

Indoor Exercise in Wales

13th August 2020

Dear Colleagues

I want to take this opportunity to provide you with an update in respect of the awaited guidance on indoor exercise.

As you will be aware, a change in regulation (law) is usually supported by a change in the guidance relating to the regulation. Regrettably we have been informed by the Sports Policy Unit at Welsh Government, that there is a delay on getting the guidance published, given the complexities surrounding indoor gatherings and the position regarding children aged 11 and under.

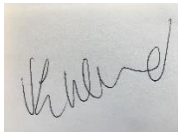
Please be assured that we will continue to work on your behalf to secure clear guidance as soon as possible. In the absence of the guidance, we have put together our own recommendations to you, which are based on discussions we have had with Welsh Government this week. Our guidance is attached to this letter. This guidance is our own interpretation of the current situation, and you may wish to take your own separate legal advice on these matters given the legal liabilities associated with the breaching of Coronavirus regulations.

Should you require any further information or would like to raise any issues that you are keen to get heard in Government, please do respond to us at your earliest convenience.

I know many of you have also written directly to Government to air your concerns. To ensure we have a unified approach I would urge you to channel your concerns through us so we can collate them all when representing the sector in Government. You may also wish to consider voicing your concerns with your local Member of the Senedd. Following a meeting this morning with Sarah Powell, CEO at Sport Wales, she has also offered to address your concerns, as Government's sponsored body for Sport, to allow colleagues in Sports Policy to focus their energy on getting the guidance prepared and out to the sector as quickly as possible.

Finally, I wanted to take this opportunity to thank you for working with us through the phased return to sport and leisure groups. The continued work of these groups is crucial to improving the health of our sector and ultimately the health of our nation.

Best wishes



Victoria Ward
CEO Welsh Sport Association

WSA Advice – Indoor Exercise in Wales (13th August 2020)

Room Capacity of 30 – Regulation 12 of the Coronavirus Act 2020 has been updated to release indoor exercise from the Act but only for groups of up to 30.

The guidance associated with this announcement states:

“exercise with others in a gathering of no more than 30 people at a fitness studio, gym, swimming pool, other indoor leisure centre or facility or any other open premises”.

We have spoken to Welsh Government who have confirmed that the 30 limit, is per room (not a whole leisure centre) is the absolute maximum to be allowed to exercise together in a well ventilated space, as long as the space is large enough to accommodate a maximum of 30 whilst adhering to the 2m social distance regulation.

Children Aged 11 and Under – The announcement from the First Minister that children aged 11 and under no longer have to social distance, where it is not practical for them to do so, was welcomed by the sport and leisure sector. However, we have been advised by Welsh Government that for indoor settings, children 11 and under *should* still be encouraged to comply with the 2m social distance regulation.

The guidance associated with this announcement says:

“In circumstances where young children mix with others, it may not be practical to attempt to maintain continual 2 metre distancing (between children, or even between children and adults). This is in part because it is harder for younger children to understand the concept of physical distancing, and in part because appropriate support from carers will often require closer contact.

For young children (those of primary school age or younger), it is in any case less essential to attempt to rigidly maintain continual 2 metre distance between them, or between the children and any adults outside their household or extended household. Studies have found that young children are less likely to transmit the virus, whether to other children or to adults, and the virus appears to take a milder course in children than in adults for most cases.

However as young children can still transmit the virus, parents of young children should still exercise their good judgement and take care, especially to encourage their children to follow had hygiene measures and keep close contact to a minimum where possible”.

We have discussed this with Welsh Government and their position on this will not change ahead of the next review.

Next Review of Legislation - Recommendations

We fully appreciate that the guidance detailed above may cause challenges for some facilities. Working with our Return to Sport groups, we are developing a set of recommendations, to urge Welsh Government to reconsider their position in a number of areas at the next review, which is scheduled to take place on Thursday 20th August, ahead of the First Ministers Announcement on Friday 21st August.

Our recommendations will include the following:

1. Room Capacity Limits indoors:

To remove the upper limit of 30 per room and adopt the formula developed by UK Active, in that a room's upper limit is calculated on floor space of 100 square foot per person.

2. Children 11 and Under:

To permit providers of sport and exercise for children 11 and under to breach the social distance regulation, in line with the Government guidance in a supervised environment.

3. Increase Group Size for Outdoor Activity:

As both formal/organised and informal groups can now meet outdoors for any purpose, we are proposing that organised groups should be able to meet in larger numbers. This will enable the return of more competitive team activity and small events.

Informal activity cannot currently breach physical distancing requirements, and participants must always remain 2m from each other.

Organised activity, with a risk assessment and mitigation in place may undertake limited breaches of physical distancing, outdoors.

4. A Pathway to the Return of Larger / Major Events

This is either in the shape of test events for larger scale events outdoors in controlled environments, and/or absolute clarity on whether running controlled "waves" is permitted under the existing regulations.