

# Returning to the pool

Guidance for **Clubs**

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# Covid-19: Returning to the Pool

## Foreword

We have all been missing the water during the Covid-19 enforced closure of swimming pools. For many of our members across all our disciplines, this will have been the longest period out of the water, which can take a toll on both our physical and mental wellbeing.

As the recognised national governing body, Swim England is therefore delighted to be able to produce this guidance to help ensure the safe return to the water once swimming pools are allowed to open once more.

Our first priority remains the safety of everyone involved in our sports, be they participants, leisure centre staff, coaches or volunteers. We will at all times be led by the latest government guidance and regulations. This guidance has been produced in collaboration with experts from across the sector and I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to its creation.

The guidance covers a range of settings, including for;

- Operators User Guidance
- Users
- Swimming Lessons
- Community Swimming
- Clubs.

When pools reopen, it will not be a case of 'business as usual' and we know that things will have to be different, but if we are to play our part in protecting the NHS from another wave of Covid-19 admissions, it is important we follow the latest guidance and adjust to the new 'normal'.

Swim England will continue to push for more financial support for the swimming sector to ensure we can all continue to enjoy the sports we love.



Jane Nickerson  
Chief Executive, Swim England

# Guidance for Clubs

## Introduction

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

This document aims to support our network of clubs in returning to swimming facilities following the period of closure due to Covid-19 and provides guidance on reducing the risk of Covid-19 transmission within the swimming pool environment.

It will highlight the continued requirements for safe social distancing and enhanced hygiene regimes, along with guidance on how this will impact on the different experience the pool user will have. The guide will include details on booking your swim, what to do before leaving home, on arrival at the pool and in the water itself.

Other sections will provide guidance for pool operators and practical advice relating to the control of Covid-19 in swimming facilities and during various activities. Links to best practice and other industry standard guidance will be provided where appropriate.

As with all environments, there is still a level of risk of Covid-19 transmission in aquatic settings that requires control measures to be implemented, based on your Covid-19 Risk Assessment. Clubs must create their own risk assessment per activity before implementing any of the activities listed below.

Anyone taking part in a club session should also familiarise themselves with the [Swim England Guidance for Users](#) before attending. There is also more detailed guidance for club swimmers in the sections below.

## Clubs

The following guidance is designed to support clubs when considering the factors that are likely to influence training sessions while social distancing measures remain in place.

- It is strongly suggested that each club should have a dedicated officer responsible for Covid-19 Liaison, making sure that from the club's perspective they are up to date with central or local government recommendations. This person will also have a key responsibility to liaise with the pool operator and be aware of the rules and guidance set by the facility (for all facilities used by the club). More information can be found in the [Covid-19 Role Description](#).
- Clubs should discuss with the pool operator any changes that may affect the pool programme and club access.
- When determining bather load and lane capacity, clubs should consider the advice on assessing risk in the pool as set out in the [Swim England Guidance for Operators](#). It is advised that clubs should do this in collaboration with the pool operator.
- Clubs should consider double width lanes when setting up for lane swimming.
- Teachers and Coaches should deliver from poolside.
- Teachers and Coaches should adhere to government guidance on social distancing.

- Clubs should work with the facility management to evaluate the number of personnel on poolside to give effect to social distancing.
- Clubs should consider the practicalities of getting swimmers to and from the poolside, particularly as the majority of facilities might also be in use by the public.
- Club members should adhere to government guidance on social distancing when walking or waiting on poolside.
- Clubs should review available pool space to allow for correct social distancing, including entry and exit points.
- Allow sufficient time between squads for cleaning, and to reduce the chance of clustering groups.
- Equipment should be cleaned in-between use. Submerging equipment in adequately disinfected swimming pool water will reduce the risk of transmission of enveloped viruses.
- Where possible participants should bring their own, readily identifiable, equipment.
- Supervision/spectating is likely to be limited, if at all, so keep those attending to a minimum.

More detailed guidance, including specific guidance for our various disciplines, can be found below.

If you have any questions relating to the guidance please contact [clubguidance@swimming.org](mailto:clubguidance@swimming.org).

# Guidance for Clubs

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Club Committee / Club Management Processes		
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7	Be prepared for change	Asking our clubs to consider the potential changes in the aquatic landscape.
7	Thought starters for setting up training sessions	Thought starters to help clubs think about their return to the pool in line with guiding principles.
8	Accessing the facility	Clubs to consider the process of pools reopening and any reasons behind some delays.
10	Potential club timeline	Staged approach to what clubs should consider before returning to training.
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12	Support one: Completing a club review	Guidance to help consider the clubs current position and steps to take.
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15	Support three: How to prepare for social distancing	Flow diagram to help clubs plan session with social distancing at the fore front of those plans and being compliant with new regulations.
16	Support four: How to formulate a new timetable	Flow diagram to support clubs developing a new club timetable with social distancing regulations applied.
18	Support five: How to Reinstate your Workforce	Flow diagram for clubs to reinstate their workforce – both paid and voluntary members who will be critical to the clubs return.
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39	Diving	Specific advice and diagrams to help plan diving training sessions.

This section of the recovery toolkit is specific to an aquatic club returning to training.

In essence the document is in two distinct parts:

- Part one – Club Committee / Club Management Planning.
- Part two – Technical Support for Returning to Training.

Initially this section will be information generic to all aquatic disciplines, then will break down into more discipline specific information for the sport or sports that your club offers.

## Guiding principles

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

## Be prepared for change

It is becoming clear that the aquatic landscape that we knew pre Covid-19 may be vastly different on our return. Once there is a green light to open all centres it's not likely that all pools will simply open their doors on that date.

- Many pools may open with reduced pool hours – early mornings for example could be limited.
- Whilst a leisure centre may open there may be a phased return to certain activities.
- Local authorities / pool operators may open pools within certain geographical areas bit by bit rather than on mass.
- Some pools may not reopen at all.

In short there could be less opportunities, and we cannot expect clubs to simply step back into where they left off. This is not definitive yet, but it is something clubs must consider.

## Thought starters for setting up training sessions

A number of these can be found within our [supporting documents page](#).

## Accessing the facility

When facilities do begin to reopen, be aware that pools may not be accessible for a number of weeks. The timing of this will all depend on various factors, including government guidelines and the operators approach.

The table below outlines the potential considerations for pool operators when they are able to look at re-opening of facilities.

	Activity	Potential delays
Week 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reactivation of the pool plant.</li> <li>Communication with booking holders (end of week one).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pool plant not starting.</li> <li>Algae.</li> <li>Time to heat the pool.</li> <li>Deep clean of pool and equipment.</li> <li>Lack of access to chemicals.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reinstating staff members.</li> <li>Completing return to work process.</li> </ul>
Week 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Independent water biological test completed.</li> <li>Set up any necessary restriction to social distancing in all public areas.</li> <li>Continued communication with clubs and members.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Testing</b> could take up to three weeks depending on local demand.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government guidelines altering.</li> <li>Producing the correct signage.</li> <li>Size of the facilities.</li> </ul>
Week 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Retrain staff.</li> <li>Communication with clubs and members regard recommencing activity.</li> </ul>	<p>Government and national governing body guidelines altering.</p>

Any issue with the above areas will delay the opening of the pool



## Preparation for clubs

Based on the potential operator timeline above, a potential return to pool timeline for clubs can be considered with key milestones in order to be ready for a return to the water. This timeline includes the number of the supporting documents and flow diagrams that have been devised to offer more information in key areas.

These supporting documents are:

1. How to review your membership using the finance toolkit.
2. How to work with your operator.
3. How to prepare for social distancing.
4. How to formulate a new programme in line with social distancing.
5. How to reinstate your workforce, paid and voluntary, using the finance toolkit.

It is outlined in the diagram below, where these supporting sheets fit in the timeline.

