe illness (for example, people with some pre-existing conditions), have been asked to take extra care in observing social distancing and should be helped to work from home, either in their current role or in an alternative role.

If clinically vulnerable (but not extremely clinically vulnerable) individuals cannot work from home, they should be offered the option of the safest available on-site roles, enabling them to maintain social distancing from others. If they have to spend time closer to others than set out in the government guidance, you should carefully assess whether this involves an acceptable level of risk. As for any workplace risk you must take into account specific duties to those with protected characteristics, including, for example, expectant mothers who are, as always, entitled to suspension on full pay if suitable roles cannot be found. Particular attention should also be paid to people who live with clinically extremely vulnerable individuals.

Steps that will usually be needed:

1. Providing support for workers around mental health and wellbeing. This could include advice or telephone support
2. Understanding current guidance for advice on who is in the clinically extremely vulnerable and clinically vulnerable groups.
3. Consider special provision for vulnerable groups using your facilities

3.2. People who need to self-isolate

Objective: To make sure workers / volunteers who are advised to stay at home under existing government guidance do not socially come to work. This includes individuals who have symptoms of COVID-19, those who live in a household or are in a support bubble with someone who has symptoms and those who are advised to self-isolate as part of the government's test and trace service.

Steps that will usually be needed:

1. Enabling workers to work from home while self-isolating if appropriate.
2. See current guidance for [employees](#) and [employers](#) relating to statutory sick pay due to COVID-19.
3. See [current guidance](#) for people who have symptoms and those who live with others who have symptoms.

3.3. Equality in the workplace

Objective: To treat everyone in your workplace equally.

In applying this guidance, employers should be mindful of the particular needs of different groups of workers or individuals.

It is breaking the law to discriminate, directly or indirectly, against anyone because of a protected characteristic such as age, sex or disability.

Employers also have particular responsibilities towards disabled workers and those who are new or expectant mothers.

Steps that will usually be needed:

1. Understanding and taking into account the particular circumstances of those with different protected characteristics.
2. Involving and communicating appropriately with workers whose protected characteristics might either expose them to a different degree of risk, or might make any steps you are thinking about inappropriate or

challenging for them.

3. Considering whether you need to put in place any particular measures or adjustments to take account of your duties under the equalities legislation.
4. Making reasonable adjustments to avoid disabled workers being put at a disadvantage and assessing the health and safety risks for new or expectant mothers.
5. Making sure that the steps you take do not have an unjustifiable negative impact on some groups compared to others, for example those with caring responsibilities or those with religious commitments.

4. Social distancing in the sport or gym/leisure facility

In this section

- [4.1 Arriving at and leaving the venue](#)
- [4.2 Moving around](#)
- [4.3 Workplaces and workstations](#)
- [4.4 Meetings](#)
- [4.5 Common areas](#)
- [4.6 Visiting instructors, coaches, teachers, and management](#)
- [4.7 Accidents, security and other incidents](#)

Objective: To have workers/volunteers and customers maintain government guided social distancing wherever possible, including while arriving at and departing from the gym/leisure facility, while in the gym/leisure facility and when travelling between venues.

You must maintain social distancing in the gym/leisure facility wherever possible.

Where the social distancing guidelines cannot be followed in full in relation to a particular activity, businesses and/or organisations should consider whether that activity needs to continue for the business and/or organisation to operate, and, if so, take all the mitigating actions possible to reduce the risk of transmission between their staff.

Mitigating actions include:

- Further increasing the frequency of hand washing and surface cleaning
- Keeping the activity time involved as short as possible
- Using screens or barriers to separate people from each other
- Using back-to-back or side-to-side working (rather than face-to-face) whenever possible
- Reducing the number of people each person has contact with by using 'fixed teams or partnering' (so each person works with only a few others)

Social distancing applies to all parts of a business and/or organisation, not just the place where people spend most of their time, but also entrances and exits, break rooms, canteens and similar settings. These are often the most challenging areas to maintain social distancing

Large gatherings

People should continue to socially distance from those they do not live with wherever possible. Social interactions should be limited to a group of no more than two households (indoors and out) or up to six people from different households (if outdoors) with social distancing in place at all times.

