



Para Dance UK

Best Practice Guidance for Return to Face to Face Activity

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Scope of Use

This guidance has been written specifically for instructors and participants of Para Dance Sport and Inclusive Dance at grass roots level, to provide Best Practice guidance on the safety of returning to activity

It is written as a guide to assist in coaches and instructors deciding on and preparing for safe return to activity, and for consideration of athletes and dancers as participants to consider their own mitigated risk circumstances.

It is not designed to guide venues on the measures they should take to ensure that venues are made as safe and as risk-free as possible for Para Dance athletes.

For further information, please visit the [Government Guidelines from DCMS](#) or refer to the references listed.

In devolved areas of the UK, restrictions and timelines may differ, and this document is meant as an overview for the UK. Where possible, links to the latest information for the devolved nations are included where it may currently differ.

Summary Recommendations

Para Dance UK have made the following recommendation having first considered all published guidance on return to sport and performance (during the continued COVID-19 pandemic) by the [Government's Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport \(DCMS\)](#), and other expert partners. It is essential that the latest government advice is followed which includes:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-coronavirus-covid-19-measures-for-elite-sport/elite-sport-operations>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-coronavirus-covid-19-measures-for-grassroots-sport-participants-providers-and-facility-operators/guidance-on-coronavirus-covid-19-measures-for-grassroots-sport-participants-providers-and-facility-operators>

Whilst government restrictions concerning social distancing and shielding are lifted, it is important to continue to make judgements and mitigate risk appropriately based on the nature and risk of the activity, and the participants and attendees.

This may require adaptations or postponements to beneficial dance activity or training but the consideration of the health and safety risks of dancers, athletes and coaches is of the utmost importance to Para Dance UK as the NGB and leading provider of Inclusive Dance Activity.

In communicating this recommendation, we encourage coaches, athletes and dancers to remain cautious and to consider all potential risks posed by returning to training, rehearsal, performance and competition and their own responsibilities for risk mitigation.

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Best Practice Guidance for Return to Face to Face Activity - Para Dance UK guidance for Coaches, Instructors, Grassroots Athletes and Inclusive Dancers

a. Thinking About Risk

It is currently recommended that coaches and participants first consider the risk of COVID-19 transmission posed by any proposed training, rehearsal, performance or competition environment not only to themselves, but also to all those they interact with beyond training, performance and competition.

In order to mitigate against any potential COVID-19 risk, or reduce it to the lowest predictable level possible. In line with government guidelines, it is recommended that organisations:

- a) perform risk assessments of individual training, performance or competition venues for representative athletes, and,
- b) take preventative measures to ensure that infection control measures are complied with across all training, rehearsal, performance and competition venues.

With respect to the nature of Para Dance Sport and Inclusive Dance – where activity is performed indoors, and where respiratory rates will be elevated, there is a higher risk of COVID-19 transmission.

It is recommended for instructors/coaches to prepare an action plan involving consultation with staff and participants as well as seeking advice from any additional governing organisations where necessary when planning face to face activity.

b. Who should return to Activity and Performance

With the removal of social distancing and mandatory facemasks, the government have provided [guidelines](#) for those who were previously marked 'at risk' including avoiding non-vaccinated individuals where possible and considering the continuation of face coverings and social distancing in certain services. This may mean that whilst shielding for extremely vulnerable people in England has been removed, at risk individuals may be forced to revert to shielding precautions to mitigate their risks. There is different guidance for clinically extremely vulnerable people living in [Scotland](#), living in [Wales](#) and living in [Northern Ireland](#).

Para Dance UK recognises that the activity type and common nature of our participants will make this relevant for inclusive dance and para dance sport activity and supports the decisions and wishes of those coaches, athletes and inclusive dancers who may choose not to return to training, rehearsal, competition and performance during this phase of the global COVID-19 pandemic. It also respects the decision of those continuing to shield or take precautions where they, or those they live with, fall into the "at risk" categories.

