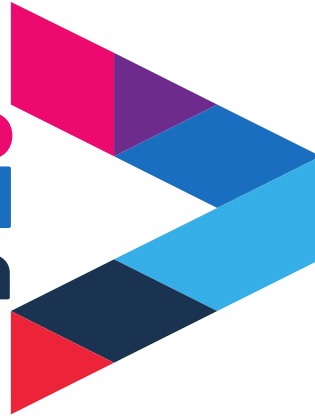




Step Forward Plan



Return to Gymnastics Information for host venues

Version 4 – 15/03/2021

(Including information on the British Gymnastics Team Sport Framework and Return to Coach Contact Framework)

PLEASE NOTE

This document is for guidance purposes only and will be updated when any further specific information is released from the government about the sports sector and any changes made to advice, guidance, or law relative to a phased return to activity. The document does not supersede any laws or local government decisions in your area.

**Working together
for a safe return
to gymnastics**

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We understand that most British Gymnastics registered clubs do not operate out of their own dedicated facility and will hire a space in another venue. Host venues may be school halls, leisure centres, community centres, village/church halls, and some clubs may even hire a space within another dedicated gymnastics facility. This document includes information for host venues on what guidance British Gymnastics registered clubs and partners have been provided with to reopen and resume activity safely. It is important that the host venue and the registered club keep up to date with the latest Government guidance.

What guidance should British Gymnastics registered clubs follow?

British Gymnastics has provided all registered clubs with access to our Step Forward Plan which provides direction for our gymnastics community on what steps should be taken, and when, in line with Government advice to prepare, resume and rebuild operations. The plan highlights key actions, considerations and signposts relevant external documentation, guidance, and law in alignment with government requirements and recommendations.

To ensure a safe return to gymnastics, all member clubs and registered partners are required to:

- Follow guidance from the [Government](#), [Public Health England](#) & the [Health & Safety Executive](#) before planning and resuming gymnastics activity. Clubs in Northern Ireland are required to follow guidance from the [Northern Ireland Executive](#) and [Public Health Agency](#) and the [Health & Safety Executive NI](#).
- Complete a Covid-19 risk assessment (or update existing risk assessments).
- Appoint a competent Covid-19 representative or officer, who is responsible for ensuring the appropriate risk assessments are carried out and the control measures are in place and being followed.
- Demonstrate increased hygiene measures including frequent cleaning of equipment and/or the venue and handwashing or sanitising procedures throughout the venue and sessions.
- Meet the [Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport \(DCMS\)](#) guidance for capacity within their sessions and comply with current social distancing regulations whilst ensuring British Gymnastics gymnast to coach/teacher ratios and safeguarding policies (and all other usual policies) are followed at all times.
- Regularly communicate and publish information on adapted operating procedures and risk assessments that reduce the risks of transmission to all workforce, members, and stakeholders.

What information can the host venue request from the club?

- Covid-19 specific risk assessment, including number of gymnasts and coaching staff in each session.
- Name and contact details for Covid-19 representative or officer.
- Adapted operating procedures.
- Covid-19 secure poster.
- British Gymnastics Step Forward Plan self-declaration checklist outlining the completion of necessary steps to ensure a safe reopening.
- Cleaning schedule.
- Timetable of sessions or activities, including session plans detailing how social distancing will be achieved throughout.

Joint responsibilities between the host venue and club

An agreement needs to be created between the club and the host venue to specify responsibilities in alignment with both the club's and the venue's plans and operational procedures. Clear communication is vital between the club and the host venue to ensure all policies are adhered to and responsibilities are clearly defined.

- Each venue must assess their capacity based on Government guidelines and work collaboratively with the club to agree on the total capacity acceptable given the activities planned, equipment available and procedures suggested with consideration given to all other activities likely to take place within the venue. It is advisable to ensure a written agreement is in place.
- While it is still important that the club takes responsibility for ensuring changes to risk assessments and carrying out a new risk assessment to add in any changes or adaptations to the club's operations, there may be things such as cleaning before and after the session that either the club or venue is responsible for. This includes health and safety and ensuring that anybody who is handling chemicals within their centre has had the correct training and access to the appropriate PPE.
- There are some aspects of the cleaning and maintenance of the equipment and facility that the venue may be solely responsible for, so it is vital that there is clear communication between the club and the venue to establish each other's responsibilities and ensure that a safe environment is provided for all members and workforce.
- Agree who is responsible for first aid and create an action plan between the club and host venue to ensure government guidelines are followed when administering first aid. More information can be found: resus.org and [HSE Covid-19 first aid](https://www.hse.ie/eng/health/19/covid19/firstaid/).
- Agree a process for keeping both club and host venue informed with details of reported symptoms or positive Covid-19 tests.

