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## 1. Introduction

This guidance provides information for all providers of paddling activity in England, including but not limited to clubs, centres, providers and event organisers who deliver paddlesport who are looking to deliver activity from **Monday 19th July 2021**.

The document refers to **UK Government guidance for England only** and is subject to change in response to the current COVID-19 Alert Level, community prevalence of COVID-19 and/or to reflect additional or updated UK Government guidance.

We recognise that decisions that apply to activities in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland will be taken by the devolved administrations. For further information and current advice contact [Scottish Canoe Association](#), [Canoe Wales](#) and [Canoe Association of Northern Ireland](#).

In order for paddling activity to be permitted, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) expects British Canoeing to ensure that action plans, risk assessments and mitigations are in place to enable safe paddling following the easing of COVID-19 social restrictions.

These plans are designed to minimise the COVID-19 transmission risk and enable participants to make an informed decision on their choice to take part. They will also support providers to make informed decisions about how they operate their activity.

Under the DCMS guidance, British Canoeing is required to ensure that providers are running their activities safely. This guidance, along with other support available from British Canoeing staff, will support providers to do this.

Within this document, we have outlined measures that should be taken by providers, before, during and after all paddling activity. They should be read in conjunction with the latest [UK Government guidance](#) and any additional British Canoeing guidance.

The guidance should be used in conjunction with venue specific risk assessments. For example, the risk factors increase for indoor activities and as such providers should discuss it with venue operators. For paddling to take place in indoor pools, organisers would need to comply with both these guidelines **and** venue guidelines and principles.

If anyone wishes to raise a concern about how a provider is operating within this guidance, complete the [incident report form](#) on the British Canoeing website so that it can be investigated accordingly.

## 2. Continued Risk of Transmission of COVID-19 Risks in Paddling

According to current government evidence, COVID-19 will remain in circulation across the country for the foreseeable future. Whilst the national vaccination programme is progressing, the risk of contracting and falling ill from the virus will remain.

It is primarily transmitted through respiratory droplets and contact with contaminated surfaces - usually those that are frequently touched. Droplet airborne transmission is possible in specific settings where certain procedures or sports treatments are performed in close proximity. When assessing the risk of COVID-19, an assessment of the transmission risk based on three key variables should be considered:

**Droplet transmission:** The risk associated with each action in an activity based on duration and proximity of participants. Providers can determine the risk of actions in the paddling activity - anything, for example, from

accessing and egressing the water, on-the-water activities, etc. - which will then determine the overall risk of paddling.

**Fomite transmission:** The risk associated with the handling and transfer of equipment in paddling, e.g. shared equipment

**Population:** The number of participants likely to take part in the proposed activity, plus the known risk factors of participants with underlying health conditions or high risk groups who wish to participate.

The risk assessment for paddling activity (appendix 1) details the risks associated with paddling and the mitigations which should be considered. We are fortunate that in the majority of environments, paddlers will be more than a metre apart and so the risks are reduced.

### 3. Guidance for the return of sporting activity - from July 19th 2021

#### How to participate safely

Even though there are now limited restrictions in place, there are some steps you should take to reduce the risk of transmission when you are participating.

#### Check for COVID-19 symptoms and health conditions

Before attending any paddling activities, all participants, officials, volunteers and spectators should self-assess for symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19). These are:

- a high temperature
- a new, continuous cough
- a loss of, or change to, your sense of smell or taste

If you, or anyone you live with, have one or more of these symptoms you should not attend any sporting activity, even if your symptoms are mild. You should follow [NHS guidance on testing and self-isolation](#).

If you have been informed that you need to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace (or are required to self-isolate in relation to travel), you must do so. You should not leave your isolation location in order to participate in paddlesport. You can find more information in the [NHS guidance on how to self-isolate](#).

#### Follow your sport provider's safety measures

Your paddling provider may ask you to 'check in' using the [NHS COVID-19 app](#) to scan their QR code, take a test or use the NHS Covid Pass. Where these types of measures are used, you should follow your provider's guidance. This will help them to keep everyone as safe as possible, and minimise the risk of transmission at their events so they can continue to provide sport safely.