When providing a service, providers have to maintain a commitment to the Equality Act 2010 and legal obligations to ensure that the decisions made in response to COVID-19 do not discriminate against customers or staff with protected characteristics or on vaccination status. However, within this request is also the need to ensure that government guidelines and safety of the community is also considered.

Each Instructor/Coach and athlete or Inclusive Dancer should make their own risk assessment of leading or participating in a session. Those with health conditions, impairments or disabilities should explore their own heightened risk of contracting COVID-19.

[World Para Dance Sport](#) and the International Paralympic Committee have their own [guidance](#) for Para Sport athletes.

The physical, social and psychological effects of additional shielding should not be overlooked, and the mental health of many may be affected. This area should have particular attention on the return to activity, and this may require additional training for those leading.

c. Social Distancing and Risk Mitigation in Performing Arts Environments

Social distancing guidelines have now been lifted in England, although for best practice, it would be worth applying the following to mitigate risk:

- a) Continuing the increased frequency of hand washing and surface cleaning.
- a) Consider remote activity or a 'blended' approach where appropriate
- b) Keeping the activity time involved as short as possible.
- c) Considering where back-to-back or side-to-side positioning (rather than face-to-face) could be used
- d) Reducing the number of people each person has contact with by considering the use of 'fixed teams or groups' (so each person works with only a few others)
- e) Social distancing for those who identify as 'at risk' or have an 'at risk' person at home

Note that it is unlikely that this fixed team approach will be possible for coaches or instructors who work with more than one group or organisation simultaneously and the risk of moving to multiple groups or facilities should be closely monitored.

Physical activity should be gradually increased after a period of rest as this carries an increased risk of injury. You may also need to consider a blended approach between remote and face to face activity whilst transitioning participants to a full face to face delivery model

Vaccinations

It should be noted that the COVID-19 vaccine will not entirely prevent the virus and that vaccinated individuals may still carry and pass on the virus and so this should not be relied on as prevention in place of good hygiene and other risk mitigations.

The vaccination status of instructors and participants may be of interest, and latest advice states that it would be best practice for an instructor to be fully vaccinated when working with 'at risk' individuals. However, it should be noted that people may choose not to be vaccinated for personal or health reasons and it is illegal to exclude a participant under the equality act 2010 if they have not been vaccinated. For privacy reasons, it is also only possible to request for someone to reveal their vaccination status if there is a justified reason to do so. (i.e. if you are employing a person to deliver to a high risk group of participants). Individuals have the right to decline to respond to this request and may not be unfairly penalised due to this, however, there may be occasion when it would be inappropriate for non-vaccinated individuals or those of undisclosed status to deliver activity.

The vaccination status of any individual must remain highly confidential and be classed as special information for GDPR purposes, and used and stored appropriately within GDPR guidelines as detailed by the [ICO](#). It may be appropriate to use the [NHS COVID PASS](#) to demonstrate status of reduced risk.

Testing

For best practice, regular [Lateral Flow Tests](#) should be carried out, ideally by both the instructors and the participants in non-symptomatic individuals at least twice a week or ahead of a scheduled session or activity. It is important that the tests are carried out [Correctly](#) and the [results reported](#)

Any person who [displays symptoms](#) of COVID-19 or those with a positive test or exposure MUST NOT attend or carry out face to face activities.

In this case, deliverers must obtain a [PCR Test](#) and follow the government guidelines until cleared to resume activity.

Employees are [legally required](#) to inform their employers if they are officially told to self-isolate.

Parents/Carers who are accompanying children or those participants who require assistance or supervision should have a clear understanding of risks and preventative measures including continued good hygiene and household guidance. Parents/Carers should help participants to understand the measures that have been taken to keep them safe ahead of attendance and reinforce the message of having fun. Parents/Carers should be available to support their participant as required during a session.

d. Keeping those in a Performing Arts Environment Safe

Comprehensive and regularly updated risk assessments should form part of everyday working and should be shared with all staff and volunteers, along with the precautions and steps that are being taken to mitigate risk. This information should be freely available to all participants in a format which can be easily understood, and without limiting access. This may be necessary in a variety of languages or accessible or easy read formats with additional considerations for neurodiverse participants with additional information prior to attending to ensure understanding of new procedures.