It is against the law for gatherings of more than 30 people to take place in private homes (including gardens and other outdoor spaces).

Businesses and venues following COVID-19 Secure guidelines can host larger groups. This is also the case for events in public outdoor spaces that are organised by businesses, charitable or political organisations, and public bodies, provided they take reasonable steps to mitigate the risk of transmission, in line with COVID-19 Secure guidance and including completion of a risk assessment. Any other gathering in an outdoor space must not be any larger than 30 people.

In particular, those operating venues or running events following COVID-19 Secure guidelines should take additional steps to ensure the safety of the public and prevent large gatherings or mass events from taking place. At this time, venues should not permit live performances, including drama, comedy and music, to take place in front of a live audience.

Individual businesses or venues should consider the cumulative impact of many venues re-opening in a small area. This means working with local authorities, neighbouring businesses and travel operators to assess this risk and applying additional mitigations. These could include:

- Further lowering capacity - even if it is possible to safely seat a number of people inside a venue, it may not be safe for them all to travel or enter that venue

- Staggering entry times with other venues and taking steps to avoid queues building up in surrounding areas
- Arranging one-way travel routes between transport hubs and venues
- Advising patrons to avoid particular forms of transport or routes and to avoid crowded areas when in transit to the venue

Local authorities should avoid issuing licenses for events that could lead to larger gatherings forming and provide advice to businesses on how to manage events of this type. If appropriate, the government has powers under schedule 22 of the Coronavirus Act 2020 to close venues hosting large gatherings or prohibit certain events (or types of event) from taking place.

4.1. Arriving at and leaving the venue

Objective: To have workers/volunteers maintain social distancing wherever possible, during your journey to and from the gym/leisure facility, on arrival and departure and to enable handwashing upon arrival.

Steps that will usually be needed:

1. Referencing the Department for Transport [guidance on getting to the workplace](#)
2. Staggering arrival and departure times at work to reduce crowding into and out of the workplace, taking account of the impact on those with protected characteristics.
3. Providing additional parking or facilities such as bike-racks to help people walk, run, or cycle to the sports or gym/leisure facility where possible.
4. Limiting passengers in corporate vehicles, for example, work minibuses. This could include leaving seats empty.
5. Reducing congestion, for example, by having more entry points to the workplace in larger gym/leisure facilities.
6. Using markings and introducing one-way flow at entry and exit points.
7. Providing handwashing facilities (or hand sanitiser where not possible) at entry and exit points.

8. Providing alternatives to touch-based security devices such as keypads.
9. Maintaining use of security access devices, such as keypads or passes, and adjusting processes at entry/exit points to reduce risk of transmission. For example, cleaning pass readers regularly and asking staff to hold their passes next to pass readers rather than touching them.

4.2. Moving around

Objective: To have workers/volunteers and customers maintain social distancing as far as possible while people travel through the sports or gym/leisure facility.

Steps that will usually be needed:

1. Reducing movement by discouraging non-essential trips within buildings and venues, for example, restricting access to some areas, encouraging use of radios or telephones, where permitted. These items require cleaning between users if multi-use.
2. Introducing more one-way flow through buildings. Providing floor markings and signage should remind both workers and customers to follow to social distancing wherever possible.
3. Reducing maximum occupancy for lifts to a number that allows for social distancing, providing hand sanitiser for the operation of lifts and encouraging use of stairs wherever possible.
4. Making sure that people with disabilities are able to access lifts.
5. Regulating use of high traffic areas including corridors, lifts, turnstiles and walkways to maintain social distancing.

4.3. Workplaces and workstations

Objective: To maintain social distancing between workers/volunteers where they work, be this at a workstation or otherwise.

For people who work in one place, workstations should allow them to maintain social distancing wherever possible.

Workstations should be assigned to an individual as much as possible. If they need to be shared, they should be shared by the smallest possible number of people.