## Potential club timeline

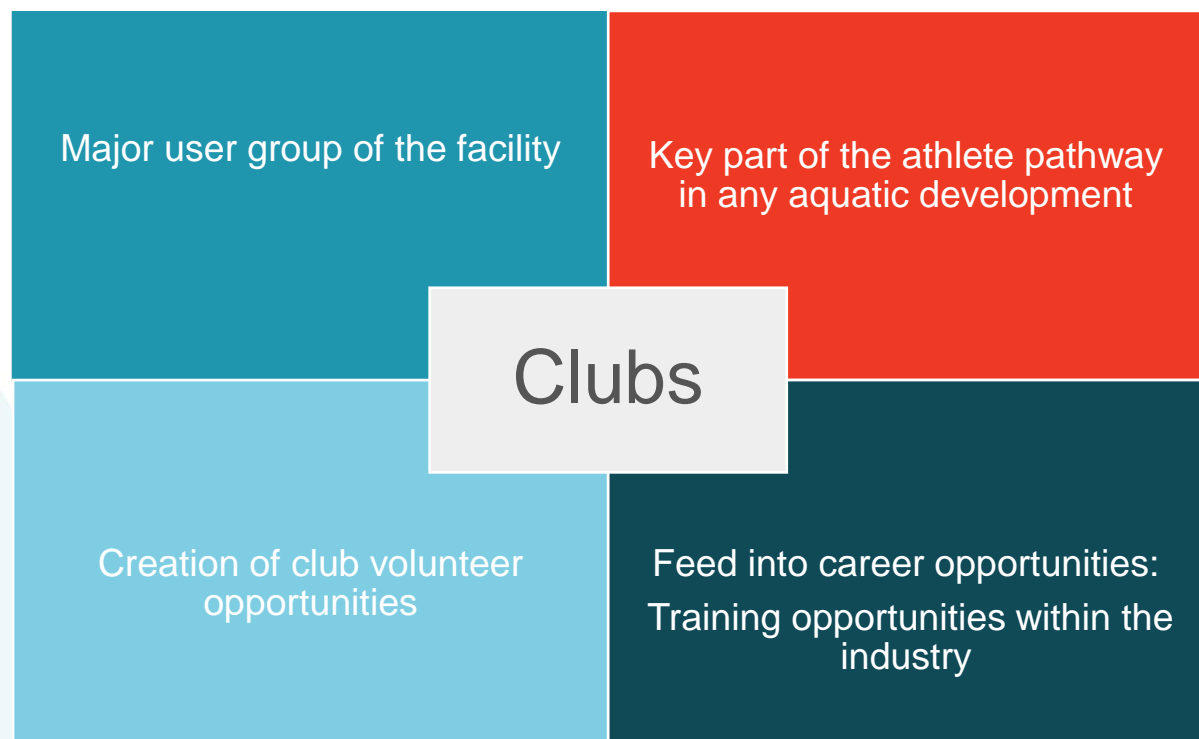
	Activity	Considerations	Supporting documents
Now	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contact your membership.</li> <li>Begin your return to club review.</li> </ul>	Potential online survey to ascertain: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How many members retained.</li> <li>Potential income generation.</li> </ul>	1, 2, 3, 4 and 5
-3 Weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communication with the facility to confirm pool time access.</li> <li>Review risk assessments for potential activity.</li> <li>Look at club timetable to offer a phased return to the pool.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Include current government guidelines / operator and NGB guidance in risk assessments.</li> <li>Consider what your offer will be for land activity to support return to pool.</li> </ul>	1, 4 and 5 SwimMark Templates
-2 Weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communication with club members.</li> <li>Make contact with coaching staff.</li> <li>Construct draft phase 1 timetable together.</li> <li>Hold remote coach/committee meetings.</li> </ul>	Consider what training is required for your coaches and lifeguards when returning to club.	2, 4 and 5
- 1 Week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access site specific training through the operator.</li> <li>Confirm date opening with operator.</li> <li>Confirm Phase 1 return to the pool with operator.</li> <li>Communication with clubs and members with return programme.</li> </ul>	Be aware there may be a delay to the opening date depending on where the facility is with their emergence process.	2
<b>Week 4:</b> Potential for club to access facility under social distancing regulations.			

## Maximising and exploring shared opportunities

As both clubs and operators begin emerging from lockdown, there are many key areas where strong partnerships can and should be forged.

With potentially less pool time and water space available, it may be necessary for local clubs to work together over the longer term as well as collaborating as a network of clubs in the short term to help each other through this process.

A true partnership and collaboration with the pool operator will be crucial for clubs in the current environment.



‘A successful club forms part of a successful leisure centre’.

# Support one

## Completing a club review

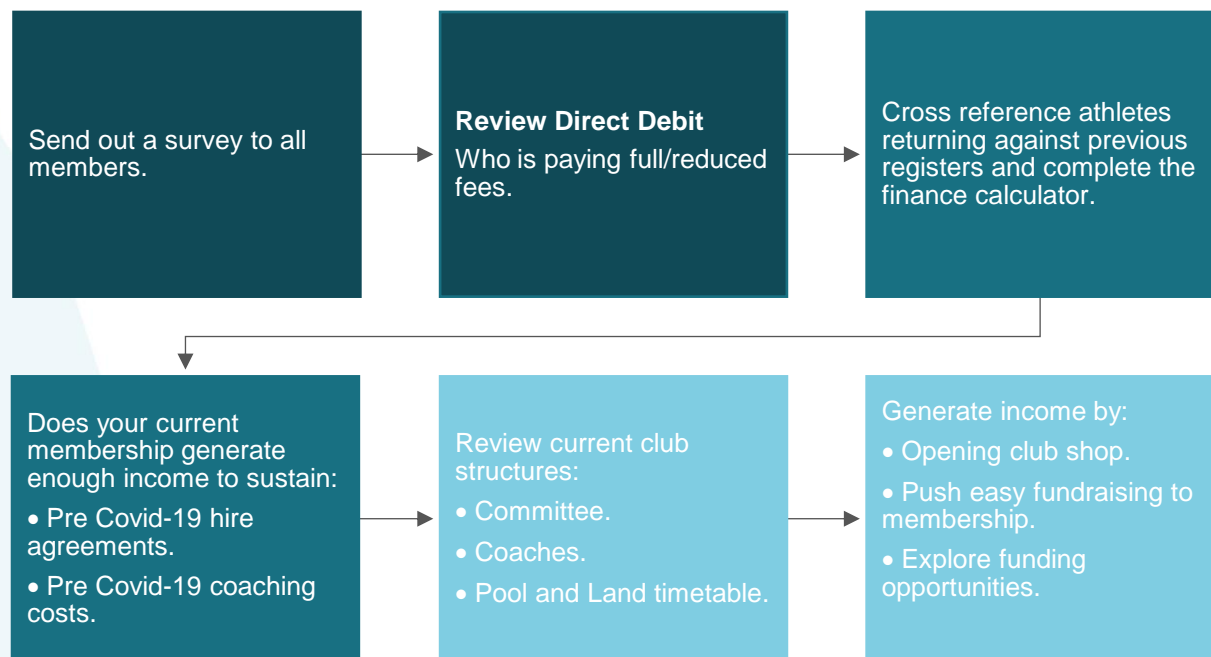
### Overview

This guide aims to support the club in identifying current baselines in terms of Membership, Club Finances, Coaching Staff and Workforce. It is important to have this information before any decisions can be made on how the club will reinstate pool activity once the facilities are able to reopen.

There are additional tools in this section to support the club:

- club finance toolkit
- survey example.

### Process



### Considerations whilst completing this process:

- More support regarding holding virtual meetings and AGMs and other useful support can be found through **Club Matters**.
- It may be necessary to adjust the proposed survey template to make it relevant to your club size and structure. The Members Survey should be a strong starting point and relevant to the majority of Swim England clubs.
- Additional support may be required when reviewing the club's (new) baseline membership. If staff have been out of the business, it might be advisable to bring the head coach back to support this process.

- When reviewing pool hire agreements, consider how social distancing might be applied.
- Can the club be moving ahead with **Stronger Affiliation accreditation** or **SwimMark**
- Club members may have lost hats, goggles or grown out of kit during this period and may need to re-stock on a few items – this could be a revenue opportunity for members requiring new or replacement kit.
- With so much online shopping taking place is the club registered to use **easyfundraising** to generate additional income

## Intended outcome

By following this process, the club should gain a good understanding of how many members have been lost or retained during this period. From this information the club should be able to generate a financial forecast and make any decisions regarding adjustments to club structures prior to returning to the pool.

## Supporting resources

Below are links to where you can find relevant supporting resources:

- **Members Survey.**
- **Finance Toolkit.**

# Support two

## How to work with your operator

### Overview

This guide aims to support the club in the initial contact with the local pool operator. The process below can offer additional information and highlight potential discussion areas. This will also support the club in preparing members and committee for possible changes that maybe necessary. The process should outline potential opportunities to manage these challenges in partnership with your pool operator.

### Process



### Intended outcome

By following this process, the club should be prepared for conversations with the pool operator. By week two of the process, the club should be in a good position to begin looking at the club programme. At this stage the club may need to bring back other members of the coaching team (if they've been out of the business).

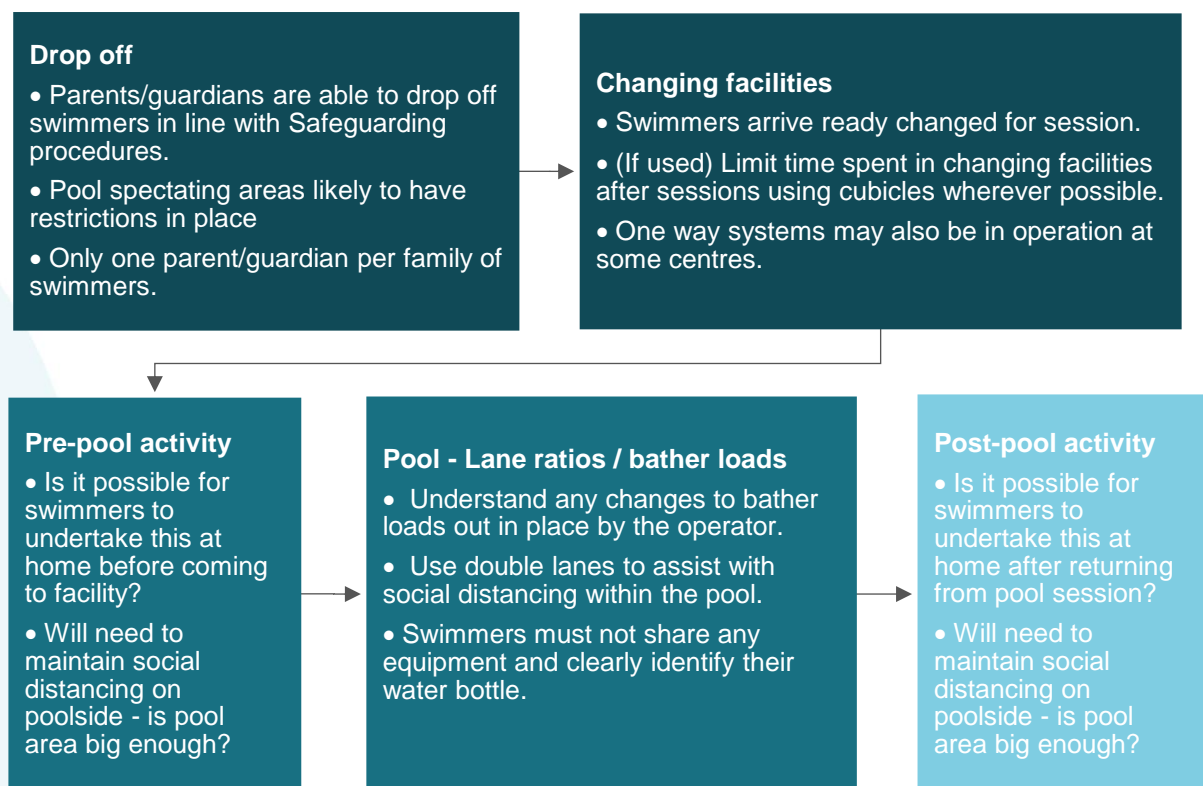
# Support three

## How to prepare for social distancing

### Overview

The below flow diagram should help with club planning. Support three is designed to help consider the factors that are likely to influence training sessions while social distancing measures remain in place. It is important to consider the practicalities of getting swimmers to and from the poolside, particularly as the majority of facilities will be in use with other user groups. Regular communication with the pool operator will be key so the club is fully aware of any restrictions or plans they are putting in place.