Club responsibilities

Risk assessment

Clubs are responsible for the completion of Covid-19 specific risk assessments to mitigate risk of transmission and publish / make available the significant findings of the risk assessment, including but not exhaustive of the below:

Communication

- It is important that any changes that will be made to the club/venue operations are communicated to all members to ensure that they are aware of all new procedures and any changes to the gymnastics programme.
- Clubs must communicate with their coaches and workforce to ensure they are prepared to return; they understand all new processes and policies and any additional training is undertaken.

Capacity for gymnastics delivery

- There is no limit on group sizes (exceptions apply for parent and child groups (England only) and Team Sport) as long as the club adhere to capacity restrictions on indoor facilities and ensure social distancing is maintained*.
- Group sizes should be carefully managed to reduce the risk of transmission
- In England parent and child groups can take place indoors with a limit of 30 attendees. Children under five years of age do not count towards the attendee limit.

- If following the Team Sport Framework the group sizes included within the guidance must still be adhered to.
- Multiple groups are allowed within the gymnastics space, ensuring social distancing is in place and maximum capacity of the venue is not exceeded.
- British Gymnastics gymnast to coach / teacher ratios and safeguarding policies should always be adhered to.

**unless following and adhering to the British Gymnastics Team Sport Framework and/or Return to Coach Contact Framework. More information available below*

Cleaning

- Clubs have been provided with cleaning guidance information, this includes suggested recommendations to assist with creating cleaning plans and risk assessments on cleaning within the club.
- Clubs will need to have a schedule and risk assessment for cleaning in place for all equipment and gymnastics areas. They must ensure that all workforce are aware of their responsibilities and are up to date with all training. This remains the club's individual responsibility based on users, cleaning policy and equipment being used.
- Appropriate PPE must be provided where necessary.

Timetabling

- Consideration should be given to staggered timetables ensuring there is no cross over with start and finish times to reduce the risk of congestion on entering and exiting the area, allowing adequate time for cleaning processes to be completed.
- Where possible clubs should plan for coaches and gymnasts to remain within the same groups to reduce the risk of transmission.

Gymnastics activity

Social distancing and hygiene regulations must be adhered to.

- Where possible one-way systems should be introduced throughout the venue and gymnastics area to minimise congestion in any communal areas.
- Social distancing must always be adhered to and no contact, close spotting or supporting is permitted between coaches and gymnasts, or gymnasts and gymnasts until the government remove/review social distancing requirements even whilst wearing PPE*. Activity delivered should be appropriate for socially distanced coaching.
- Government guidance does not make it compulsory for coaches to wear a mask/face covering whilst coaching at a social distance. Where coaches are implementing the Return to Coach Contact Framework the wearing of a mask/face covering is compulsory unless exempt.
- Gymnasts are not permitted to wear a mask or face covering during activity, gymnasts may choose to wear a mask or face covering whilst waiting for a turn or whilst moving around the gym.

**unless following and adhering to the British Gymnastics Team Sport Framework and/or Return to Coach Contact Framework. More information available below.*

Equipment & apparatus

- Clubs are advised to minimise using hard-to-clean equipment or apparatus and to minimise multiple users touching the same surfaces. Consideration should also be given to whether any equipment or mats

(particularly items that cannot be cleaned and disinfected) can be removed from general use and stored safely.

- Clubs should carefully review their use of hand equipment and toys (preschool/recreational sessions) with the associated cleaning needs and risks according to the materials they are made of and any cleaning related instructions. Sessions should prioritise apparatus free activities or activities with wooden or plastic equipment (plastic balls instead of beanbags).
- Clubs are advised to remove communal chalk bowls and where the use of chalk is necessary, gymnasts use their own chalk, in a clearly labelled container and not share the chalk with anybody else.

