

A practical guide for event organisers  
returning to off track athletics  
following the COVID-19 restrictions during  
**phase 3** of the route map for exiting lockdown

This practical guide, prepared by our team in consultation with **sportscotland** and UK Athletics in line with government guidelines, outlines the specific measures **scottishathletics** recommends that event organisers take to ensure a safe return to athletics activity.



## PHASE 3

Be aware that guidance can change quickly and more restrictive rules may be applied in the future, so please refer to the scottishathletics website regularly as your event date approaches.

The guidelines in this document relate to phase 3 of the Scottish Government's COVID-19 route map through and out of the crisis.

This phase:

1. Permits the resumption of sport in line with sports specific guidance and public health advice.
2. Organised outdoor sport specific activity can be undertaken by children and young people (u18) from 13<sup>th</sup> July with no physical distancing required on the field of play.
3. Enables groups of 15 from 5 households, including family and friends, to meet outside with physical distancing.
4. Gyms (including indoor sport spaces) will not open before 31<sup>st</sup> July.
5. These guidelines should be read in conjunction with any updated Scottish Government guidance. Information on the Scottish Government's approach to managing COVID-19 is available at [www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/](http://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/)
6. Travel guidance outlined by the Scottish Government should always be adhered to. Guidance is available at [Staying Safe and Protecting Others: Travel](#)

The safety and wellbeing of athletes, coaches and the wider athletics community is at the heart of any guidance that **scottishathletics** produces and distributes. We are aware that a number of athletes, coaches, event organisers and athletics venues are eager to resume athletics competition as soon as possible. However, **scottishathletics** stress that competition should not take place until it is safe and appropriate to do so, and aims to ensure that the safety and wellbeing of everyone involved in athletics, facility provision and the wider community of the sport is prioritised.

The safety of all event participants is key, and event organisers must ensure that measures are in place to mitigate risk at their event. Competition providers should appoint a COVID-19 Officer to hold overall accountability for the competition. This should be a named person from your organisation who will work closely with you, your venue and your officials to ensure that the event can be delivered safely in the current climate. All competitions must take account of local conditions, and any risk assessment for normal activities must be undertaken with government guidance around COVID-19 considered. Planning scenarios around, for example, an injury occurring and the need to access first aid while adhering to current guidance, can help to ensure that your assessment is as robust as possible.

The guidance that follows provides competition-specific advice within the confines of the government framework. This guidance has been published on the understanding that it is an interpretation of government guidance relevant to off track competition It is likely to change at short notice; in which case, updates will be published through the **scottishathletics** website and social media channels. Event organisers should check for updates regularly and adapt competition plans accordingly as their event date approaches.

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## 1. Competition Timelines

Up to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2020

- Virtual competitions taking place.
- No other licensed competition until 1<sup>st</sup> August at the earliest, in line with government guidelines.
- Guidance will be reviewed following any Scottish Government announcements.

From 1<sup>st</sup> August 2020

- This provisional date has been given on the assumption that further restrictions may be eased to enable the resumption of competition
- Competition suspension lifted across all disciplines of athletics in Scotland.
- Any licensed competitions taking place **MUST** comply with the government and **scottishathletics** guidelines available on the date of the event.

## 2. Pre-Competition Planning

Event organisers planning to host a track and field event will need to consider a number of factors whilst planning their event. In the current climate, this will involve adaptations to usual approaches and additional considerations in some areas:

- Contact the venue or landowner to ensure that the space you intend to use is open and available, and that all COVID-19 requirements are in place.
- Consider the maximum number of attendees at the event and how this can be controlled. This will include participants, officials, contractors, any venue staff and first aid personnel, as well as any spectators you expect to attend.
- Ensure consideration is given to health provision within the wider community. Local emergency and health services should be contacted to ensure they are aware of the event and any potential ramifications of holding the event locally.
- Determine the format of your competition. Be aware that unlimited mass starts will not be possible due to restrictions and will need to be adapted. Considerations should include the staging of time trial or small wave starts; introducing qualifying conditions such as expected finish time or the age range the event is open to; and whether you can offer a virtual alternative alongside or instead of the physical event.
- Apply for a **scottishathletics** licence for the event. The licensing process is open now for Summer 2020 and Winter 2020-21, with licences being issued as normal but on the understanding that all licensed events will comply with all government and **scottishathletics** guidance available on the event date.