### Process



The discussions and communication with the pool operator within support document two will be key to putting these practices in place. It will be necessary for the club to update their risk assessments for training sessions with any changes made. A Risk Assessment Template can be found later in this document.

### Intended outcome

Once the club has followed this process, it should give an understanding of how to organise access to the pool and basic considerations for returning to the water.

Information for each aquatic discipline within the Technical Support for Returning to Training, will evolve this process much further.

The support documents in section two and four will also form a key part of this process.

# Support four

## How to formulate a new timetable

### Overview

This guide aims to support the club in formulating a return to pool timetable. This timetable may need to be revised as government guidance changes. The timetable is based on activity for athletes who are not symptomatic and applies to the social distancing measures in place within re-opening of facilities. This guide should be followed in line with the support three document for social distancing in general.

### Process



### Considerations before completing the squad overview

When it comes to pool space and time for club swimming, (which will also be applicable to artistic swimming and water polo training) there are numerous variables to be considered, including:

- **Lane width** – narrower lanes = less swimmers, wider lanes = more swimmers.
- **Pool design** – specifically, a tank type pool will create significant waves from club swimmers, the 'rough' waters can necessitate having fewer swimmers within a club session, whereas in a deck level pool waves will dissipate over the side rather than the energy staying within the pool.
- **Pool length and width** – social distancing application.
- **Pool depth** – a shallower pool will often create more turbulent waters, so may necessitate fewer swimmers per lane/pool.



- **Lane ropes** – similar to pool design, anti-wave lane ropes dissipate the energy and prevent a build-up of turbulence on the surface, and additional turbulence could contribute to a need for amending bather loads.
- **Pool plant system / air handling** – efficiency and age of the pool may have an impact on bather loads.

Size, dimensions and design will be a consideration for all aquatic disciplines in terms of maximum bather loads for social distancing.

### Guidance to formulate your squad overview

Every facility will be different. So dialogue and communication with the facility is paramount:

- Do they have a maximum bather load?
- What are their maximum numbers per lane?
- Are they using double lane widths?

These answers are critical in order to plan training sessions and numbers per squad.

### Intended outcome

By following this process, coupled with the Members Survey, the club will be able to see the number of pool hours required.

Once squad numbers have been devised, it's then possible to apportion the hours into a new club timetable to make the best use of the water time whilst adhering to social distancing.

The Head Coach as a minimum will be needed to carry out this exercise with the support of the Club Committee.

Remember this will be a starting point for the club, regular reviews and knowledge of changing guidance will allow the club timetable to evolve.

### Supporting resources

Below are links to where you can find relevant supporting resources:

- [Risk Assessment template.](#)
- [Risk Assessment examples.](#)

# Support five

## How to reinstate your workforce - paid and voluntary

### Overview

This guide aims to support the club in reinstating the coaching team, both voluntary and paid coaches. This guide will link closely with the [Club Coronavirus Toolkit](#), where suitable links to the latest government guidelines regarding furlough and the self-employment scheme can be found. This guide should be followed in line with support one to ensure the club is a sustainable position for covering coaching costs as the club returns to the pool.

### Process

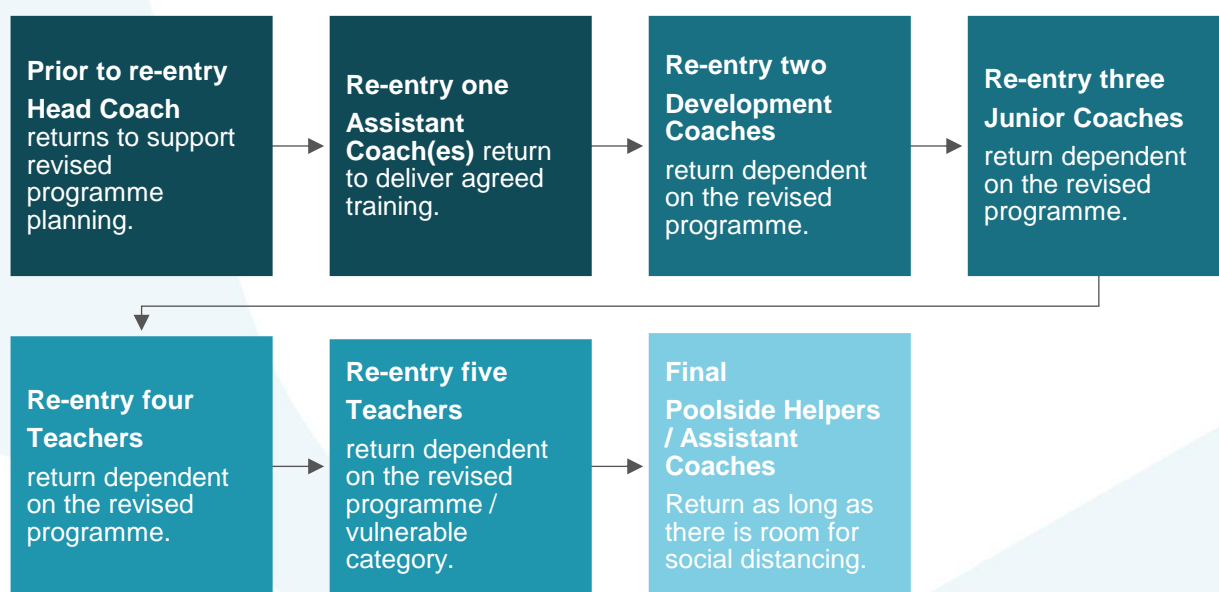
Re-evaluate your programme using the Club Finance Toolkit to establish the number of staff required to deliver a revised timetable (if applicable) in the first instance. Remember it is likely to be a phased approach as the club is able to regrow and new or existing members return to the water.

Taking the following into account:

- safety
- expenditure
- revised membership fees
- staffing costs.

The chart below details a potential process for re-establishing the clubs coaching workforce. (NB: Not all parts of the flow diagram will be applicable to all clubs).

NB: whilst we have referenced coaching staff, the same process would be relevant to a club's teaching workforce depending on the club type.



### Considerations whilst planning for coaches to return:

- 48 hours notice is required before anyone on the furlough scheme can return to any form of work; admin, land delivery, pool activity etc.
- Do any of the club's coaches, either paid or unpaid, fall into the at risk category? You can visit the [NHS website](#) for support with this area.
- Do the club's coaches also lifeguard sessions? Will they need site specific training before they can deliver?
- Do all the coaches have **DBS and safeguarding** up to date? This can be completed online before they return to delivery.

### Intended outcome

By following this process, the club should be able to ensure there is a safe, sustainable financial delivery plan in place to support the coaching and teaching workforce. At this stage the club may need to consider both financial and legal aspects of reinstating your coaching team.

# Additional resources

All documents listed below can be found within the [supporting document page](#) on [swimming.org](https://swimming.org).

- Club Coronavirus Toolkit
- Finance Toolkit
- Member Survey
- Club Covid-19 Lead – Role Description
- Risk Assessment template
- Risk Assessment examples for:
  - Artistic Swimming
  - Competitive Swimming
  - Diving
  - Water Polo
- Advice for returning to exercise after Covid-19
- Health Survey
- Training venue assessment

# Returning to training – all disciplines

This section looks covers all competitive disciplines and is followed by further discipline specific information. (If your club delivers the Learn to Swim Programme too, please refer to the [Swim England Guidance for Swimming Lessons](#)).

## Introduction

All clubs are responsible for their own decisions with regards to return to training as they must consider their individual circumstances, environments, participants, workforce and all their members.

## Covid-19 awareness and risk assessment

All activities should be planned and a suitable **risk assessment** undertaken that takes into account considerations related to Covid-19 including government guidance (both local and national).

It is particularly important that the “risk assessment – social distancing” section of the [Swim England Guidance for Operators](#) is taken into account as this covers our guidance on how close participants can come to each other during training sessions. Clubs should adopt these principles and apply them to their own unique circumstances in order to plan safe and effective sessions.