If it is not possible to keep workstations socially distanced then businesses and/or organisations should consider whether that activity needs to continue for the business and/or organisations to operate, and if so take all mitigating actions possible to reduce the risk of transmission.

Steps that will usually be needed:

1. Reviewing layouts to allow workers/volunteers to work further apart from each other.
2. Using floor tape or paint to mark areas to help people keep the government recommended social distance from each other.
3. Avoiding people working face-to-face. For example, by working side-by-side or facing away from each other.
4. Using screens to create a physical barrier between people.
5. Using a consistent pairing system if people have to work in close proximity. For example, maintenance activities that cannot be redesigned.
6. Minimising contacts around transactions, for example, considering using contactless payments, access to facilities, lockers or other storage
7. Rethinking demonstrations and promotions to minimise direct contact and to maintain social distancing.

4.4. Meetings

Objective: To reduce transmission due to face-to-face meetings and maintain social distancing in meetings with workers/volunteers.

Steps that will usually be needed:

1. Using remote working tools to avoid in person meetings.
2. Attending meetings only when absolutely necessary and, in such case maintaining government guided social distance throughout.

3. Avoiding transmission during meetings, for example avoiding sharing pens and other objects.
4. Providing hand sanitiser in meeting rooms.
5. Holding meetings outdoors or in well-ventilated rooms whenever possible.
6. For areas where regular meetings take place, using floor signage to help people maintain social distancing.

4.5. Common areas

Objective: To have workers/volunteers and customers maintain social distancing while using common areas.

Steps that will usually be needed:

1. Ensuring risk assessment carefully considers worker safety, especially of those working closely with many customers.
2. Staggering break times to reduce pressure on the staff break rooms or places to eat.
3. Using safe outside areas for breaks.
4. Creating additional space by using other parts of the working area or building that have been freed up by remote working.
5. Installing screens to protect workers in receptions or similar areas.
6. Providing packaged meals or similar to avoid fully opening staff canteens.
7. Reconfiguring seating and tables to optimise spacing and reduce face-to-face interactions.
8. Encouraging workers to remain on-site and, when not possible, maintaining social distancing while off-site.
9. Considering use of social distance marking for other common areas such as toilets, showers, lockers and changing rooms and in any other areas where queues typically form.

4.6. Visiting instructors, coaches, teachers, and management

Objective: To ensure safe practices for visiting instructors and supervisors that rotate across sports venues and leisure facilities.

Steps that will usually be needed:

1. Considering limiting the number of classes that rotating instructors teach in order to minimise exposure.
2. Determining the number of facilities they are comfortable with instructors rotating amongst in order to minimise exposure and establishing a system for monitoring this.
3. Given the high risk of transmission from visiting instructors, where possible, establishing a private testing programme for rotating/visiting instructors.

4.7. Accidents, security and other incidents

Objective: To prioritise safety during incidents.

In an emergency, for example, an accident, provision of first aid, fire or break-in, people do not have to stay appropriately distanced if it would be unsafe.

People involved in the provision of assistance to others should pay particular attention to sanitation measures immediately afterwards including washing hands.

Steps that will usually be needed:

1. Considering the security implications of any changes you intend to make to your operations and practices in response to COVID-19, as any revisions may present new or altered security risks which may need mitigations.
2. Considering whether you have enough appropriately trained staff to keep people safe. For example, having dedicated staff to encourage social distancing or to manage security.
3. Following government guidance on [managing security risks](#).

5. Ventilation of indoor gym and leisure facilities

Air extraction and ventilation measures

Ventilation is an important part of mitigating against the transmission of COVID-19. Ventilation into the building should be optimised to ensure a fresh air supply is provided to all areas of the facility and increased wherever possible. Particular attention should be given to areas where high intensity exercise activity takes place.

To achieve this, specific measures should be implemented:

- The maximum occupancy of each indoor facility should be limited by providing a minimum of 100sqft per person. For this figure, the area is the net useable indoor facility space available to members to use, including changing rooms, toilet and wash facilities. Reducing capacity in this way whilst sustaining ventilation flows, will increase the typical current 10l/s/p flow rate of ventilation to at least 20l/s/p, as fewer people are being served by the ventilation system.
- Ventilation systems should provide 100% fresh air and not recirculate air from one space to another.