#### Take part safely

- You should continue to follow any relevant advice from your provider on how to participate safely in your activity. This may set out different ways to organise matches or tournaments, or measures you should follow like regular breaks in polo to sanitise the ball or other equipment or wearing a face mask.
- You should make an informed decision to consider your own health and circumstances (for example, if you are not yet double-vaccinated or you live with somebody vulnerable), so you can make an informed choice about whether you participate.
- You should continue to follow good hygiene practices, to reduce the risk of transmission in sport environments. For example, you should not spit or rinse out your mouth whilst paddling. You can find more information in the [guidance on how to stay safe](#).
- You should avoid sharing water bottles or other refreshment containers. Where possible, you should take your own drink, in a labelled or highly distinguishable container.
- Face coverings are no longer required by law, but the government expects and recommends that people should continue to wear them in crowded and enclosed settings, to protect themselves and others. Where worn correctly, this can reduce the risk of transmission.

- You should avoid sharing equipment where possible and practical, particularly equipment which is used around the head and face (such as helmets). If equipment needs to be shared, it should be cleaned between users.

## **How to provide sport and physical activity safely**

This guidance sets out the key principles that you should follow and communicate to providers and participants in paddling activity. This advice applies to all types of paddlesport, but further advice is also provided below for team sports, and mass participation events.

### **Key principles**

You should ensure that people can participate in your activities safely. You should consider the best way to approach this for your activity, including by issuing guidance as a club or delivery partner, and following any relevant guidance from the British Canoeing. The key principles below should form the basis of any provided guidance.

#### **1. Communications and guidance**

You should consider how you can inform visitors of important information and any changes to processes in advance of the activity, for example on your website, or when booking, and in your marketing. You should consider how to do this in a way that works best for your activity provision and is accessible to all, including those with disabilities.

For example, you could email registered participants in advance of a session starting to set out the operational information they should be aware of and safety measures you have chosen to put in place. Then include a brief reminder of any key points or steps they must take in your follow-up communications or social media engagement.

Your communication to participants should include reference to the points raised in the how to participate safely section above.

#### **2. NHS Test and Trace**

Sport providers are no longer required to collect participants' contact details, or keep records of your staff and visitors, however, you are advised to continue to display an [NHS QR code](#) for participants wishing to check in using the app, to support NHS Test and Trace. You do not have to ask participants to check in, or turn them away if they refuse. If you display an NHS QR code, you should also have a system to collect (and securely store) names and contact details for those who ask to check in but do not have the app.

#### **3. Pre-participation safety measures**

- Consider whether you should ask participants to take a COVID-19 test before participating, where this is practical and possible. This can help to ensure your sport provision is as safe as possible, and reduce the risk of transmission.
- You can also consider using the NHS COVID Pass to reduce the risk of transmission. The NHS COVID Pass allows people to demonstrate that they are at a lower risk of carrying COVID-19 and transmitting it to others, through vaccination, testing or natural immunity. It can help organisations to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19. The NHS COVID Pass will be available through the NHS App, [the NHS website](#), or as a letter that can be requested by ringing NHS 119. Participants will also be able to show text or email confirmation of test results. If you use the NHS COVID Pass, you should ensure that you comply with all relevant legal obligations and guidance, including on equalities. You can find more information in the [NHS COVID Pass guidance](#).
- Even when using testing or the NHS COVID Pass, it is still important that you follow the rest of the guidance and put measures in place to reduce the risk of COVID-19 spreading at your venue or event.

#### **4. Hygiene**

- You should continue to follow good hygiene practices, to reduce the risk of transmission in your environments. For example, giving guidance on such as the taking part safety section above. You can find more information in the [guidance on how to stay safe](#).

- Water bottles or other refreshment containers should not be shared. Advise participants to bring their own water bottle or refreshment container, in a labelled or highly distinguishable container. If you are providing water or other beverages, ensure that these are provided to individuals and are not expected to be shared.
- You should consider whether there are any changes you can make to your provision, to reduce the risk of transmission. For example, you could ask paddlers not to shake hands when greeting each other.