Foam Pits

- Following research on the use of foam and the transmission of Covid-19, the reintroduction of foam pits is now permitted as it concluded that the risk of Covid transmission in foam was low after one minute.
- Clubs should review and update their Covid-19 Risk Assessments with the control measures included in the guidance, such as:
 - Completion of self-screening surveys prior to departure for all users. Anyone displaying symptoms should not leave home.
 - Only one person in the pit at any one time.
 - A gap of one minute between each gymnast entering the foam.
 - Maintain regular hand sanitisation and cleaning of high touch areas around the pit.
- Clubs wishing to use pitted areas should implement the control measures contained within the 'Reintroduction of foam pits' guidance in conjunction with their existing risk assessments, cleaning protocols and operational procedures.

Test and Trace

- The club has a responsibility to maintain registers of staff and members who are in the venue and a note of the date and time they have been in the venue.
- Screening policies will vary between clubs, but it is likely they will have some form of screening for anyone entering the gymnastics area. This could be a Covid-19 questionnaire or a temperature check.

British Gymnastics Team Sport Framework

The British Gymnastics Team Sport Framework has been approved by the [Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport](#) (DCMS) for England and the Department for Communities (DFC) and Sport Northern Ireland's (SNI) expert panel in Northern Ireland. As a result, clubs, and coaches are now able to adopt the controls outlined within the framework and safely resume team sport activities.

Those clubs wishing to resume delivery of team sport activities can use the British Gymnastics Return to Team Sport Checklist or follow suitable methods in adopting and adhering to the specific controls and measures outlined within the Action Plan.

The disciplines which are covered within the Team Sport Framework Action Plan include:

- Acrobatic Gymnastics where gymnasts work together in pairs or groups of 3 or 4.
- Aerobic Gymnastics with pairs, trios and groups of 5 working closely together
- Rhythmic Gymnastics in which groups of up to 6 gymnasts work together
- TeamGym where teams of up to 12 gymnasts are in close proximity

- Gymnastics for All (GfA) – Festival Display Groups - no limit on group size but should be carefully managed to reduce the risk of transmission

All pair and group work in the identified disciplines is likely to involve direct physical contact and face to face proximity between gymnasts through choreography, dynamic and balance work and throwing and receiving of hand-held apparatus.

- **Acrobatic Gymnastics permitted activities for gymnasts:** Physical contact & close-proximity during balance, dynamic, routine and choreography work.
- **Aerobic Gymnastics permitted activities for gymnasts:** Physical contact & close-proximity during lifts, dynamic, routine and choreography work.
- **Rhythmic Gymnastics permitted activities for gymnasts:** Physical contact & close-proximity during dynamic, routine and choreography work. Hand-held apparatus transfer between gymnasts for throwing and receiving.
- **TeamGym permitted activities for gymnasts:** Physical contact & close-proximity during balance, dynamic, routine and choreography work.
- **Festival Display Gymnastics permitted activities for gymnasts:** Physical contact & close-proximity during balance, dynamic, routine and choreography work. Hand-held apparatus transfer between gymnasts and through the use of props (if individually assigned).

Please note, the Team Sport Framework does not allow for social distancing to be fully removed from the gymnastics environment. The controls in place are specific to the identified disciplines and activities, where these activities are not being performed social distancing must be adhered to e.g. warm up, conditioning, individual skill work and does not allow for the pairs or group work within other disciplines. Coaches are still required to socially distance with no permitted contact between coaches and gymnasts.

Clubs wishing to resume pair and group work (Team Sport) within the identified disciplines/activities must:

- Have already satisfied the requirements as set out in the relevant government guidelines for a safe return of sport and have been operational for a minimum of two weeks maintaining the appropriate controls.
- Follow all further transmission mitigating control measures required as stipulated within the British Gymnastics Team Sport Framework Action Plan.
- Educate staff and gymnasts in the required practices and controls as indicated within the British Gymnastics Team Sport Framework Action Plan and associated risk assessments completed by the club. Appropriate records for the relevant Test and Trace system must be kept.
- Ensure all gymnasts (and parents/carers) who wish to resume working in pairs and groups understand their responsibilities and abide by all control measures as outlined within the British Gymnastics Team Sport Framework Action Plan. Prior to taking part in team activities, gymnasts must opt-in to this agreement, yet can opt out and stop team activity at any point.