Risk assessments should include consider the different ways the virus can be spread (aerosols, droplets and surfaces) and put in place measures to reduce the risk of each type of transmission. The risk assessment should be specific to the activity and the venue as some activities can increase the risk of catching or passing on COVID-19. This applies to our activities of dance where exertion and/or singing will generate more particles through heavy breathing. In this case, the specific risks should be assessed and additional mitigations put in place to prevent transmission.

Visual reminders of good hygiene and considerations should continue.

Each room/venue used will need its own risk assessment to determine safe numbers. This will depend on a number of factors:

- The size of the room and any requirement to keep social distancing (at risk individuals)
- The type of activity taking place- activity with a higher respiration rate, and therefore higher risk of droplet contamination
- The ventilation available
- Consideration of number of support workers or others required to be present

Outside activity remains the safest option, wherever possible

If singing/shouting or instruction with a raised respiration rate cannot be avoided, further distancing should be employed

Breaks in sessions should be maintained for rest, rehydration and respiration recovery, but consideration should be given to staggering the time of these to prevent high population risk.

Considerations should also be given to allow adequate cleaning of such high risk areas.

e. Venues

Instructors, coaches, athletes and dancers are reminded that the capacity, continued accessibility, and ventilation of training, rehearsal, performance and competition venues is not under Para Dance UK control or influence and we are unable to guarantee adequate risk assessment or risk mitigation policies and procedures at any proposed training, performance or competition venues.

Detailed information regarding the responsibilities of venues can be found in the information [for facility operators](#)

Each venue, club, including council-owned sports facilities, will make their own decisions about when their facilities are ready to open and can be operated safely and will have different rules to adhere to. It is still essential, however, for each coach or participant to ensure that risk can be adequately mitigated before taking the decision to participate or use a venue.

Each venue should have its own risk assessment and policies detailing their ventilation, capacity and cleaning provisions etc., but this does not remove the responsibility of the activity organiser (coach/instructor) from completing their own comprehensive and ongoing risk assessments. An example risk assessment template can be found in the Appendices of this document. This will be unique for each circumstance and should reflect this.

Full risk assessments by individuals and venues should all be complete and in place before returning to activity and regularly updated and reviewed.

Venues should have their own hygiene provisions in place, which you should follow, Particular consideration should be given to high population and footfall areas such as entrances and queueing areas (e.g. for areas such as registration) Outside waiting should be used wherever possible and cleaning prioritised to communally used items such as touch screens or pay phones. Accessible lifts (where relevant should be available for use, but care should be taken to ensure more regular cleaning and ensure that this does not become a high risk queueing area.

Toilets, should be considered high risk areas with more waste collection and hand cleaning areas required, and consideration should be given to ensuring adequate adjustments for disabled people. Accessible toilets or hoist areas may be in demand due to the number available and care should be taken to prevent queueing or crowding for use of these facilities and consideration given to the need for multiple hoist bags to ensure no cross contamination between participants. The venue should include these areas in their regular cleaning schedules.

Background music within the venue should be avoided to prevent the need to raise voices.

First aid provisions should remain available with additional sanitisation available. First aid policies should be reviewed to reflect Covid-19 provisions and this may require further training.

Guidance produced by The Resuscitation Council UK can be found [here](#).

Ventilation within the venue will be key to mitigating some risk and will influence the decision on numbers of participants. Either air-conditioning or natural ventilation will aid in the mitigation and the more the better. It may be necessary to adjust group or session numbers based on the results of the ventilation risk assessment. Poorly ventilated areas should be identified (using a CO2 monitor if necessary) and steps taken to relocate or improve ventilation. Further information on ventilation can be found from the [Health and Safety Executive](#)

f. Cleaning

The government guidelines on decontamination and cleaning can be found [here](#)

All areas of the environment should be cleaned at the beginning and end (and perhaps during) the session. All participants and staff should comply with regular handwashing and personal hygiene. Under no circumstances should people be sprayed with disinfectant or similar! It may be necessary to consider participants with allergies or sensitivities depending on products and carrier method used.