## 5. Equipment

- Organise your sessions to avoid sharing equipment where it is possible and practical, particularly equipment that is used around the head and face. Where equipment needs to be shared, it should be cleaned between users.
- If using equipment that is circulated during an activity, you may wish to encourage paddlers to take breaks to sanitise it at regular intervals, for example in a polo game, before and after each match, and in half-time or a suitable break in play.

## 6. Face coverings

- Face coverings are no longer required by law, but the government expects and recommends that people should continue to wear them in crowded and enclosed settings, to protect themselves and others. Where worn correctly, this can reduce the risk of transmission.
- If a sport facility or venue where your paddling takes place recommends the use of face coverings (when not participating in sport or physical activity), ensure this is communicated to your staff and participants.
- 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 a physician.

## 7. Medical and First Aid provision

- Where possible Paddlers and Coaches should be advised to self administer first aid. This can be supported through the provision of first aid equipment.
- Physios and other medical or first aid personnel should ensure that equipment and surfaces are frequently cleaned and disinfected, and maintain hygiene standards when treating participants.
- Where close face-to-face contact is required, medical personnel may decide that they and patients should wear a face covering. This is particularly important when they are conducting treatments which require them to be in close proximity to a person's face, mouth and nose.
- After contact with an injured participant, physios, first aiders and other medical personnel should clean their hands thoroughly with soap and water or alcohol hand sanitiser at the earliest opportunity. This applies in all situations, regardless of whether there was close contact.
- Those working at a sport event should familiarise themselves with the [guidance for first responders](#), in case of emergency situations.

## 8. Facility usage

- Providers which work with or operate facilities should ensure they are familiar with the guidance for sport facilities below. This sets out information on ventilation and other important steps you can take to reduce transmission.
- Where there is no facility operator (such as sport in a public park), the sport provider should review the guidance and consider following any relevant advice to reduce the risk of transmission.
- If you are managing a sports facility, the government guidance specifically references six steps that you can take to protect your staff and users:
  - a. Complete a health and safety risk assessment that includes the risks of COVID-19
  - b. Turn people with COVID-19 symptoms away.
  - c. Provide adequate ventilation
  - d. Clean more often
  - e. Enable people to check in at your venue

- f. Communicate and train.

There is additional detailed guidance for [how to manage a sport facility safely](#) as part of the government guidance

## 9. Sporting events

- If you are organising grassroots paddling events, or expect a significant number of spectators, you should review the [guidance for events and attractions](#) and follow any relevant measures to reduce the risk of transmission at your event.
- You can also use the [risk management template](#) to help you plan your event.

### Advice for specific sports and events

#### Team sports

- There are no restrictions on how team sports can take place which means polo and rafting are able to participate on the water as per their regular rules.
- Additional mitigations referenced throughout this guidance should be considered to support people to participate safely.

#### Sport participation events

Sport participation events such as paddling sessions, courses or races, can take place outdoors with no capacity caps for participants or spectators. In addition to your usual event organisation processes, you should ensure that you take steps to keep everyone safe, and reduce the risk of transmission at your events so you can continue to provide sport and physical activity safely.

As there continues to be a risk of infection from COVID-19, businesses still have a legal duty to manage risks to those affected by their business. The way to do this is to carry out a health and safety risk assessment including the risk of COVID-19, and put in place measures to reduce the risks you identify. You should review the [guidance for events and attractions](#), which sets out advice on the risks you should take into account when managing events, along with options for managing and reducing these risks and a risk management checklist to help you plan your event. You can also use the [risk management template](#) to help you plan your event.