For a full list of control measures required for gymnastics, please request a copy of the British Gymnastics Team Sport Framework Action Plan from the gymnastics club hiring the venue.

Further information can be found on the [Team Sport Framework FAQ's page](#).

British Gymnastics Return to Coach Contact Framework

The British Gymnastics Return to Coach Contact Framework has been approved by the DCMS for England and the DfC and SNI's expert panel in Northern Ireland. As a result, clubs, and coaches/instructors are now able to adopt the controls outlined within the Action Plan and safely resume some manual handling activities.

For more information and details of the phased approach in each home country please see the appendices.

Those clubs wishing to resume coach contact can use the British Gymnastics Return to Coach Contact Checklist or follow suitable methods in adopting and adhering to the specific controls and measures outlined within the Action Plan.

Please be aware that due to the nature of Return to Coach Contact activities, there is a higher risk of a Covid-19 outbreak and operating outside of a Covid-secure environment.

The disciplines which are covered within the Return to Coach Contact Framework include:

- Acrobatic Gymnastics
- Aerobic Gymnastics
- Double mini tramp
- Disability Gymnastics
- Gymnastics for All- which includes festival and display, adults
- Men's Artistic Gymnastics
- Preschool Gymnastics
- Rhythmic Gymnastics
- TeamGym
- Tumbling Gymnastics
- Trampoline
- Women's Artistic Gymnastics

What is coach contact?

Coach contact is defined as manual support or assistance and is a common practice in gymnastics coaching, which serves important purposes during the skill learning process and in the general practise and performance contexts. In addition to manual supporting, coach contact also includes the following between coaches and gymnasts; face to face contact, contact within 1 metre and being less than 2 metres away and prolonged contact for 3+ seconds throughout a session.

Manual support of progressions/activities is often required (depending on the complexity of the skill), especially when the gymnast is attempting them for the first time. The coach/instructor has a duty of care to ensure the gymnast understands the requirements of the progression/activity and can safely attempt it, therefore manual support in the initial attempts is critical.

Under the Return to Coach Contact Framework manual support may occur if:

- The skill/activity is new or carries risks and the coach/instructor wants to ensure the gymnast can perform it safely.
- The skill/activity is new, and the gymnast is apprehensive.
- The gymnast is attempting or practising the full skill and there is a risk of injury during the skill or upon landing.
- There is a risk of overuse injury, or repetitive stress or strain due to forces associated with the amount of practise required to learn and master the full skill.

By allowing coaches/instructors to resume coach contact activities and manually support under specific guidance gymnasts will be more likely to safely learn and progress new skills and regain skills they may have already had in their repertoire prior to the coronavirus pandemic. Consequently, they will gain enjoyment and satisfaction from their participation, and will be more likely to remain motivated to continue participation in gymnastics.

All manual support work in the identified planned activities will involve direct physical contact between gymnasts and coach/instructor. This may include contact such as:

- Hand to limb contact
- Hand to shoulder
- Hand to feet
- Hand to torso
- Face to face proximity
- Prolonged (3+secs)

Coaches/instructors should avoid hand to hand manual support during any supported activity and alternative use appropriate body parts or training aids where possible.

Gymnastics clubs wishing to resume manual support within the planned activities must:

- Already meet the requirements as set out in the relevant government guidance and have been operational for a minimum of two weeks maintaining the appropriate controls.
- Follow all further transmission mitigating control measures required as stipulated within the **British Gymnastics Return to Coach Contact Framework Action Plan**.
- Educate staff and gymnasts in the required practices and controls as indicated within the **British Gymnastics Return to Coach Contact Framework Action Plan** and associated risk assessments completed by the club.
- Ensure appropriate records for Test and Trace are to be kept secure for the allocated timeframe as per current Government guidelines.
- Ensure all gymnasts, coaches/instructors (and parents/carers) who wish to resume manual support activities understand the risks, their responsibilities and abide by all control measures as outlined within the **British Gymnastics Return to Coach Contact Framework Action Plan**.
- Prior to taking part in manual support activities, gymnasts (and parents/carers) and coaches/instructors must opt-in to the **Agreement** with the code of behaviour and other associated controls. Individuals can opt-out and stop manual support at any point.

