



Guidance for Health Walk Leaders

COVID-19: RETURN TO ACTIVITY

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Important: If you are showing symptoms of the virus or have been in contact with someone displaying symptoms within the last two weeks, then you should stay at home until a NHS practitioner advises you that you no longer need to remain in isolation.

INTRODUCTION

These guidelines have been produced in line with the Government announcement on 22nd February 2021 on the Spring roadmap out of lockdown restrictions and the subsequent Government guidance on [gatherings, public spaces, and outdoor activities](#) and the [phased return of outdoor sport and recreation](#) published on the Gov.uk website

Organised outdoor sport and physical activity for adults and children can return from 29th March 2021, it is exempt from the legal gathering limits. The threshold on participant numbers will be decided by each national governing body (NGB) or organising organisation and will follow Covid-secure guidance.

All Somerset Activity and Sports Partnership (SASP) guidance will be updated as per Government guidelines when they are made available or as soon as possible thereafter.

The safety and wellbeing of all our participants, staff, volunteers, coaches, and the wider community is paramount within the guidance that SASP is distributing. We know that several people will be keen to resume sport and physical activity as soon as it is safe and appropriate for them to do so. SASP recognises that wish BUT at the same time wants to ensure that the safety and wellbeing of everyone in the sport and physical activity community, facility providers and the wider community is considered as the priority.

The safe and timely exit from lockdown places a heavy burden of responsibility on all participants, and in particular the person in charge, to fully adhere to the following measures. Failure to do so will at least lead to adverse public reaction and subsequent loss of trust, and at worst result in a resurgence of the virus necessitating in a further lockdown.

As the weeks progress, Government restrictions may or may not be eased further. If they are, SASP will update its advice accordingly. It is essential everyone is clear about the restrictions and works together to manage social distancing and strict hand hygiene.

GUIDELINES FOR HEALTH WALK LEADERS

HEALTH WALKS GROUP SIZE LIMITS

- Official Health Walk sessions should be limited to individuals or groups of no more than 30 people, including the Walk Leader(s). Remember this is a maximum and not a target so you can set the group size limit lower if that feels right for your walk and local community, and adjust it as you see fit as long as it meets government guidelines.
- Walking groups can restart with the large group sizes of up to 30 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 per walk.
- Social distancing and strict hygiene measures should still be observed. Walk Leaders and backstops should carry out a risk assessment to determine the maximum capacity for their walking route that can be achieved safely whilst maintaining social distancing and not exceeding the current limits of 30 people.

BOOKINGS

- New walkers, when you feel happy to take them again (this can be straight away or delayed) will be required to complete and sign a health commitment statement (HCS) form (available from your scheme co-ordinator or walk leader) before booking onto a walk. If an individual has been shielding, they need to follow medical advice from their GP.
- Ensure you take bookings for each of your walks. We recommend using an online booking system, and you can use the SASP website for this (see <https://www.sasp.co.uk/events> and ask your Coordinator for support with this if needed), or alternatively phone, text, email etc. bookings can be taken directly by yourself the walk leader, or via the Scheme Co-ordinator.

A well-managed booking system will enable contact tracing if there is a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 infection case in your group. For further information and how the NHS Track and Trace works, please click [here](#).

The following information (name, email, contact telephone number) **MUST** be taken for each walker. Please make sure you keep a register of all walkers for 21 days in case of infection

- This information should be destroyed after it is no longer required for NHS track and trace (21 days after the walk). This data should be kept secure and please contact SASP if you require any further information on our GDPR procedures.
- **All** walkers must pre book, no "walk up" or similar unanticipated walkers, we need to limit numbers and take each walkers details for NHS track & trace to ensure everyone's safety. Remind walkers that you cannot bring any additional people along if they have not booked

COMMUNICATION & MEETING POINT LIASON

- Walk Leaders should be aware of any restrictions around toilets, car parks and specific access issues for participants with a disability or vulnerable participants. In all cases they should ensure government guidance is followed and a risk assessment in place before any walk that takes place
- Communicate with your walkers clearly and regularly, making them aware in advance of the measures you are putting in place for your sessions, and guidelines they should follow when attending walks
- Hold a welcome briefing at the start of the walk. As well as your normal checks & introductions remind everyone about physical distancing, hygiene measures and any particular hazards on the route. Make sure you take the register and know who has attended.