#### When planning your event, you should take into account the following factors:

- Do not admit customers or spectators who have suspected or confirmed COVID-19. If a participant or spectator presents with symptoms, or you become aware of a case of suspected or confirmed COVID-19 on-site, they should not be admitted or should be asked to leave the facility or event, unless they need to be transported to hospital for treatment. The customer should be advised to self-isolate in line with [NHS guidelines](#) and to take a PCR test.
- Consider encouraging staff, volunteers, participants, and spectators to wear face coverings, for example through signage. Face coverings are no longer required by law, but the government expects and recommends that people should continue to wear them in crowded and enclosed settings.
  - You need to consider the reasonable adjustments needed for people with disabilities. You also need to carefully consider how this fits with other obligations arising from the law on employment rights, health and safety and equality legislation.
  - You should not ask people to wear face coverings while taking part in any strenuous activity or sport.
  - Remember that some people are not able to wear face coverings, and the reasons for this may not be visible to others. Please be mindful and respectful of such circumstances. Be aware that face coverings may make it harder to communicate with people who rely on lip reading, facial expressions and clear sound.
- Consider displaying an [NHS QR code poster](#) so that customers can check in using the NHS COVID-19 app. You are no longer required to collect customer contact details, or keep a record of your staff and visitors. However, you are advised to continue to display an NHS QR code for customers wishing to check in using the

app, as this will help to reduce the spread of the virus and protect your customers, visitors and staff. You do not have to ask customers to check in, or turn them away if they refuse. If you display an NHS QR code, you should also have a system to collect (and securely store) names and contact details, for those who ask to check in but who do not have access to a smartphone or who prefer not to use the app.

- Consider whether you should put in place safety measures to reduce the risk of transmission. For example, you could consider ways to distribute medals which don't require contact between large groups of people. You could also consider organising bag-drops and equipment storage to minimise crowding and shared handling, and ensure hand sanitiser is provided. You can find more advice on the types of measures which may be appropriate for your event in the [guidance on events and attractions](#).
- Ensure that any safety measures are communicated clearly and consistently to all participants and support staff, including volunteers. You can find advice about how to do this in the [guidance on events and attractions](#).
- Consider how any safety measures will affect participants, staff and attendees with protected characteristics, and any adjustments you should make. You should also consider whether any special provisions should be made for children and young people under the age of 18 and vulnerable adults, if this is relevant to your event.
- Ensure that there is sufficient access to toilet facilities (particularly for those with special needs and disabilities), and that they are well-ventilated and frequently cleaned. Particular care should be taken to clean portable toilets and larger toilet blocks.
- Consider how best to provide refreshments during the event. Water bottles or other refreshment containers should not be shared between participants.
- Ensure that any amenities at the event follow the relevant guidance, such as hospitality services ([guidance for restaurants, pubs, bars, nightclubs and takeaway services](#)) and retail outlets ([guidance for shops, branches, and close contact services](#)).

Organisers of British Canoeing events are asked to ensure that the event is appropriately authorised as per the information provided in appendix 3.

There is additional detailed guidance for [sport participation events](#) as part of the government guidance. There is also additional British Canoeing guidance for organisers as part of the [Event Toolkit](#) on the British Canoeing website.

## Appendix 1 – British Canoeing Risk Assessment template

**Name:**

**Assessment carried out by:**

**Date assessment was carried out:**

All Providers of Paddlesport activity must protect people from harm. This includes taking reasonable steps to protect among others your members, staff, and volunteers, from coronavirus. This is called a COVID-19 risk assessment and it will help you manage risk and protect people. You must:

- identify what activity or situations might cause transmission of the virus
- think about who could be at risk
- decide how likely it is that someone could be exposed
- act to remove the activity or situation, or if this isn't possible, control the risk

When completing your assessment make sure you talk to your volunteers/employees and members to explain the measures you are taking. They can also provide valuable information on how you could control the risks. Using the information in your risk assessment you can create a plan of how you will run your activity on a day to day basis.

You can use this document to help ensure you have covered what you need to keep your members and others safe.

You will also have to monitor to make sure that measures put in place are working as expected. Your Risk Assessment and plan should be reviewed to check that your mitigations are effective and after each change in guidance / legislation to ensure that they still are fit for use.



## Types of Transmission of COVID-19 and suggested control measures

**Droplet Transmission** - The risk associated with each action in an activity based on duration and proximity of participants. - The majority of Paddlesport activity takes place with participants at distances greater than 2m and is therefore in the low category. Below are examples where paddlers may participate at distances below 2m, during activity recognised by British Canoeing.

