

10th June 2020

Dear Clubs,

Please find attached the following documents which are being issued today to clubs (to club committees, coaches and CCO's) and will be published on the Swim Ireland website [HERE](#) on Friday

1. Club Swimming Return to Training Framework – includes risk assessment
2. Club Water Polo Return to Training Framework – includes risk assessment
3. Letter for club committees to issue to members
4. Letter to be issued to athletes
5. Booklet of diagrams

The purpose of these documents is to assist, empower and support your Club to get back into the water as safely as possible. It is fundamental that it is understood that it is not possible to eliminate the risk of the spread of Coronavirus completely and that we will work with all stakeholders to minimise risk; this concept must be fully understood and accepted by all Swim Ireland members and the parents of our members who are minors.

Swim Ireland have been working with England, Scotland and Wales as part of a 'Four Nations Working Group' on these matters and have also observed and studied closely that which would currently be seen as best practice by other European nations.

We are working closely with Ireland Active (who represent the leisure industry in the south) in relation to the framework within which swimming pools are likely to re-open.

We need to emphasis at this point that it is not permissible for indoor swimming pools to open either in the Republic of Ireland or Northern Ireland under the roadmaps of both governments. Clarification is being sought on the re-opening of swimming pools and indoor sport in relation to Phases 3 and 4 of the Government of Ireland Roadmap (whilst endeavouring to align this with the Northern Ireland Executive's equivalent). Consultation will also take place with relevant Northern Ireland governmental departments in a similar regard.

We cannot emphasise enough that any return to training will be completely dependent on the risk assessments related to the re-opening of pools and that the decisions and the circumstances of pool operators may vary widely in this regard. The sector is under incredible financial pressure and (based on current information received) it is understood that pools are unlikely to operate to more than 50% capacity on re-opening whilst still bearing 80-100% of the costs. This may well delay the re-opening of certain facilities, regardless of any governmental decrees north and/or south of the border.

We know that with strong and organised collaboration between club committees, club coaches, parents of athletes, athletes themselves and facility providers, we can create safe plans for the usage of our pools to deliver coaching, and deliver this in a manner which is compliant with public health directives. The current HSE advice in relation to the impact of COVID-19 in chlorinated environments states that **'adherence to current recommended disinfection practice is sufficient to inactivate COVID-19 virus in chlorinated drinking water and swimming pools'** and can be found [HERE](#).

At all times, current (and updated) Government restrictions and guidelines in place relating to travel, social distancing, hand washing/hygiene and face masks/coverings should be adhered to at all times via [HERE](#) (ROI) or [HERE](#) (NI).

Please note that these Frameworks are not legal documents. They are not legal advice or intended as a substitute for any applicable government advice for clubs, members and/or users carrying out their own risk assessment of review. Readers should review this and all future information and ensure that they are following best practice relative to the environment in which they are operating. Close cooperation with your facility operator is absolutely key to this. We continue to monitor the situation very carefully and will issue further information to our clubs and members as this becomes available. Please continue to regularly check the Swim Ireland website for further updates and contact us if you have any urgent questions or concerns.

In the coming weeks, we will be issuing further documents to help you prepare your club to return to training, along with some documents that will help your athletes understand what they will need to do when they return to the pool.

We will also be holding Webinars where we will answer your questions and work through potential scenarios to help you understand how your first sessions back training will look. The first two have been scheduled as follows:

Monday 15th June at 7.30pm [BOOK HERE](#)

Wednesday 17th June at 11am [BOOK HERE](#)

We have included template letters for you to send to your members, one aimed at adult members and one specifically for young athletes. We ask that you circulate these letters to your members in advance of the information being published online later this week.

In relation to Open Water Swimming, our advice remains the same that if this is not something you or your members have experienced in the past, now is not the time to start learning.

Finally, we are all living in a changing society and world at the moment. This will be no different for our aquatic clubs. We are here to support you and whilst we are eager to return to the water and our activities, we advocate a conservative approach to restarting training.

Yours sincerely



Sarah Keane
CEO



Adam Cox
Head of Clubs, &
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Jon Rudd
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