Clubs should follow the following guidelines:

- Appoint a **Covid-19 Lead** with the overall responsibility to oversee the safe return to the water for athletes in partnership with the operator.
- The Club Chairman must ensure a high level of support for the Covid-19 Lead, maintaining open communication and a confidential access to the Welfare Officer if required.
- An additional individual should also be appointed Covid-19 Liaison for each training squad (or session as appropriate). This person will be available at every training session and responsible for the monitoring of social distancing and wellbeing, reporting back to the Covid-19 Lead after each training session identifying good practice together with any adverse findings. This person should not be the session coach and ideally have no other role at the training session.
- When a multi squad training session takes place, it is only necessary for one Covid-19 Liaison to be present.
- The Covid-19 Lead should appoint Liaisons as required and maintain a good level of contact with them ensuring prompt dissemination of information and updates.

## Planning

All clubs are unique and as such there cannot be standard guidance to cover all eventualities. Clubs will therefore need to plan for their own specific circumstances to address the need to maintain social distancing and adhere to government guidelines.

Clubs should ensure they have planned effectively for all aspects of their sessions and should agree their plans with the pool operator to ensure alignment and to offer the safest and best experience for their participants and workforce.

- Club planning and risk assessments should take into consideration (but not be limited to) the following, always with a focus on maintaining social distancing, minimising transmission risk and adhering to government guidance:
  - Arrival and departure protocols.
  - Activity pre, during and post pool.
  - The standard of participants and the specific type of activity.
  - Transitions between activities (e.g. from training sets to breaks).
  - The length of pool and width of lanes.
  - The set-up of poolside space.
  - Use and cleaning of equipment.
  - Use of facilities such as changing rooms and dryland areas.
  - Spectators.
  - Lifeguarding and safety arrangements.
- If the club has any doubt about any aspects of their planning, it is suggested that they start with smaller numbers of participants and ensure that distancing can be maintained and guidance applied, only increasing the number of participants when they are sure this is feasible.
- Each club must assess the relevant numbers that can be catered for within its own sessions and this should comply with pool operator guidelines. This will depend on a number of factors including (but not limited to):
  - Level and ability of participants involved.
  - Proposed training content.
  - Pace/intensity/volume of training.
  - Requirement for equipment.
  - Available poolside space and need for rest.
  - Vulnerability of participants.
  - Length of pool and width of lanes.

## Participant and workforce behaviour and safety

- When participants return to training it should be gradual, progressive, and for those in high risk groups (or anyone with concerns) we suggest they do so following consultation with their medical practitioner. It is very important that those in the moderate risk group continue to follow the latest general government guidance around social distancing.
- Briefings on pool protocols should be given to all workforce and participants via video link/recording or in writing before their first session. No briefing, no access.
- All involved (or their parents for under 18-year-olds) should be asked to agree and confirm in writing (via email or online) that they have seen/read the briefing, understood the requirements, and commit to adhering to them.
- Participants and workforce should be made aware that returning to training is not compulsory and they have the option to opt-in or opt-out. We advise that the club records and stores this decision. It is a challenging time for all individuals with increased anxiety and different circumstances for many. We suggest that clubs should recognise this and there should be no compulsion or risk of losing membership if they cannot return straight away.
- Participants should be grouped and then continue to train only with that group, meaning that if anyone displays symptoms, the transmission possibility is limited only to that group rather than other club members and it will be easier to trace contacts. This maybe outside of the normal squad structure of the club.
- Participants and workforce must be briefed that they must not attend training if they have any Covid-19 symptoms or know they have been in contact with others that have symptoms. They should follow government guidance as should those shielding or in any vulnerable category. If you're unsure whether someone should return to training, refer to the [Training Venue Assessment](#).
- Clubs should ask participants/workforce that have had Covid-19 during lockdown to ensure they only resume training following [advice](#) given by their own medical practitioner.
- The Covid-19 Lead and/or the Covid-19 Liaison has the right to refuse entry to training to any member they believe may have symptoms of Covid-19 or is returning to training too early after having Covid-19. There is no right to appeal these decisions.
- Clubs should ensure that athletes are 'fit' for training, and have the pre-requisite level of fitness for the activities that are planned. To help with this, clubs can use the [Health Survey](#). If in any doubt, then the volume and intensity should initially be low to enable participants to gradually build up fitness whilst minimising injury risk.
- Clubs and coaches should regularly reiterate safety and social distancing information, for example at the start of sessions and through swift intervention if anyone in the session is breaching guidelines.

## Participant and workforce hygiene

- Thorough hand washing with soap or if not available, hand-sanitiser, should be undertaken by all participants and workforce before and after training.

- Equipment that can't be cleaned in the water should be cleaned with anti-viral wipes.
- Where possible participants should change into their kit at home, arrive at the pool in a tracksuit or other suitable clothing, towel off after training and return home to shower, thus minimising the transmission risk in changing rooms and following the centre guidance where appropriate.
- Participants and workforce should avoid using wash/toilet facilities if possible but if used, then they should wash hands thoroughly, use hand-sanitiser where possible and not touch their mouth or nose.

## Dealing with illness during a session

- Protocols must be agreed with the pool operator to ensure that effective first-aid provision is available. Given the current situation, it is the responsibility of the club to minimise the risk of any injury/illness to reduce as much as possible the risk of requiring first aid.
- The club should ensure that participant contact details are up-to-date and available on site in case of any injury or illness.

## Delivery workforce

- The number of deliverers required will be dependent upon the number of people in the session and also the number of lifeguards present at the pool. Ensuring minimum but necessary staffing levels are calculated to balance training need, distancing protocols and reducing risk. This should be identified in the club's risk assessments prior to any session beginning.
- Areas of coaching should be agreed within the risk assessment and adhered to throughout the session. Coaches should avoid close contact with any participants. As long as the area is clearly marked more than one coach can be on poolside.
- The Covid-19 Lead will intermittently attend the training venues to maintain oversight.
- Wellness and training load of participants should be monitored closely to enable proactive management of athletes and their return to training.

## Wider considerations for clubs

The club should ensure that it has liaised with the pool operator so that all measures put in place are agreed and meet with the guidelines applied in the facility as well as local and national government requirements.

The club should also ensure that:

- It is fully aware of any amendment to Normal Operating Procedures / Emergency Action Plans NOPs / EAPs at the pools.
- It is aware of any changes to the Centre's protocols and that it informs participants, parents and workforce of these as necessary, for example:
  - arrival/entry



- exit
- parking
- cleaning
- changing rooms
- closure of areas such as balconies, meeting rooms and reception areas
- staffing
- lifeguarding, health and safety
- accident reporting
- toilet usage.

## Equipment

Where possible, participants should have their own equipment and only bring what is required for that particular session. It will be important for the coach to ensure this information is provided in advance.

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

## Practical suggestions for applying social distancing and reducing transmission risk

- Briefings and corrections in sessions should be kept to a minimum to avoid participant congestion. This will vary across disciplines depending on the level of interaction required. If there is a health and/or safety concern then the coach should not hesitate to undertake a briefing or make a correction.
- To enter the pool a one way system should be put in place, ensuring this adheres to the process the centre has in place.
- Ensure that athletes bring sufficient fluids for the session in their own clearly marked bottles and any necessary food in clearly marked containers so as not to require vending machines or water fountains.
- No physical contact between coaches and athletes should take place when making corrections, only oral communication, keeping the required distance.
- Create time gaps between sessions so that one group of participants can leave the pool and centre before the next group arrives.

- Clubs should consider whether they undertake pre-pool and post-pool activation exercises at the venue or whether this can be done more effectively at home to avoid additional risk of transmission.
- Be clear with participants, parents and workforce that they must stick to scheduled timings to enable arrival and departure to take place effectively without overloading the capacity of the centre/pool.
- It is advised that until further lockdown restrictions are lifted, clubs continue to use online/virtual sessions for land based training or outdoor training in small groups to minimise transmission risk links below:
  - **Guidance for Virtual Teaching and Coaching.**
  - **Swim England Land Training Guidance Under New Social Distancing Measures June 2020.**
- It is likely that many clubs will be working with smaller groups than usual. To that end, the club will need to determine how it caters effectively for its members, for example by offering shorter sessions that enable all of them to be involved or by phasing re-entry to the water.
- A familiarisation video of the environment, housed on the club's website would be beneficial if possible.

## Safeguarding

All clubs and coaches must operate in a safe and effective manner in accordance with the Swim England Club insurance policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policies and Procedures, which are still in operation.

The Club Welfare Officer must be aware of the training that is being undertaken and be involved in all risk assessments made, giving guidance as appropriate. This should include assessing that the venue, activity and supervision is appropriate from a safeguarding point of view.

Coaches should ensure they do not put themselves in compromising positions, in particular ensuring that they are never left one-to-one with an under 18-year-old athlete.

Report child safeguarding concerns immediately to your designated safeguarding officer such as the Club Welfare Officer or Swim England's Child Safeguarding Team.

The Swim England Child Safeguarding Team is still available during this period and can be contacted on **01509 640 252**. Please continue to visit the **Swim England/Institute of Swimming Coronavirus (Covid-19) FAQs** for any further useful updates.

**Online safeguarding training** is available from Swim England.

# Competitive Swimming

## Introduction

It is important that clubs read this section in conjunction with the section “Return to Training – all disciplines”.

## Numbers in training sessions

The coach planning the session should take into account the information within the risk assessment – social distancing section of the [Swim England Guidance for Operators](#).

### Number of participants

We would advise during the current circumstances that there is a minimum of 6 m<sup>2</sup> per participant, this defines the maximum bather load. To help capacity it may be useful to reduce session length or regularity to enable more participants to take part over a given period of time.