You should also consider:

- Increasing the existing ventilation rate by fully opening dampers and running fans on full speed
- Operating the ventilation system 24 hours a day
- Increase the frequency of filter changes
- In the absence of known ventilation rates, a carbon dioxide sensor shall be used as a surrogate indicator to switch on additional mechanical ventilation or open windows.

Further guidance is provided in the CIBSE [COVID-19 Ventilation guidance](#).

6. Cleaning the workplace/facility

In this section

- [6.1 Before reopening](#)
- [6.2 Keeping the workplace/facility clean](#)
- [6.3 Hygiene: handwashing, sanitation facilities and toilets](#)
- [6.4 Changing rooms and showers](#)
- [6.5 Handling goods, merchandise and other materials](#)

6.1. Before reopening

Objective: To make sure that any site or location that has been closed or partially operated is clean and ready to restart, including:

- an assessment for all sites, or parts of sites, that have been closed, before restarting work
- cleaning procedures and providing hand sanitiser, before restarting work

Steps that will usually be needed:

1. Checking whether you need to service or adjust ventilation systems, for example, so that they do not automatically reduce ventilation levels due to lower than normal occupancy levels.
2. Most air conditioning systems do not need adjustment, however where systems serve multiple buildings, or you are unsure, advice should be sought from your heating ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) engineers or advisers.
3. Prior to re-commissioning a swimming pool facility, the following re-commissioning advice should be followed: [PWTAG Technical Note No. 45: Re-opening a pool after COVID-19 shutdown](#).

6.2. Keeping the workplace/facility clean

Objective: To keep the workplace clean and prevent transmission by touching contaminated surfaces.

Steps that will usually be needed:

1. Maintaining good ventilation in the sport or gym/leisure facility. For example, opening windows and doors frequently, where possible.
2. Frequent cleaning of work areas and equipment including stationary gym equipment between use, using your usual cleaning products.
3. Frequent cleaning of objects and surfaces that are touched regularly, including stationary gym equipment, free weights, mats, balls, etc.
4. Providing spray and cloths and instructions for users to wipe down each machine

After use to users of stationary gym equipment. Whilst operators will wish to increase the frequency of normal or enhanced cleaning of touched surfaces, the only means of minimising contact transmission is cleaning of equipment after every user. Therefore, materials for self-cleaning of handles and rails after use (in line with normal practice) is essential and signage should emphasise to users that this is a duty to others as they dismount/disengage from equipment.

5. Maintaining current rigorous cleaning procedures, reviewing and adapting where necessary including in increased high-risk spaces including main thoroughfares, touch points and walls and floors in circulation routes (corridors, lifts, foyers, landings, stairs, lobbies).
6. Clearing workspaces and removing waste and belongings from the work area at the end of a shift.
7. If equipment cannot be cleaned after each use, it should not be used.
8. If you are cleaning after a known or suspected case of COVID-19 then you refer to the [specific guidance](#).

6.3. Hygiene – handwashing, sanitation facilities and toilets

Objective: To help everyone keep good hygiene through the working day.

Cleaning protocols should be put in place to limit coronavirus transmission in public places. It is advised that touch points (e.g. handrails and gates) should be particular areas of focus for increased cleaning.

Frequent cleaning of work areas and equipment between use, using your usual cleaning products, is advised. As is clearing workspaces and removing waste and belongings from work areas at the end of shifts.

Maintaining hygiene, through handwashing, sanitisation facilities and toilets.