Coaches/instructors will be using a phased return to manual support activities as shown in the relevant home country appendix.

The club should already be operating as per guidance set out within the Step Forward Plan and therefore, gymnasts and coaches/instructors will already be working independently of each other with social distancing in place. This should be in place for a minimum of 2 weeks prior to the phased return to coach contact commencing.

It is the responsibility of the club and coach/instructor to review the programme, understand the increased risk, and ensure manual support activities are kept to a minimum.

During sessions, coaches and instructors following the Return to Coach Contact Framework must ensure that:

- No contact is permitted between gymnasts and gymnasts unless following the *British Gymnastics Team Sport Framework*** in identified disciplines/activities. Gymnasts are not permitted to support each other.
- Activities that can be conducted without close-proximity work must still be done with social distancing in place (for example warm-ups, conditioning, individual skill work, cool downs). Similarly, social distancing must still be maintained in communal areas of the training venue.

- Hand sanitisation takes place before and after each individual gymnast's turn on the activity with soap and water or alcohol hand sanitiser.
- Throughout all coach contact and manual support activities and phases, a face covering must be worn in line with government guidance.
 - This must remain on throughout the contact or supported activity.
 - Face coverings may be removed once a 2m distance has been adopted in between a coach/instructor and the gymnast.
- Care is taken to ensure face coverings are not left lying around the gym and are disposed of correctly/ washed regularly.
- Throughout all coach contact and manual support activities and phases, coaches/instructors must wear a face covering in line with government guidance.
- Any coach/instructor who is exempt from wearing a face covering will need to risk assess further with their club for their own safety as well as the gymnasts. (A face shield may be more appropriate to ensure manual support can still be applied).
- Hand hygiene is maintained with gymnasts and coaches /instructors being expected to wash or sanitise their hands regularly before and after working in close proximity on manual support activities, as well as throughout the session and venue.
- No other gymnasts are to be supported in any other groups and existing Step Forward Plan guidance must be followed for all other groups.

Coaches/instructors are still required to socially distance with no permitted contact between coaches/instructors and gymnasts, unless they are completing the planned manual support activities.

The Return to Coach Contact Framework does not allow for social distancing to be fully removed from the gymnastics environment. The controls in place are specific to the planned activities, where these activities are not being performed social distancing must be adhered to e.g., warm up, conditioning, or independent skill work.

***unless following the Team Sport Framework. The Team Sport Framework provides a separate action plan and control measures for identified team sport activities and disciplines, where a club or gymnastics provider is delivering under the Team Sport and Return to Coach Contact Frameworks, both action plans must be adhered to. Where the Team Sport Framework states no contact is permitted between coaches/instructors and gymnasts this is still true unless the Return to Contact Coaching Framework has been implemented and control measures adopted.*

For a full list of control measures required for gymnastics, please request a copy of the British Gymnastics Coach Contact Framework Action Plan from the gymnastics club hiring the venue.

Further information can be found in the [Return to Coach Contact FAQs](#).

Further support

We're pleased to see that many of our gymnasts are now able to make their return to gymnastics following lockdown and the impact of the coronavirus (Covid-19). To support this, we have provided some guidance to parents and gymnasts about what to think about and what to expect when returning to gymnastics.

[Parents' Guide & Gymnasts' Guide](#)

We have also produced a list of FAQs and Home Country Guidance which are available for you to view:

[FAQs & Home Country Guidance](#)

Covid-19 Concerns

If you are concerned about any matters regarding Covid-19 within the club, in the first instance contact the clubs Covid-19 representative to resolve any issues. If you require support from British Gymnastics, please contact our Customer Support Team on 0345 129 7129 or customersupport@british-gymnastics.org

More information can be found from the Health and Safety Executive at www.hse.gov.uk or 0300 003 1647

Welfare and Safeguarding concerns

If an incident or concern is important and you think a child is in immediate danger of abuse or at risk of significant harm or are in need of protection, call the Police on 999 and/or your local Social Services. To report safeguarding concerns, in the first instance contact the club's Welfare Officer.

Further information regarding the safeguarding and protection of children can be found on the [British Gymnastics Website](#).