### Proximity of participants

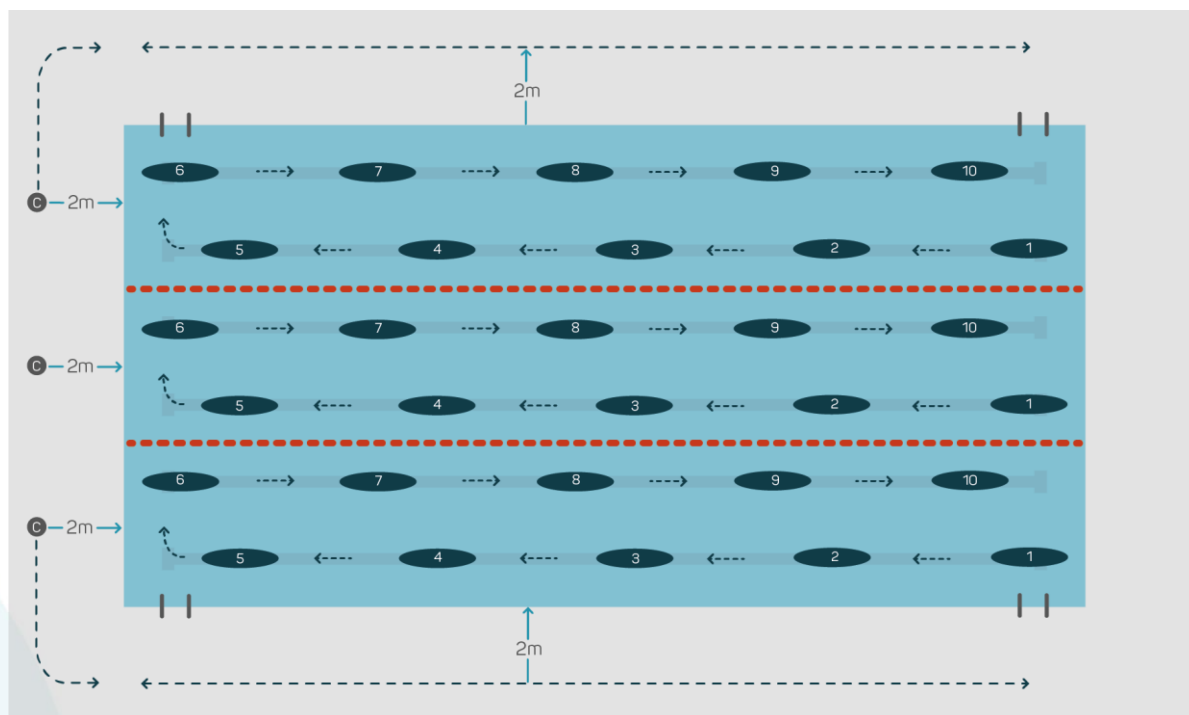
- It is acceptable for swimmers in a session to pass each other at less than 2 metres distance as long as that is for a short time and only when swimmers are in motion.
- It is imperative that swimmers maintain social distancing when static either in or out of the water.
- Clubs should take relevant additional steps to further minimise transmission risk, for example, participants exhaling in the water when passing if that is practicable and safe.
- Clubs should plan their sessions taking into account the factors outlined above. For example:
  - If a club is working with skilled swimmers, in a 25 metre by 12.5 metre pool using a steady pace then 30 swimmers in the pool may be suitable (see diagram below).
  - If however, the club is working with larger athletes doing butterfly (a wide stroke) at a varied pace (more difficult to implement a steady flow) then the number of swimmers would need to be smaller to allow for appropriate distancing to be maintained.
  - We suggest that clubs utilise a double width lane set-up to minimise transmission risk.

Clubs should plan their number of swimmers and make the necessary judgements based on the training plan and their ability to facilitate social distancing guidelines throughout the session including during rest periods.

The lane swimming diagram below gives an example of how this could be implemented for competitive swimming training using **double-width lanes**.

As highlighted above, the application of this will depend on a number of factors and each club will need to plan and risk assess for their own environment.

We recognise that training sessions may not look like a “normal” programme of swimming training however the circumstances that we are operating under are not “normal” and clubs, workforce and participants will need to accept that to be able to utilise pools whilst complying with government guidance, they will need to adapt accordingly.



## Further considerations

When planning for sessions, clubs and coaches should also consider the following practical solutions in terms of maintaining distancing and minimising the risk of virus transmission:

Repeat swims are started when the third swimmer gets to the end.

- Continuous swimming with a snorkel.
- Swimmers complete their activity mid pool (start/stop points are mid pool positions).
- Ability of swimmer and their positioning within the lane (fastest first in the lane).
- Amount of time between each swimmer push off interval.
  - E.g. 40 seconds per 50, 5 second gaps would allow 8 swimmers per lane not 10.
- Determining the typical pace of your swimmers will therefore be critical in determining numbers per lane.
- Identifying and using poolside space to rest swimmers.
- Setting up zones for pool briefings with clear markings of where swimmers and coaches should stand to maintain social distancing.

- Identifying where each swimmer will leave their drink and kit to enable them to access these without the risk of congregation.

## Suitable types of training

The reintroduction of training should be carefully planned and consideration of prior fitness is paramount. This should be phased over a period of time with the emphasis on skills and drills. Planning is crucial to ensure social distancing protocols are continually adhered to as well as progressive intensity. The below are examples, but not exhaustive, of low heart rate level type of work so that swimmers can learn to 'feel' the water again without gaining any undue muscle soreness.

- Four stroke technical efficiency sessions where movement is continuous and little time needed for recovery and low heart rate maintained to avoid excessive exhalation.
- Drills and skills.
- Underwater work (within 15 metres) to improve streamlining and transition phases.
- Using a snorkel where possible. Swimming will lead to a breath being blown out above water. Being mindful of how your face is positioned when exhaling should be considered.
- In the first three to four week meso-cycle, focus on low to medium level aerobic training (not more than 50bpm or 5-6/10 effort) to avoid the need to use explosive breathing and to allow a controlled re-acclimatisation to training.
- When doing freestyle, if swimmers need to pass each other, breathe to the opposite side.
- Care should be taken when doing kick sets and if practical a recommendation to use the flat kicking technique with face in the water and snorkel.

## Unsuitable types of training

When considering session planning, coaches should take into account:

- Time that athletes have spent out of the water.
- No competitive racing opportunities are available imminently.
- How excessive heart rate will impact on the explosiveness of exhaling.

The avoidance of the skills, drills and tactical practices listed below is recommended:

- Start practices whilst social distancing is still in place, to avoid repeated touching of blocks, poolside steps etc.
- Race pace practice.
- Excessive heart rate intensity.
- Hypoxic training.

# Para-Swimming / disability considerations

It is important that clubs read this section in conjunction with the section return to training – all disciplines and the competitive swimming section.

All information below is subject to change based on government guidance. Clubs and individuals to whom this applies should stay up-to-date with the latest government guidance. If in any doubt, seek expert/medical advice.

## ‘At risk’ groups

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

## People deemed at high risk (clinically extremely vulnerable)

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

People at high risk from Covid-19 include people who:

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

## People at moderate risk (clinically vulnerable)

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

Swimmers at moderate risk from coronavirus can go out to work (if they cannot work from home) and for things like getting food or exercising but they should try to stay at home as much as possible.

It is very important they follow the general advice on social distancing, including staying at least 2 metres (three steps) away from anyone they do not live with. Unlike people at high risk, they will not get a letter from the NHS.

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

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

## Guidance for clubs with para-swimmers / disabled swimmers

- Social distancing should be adhered to at all times.
- Swimmers who need assistance and use a carer/chaperone (for example getting changed or accessing the facility, entering the water) should bring them as necessary, one carer/chaperone with them who is part of their household.
- Swimmers, parents, carers who use assistance dogs are able to attend training. The assistance dog should not be smoothed or patted by anybody other than the person(s) they are there to support.
- Assistance dog owners please follow the guidance from Assistance Dogs UK and the Animal and Plant Health Agency.

- Swimmers who use equipment to access the pool, travel on poolside or specialist equipment for training, should continue to use this equipment, to ensure safe practice in and out of the pool. Equipment commonly used:
  - wheelchairs / wet chairs
  - scooter/skateboard
  - prosthetic limbs
  - tapping device
  - starting equipment (bands, cords, towels etc.).
- All equipment (including above) must be cleaned with anti-bacterial wipes/spray **before** entering the facility.
- All equipment (including above) must be cleaned with anti-bacterial wipes/spray **after** the training/swimming session.
- Equipment (including above) must only be handled by the swimmer or their carer/chaperone.
- All swimmers must only touch and handle their **own** equipment.
- All carers/chaperones only to remain poolside if deemed essential and must adhere to social distancing rules during the training/swimming session.
- Those swimmers who require carer/chaperone to act as a tapper during training should continue to use the tapper and tapping device to ensure safe training, however the tappers on poolside must adhere to social distancing rules.
- For training sessions which contain more than one visually impaired swimmer, who requires the use of a tapper, we suggest having those swimmers in the same lane to minimise the number of tappers needed on poolside.
- Swimmers who require a hoist to enter/exit the water should continue to use the hoist for best practice and safety. Carer/chaperone should assist where required and follow the instructions of the leisure operator.
- We advise clubs to review all medical information provided by their members, update risk assessments and to identify members who are categorised as people of high and/or moderate risk by the NHS.
- When swimmers return to training it should be gradual, progressive, and for those in high risk groups, (or anyone with concerns), we suggest they do so following consultation with their medical practitioner.



