

Rt Hon Mark Drakeford MS
First Minister of Wales
Welsh Government
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CC. Baroness Eluned Morgan MS, Minister for Mental Health, Wellbeing and Welsh Language
CC. Lord Dafydd Elis-Thomas MS, Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism

2 March 2021

Dear First Minister

Collaboration within the Welsh sports sector has never been stronger, and we have been working closely with officials from your Government on the various processes required for a safe and responsible return to sport in Wales. We are keen to see further sport return when it is safe and practical to do so, respecting the public health priorities that are the primary driver of decision making in these unprecedented times. As we begin to look toward the reopening of Wales' everyday life, and in anticipation of the next review we would like to see the following steps announced on March 12 2021. However, it would be incredibly helpful if notice could be provided to the sector this week to enable us to make safe and timely preparations.

- The removal of outdoor sporting facilities from the list of closed premises in the Coronavirus regulations¹. This includes "Sports courts, bowling greens, golf courses and enclosed sports grounds or pitches". This is a necessary step to facilitate the return of much sporting activity outdoors.

As a sector, we will engage with Local Authorities, Leisure Trusts and other operators to look to ensure that the breadth of public and private facilities is available for use as quickly as possible.

- The return of outdoor organised group activities for under 18s - this will be especially important throughout the impending Easter holidays and as children return to school.
- Enable individuals to travel by car or other means to access outdoor recreation and therefore effectively restart outdoor activities such as angling, equestrian sports, canoeing, sailing and many others. This will have a key role in enabling individual, family and small group social participation in these outdoor activities.
- A return to the gathering limit of 30 for organised outdoors activity in a sporting context, as outlined in the Welsh Government's Coronavirus Control Plan for Alert Level 3². This would enable the return of some community and grass roots sports across Wales. This would also ensure the return across sports is equitable across all sports and social groups and does not

¹ https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-02/the-health-protection-coronavirus-restrictions-no-5-wales-regulations-2020-as-amended_0.pdf

² <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-02/coronavirus-control-plan-alert-levels-in-wales.pdf>

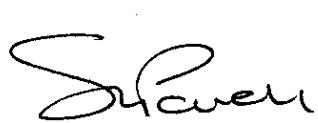
prioritise some outdoor activity over others where there are demographic discrepancies in participation.

- As the number of events for elite athletes will increase over the spring and summer we request that the approval to stage events is regulated by Sport Wales via the National Sport Group (NSG) as opposed to the current process of all events requiring ministerial approval. Sport Wales through the NSG will work with Sports, venue owners and Local Authorities to provide a safe environment. Sport Wales with NSG support would be able to sanction events larger than general regulations permit providing there are robust Covid protocols.
- In the context of the impending Easter school holidays, we also think it would be very helpful if organised sporting activities were able to access indoor facilities.

Whilst we accept that there may be some delay in reopening indoor facilities, it would be incredibly helpful if the Welsh Government were able to signal at this (March 12), or at the latest the next (April 2) review an indicative window for when a return indoors for the general public will be considered. This will allow facility operators to make plans for a safe return, just as we did last summer following the first lockdown and in the Autumn after the fire break. As a sector we now have extensive experience of restarting activity safely, and our indoor facilities have extensive mitigation measures in place to manage any potential risk.

Many thanks for all your efforts on behalf of our sector and we will continue to work with Welsh Government officials to ensure that sport is properly prepared to return to activity safely.

Sincerely



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