MAINTAINING SOCIAL DISTANCING

- Social distancing between walkers, and between the walk leader and walkers, should be maintained at all times
- Walk Leaders should ensure this is emphasised to walkers at the start of each walk, and that they are clear on how they should maintain social distancing for each route before starting it. Walk Leaders can choose to follow the 2m rule with no face masks, or 1m with additional controls i.e. wearing face masks.
- Ensure walkers are respectful to other path users, such as when other walkers are passing they could stand back and give way
- Ensure walkers leave the walk finish point / car park soon after the end of the walk and avoid congregating so that it is accessible for other users. Please follow

Government guidance on social gatherings after walks. Social gatherings after walks of up to 6 people outside are allowed from 29th March and in more than 6 people from 17th May (subject to change).

HEALTH, SAFETY & HYGIENE

- Avoid using public transport if possible
- Please remember you are **NOT** allowed to share a car with someone outside of your household or social bubble
- Scheme co-ordinators should complete and provide the Covid-19 risk assessment to help plan any steps you need to take to stay safe. This should be in addition to the risk assessment for the route
- You must complete and keep a copy of your risk assessment for every route that you lead – you can review the one you were using prior to the recent lockdown to check if it is still relevant and make any adjustments needed.
- Hand hygiene is imperative - use alcohol gel to clean your hands after touching a shared surface
- Avoid touching your face
- Avoid touching gates and path furniture. If you do – wash your hands as soon as possible
- If you need to sneeze or cough, do so into a tissue or upper sleeve
- All walkers should wash hands before and after each walk, as soon as possible
- Walk Leaders should be aware that walkers with an underlying health condition which makes them 'clinically extremely vulnerable' and who have been advised to shield must follow specific UK Government advice – refer to current [UK Government guidance](#). If unsure, please suggest they follow medical guidance from their GP. It has been confirmed that from 2nd December 2020 shielding will not be required.
- If a walker becomes symptomatic during the session, they should be immediately removed from the walk and taken home as soon as possible. NHS guidance on further management of symptoms should be followed
- If a walker that has taken part in your walk develops symptoms of COVID-19 after attending, they should be directed to follow the Government's 'test and trace' guidelines, which can be read on the Gov.uk website

ACTIVITY

- All activity should be consistent with the government guidance regarding health, travel, social distancing and hygiene at all times
- Consider planning short walks, at an easy or leisurely pace. These walks may be more popular as people get back to group walking
- Plan walks to avoid busy times and locations
- Try to avoid congested areas, busy times of day and routes with narrow footpaths.
- You should recce the route as close to the date of the walk as possible, to make a note of hazards and plan any adjustments and update your risk assessment for the walk accordingly.
- Always follow the [Countryside Code](#). Know where you can and can't walk and be considerate to others
- Walk Leaders must consider safety first, particularly minimising the risk of infection/transmission. A thorough risk assessment must be undertaken (or updated if one previously completed), and appropriate measures put in place to ensure walkers are protected. A generic COVID-19 risk assessment template is available from your Scheme Co-ordinator.
- Guidelines will be updated as we progress through the different phases of Government measures, so we recommend you check on a regular basis with your Scheme Co-ordinator to stay abreast of the latest recommendations

EQUIPMENT

- Take hand sanitizer with you
- Walkers are recommended to use their own equipment and to not share equipment such as walking poles.
- If you are sharing equipment such as fold out chairs, you should wash or sanitise your hands before and after use, and all contact points on the equipment should be cleaned after each session using a suitable cleaning solution or antimicrobial wipes.
- Walkers should not share items such as clothing & towels
- High vis jackets should not be shared at any point during a session. Walk Leaders should bring their own.
- Bring a full water bottle, and do not share food or drink with others
- Ensure you remind walkers to take all your belongings with them at the end of the walk

FIRST AID

Walk leader volunteers do not have to be first aid trained and are under no obligation to offer first aid. However, should a Walk Leader or participant be first aid trained and wish to perform first aid then the following must be observed:

- Walkers are requested to indicate as soon as possible if they do not require assistance
- If you get injured or require first aid, a member of your household can assist you, if present. But others will still need to socially distance unless a life or limb-threatening injury necessitates compromising guidelines to provide emergency care.
- If there is a first-aider or other medical personnel present, they should be equipped with the appropriate PPE (face mask, gloves etc) to protect themselves and others if they need to compromise social-distancing guidelines to provide medical assistance
- For guidance on First Aid during Covid-19, please refer to [St John's Ambulance](#)

DISCLAIMER:

This guidance is for general information only and does not constitute legal advice or replace any Government or PHE advice; nor does it provide any specific commentary or advice on health-related issues. Affected organisations/persons should therefore ensure that they seek independent advice from medical practitioners, or healthcare providers, prior to implementing any return to sport & physical activity, as required. While efforts have been taken to ensure the accuracy of this information at the time of publication, the reader is reminded to check the Government website to obtain the most up-to date information regarding social distancing and any other Government measures