## 3. Appointing Officials

UKA licensed officials are required at all events in line with the licensing standards and UKA rules. Officials and volunteers should be approached prior to the competition license application to ensure that sufficient numbers of volunteers are available to help you to stage the event. It is fully understood that the availability of graded officials may be limited under current circumstances, and so additional volunteers may be recruited to work under the supervision of a graded official should a sufficient number of graded officials not be available.

Considerations when appointing your officials would include:

- It is the event organiser's responsibility to co-ordinate officials and volunteers for their event.
- A Race Referee should be appointed for all events. They must be qualified to at least UKA Level 2 and are to be responsible for ensuring that the event conforms to UKA rules.
- Officials should be selected from those living within close proximity to the event. Only once all avenues for suitably qualified officials locally have been explored can the competition provider expand the search further.
- Evidence of officials' attendance will be required post event. Competition providers must keep a register of all officials, volunteers and helpers, and inform **scottishathletics** of the names of those in Chief/Referee roles, through the post-event returns process.

#### 4. Event Licencing

Event organisers are now welcome to apply for **scottishathletics** event licences for competitions of all disciplines of athletics scheduled to take place between 1st August 2020 and 31st March 2021.

- For any competition results to appear on Run Britain or Power of 10, a licence must be granted by the governing body and sufficient officials be on duty throughout the event. This includes any competition which will adopt a virtual format. Some events this Summer may be licensed but still ineligible to be used for ranking purposes if sufficient qualified officials are not in place.
- UKA public liability cover will apply to competitions that are licensed and promoted by an affiliated Competition Provider. Licences are issued on the assumption that all relevant Covid-19 regulations are applied to the competition, failure to do so could result in insurance being invalidated.
- Licence applications are submitted online. Providing all relevant previous licence returns have been completed and all information for the event has been submitted, a UKA level 1 licence will be issued in track and field.
- More information about the licensing process can be found here:  
<https://www.scottishathletics.org.uk/events/organising-an-event/>

#### 5. Competition Preparation for Phases 3 and 4

Once an event licence is in place, the event organiser should begin planning for their event's delivery. This includes regular liaison with the local authority, venue and/or landowner, and detailing event programming, event promotion and how important information will be communicated to attendees.

##### Key Principles

- Event organisers have a responsibility to take reasonable steps to ensure their activities and the event environment is as safe as possible for all.
- Medical provision must remain in line with current guidance, with additional requirements specific to the current Covid-19 situation in place.

##### Venue Liaison

The event organiser should work with their venue to ensure that their event site will adhere to all government guidance. The event organiser must name a **COVID-19 Officer** for the event, who may be a volunteer or responsible colleague. They will complete, with the venue provider, a detailed risk assessment covering all of the event's risks, including those related to COVID-19.

Venue considerations should include (this list is not exhaustive):

- Maximum number of ALL attendees, including facility staff, contractors, officials, athletes, coaches, parents, spectators, first aid, catering, etc.
- Arrangements for build and de-rig of event infrastructure to adhere to physical distancing.
- Ingress and egress, including routes from parking to the event area, for all competitors, spectators and officials/volunteers and their maintenance of physical distancing. This could include one-way systems around the event site and/or restricted access to specific areas.
- Physical distancing of all participants and spectators during the event.
- Oversight of young athletes by parents – where can parents spectate and how many can be accommodated within the event site?
- Hygiene/cleaning requirements for all equipment and on-site facilities to meet COVID-19 guidance.
- Catering arrangements both for the public and for staff, contractors, officials and volunteers.
- Plans for circumstances where injuries or other accidents occur, and mitigating procedures and plans to resolve any issues whilst maintaining compliance with all government guidance.
- Toilet allocation needs to be provided, meeting all guidance on hygiene/cleaning and physical distancing requirements. This includes accessible toilets, which must be available.
- Changing facilities may not be available during phase 3. This may change in phase 4.

### Event Programming

Guidelines suggest that only limited events and small groups will be able to compete together during phase 3. Event organisers must consider the format of their event in advance and ensure that it complies with any restrictions in place on the day.