Steps that will usually be needed:

1. 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.
2. Considering how to ensure safety messages reach those with hearing or vision impairments.
3. Providing regular reminders and signage to maintain hygiene standards.
4. Frequent cleaning of work areas and equipment between use, using your usual cleaning products, is advised.
5. Clearing workspaces and removing waste and belongings from work areas at the end of shifts.
6. Thoroughly cleaning all fitness and non-personal equipment, including mats equipment after use – this can be done both by the customer or staff using spray and cloths provided and is in addition to the regular cleaning schedule.
7. Providing hand sanitiser in multiple locations, in addition to washrooms, where there may be a higher risk of transmission including reception and entrance foyers, changing rooms and lockers and adjacent to fitness

equipment and entrances to halls, gyms and studios. Operator to check and maintaining adequate supply at all times.

8. Setting clear use and cleaning guidance for toilets to ensure they are kept clean and social distancing is achieved. Putting up a visible cleaning schedule can keep it up to date and visible.
9. Keep the facilities well ventilated, for example by fixing doors open where appropriate.
10. Providing more waste facilities and more frequent rubbish collection.
11. Using disposable paper towels in handwashing facilities where possible.
12. Minimising use of portable toilets. Special care should be taken for cleaning of portable toilets and larger toilet blocks.

6.4. Changing rooms and showers

Objective: To minimise the risk of transmission in changing rooms and showers.

Changing rooms are an area of increased risk of transmission. It is important that social distancing is maintained in changing rooms and showers and that they are only use if essential. All venues should encourage attendees to arrive at the facility in sports kit and where possible to travel home to change/shower. Use of changing rooms and showering facilities should in general be avoided where possible, although these must be available for participants with disabilities or special needs and are likely to be needed after swimming. If changing rooms are to be used, users should use the facilities as quickly as possible.

Steps that will usually be needed:

1. Taking [steps](#) to ensure that all water systems, for example showers and sinks, are safe to use after a prolonged facility shutdown to minimise the risk of legionella and other diseases associated with water.
2. Where shower and changing facilities are required, setting clear use and cleaning guidance for showers, lockers and changing rooms to ensure

they are kept clean and clear of personal items and that social distancing is achieved as much as possible. Consider closing communal showers if possible.

3. Introducing enhanced cleaning of all facilities regularly during the day and at the end of the day.
4. Encouraging participants and staff to change and shower at home rather than in changing rooms where possible i.e. easier for the gym than for swimming where you have to change.
5. In establishments where guests use shared showers, consider cleaning more frequently.
6. For additional reassurance, providing cleaning materials and hand sanitiser for customer use at touch points.
7. Providing additional signposting in these areas to maintain social distancing.
8. Considering changes in policies to ensure limited time is taken in changing areas, especially during the changeover of group activity to maintain social distancing.
9. Maintaining use of lockers use where social distancing can be maintained.

6.5. Handling goods, merchandise and other materials

Objective: To reduce transmission through contact with objects in the gym/leisure facility.

Steps that will usually be needed:

1. Encouraging increased handwashing and introducing more handwashing facilities for workers and customers or providing hand sanitiser where this is not practical
2. Limiting customer handling of merchandise, for example, through different display methods, new signage or rotation of high-touch stock.

3. Putting in place picking-up and dropping-off collection points where possible, rather than passing goods hand-to-hand.
4. Reducing or avoiding use of non-personal kit. Any non-personal kit or equipment must be carefully cleaned between uses.
5. Encouraging contactless refunds.

7. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and face coverings

PPE protects the user against health or safety risks at work. It can include items such as safety helmets, gloves, eye protection, high-visibility clothing, safety footwear and safety harnesses. It also includes respiratory protective equipment, such as face masks.

Where you are already using PPE in your work activity to protect against non-COVID-19 risks, you should continue to do so.

At the start of this document we described the steps you need to take to manage COVID-19 risk in the workplace. This includes working from home and staying appropriately distanced away from each other in the workplace if at all possible. When managing the risk of COVID-19, additional PPE beyond what you usually wear is not beneficial. This is because COVID-19 is a different type of risk to the risks you normally face in a workplace, and needs to be managed through social distancing, hygiene and fixed teams or partnering, not through the use of PPE.