Contact Point	Type	Proximity	Risk	Interaction time	Cumulative Risk	Adaptations/ Mitigation	Reasoning
Proximity to other paddlers: e.g. arriving at or departing from a session, booking in, playing a game or sitting in an eddy	Face to face & Not face to face	>0.5m	Medium	Fleeting	Medium	Paddlers to adjust kit and launch independently where possible, if not possible consider further measures such as Face masks. Avoid activities that come into close proximity, discourage shouting, Social distancing Signage, one way routes and walkways.	Reduction of close proximity
Proximity to other paddlers - Crew boats	Not face to face	>1m	Medium	Varies	Medium	Not turning to talk to crew face to face, wearing of masks setting up the boat, crews should be self selecting and ideally households	Reduction of close proximity
Leaders and Coaches giving instructions and coaching	Face to face / Loud voices	2m	Low	Fleeting	Low	Avoiding raised voices, socially distanced briefings and well understood safety procedures. Consider pre session briefings and post session feedback delivered online	Reduction of close proximity
Rescues	Face to face	<2m	Low	> 5min	Low	Avoid rescues where possible by paddling within your capability, consider activities and games played to reduce the likelihood of a capsize/rescues required self rescue where practicable, follow FSRT principles of Self - Team - Victim - Equipment &	Reduction in close proximity

						Shout - Reach - Throw - Row - Go. Consider additional buoyancy in craft. All paddlers to wear personal buoyancy	
Sitting on the wash	Not face to face	>1.5m	Low	Variable	Med	Do not turn to face other paddlers, avoid shouting, paddlers should be self selecting and within households where possible	Reduction of close proximity
Provision of First Aid	Face to Face	<1	Poss High	Variable	Poss High	Follow Gov.uk first responder guidance, Have sufficient control measures to reduce likelihood of an incident.	
Travel and Shuttles	Not face to face	Enclosed space	Med	Variable	Med	Avoid shared transport outside of households, open windows, wear masks and follow government travel advice. N.B. British Canoeing Insurance does not cover Travel	Reduction of close proximity
Indoor Proximity Changing Rooms, Lecture Halls, Gyms	Not face to face	Enclosed space	Medium	Variable	Medium	Follow gov.uk guidance on Indoor space Ensure sufficient ventilation or restrict the numbers of users inside at any one time	Reduction of close proximity

**Fomite Transmission:** The risk associated with the handling and transfer of equipment in the sport. The majority of paddlesport is very low risk providing sensible precautions such as hand and equipment washing/sanitizing are carried out

Contact Point	Type	Occurrence	Risk	Interaction time	Cumulative Risk	Adaptations / Mitigation	Reasoning
Hands	Hand / Body	Regular	Medium	Ongoing	Medium	Provision of and Advice for Regular Hand Washing or Sanitisation	Reduction of transfer
Surfaces	Contact Point	Often	Medium	Constantly	Medium	Advice on regular sanitisation, Identification and regular cleaning of contact points	Reduction of transfer
Shared Equipment (Water)	Hand / Body		Medium	> 10min	Medium	Equipment should be cleaned and sanitised before use by another person. Avoid shared equipment where possible	Reduction of transfer
Shared Equipment (Land)	Hand / Body	Sessional	Medium	>10min	Medium	Good Hand Sanitising. Equipment should be cleaned and sanitised before use by another person. Avoid shared equipment where possible. Exercise equipment (ergos / circuits) cleaned between users or as part of a managed session cleaning regime.	Reduction of transfer
Setting up of equipment	Hand / Body Individuals responsible for personal setting up of equipment e.g. adjusting boats	Once per session	Low	> 5min	Low	Equipment should be cleaned and sanitised before use by another person. Avoid shared equipment where possible	Reduction of transfer
fixed equipment (e.g. Pontoons / slalom Poles / buoys)	Hand / Body	Once per session	Low	> 5min	Low	Reduce contact where possible (not getting in and out multiple times in a session), One person to be responsible for course setting and adjustment, good hygiene precautions	Reduction of transfer

**Population:** The number of participants likely to take part in the proposed activity plus known risk factors of participants with underlying health conditions or high risk groups who wish to participate.