**In phase 3, athletes aged 18+ are permitted to gather in groups of up to 15 people, from a maximum of 5 households. This means that start waves may be limited to a maximum of 5 athletes if they are all from different households.**

**Athletes under 18 are not required to adhere to physical distancing measures on the course. Races exclusively for young athletes can therefore be conducted as normal, although physical distancing must be observed immediately before and after the race.**

Programming considerations may include but are not limited to:

- Entries should be taken online or prior to the event to ensure that the expected number of attendees is known and the scheduling of starts can be planned in advance.
- All results should be managed individually, or virtually using computer systems. There should be no sharing of paperwork or sharing of equipment between officials and volunteers on race day.
- It is advised that bibs/numbers are provided to participants in advance and that runner packs contain only essential materials. If the event organiser decides that bib numbers are collected on the day of their event, bibs should be handed to the athlete using appropriate PPE, and any registration/declarations areas must be suitable for physical distancing.
- Consider marking out spaces within parts of the event site (eg. in queuing or waiting areas) or providing additional signage to remind attendees to maintain physical distancing.
- Warm up areas should enable athletes to prepare whilst maintaining physical distancing.
- Starts must be timetabled and planned according to pre-entries. Enough time must be planned between waves to ensure physical distancing can be maintained throughout race day, including any warm up periods.
- A start schedule should be drawn up to inform athletes of where and when to congregate for their start wave. This schedule should not be printed and posted within the event site, but instead available online and/or emailed to participants in advance of the day.

## Promotion of Events

Once your licence has been approved, you will be able to advertise your race as a licensed event and it will appear on the **scottishathletics** online fixture list.

- Ensure that all event advertising is factually correct and includes information about what facilities will be available for use, including parking, toilets, spectator areas, etc.
- Event organisers must take care not to mislead or force the athletics community in any way to take part in their competition. Sensitivity will help to ease the return to competition for many who may be feeling apprehensive in the current climate. Many, particularly those who have been shielding, may not yet feel ready to return to competition in any format and should have the choice not to do so until they feel prepared.

## Participant information and management

All participants and individuals connected to them should have information provided prior to race day about how the event will run. This includes information on access, egress, event provisions, competitor and spectator management, competition management, timetables, and all health, safety and risk mitigations should be communicated prior to the event. Information around procedures for registration, warm up, and cool down should also be communicated in advance.

If you run an annual or regular event, also consider questions you are often asked at registration or during the event and provide the answers to these in advance to your competitors. You could produce this information in an FAQ document, or you could consider holding a pre-event online webinar or forum for competitors to ask questions if this will assist with your communication of information.

## 6. Health, Safety and Hygiene

Reinforce good hygiene practices prior to, during, and after your event, as participants may be asymptomatic. In this phase, no one should attend any events if they:

- Have been in contact with someone with COVID-19 in the last 14 days
- Have been overseas to a country on the quarantine list or exposed to someone with COVID-19 in the last 14 days
- Have COVID-19 symptoms (self-isolate for 7 days) or are feeling unwell
- Have been told to self-isolate as part of the contact tracing measures in place

Event organisers holding races in fixed venues should consult with their facility operator to ensure that usual access to first aid and emergency equipment is maintained. Organisers should adapt the activity level, number of participants and event timings to reduce the risk of mass medical needs.

Consideration should be made to house first aid equipment outdoors. Ensure that first aid equipment has been updated appropriately for the COVID pandemic and first aiders are aware of COVID-19 specific first aid advice: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/first-aid-certificate-coronavirus.htm>.

External first aid providers must conduct a Covid-19 risk assessment and provide suitable PPE for their staff's use. Treating patients is a priority and in emergencies first aid personnel will attend to any injured party accordingly.



### **Cleaning Advice**

- Hand sanitiser should be at least 60% alcohol based and detergent wipes appropriate for the surface they are being used on. Cleaning products should conform to EN14476 standards.
- Cleaning protocols may differ between venues, individual venue guidance to cleaning must be followed at all times.
- Event organisers must implement safe systems of work protocols for all event staff, officials and volunteers with an emphasis on the maintenance of strict and frequent personal hygiene measures, particularly handwashing/sanitising.
- Event organisers must ensure that an uninterrupted supply of personal and hand hygiene equipment and consumables is provided for staff, officials and volunteers at the event site at all times.
- Organisers must ensure that all relevant areas of the event site are cleaned to the standard defined in the government guidance. High contact surfaces such as door handles and light switches should be considered a priority for disinfection on a frequent basis, should there be any within the event site.