# Water Polo

It is important that clubs read this section in conjunction with the section return to training – all disciplines.

For guidance on swimming training, please refer to the competitive swimming section.

## What practices can reasonably be delivered?

- Keep athletes moving as much as possible, if athletes need to cough they must exit the water and go to an isolated location. When stationary keep 2 metre spacing between athletes.
- Individuals having own space in pool, practicing movements, jumps, treading water, sculling.
- Players have a ball each, when focusing on ball handling skills.
- Throwing ball against a rebound wall or net. Ball retrieved by thrower observing social distancing.
- Centre forward shots unopposed, 2 metre off wall, various shots at wall/poolside.
- Shooting at goals with targets in upright corners or netting with holes to shoot through if available, player retrieves own ball.
- Participants could do widths to spread athletes out.
- Use alternative start ends if doing work that requires longer rests.
- Training should focus on technical drills, which can be performed on the spot and with 2 metre space between and around athletes.
- Cool down can be done as flex drills using bands and further flexibility can be performed at home.

## Next progressions

- Individuals having own space in pool, practicing movements, jumps, ball skills treading water and sculling.
- Passing ball in threes, in triangles, clockwise and anti-clockwise, two balls / triangle pressure passing, hand to hand, hand to water, water to hand, hold, slow, medium, fast passing, left hand and right hand alternating passing.
- Shooting at goal from 5 metre collecting own ball after shot four. Centre forward shooting on 3 metre at goal.
- Set plays in front of goal unopposed, 3v3, 4v2, 6v6 (adhering to distancing guidelines at all times).
- Set plays in front of goal opposed - zonal defences only maintaining social distances.

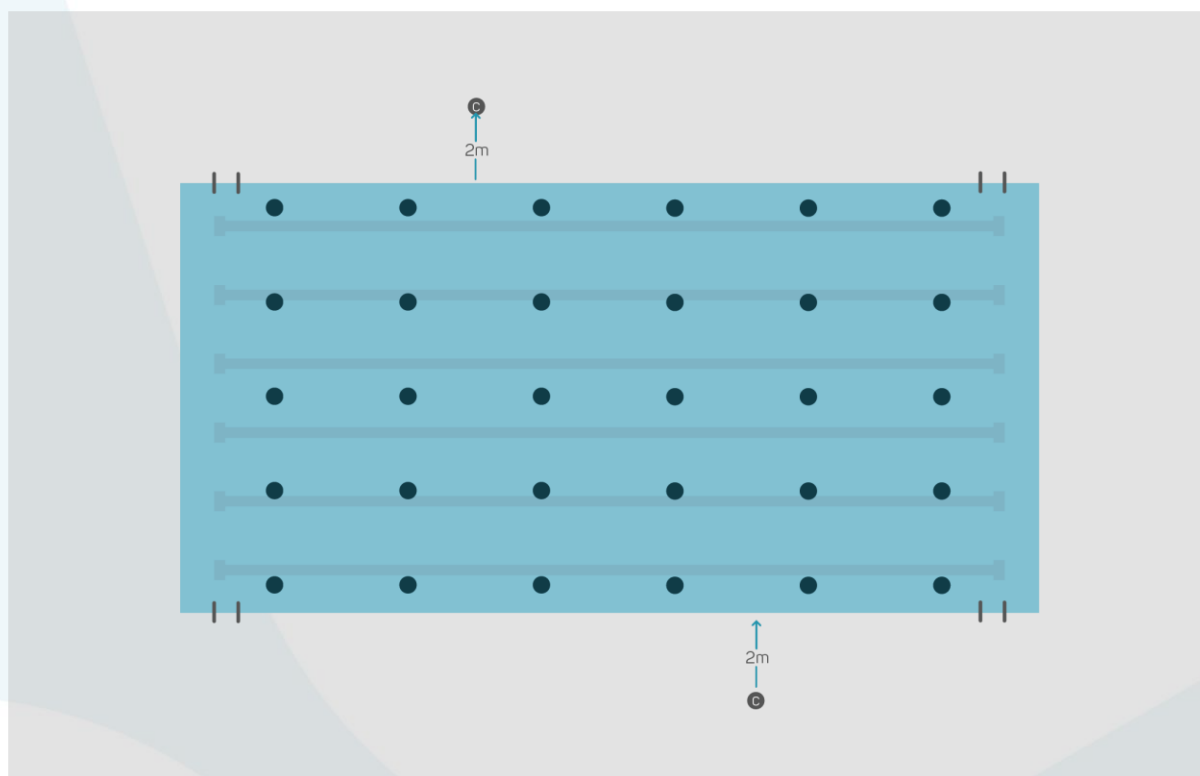
## What practices should not be delivered during these times?

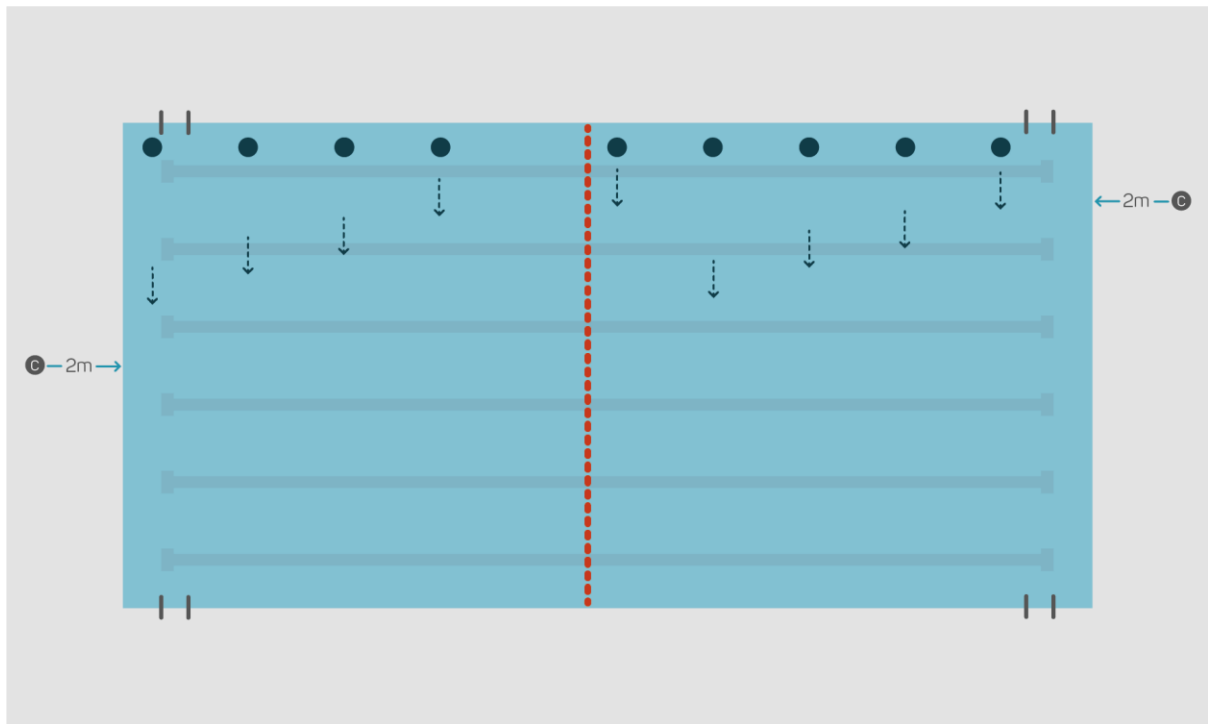
- Scrimmages of any size (game play) of any type.
- Contact drills, marking, offensive/defensive manoeuvres.
- Shooting with a goalkeeper.
- Swimming within a 2 metre space of one another.

## Number of participants

We would advise during the current circumstances that there is a minimum of 6 m<sup>2</sup> per participant – this defines the maximum bather load.

- Clubs should plan their number of participants and make the necessary judgements based on the training plan and their ability to comply with social distancing guidelines and implement this guidance throughout the session including during rest periods.
- The **example** below is based on 25 metre by 10 – 12.5 metre pool and includes 30 players. As highlighted above, the application of this will depend on a number of factors and each club will need to plan and risk assess for their own environment.
- We recognise that training sessions may not look like a “normal” programme of training however the circumstances that we are operating under are not “normal” and clubs, workforce and participants will need to accept that to be able to utilise pools whilst complying with government guidance, they will need to adapt accordingly.





## Coaches positioning

- Squad swimming widths, coach stands on end, squad swims lengths, coach stands along the length (see competitive swimming section).
- Coaches to watch their group of athletes and be aware of passing other coaches, maintaining social distancing at all times.
- Coaches to have clearly defined areas to stand and walk.
- Avoiding close contact with swimmers.

## Number of coaches required

- This will be dependent upon the number of people in the pool and also the number of lifeguards present at the pool.

## Use of equipment

Cleaning regime of equipment before and after all uses.

- balls cleaned before and after each session
- hats not required
- publish what equipment is required prior to sessions.

# Artistic Swimming

It is important that clubs read this section in conjunction with the section return to training – all disciplines.

For guidance on swimming training, please refer to the competitive swimming section.