The exception is clinical settings, like a hospital, or a small handful of other roles for which Public Health England advises use of PPE. For example, first responders and immigration enforcement officers. If you are in one of these groups, you should refer to the advice at:

- [COVID-19: personal protective equipment \(PPE\) plan](#)
- [COVID-19: cleaning in non-healthcare settings](#)

Workplaces should not encourage the precautionary use of extra PPE to protect against COVID-19 outside clinical settings or when responding to a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19.

Unless you are in a situation where the risk of COVID-19 transmission is very high, your risk assessment should reflect the fact that the role of PPE in providing additional protection is extremely limited. However, if your risk

assessment does show that PPE is required, then you must provide this PPE free of charge to workers who need it. Any PPE provided must fit properly.

There are some circumstances when wearing a face covering may be marginally beneficial as a precautionary measure. The evidence suggests that wearing a face covering does not protect you, but it may protect others if you are infected but have not developed symptoms.

A face covering can be very simple and may be worn in enclosed spaces where social distancing isn't possible. It just needs to cover your mouth and nose. It is not the same as a face mask, such as the surgical masks or respirators used by health and care workers. Similarly, face coverings are not the same as the PPE used to manage risks like dust and spray in an industrial context. Supplies of PPE, including face masks, must continue to be reserved for those who need them to protect against risks in their workplace, such as health and care workers, and those in industrial settings like those exposed to dust hazards.

It is important to know that the evidence of the benefit of using a face covering to protect others is weak and the effect is likely to be small, therefore face coverings are not a replacement for the other ways of managing risk, including minimising time spent in contact, using fixed teams and partnering for close-up work, and increasing hand and surface washing. These other measures remain the best ways of managing risk in the workplace and government would therefore not expect to see employers relying on face coverings as risk management for the purpose of their health and safety assessments.

Wearing a face covering is optional and is not required by law, including in the workplace. If you choose to wear one, it is important to use face coverings properly and wash your hands before putting them on and taking them off. You should be prepared to remove your face covering if asked to do so by police officers and staff for the purposes of identification. Please be mindful that the wearing of a face covering may inhibit communication with people who rely on lip reading, facial expressions and clear sound.

Employers should support their workers in using face coverings safely if they choose to wear one. This means telling workers:

- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser before putting a face covering on, and after removing it
- When wearing a face covering, avoid touching your face or face covering, as you could contaminate them with germs from your hands
- Change your face covering if it becomes damp or if you've touched it
- Continue to wash your hands regularly
- Change and wash your face covering daily
- If the material is washable, wash in line with Manufacturer's instructions. If it's not washable, dispose of it carefully in your usual waste
- Practise social distancing wherever possible

You can make face-coverings at home and can [find guidance on how to on how to do this and use them safely on GOV.UK.](#)

All forms of face coverings may restrict breathing efficiency and should not be used during exercise except on specific advice from a physician.

8. Workforce Management

In this section

- [8.1 Shift patterns and working groups](#)
- [8.2 Work-related travel](#)
- [8.3 Communications and training](#)

8.1. Shift patterns and working groups

Objective: To change the way work is organised to create distinct groups and reduce the number of contacts each worker has.

Steps that will usually be needed:

1. As far as possible, where workers are split into teams or shift groups, fixing these teams or shift groups so that where contact is unavoidable, this happens between the same people.
2. Identifying areas where people have to directly pass things to each other and finding ways to remove direct contact such as by using drop-off points or transfer zones.
3. You should assist the Test and Trace service by keeping a temporary record of your staff shift patterns for 21 days and assist NHS Test and Trace with requests for that data if needed. This could help contain clusters or outbreaks.

8.2. Work-related travel

8.2.1. Cars, accommodation and visits

Objective: To avoid unnecessary work travel and keep people safe when they do need to travel between locations.

Steps that will usually be needed:

1. Minimising non-essential travel – consider remote options first.

2. Minimising the number of people outside of your household or support bubble travelling together in any one vehicle, using fixed travel partners, increasing ventilation when possible and avoiding sitting face-to-face.
3. Limiting passengers in corporate vehicles, for example, work minibuses. This could include leaving seats empty.
4. Cleaning shared vehicles between shifts or on handover.
5. Where workers are required to stay away from their home, centrally logging the stay and making sure any overnight accommodation meets social distancing guidelines.

