

“Swimming Lessons must restart as soon as swimming pools open”

says Sarah Keane, CEO, Swim Ireland



The enforced global closure of Swimming Pools and Leisure Facilities has had, what can only be described as a catastrophic impact on the aquatic community, and fourteen months into this global pandemic, it's not surprising that the Aquatic Industry in Ireland feels like they are silently drowning.

This is an industry crying out to be heard, in fear of a lost generation of swimmers and workforce.

Swimming Schools, Swimming Clubs, Swimming Teachers and Swimming Coaches are waiting on the side-lines, praying that they will be allowed back into the water as soon as swimming pools open. And let's not forget the children and young people who would have accessed swimming lessons and training sessions, heading into another summer without those vital opportunities.

How do we know swimming pools are safe?

Recent research, commissioned by Water Babies, Swim England and the Royal Life Saving Society, conducted by Imperial College London, confirms the risk of transmission of Covid-19 is incredibly low in aquatic environments. Virologists proving **the virus is inactivated in just 30 seconds in the presence of chlorine**, under the right conditions.

Maarten Keuten, researcher at TU Delft University and Hellebrekers, Netherlands published evidence that **air quality in swimming pools is close to that of air quality outdoors**. The study demonstrates that ventilation systems with as little as 30% fresh air being circulated at a minimum of 80% fan speed, reduces the aerosols in the air as would occur naturally in the outdoors (PWTAG Conference 2021).

The Health Protection Surveillance Agency in Ireland (HSPC) and World Health Organisation (WHO) state as **FACT: swimming in a well-maintained chlorinated pool is safe**.

With this evidence and the extensive frameworks produced by Swim Ireland, addressing operations in swimming pool activities, in swimming schools and swimming clubs, as well as swimmers and workforce, it is unquestionable that **the swimming pool is just as safe as any other indoor area, if not safer**.

A lost generation of swimmers and workforce

The cessation of operations across the country has impacted so many, and now the fear of a lost generation of swimmers and a reduction in aquatic professionals is real (in some cases up to 40% of the workforce has been lost – Water Babies Ireland).



Thousands of people across the island have been unable to access water for essential swimming lessons and their health and wellbeing for nine of the past 12 months.

Ultimately, if lessons and clubs can't return when swimming pools open the **future viability of the industry is in jeopardy.**

Swimming is such a unique sport....

It's **the only sport which caters for all ages** of our population, from cradle to grave.

It's **the only sport which teaches lifesaving skills.**

It's **the only sport that could save your life, or the life of a loved one.**

It's an activity, that for a large proportion of our population **has health and wellbeing benefits that cannot be found on dry land.**

On behalf of our members, partners, swim schools, teachers, coaches, athletes and swimmers, our message is simply this:

When swimming pools open: let us teach, let us train – let us swim

#ReturntoWater

#LetusSwim

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