Time should be allowed between sessions where numerous sessions are held back to back for thorough cleaning.

All surfaces which will have been touched or subject to potential aerosol droplet contamination should be cleaned regularly. Flooring should be easy to clean, and should be cleaned between each session, particularly if contact by outside shoes, hands or bare feet or the wheels or ferrules of mobility equipment which has been used outside. Carpeted flooring should be avoided wherever possible. Venue guidelines and colour coding should be adhered to, in line with their risk assessment.

g. Equipment

[Current government guidance](#) strongly encourages the strict and regular cleaning (disinfecting) of all equipment used during activity, alongside the usual cleaning of personal equipment and belongings. This includes both personal and shared equipment.

For wheelchairs, this means thorough disinfection, particularly of all contact areas on arrival and departure of the training venue, and avoiding contact with wheelchairs by other athletes during the training wherever possible. Particular attention should be paid to tyres and wheels and gloves if worn as well as hand cleaning and ferrules or points of floor or hand contact of mobility equipment.

Sharing of equipment (including hire equipment and shared 'group' equipment and props) should have particular cleaning attention between users and at the end of a session.

It is strongly recommended that participants carry with them at all times hand sanitiser (70% alcohol), tissues, and disinfecting wipes, and adhere to the usual hand-washing guidance in order to prevent COVID-19 transmission.

Water bottles should not be shared and should be clearly named.

h. Personal Protective Equipment and Face Coverings

[Government guidance](#) states that "*Coronavirus (COVID-19) usually spreads by droplets from coughs, sneezes and speaking. These droplets can also be picked up from surfaces, if you touch a surface and then your face without washing your hands first. This is why social distancing, regular hand hygiene, and covering coughs and sneezes is so important in controlling the spread of the virus. The best available scientific evidence is that, when used correctly, wearing a face covering may reduce the spread of coronavirus droplets in certain circumstances, helping to protect others. Because face coverings are mainly intended to protect others, not the wearer, from coronavirus (COVID-19) they are not a replacement for social distancing and regular hand washing.*"

From the 19th July 2021 in England, it is no longer law to wear a face covering in public, however many people (particularly those 'at risk') may wish to continue wearing a face covering in public places based on their own personal risk judgements. This should be respected and may be expected in some businesses or in crowded environments.

People should not generally wear a face covering while taking part in any strenuous activity or sport, unless they have been advised to do so by their doctor.

i. Reporting and Tracing

Any person attending a session who is displaying symptoms should be turned away.

Providers are no longer required to collect participants' contact details, or keep records of staff and visitors. However it is best practice to display an [NHS QR Code](#) to aid in the transmission. People are not obliged to use this and should not be turned away if they refuse.

Each session leader should have a clear policy for managing any potential COVID-19 symptoms or known positive test results.

Attendees should immediately go home and self-isolate if they experience any [Covid-19 symptoms](#), and should comply with the government's [government guidance](#)

Participants returning to activity following COVID-19 illness will need to be guided by their healthcare provider on safety and graduated return.

j. Insurance

Para Dance UK trained instructors who utilise our insurance will be fully covered for activity provided that a full and comprehensive risk assessment has been completed and risks mitigated.

For external insurance cover, the instructor should seek advice from their own provider.

k. Music

Music is an important part of dance activity and can still be used, but the volume level should be low enough to prevent shouting wherever possible and singing should be discouraged. The use of head microphones will aid to raise the volume of projection. Instructors may also consider the use of face shields to prevent droplet contamination with a raised voice.

With increasing activity taking place remotely and via various live or recorded platforms, the usual music licencing products may not provide adequate performance.

It is the responsibility of the instructor/coach to ensure that they have the correct music licences for choreographing, remote and face to face sessions.

l. Para Dance Sport Technical Specifics

The nature of Para Dance Sport will require a large amount of partner work, and in situations (e.g. combi) physical contact and face to face positioning. Consideration should be given to the makeup of partnerships with reference to the vulnerability of the dancers, and the frequency of changing partners.