## **7. Athlete Competition Guidance for Specific Groups**

### **Younger athletes (Under 18 years of age)**

- Event organisers must ensure they have the permission/agreement of the responsible parent or guardian of any athlete who is under the age of 18 to include the athlete in the competition.
- Provisions should be made for any parents/guardians attending to be able to spectate from designated areas (even if this is in limited numbers).
- On the course, physical distancing measures are not required for athletes under 18.
- Those aged 12-17 must adhere to physical distancing immediately before and after race.

### **Masters athletes**

- Higher Risk: athletes in the higher risk groups should follow any medical guidance they have been given about ensuring good health and welfare. If there are further concerns, please consult with your medical or national organisations for support and best practice.

### **Athletes with a Disability**

- Higher Risk: athletes in the higher risk groups should follow any medical guidance they have been given about ensuring good health and welfare. If there are further concerns, please consult with your medical or national organisations for support and best practice.
- General Assistance: athletes with a disability who require support are permitted to bring one carer with them to competition, provided this person is part of their household or extended household. This could also include athletes with an intellectual impairment, such as athletes who need support tying shoelaces, changing, stretching etc.
- Guide Runners: Currently with physical distancing in place, unless the guide is part of the athlete's same or extended household, guide running cannot be carried out.
- Equipment: Para athletes will be permitted to use their personal Racing Wheelchairs. Hygiene guidance should always be followed.
- Accessible Toilets: see facility guidance and communicate through pre event information.
- Guide Dog owners should refer to guidance on Guide Dog welfare via Guide Dogs UK



## 8. Event-Specific Guidance

Event organisers must ensure that, where applicable, all guidance principles are applied by staff and volunteers and by all third party suppliers, venue staff and contractors, throughout all stages of the delivery of the event, including planning and at all times on race day. Organisers should commit to demonstrating to their normal licensing authorities that these guidelines are adhered to throughout the planning and delivery of their event.

### Communication

- All guidelines issued by event organisers to their stakeholders should be underpinned by clear, consistent messaging from the organisers to staff, volunteers, participants and the wider public, including potential spectators.
- Online video or written race briefings which are sent to competitors in advance of the event should be provided. On the day, briefings should not take place unless critical information needs to be shared. If this is the case, consider how you will share any last-minute changes on the day and communicate the method in advance. Public Address announcements, social media and text messaging services could be considered, rather than face-to-face communication.
- Ensure that race information is sent out sufficiently in advance to allow competitors to ask any questions and receive a response before event day. Consider providing an FAQ section on your website and updating this regularly in advance of the event.
- Consider hosting an online chat the days before the event to provide participants with an opportunity to ask questions.

### Venue and Facility Considerations

- Any venue being used as part of the event is likely to have their own procedures and protocols in place which event organisers will need to fully adopt and adhere to. Liaise with your venue operator to ensure that all working spaces and facilities used are organised in a way that physical distancing can be maintained.
- Where a permanent building containing toilet facilities cannot be used or is inaccessible, consider increasing the number of portable toilets on-site to reduce queuing, and ensure that these are fully stocked and replenished with hand sanitisers or soap and water and paper towels throughout the event.

### Physical Distancing at the Event

- Organisers must design their event so that the applicable government advice on physical distancing can be maintained by all participants and stakeholders.
- The event timetable and event areas should be designed in order to maximise the available space for each participant and minimise the amount of time participants spend in proximity to each other.
- The event timetable should be designed to permit only as many people as can be admitted whilst physical distancing is maintained onto the event site at any given time.
- Organisers must carefully assess the capacity of their events, such that physical distancing is possible based on the time and space available to the organiser. Crowd flow modelling tools may be useful where appropriate.