8.2.2 Deliveries to other sites

Objective: To help workers delivering to other sites such as factories, logistics sites or customers' premises to maintain social distancing and hygiene practices.

Steps that will usually be needed:

1. Putting in place procedures to minimise person-to-person contact during deliveries to other sites.
2. Maintaining consistent pairing where two-person deliveries are required.
3. Minimising contact during payments and exchange of documentation, for example by using electronic payment methods and electronically signed and exchanged documents.

8.3. Communications and training

8.3.1. Returning to work

Objective: To make sure all workers understand COVID-19 related safety procedures and feel safe to return to work.

Steps that will usually be needed:

1. Providing clear, consistent and regular communication to improve understanding and consistency of ways of working.

2. Engaging with workers and worker representatives through existing communication routes to explain and agree any changes in working arrangements.
3. Developing communication and training materials for workers prior to returning to site, especially around new procedures for arrival at work.

8.3.2. Ongoing communications and signage

Objective: To make sure all workers are kept up to date with how safety measures are being implemented or updated.

Steps that will usually be needed:

1. Ongoing engagement with workers (including through trade unions or employee representative groups) to monitor and understand any unforeseen impacts of changes to working environments.
2. Awareness and focus on the importance of mental health at times of uncertainty. The government has published [guidance on the mental health and wellbeing aspects of coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#).
3. Using simple, clear messaging to explain guidelines using images and clear language, with consideration of groups for which English may not be their first language.
4. Using visual communications, for example whiteboards or signage, to explain changes to production schedules, breakdowns or materials shortages to reduce the need for face-to-face communications.
5. Communicating approaches and operational procedures to suppliers, customers or trade bodies to help their adoption and to share experience.

9. Inbound and outbound goods

Objective: To maintain social distancing and avoid surface transmission when goods enter and leave the site, especially in high volume situations, for example, distribution centres or despatch areas.

Steps that will usually be needed:

1. Revising pick-up and drop-off collection points, procedures, signage and markings.
2. Minimising unnecessary contact at gatehouse security, yard and warehouse. For example, non-contact deliveries where the nature of the product allows for use of electronic pre-booking.
3. Considering methods to reduce frequency of deliveries, for example by ordering larger quantities less often.
4. Where possible and safe, having single workers load or unload vehicles.
5. Where possible, using the same pairs of people for loads where more than one is needed.
6. Enabling drivers to access welfare facilities when required, consistent with other guidance.
7. Encouraging drivers to stay in their vehicles where this does not compromise their safety and existing safe working practice, such as preventing drive-aways.

10. Further guidance for clubs, community sports organisations and deployers of volunteers

In this section

- [10.1 Workforce planning to provide a safe environment](#)
- [10.2 Session organisation and activity grouping](#)
- [10.3 Training for returning to activity](#)
- [10.4 Wellbeing and inclusion](#)

Volunteers have a vital role to play in helping to ensure the safe return to activity for many sports. This is particularly true of community sports clubs and groups, who are often entirely dependent on volunteers giving their time to enable the club to deliver sport and operate safely.

Whilst there are many consistencies between the paid workforce and volunteers in relation to safety and welfare, the principal difference is choice. Unlike paid workers, volunteers have no obligation to return, whereas staff are likely to have an employment contract and other employment legislation to protect both them and their employers.

Ensuring volunteers are ready to re-engage and feel able to give their time in a safe environment will be critical to the resumption of activity within clubs. It is important that appropriate consideration is given to identify the practical steps that can be taken to ensure they feel supported, welcomed and most importantly ensure they can volunteer safely.

We know that the types of clubs, groups and community organisations that support sport and physical activity are diverse and so one size will not fit all when it comes to supporting volunteers. This guidance therefore aims to provide some headline considerations for organisations and groups to think about in their planning at this time. It does not cover everything that needs to

be considered or every context where volunteers will be involved but instead is designed to work alongside more detailed guidance which is available on the [Sport England website](#).