Contact Point	Type	Proximity	Risk	Interaction time	Cumulative Risk	Adaptations / Mitigation	Reasoning
Arriving and getting ready / Booking in at events	Paddling Sessions	>2m	Low	<20min	Low	Ensure social distancing, consider staggering start times, Manage group size and attendance, Encourage paddlers to arrive ready to paddle	Reduction of close proximity
Post session and departure	Paddling Sessions	>2m	Low	<20min	Low	Discourage post session chats, Encourage paddlers to depart as soon as possible.	Reduction of close proximity
Underlying health conditions	Paddling Sessions	>2m	Low	ongoing	Low	Ensure that participants understand the risks and discuss their individual needs and communicate to those who need to know	Reduction of transmission risk to high risk groups
Risk Groups	Paddling Sessions	>2m	Low	Ongoing	Low	Identify participants in high risk groups (Age, Gender, Ethnicity, etc.) discuss management with them	Reduction of transmission risk to high risk groups
Large Group Session	Paddling Sessions	>2m	Low	Ongoing	Large	Ensure social distancing is carried out. Where possible operate in Sub groups of six. Operate a booking system to prevent unexpected number	Reduction of transmission



## **British Canoeing Provider COVID-19 Guidance Compliant Code of Behaviour**

**This provider is committed to keeping paddlers safe throughout the COVID-19  
Pandemic and is compliant with the latest  
British Canoeing Return to Paddling Guidance**

**In order to achieve this, we have:**

1. Carried out a risk assessment based on guidance by British Canoeing
2. Produced an action plan
3. Published and shared this action plan and communicated key messages with all our paddlers

**Signed by:**

**Date:**

**Name:**

**Role:**

### EVENT AUTHORISATION

In light of the increased risk during events with Covid-19 British Canoeing have reviewed the authorisation procedure and documentation requirements for events.

The definitions of events remain the same with regards to club events, those events under the auspices of Discipline Committees/Regional Development Teams and National / British Canoeing events.

The definition of each level of events and the process for authorising them is detailed below.

#### **Club Events**

**Definition** - Club events involving non club members (please note a club event in this regard does not include courses and trips). Normally self-sufficient within the club and not require support/ funding / promotion by the BC or National Associations discipline committee. Coaching activity delivered within the scope of the BC Coaching Terms of Reference is not included.

**Authorised by** - Club committee, guided by the appointed club safety officer and Event Covid Officer

**Revised Requirements** - Club Committees remain the authorising body for club events but all documentation will need to be approved by the appointed club safety officer and if applicable the Event Covid Officer(s).

**Events with more than 100 participants are encouraged to engage with the British Canoeing Events team to sense check and provide input into event delivery plans.**

#### **Discipline Committee / Regional Development Team Events**

**Definition** - Significant relationship with a discipline committee or RDT, normally advertised by British Canoeing or National Associations, for example Divisional slalom events or tours. Some are run directly by the Discipline Committee or RDT while others are run by a club on behalf of the Discipline Committee or RDT.

**Authorised by** - Discipline Committee or RDT guided by the appointed Committee/RDT Safety Officer(s), Club Safety Officer (where the event is organised by the club) and Event Covid Officer.

**Revised Requirements** - All events being organised as part of a Discipline Committee ranking system or central calendar will be required to submit an up to date risk assessment, including covid risks to their relevant discipline committee. Where an event is not part of a formal structure (e.g. Slalom ranking, Marathon Hasler, RDT Tour) then the authorisation remains as per a Club Event.

#### **National / British Canoeing Events**

**Definition** - These events will have direct funding and resource support from the governing body. Such events might include a World Cup/Championship.

**Authorised by** - British Canoeing Senior Management Team or Home Nation Board.

**Revised Requirements** - Any national level event (e.g National Championships) will require submission of a risk assessment, including covid risks, and an event delivery plan for review to the British Canoeing Events team (events@britishcanoeing.org.uk).