Para Dance Sport technique can be rehearsed as solo movements for the majority of categories or danced with additional distancing for others (i.e. duo) if adequate space is provided.

A risk assessment should be carried out regarding the amount of contact and face to face engagement that will be involved in deciding to proceed with contact figures and high risk categories of dance. If unavoidable, high risk figures and contact could be adapted if necessary.

There is no longer any restriction on the types and direction of movement around the room for multiple individuals or teams (i.e. following line of dance) however, it should be noted that this directional movement still holds the highest risk of transmission.

m. Inclusive Dance Technical Specifics

Inclusive Dance provisions will vary greatly depending on the participant type, number and genre(s) of dance involved. Considerations for those who may find the transition to COVID mitigations difficult or who will struggle to comply with them without support should be taken. In these instances it may be necessary to have less participants to allow more distance for each individual. Clear signage and reminders of good hand hygiene will still be appropriate.

It may also be challenging to prevent clapping, cheering or singing in some participants, and the risk assessment should mitigate this.

Directional movement and start positions should be considered to mitigate risk as far as possible and consideration given to the appropriateness of communal or mix and match or dances with physical interaction or face to face contact.

Glossary- Definitions and Terms

NGB – National Governing Body – Para Dance UK

IPC- International Paralympic Committee

BPA- British Paralympic Association

World Para Dance Sport –The world governing body for Para Dance Sport

Training, rehearsal, performance and competition venues – any venue where participants undertake Para Dance Sport or Inclusive Dance activity

Training, rehearsal, performance and competitive equipment – any equipment used either for the purpose of, or during, Para dance sport activity

Representative athletes – athletes representing Great Britain in Para Dance Sport, and any athlete registered with the National Governing Body

Protected characteristics – those characteristics that define the medically “at risk” groups

Coach/Instructor- a person leading an Inclusive Dance or Para Dance Sport session or class

Para Dance Sport Athlete/Inclusive Dancer/Participant- any person taking part in Inclusive Dance or Para Dance Sport sessions for training, rehearsal, performance or competition

References

1. <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>
2. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/performing-arts#arts-3-1>
3. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/performing-arts>
4. <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-transport-and-travel-guidance>
5. <https://www.who.int/images/default-source/health-topics/coronavirus/myth-busters/mythbuster---masks-and-exercise.png>
6. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>
7. <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/>
8. https://www.paralympic.org/sites/default/files/2020-08/2020_08_03_Assessment%20of%20potential%20Covid-19%20disease%20risk%20based%20on%20disability%20for%20physicians.pdf
9. <https://www.resus.org.uk/covid-19-resources/covid-19-resources-general-public>
10. https://www.paralympic.org/sites/default/files/2020-08/WPDS_Return_Guidelines.pdf
11. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-public-on-mental-health-and-wellbeing>
12. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings>
13. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-personal-protective-equipment-ppe-plan/covid-19-personal-protective-equipment-ppe-plan>
14. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own>
15. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own#the-reason-for-using-face-coverings>

Additional Information

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/close-contact-services>
<https://emduk.org/important-information-from-emd-uk-on-coronavirus-covid-19/>
<https://www.onedanceuk.org/covid-19-guidance/>
<https://www.sportandrecreation.org.uk/news/covid-19>
<http://www.activityalliance.org.uk/news/5752-using-activity-alliance-ten-principles-to-encourage-act>

Appendices

Appendix 1

[Guidance on COVID-19 Risk Assessment Completion and Risk Assessment Template](#)

Para Dance UK is continuously reviewing the specific guidance for Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland. Whilst the timeline for activity is different, the guidance of participation in Para Dance Sport and Inclusive Dance is not. Para Dance UK will update this guidance if specific changes from the English guidance is found. For more information please see the below guidance.

Northern Ireland

<https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/publications/covid-19-guidance-safe-return-sport>

Wales Guidance

<https://gov.wales/sport-recreation-and-leisure-guidance-phased-return-html>

Scotland Guidance

<https://sportscotland.org.uk/covid-19/latest-sport-and-physical-activity-guidance/>

End of Document