Appendix One - England

Return to Coach Contact in England (from 17th May 2021)

Phase 2 Approval

The DCMS have approved Phase Two of the British Gymnastics Coach Contact Framework, only permitting coach contact activities in one club/environment. Therefore coaches/instructors who deliver across multiple clubs or environments are limited to coach contact activities in one gymnastics venue only. British Gymnastics Clubs and Partners may move to phase two following the completion of Phase One.

Whilst the framework provides a clear three phased approach, it is essential that those delivering gymnastics ONLY permit coach contact activities up to and including Phase Two. The full framework has been released to show the transition to full coach contact over time. The DCMS will be advising British Gymnastics of when it is safe and appropriate for movement into Phase Three.

Phase Number	Approval status	Manual Support Allowed?	Detail
1	Active	Yes – but limited to 15 minutes per day	During this phased return to manual support, each coach/instructor must limit the coach contact time to a maximum of 15 minutes per day, for one fixed group* for at least a minimum period of two-weeks of pre-planned activity. <i>Manual support may not be provided for any other group or individuals once the identified group for each coach/instructor has been decided.</i>
2	Active	Yes – but limited to 15 minutes per group per session and in one gymnastics venue only	Following the completion of phase 1. Phase 2 allows the coach/instructor to increase their coach contact to multiple groups throughout the day. The coach/instructor must limit the coach contact time to 15 minutes per group/session*. Each group should only have one identified coach taking part in coach contact throughout the session and where possible for the duration of the phase**.
3	Not yet active	Yes	Following the first two phases, coach contact can resume for all pre-planned activity.

* Groups must not exceed government groups sizes (or British Gymnastics coach: gymnast ratios) and each group is limited to 15 minutes coach contact per day.

**Where possible, club, coaches/instructors should control and keep to a minimum the number of gymnasts that require manual support to reduce the number of contact any one coach has. Approval has only been granted to move to Phase Two in only one gymnastics venue, Therefore, coaches/instructors who deliver across multiple clubs or environments are limited to coach contact activities in one gymnastics venue only.

Appendix Two – Northern Ireland

Return to Coach Contact in Northern Ireland (from 24th May 2021)

Return to Coach Contact Northern Ireland

The British Gymnastics Return to Coach Contact Framework has been reviewed and approved by the Department for Communities and Sport Northern Ireland's Expert Panel.

British Gymnastics recognised gymnastics environments are now able to resume coach contact and manual support activities if following the control measures included within the action plan and adhering to the appropriate protocols for phase 1 and/or phase 2.

Whilst the framework provides a clear three phased approach, it is essential that those delivering gymnastics ONLY permit coach contact activities up to and including Phase Two. The full framework has been released to show the transition to full coach contact over time. The movement into Phase 3 will be permitted when it is safe and appropriate in line with further easing of restrictions.

Return to Coach Contact Northern Ireland

Phase Number	Approval status	Manual Support Allowed?	Detail
	Active (not before 24 th May)	No	The club must meet the requirements as set out in the relevant government guidance and have been operational for a minimum of two weeks maintaining the appropriate controls before implementation of the Return to Coach Contact Framework
1	Active (not before 7 th June)	Yes – but limited to 15 minutes per day	During this phased return to manual support, each coach/instructor must limit the coach contact time to a maximum of 15 minutes per day, for one fixed group* for at least a minimum period of two-weeks of pre-planned activity. <i>Manual support may not be provided for any other group or individuals once the identified group for each coach/instructor has been decided.</i>
2	Active (not before 21 st June)	Yes – but limited to 15 minutes per group per session	Following the completion of phase 1. Phase 2 allows the coach/instructor to increase their coach contact to multiple groups throughout the day. The coach/instructor must limit the coach contact time to 15 minutes per group/session*. Each group should only have one identified coach taking part in coach contact throughout the session and where possible for the duration of the phase***.
3	Not yet active	Yes	Following the first two phases, coach contact can resume for all pre-planned activity.

* Groups must not exceed government groups size limits (or British Gymnastics coach: gymnast ratios) and each group is limited to 15 minutes coach contact per day.

***Where possible, clubs, and coaches/instructors should control and keep to a minimum the number of gymnasts that require manual support to reduce the number of contact any one coach has.