## What practices can reasonably be delivered?

- Keep athletes moving as much as possible, if athletes need to cough they must exit the water and go to an isolated location. When stationary keep 2 metre spacing between athletes.
- Drills, skills and underwater work can still be practised.  
NB: coaches should be careful to build-up underwater work gradually taking account that participants have not trained in water for a considerable time.
- Alternatively you could do widths to spread athletes out.
- Using a snorkel where possible for long sets of swimming.
- Use alternative start ends if doing work that requires longer rests.
- Training should focus on technical drills, figures and elements which can be performed on the spot and with at least 2 metre space between and around athletes.
- Solo training can be continued, other athletes in pool need to be aware of travel and stick to low numbers and performing drills and figures.
- Duet and team training can only be performed with at least 2 metre distancing, teams should be performed in groups of no more than four athletes (space dependent).
- Lifts and any close contact is not permitted.
- Cool down can be done as flex drills using bands and further flexibility can be performed at home.

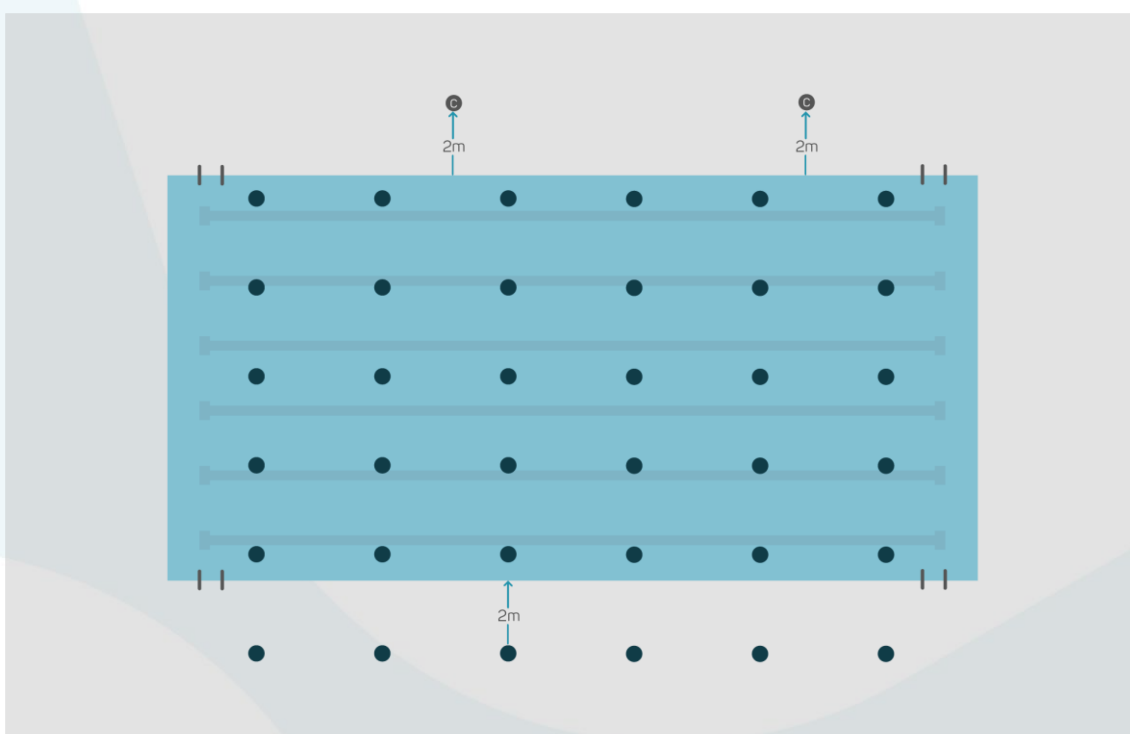
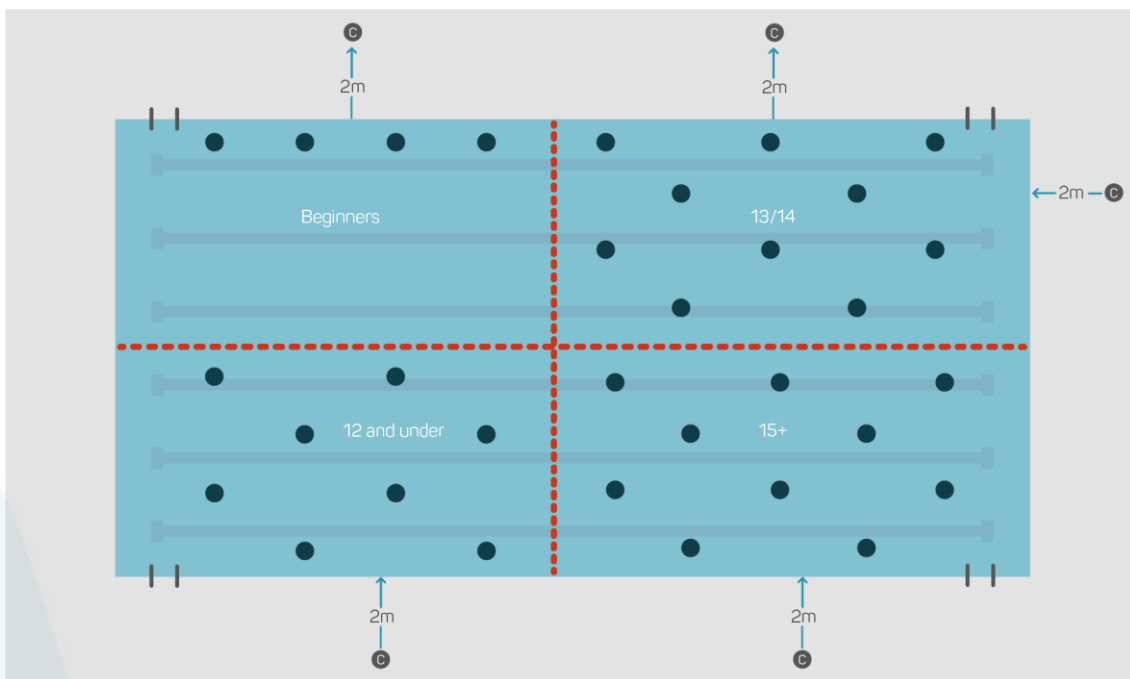
## What practices cannot be delivered during these times?

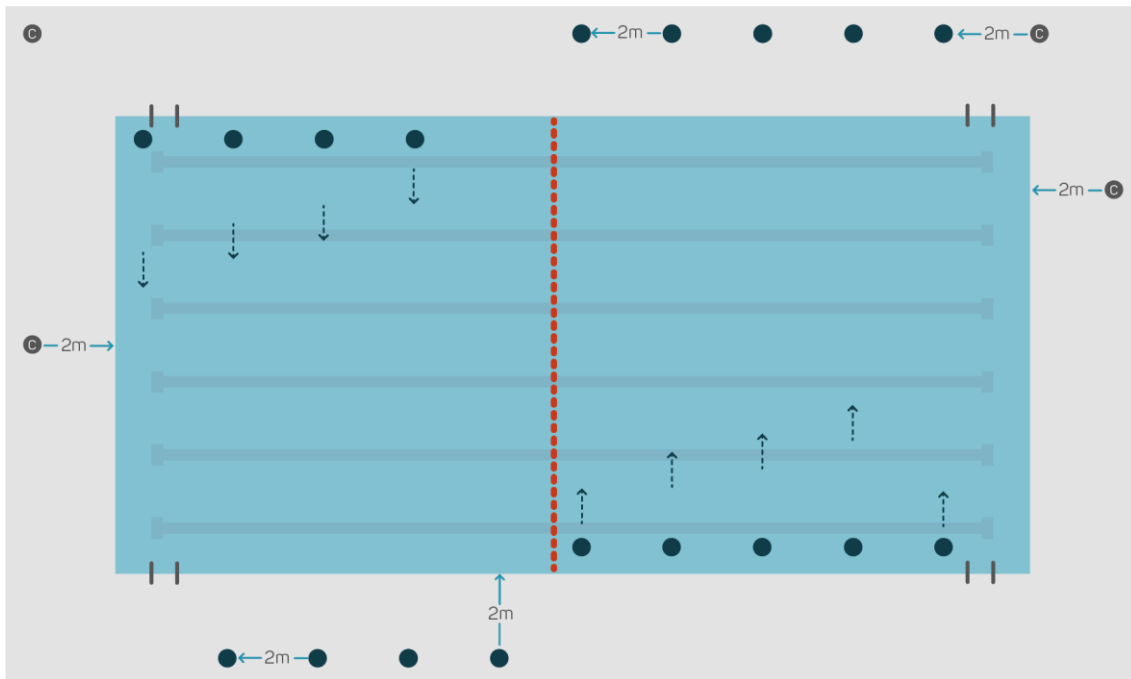
- Performing lifts or any highlights.
- Connected movements between two or more athletes.
- Close patterns in routines.

## What numbers can realistically participate in these sessions?

We would advise during the current circumstances that there is a minimum of 6 m<sup>2</sup> per participant – this defines the maximum bather load.

- Clubs should plan their number of participants and make the necessary judgements based on the training plan and their ability to comply with social distancing guidelines and implement this guidance throughout the session including during rest periods.
- The example below is based on 25 metre by 10 – 12.5 metre pool. As highlighted above, the application of this will depend on a number of factors and each club will need to plan and risk assess for their own environment.
- We recognise that training sessions may not look like a “normal” programme of training however the circumstances that we are operating under are not “normal” and clubs, workforce and participants will need to accept that to be able to utilise pools whilst complying with government guidance, they will need to adapt accordingly.





## Coaches positioning

- Coaches to watch their group of athletes and be aware of passing other coaches, maintaining social distancing distance at all times.
- Coaches to have clearly defined areas to stand and walk.
- Avoiding close contact with swimmers.