10.1. Workforce planning to provide a safe environment

Objective: Considering the needs of volunteers when planning for re-starting activities.

Steps that will usually be needed:

1. Consulting [NVCO advice on volunteering](#).
2. Consulting your national governing body for sport-specific guidance.
3. Adopting a phased approach to bring people back to the club and organisation and expanding the activity offer over a period of time.
4. Working with stakeholders to clarify the organisational and operational requirements the organisation needs to put in place before returning to activity and designating a point person who will be responsible for making sure these requirements are met.
5. Putting measures in place to ensure that the facility, location or context where volunteering is taking place is safe, including by conducting your own risk assessment.
6. Where running activities for children without their parent or carers supervision, consulting the Department for Education guidance on [Protective measures for out-of-school settings](#) which sets out further practical steps providers of community activities, holiday clubs, after-school clubs, tuition and other out-of-school provision for children should follow to minimise the risk of transmission for children attending their settings.
7. Considering the tasks and roles needed to support activities that can take place. For example, how many volunteers you need, in what roles and how those roles may need to be adapted.

8. Following public health guidelines to assess individual circumstances and levels of risk, to support decisions about whether it is safe for individuals to volunteer.
9. Considering that volunteers may have other responsibilities at this time such as looking after relatives, childcare or changing working circumstances. Identify what time they may be able to commit and what flexibility and support they may need to undertake their volunteering role.
10. Developing a plan for ongoing communication with members, volunteers, parents and carers which includes consulting on their intentions to return and regularly updating on re-opening plans including providing members with advanced access to guidance.

A guidance template for developing action plans is available via [Club Matters](#).

10.2. Session organisation and activity grouping

Objective: To modify the way activity is organised to create distinct groups and reduce the number of contacts each volunteer has.

Steps that will usually be needed:

1. As far as possible, where paid and unpaid workers are split across sessional activity, fixing these groups so that where contact is unavoidable, this happens between the same people.
2. Identifying areas or activities where people have to directly pass things to each other and finding ways to remove direct contact such as by using drop-off points or transfer zones.
3. Enabling a booking system or other approaches to manage demand for access to facilities, particularly for group sessions, so that no more than the desired number of participants are present at any one time.

10.3. Training for returning to activity

Objective: To make sure all volunteers are trained on COVID-19-related safety procedures and feel safe to return to activity.

Steps that will usually be needed:

1. Identifying which roles need new processes and procedures, such as for hygiene or social distancing. Core training is available for free for all volunteers through [CIMSPA](#).
2. Using the guidance produced by national governing bodies of sport to provide sport-specific guidance for volunteer coaches and leaders. This information can be accessed through the Sport England [Return to Play](#).
3. Considering what new training needs to be offered to volunteers to support them to adapt to new ways of working, or if they are undertaking a new role.
4. Providing training materials for volunteers prior to returning to their activities, for example, what procedures are there for arrival at the venue or facility and how to safely run their sports.
5. Providing clear, consistent and regular communication to improve understanding and consistency of ways of working.
6. Engaging with volunteers to continuously understand any fears or challenges and agree any changes required.

10.4. Wellbeing and inclusion

Objective: To ensure that the environment is inclusive, and that the wellbeing of volunteers is considered and continuously monitored.

Maintain awareness and focus on the importance of mental health at times of uncertainty. The government has published guidance on the mental health and wellbeing aspects of coronavirus (COVID-19). Free Mental Health Awareness training for voluntary coaches is available from MIND through [UK Coaching](#).

Steps that will usually be needed:

1. Using simple, clear messaging to explain guidelines, for example using images and clear language, and with consideration of groups for which English may not be their first language.
2. Using visual communications, for example whiteboards or signage, to explain changes to access, timetables, or programmes to reduce the need for face-to-face communications.
3. Communicating approaches and operational procedures to suppliers, customers or trade bodies to help their adoption and to share experience.

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