## Number of coaches required

- This will be dependent upon the number of people in the pool and also the number of lifeguards present at the pool.

## Use of equipment

- Cleaning regime of equipment before and after all uses including music equipment.
- Publish what equipment is required prior to sessions.

# Diving

It is important that clubs have followed the guidance in the section return to training – all disciplines and that appropriate risk assessments are undertaken.

## How will social distancing be applied - pool

- A strict rule of 2 metres social distancing will be applied both on the poolside and the diving boards themselves.
- Each facility will need to be assessed and reviewed to establish the maximum number of athletes and coaches that can safely operate whilst maintaining strict social distancing.
- A one way system should be considered with clear routes up to the boards from the water identified for each board.
- Platform divers to stay one person to a flight of stairs when accessing platforms with no return back down the stairs.
- Waiting queues should also be clearly marked for each board.
- Floor markers should be considered to assist with this.
- Session planning should be undertaken between all coaches involved considering restricting different groups to certain areas of the pool to assist with the management of social distancing.
- Once within the pool training environment, any athlete should ensure that if their coach has required them to warm up on the pool side, that that warm up be performed at least 2 metres from any other participants.
- If warm up mats are to be used, do not share mats. Ensure all mats are cleaned before and after use. Athletes should be encouraged to bring their own mat.
- Once in pool training has commenced, follow the principle of one person per board/platform (unless synchro training is being completed where two is permitted as long as boards allow for participants to maintain a distance of 2 metres apart).
- Poolside coaches should remain 2 metres from each other and the edge of the pool at all times. Athletes should be advised not to come up to the coach for coaching comments and feedback.
- Athletes that use chamois style towels (sometimes referred to as shammies) must take extra precautions with the chamois towel. The dropping of towels from platforms should be done with more care than previously, so as to ensure that the towel is not in another person's way, touches another person, or is hanging from a part of the tower that is hard to reach.
- It is important to ensure that, like water bottles, no chamois towels are to be shared, and only your own chamois is to be touched.

## How will social distancing be applied – dry land

- Dry land training and usage of dry land facilities should be reviewed at each facility and where possible be delivered online using previous guidance.
- For dry land activities that cannot be undertaken at home a review and risk assessment of the dry land facilities available at your venue must be undertaken. Any use of dry land facilities must maintain social distancing.
- Separate work areas (and the equipment in them) so that divers and staff maintain social distancing from each other while training.
- Provide hand foam for each training area/station.
- Divers should use their own rolled towel for the head for any exercises requiring them to be face down and wipe down all equipment before and after exercise.
- Limit equipment to one athlete (per board or side of platform, somersault box, lifting station etc.) to maintain distance between athletes.
- Avoid alternating sets between athletes on equipment/mats/blocks in the gym and dry land areas.
- Facilitate cleaning of dry-equipment (Olympic bars, somersault boxes, mats etc.) and handrails between athletes.

## What practices can reasonably be delivered?

- A staged return to training should be implemented for divers of all ages and levels starting with basic jumps and entries building up volume and height over time.
- Following this the build-up of required and basic dives can be introduced followed by lead ups and eventually optional dives.

## What practices cannot be delivered during these times?

- Diving can on occasion result in injury that requires ambulance care. Whilst this cannot be predicted extra precautions should be taken. Any dives that could be considered dangerous/new/risky should not be undertaken during the initial training period to avoid the risk of injury and requirement to contact emergency services putting additional pressure on the NHS.

## What numbers can realistically participate in these sessions?

- This will be dependent on your facility size and set up and should be evaluated in detail along with the facility operator to ensure sessions can be planned appropriately.
- Clubs should plan their number of participants and make the necessary judgements based on the training plan and their ability to comply with social distancing guidelines and implement this guidance throughout the session including during rest periods.

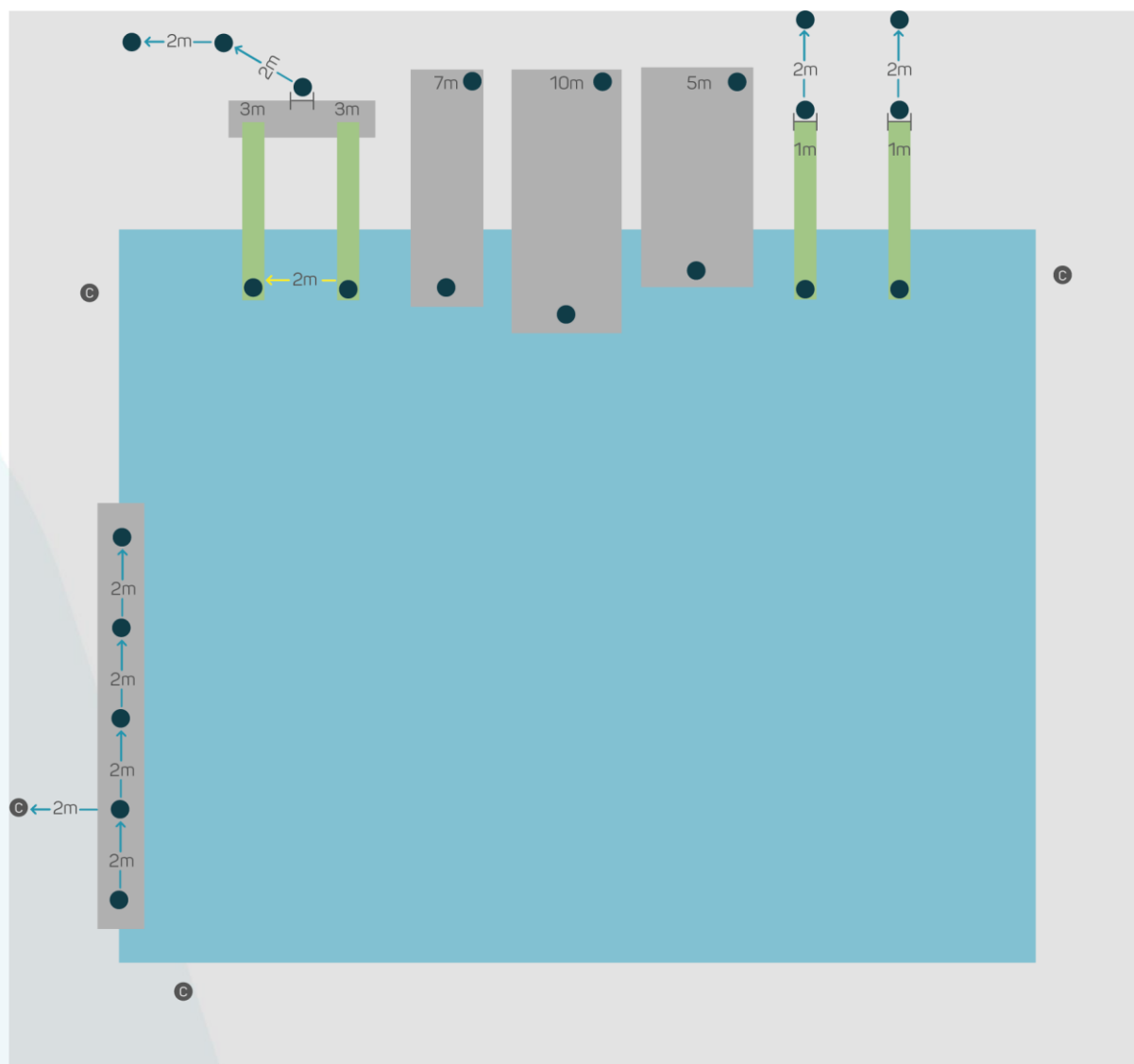


## Coaches positioning

- Coaches should maintain social distancing from athletes, lifeguards and other coaches in designated areas, marking out coaching areas for each board should be considered.

## Number of coaches required

- This will be dependent upon the number of people in the pool and also the number of lifeguards present at the pool.



# Updates

Version one to three.

## Page 15:

Point removed in diagram.

- No use of showers.

## Page 20:

Updated:

- Do any of the club's coaches, either paid or unpaid, fall into the **at risk** category?  
You can visit the [NHS website](#) for support with this area.

## Page 31:

Update:

~~Swimmers who are at moderate risk should consult with GP for them to sign off that they are able to return to training.~~ The information below is accessible on the [NHS website](#) and highlights some people who are at moderate risk:

## Page 31:

Title update from "Guidance for clubs para-swimmers / **swimmers with disabilities**" to "Guidance for clubs with para-swimmers / **disabled swimmers**".

## Page 31:

Bullet point removed:

- Swimmers should seek medical advice before returning to any group training.

## Page 32:

Bullet point change:

When swimmers return to training it should be gradual, progressive, and for those in high ~~or moderate~~ risk groups, (or anyone with concerns), we suggest they do so following consultation with their medical practitioner.

## Page 41:

Bullet point updated from:

- When participants return to training it should be gradual, progressive, and for those in high or moderate risk groups, (or anyone with concerns), we suggest they do so following consultation with their medical practitioner.

To:

- When participants return to training it should be gradual, progressive, and for those in high risk groups (or anyone with concerns) we suggest they do so following consultation with their medical practitioner. It is very important that those in the moderate risk group continue to follow the latest general government guidance around social distancing.

## Version three to four.

### Page 36:

Updated section:

### What practices cannot be delivered during these times?

- ~~Diving.~~
- ~~Explosive sprints.~~
- ~~Swimming within a 2 metre space of one another.~~
- ~~Performing lifts or close contact head up work.~~

Added:

- Performing lifts or any highlights.
- Connected movements between two or more athletes.
- Close patterns in routines.

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