## **Staff/Volunteers, Suppliers and Contractors**

- All staff, suppliers and contractors must receive and acknowledge detailed briefings on these guidelines before arriving at any event site.
- Mitigations such as increased on-site working and welfare space should be put into place. Extra time to build and de-rig the event should also be factored in.
- Event staff and volunteers must be supplied with suitable PPE if required for their role.
- Organisers should develop suitable plans to monitor staff and volunteers for COVID-19 symptoms. Anyone showing COVID-19 symptoms, and those who have been in close contact with them, must follow all up to date government instructions regarding isolation, tracing and testing.
- Event Organisers must appoint a named COVID-19 Officer who shall be the first point of contact for all contractors, volunteers and staff throughout the build and takedown period, as well as during the event itself. The COVID-19 Officer will be responsible for oversight of the risk and mitigation planning and will ensure that the necessary standards are met.
- The Event Organiser should develop an event operations plan that considers measures in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19 at the event, and a COVID-19 risk assessment and mitigation plan. Depending on the scale of the event, consideration should be given to the following:
  - A code of behaviour for all contractors, volunteers and staff throughout the build and de-rig periods which provides clear site and operational guidelines.
  - An appropriate education programme for all contractors, volunteers and staff, if required.
  - Any activities during the build and de-rig period where physical distancing cannot be easily maintained should be risk assessed and mitigated.
  - Limiting all non-essential activities during the build and de-rig period, such as on-site catering provision.
  - A map of the event site and the course/route, defining all areas, routes and access/egress points.
  - The maximum capacity and layout for each area to allow physical distancing to be maintained.
  - Information on the management, movement and scheduling of contractors, volunteers and staff and their vehicles to allow physical distancing to be maintained.
  - A security plan, screening process and accreditation system that defines the access control system throughout the build and de-rig period, if required.
  - A transport plan for staff and contractors for travel to and from the venue/site which minimises the usage of shared or public transport.
  - A signage plan to support the implementation of the guidelines.

## **Spectators, Residents and Businesses**

- Organisers should deter spectators from attending their event where possible to ensure that physical distancing guidance can be adhered to. Some spectator provision should be made available for parents (if an event is open to under 18s) and coaches, although this may be limited.
- If appropriate, organisers must update existing plans for spectators and crowd flows to help to ensure physical distancing can be maintained.
- Event organisers should also take pre-emptive action to combat known points of spectator crowding, including preventing access to those areas if necessary or applying one-way systems. This may be, for example, areas close to the finish line, or at narrower points on the course/route.
- Organisers should inform local residents and businesses that the event is taking place, explaining how the event is being held safely.

## Post competition

Post competition, the event site must be returned to its original state, ensuring any and all venue equipment is thoroughly cleaned in line with the venue and government guidelines

Each competitor, official and volunteer who was within the event site or on the course during the race must be briefed to ensure that they are aware that if they show signs of COVID-19 within one week of the event, the event organiser must be informed so all other attendees can be contacted. This is in line with the Government Test and Protect system. **scottishathletics** must also be notified if there is a positive COVID-19 case following the competition through the post-event returns process (to be completed within 28 days of the race date).

## 9. The Athlete Journey - Considerations

The following outlines the considerations for an athlete's journey through a licensed athletics event held during Summer/Autumn 2020.

### Travel to and from the Event

- Organisers should determine whether it is possible for attendees to maintain physical distancing when travelling to and from the event: is public transport able to be used? Is parking available if private cars are encouraged? Is it appropriate for attendees to car-share?
- Organisers should adapt their plans to ensure that public transport systems can cope with the volume of people attending the event. This could include staggering start times and asking separate start waves to arrive and leave at different times.
- Organisers should consider providing facilities to encourage attendees to use alternative means of transport, e.g. bike parking, car parking etc.

### Arrival

Athletes should be advised to arrive as close to their scheduled start time as possible and to leave the event immediately following the conclusion of their run. Ingress and egress routes should be clearly marked, with a one-way system around the event site. Spectator areas of limited capacity for coaches, parents, etc. must have sufficient space for physical distancing; and spectators should be advised of any restrictions on access times in advance. Athletes must be asked not to bring large groups of family or other non-competitors to spectate to minimise the number of people at the venue.

### Before the Start

- Organisers must ensure that areas are designed so that participants do not need to assemble in a manner which conflicts with physical distancing guidelines.
- Organisers should consider whether some facilities (e.g. baggage drop, customer information) are necessary at the event and either remove event elements likely to cause participants to congregate or mitigate that congregation (e.g. queue lines/markers, etc).
- Use an online entry system if at all possible. This will allow you to set a maximum number of runners in advance, and ensure that you are aware of how many people to expect to attend on the day. This will help you to plan for the event, as well as ensure that in-person face-to-face sign-ups and the collection of personal details are not required on the day.
- Wherever possible, payments are to be done online in advance, or if on the day, using contactless payment only.

- If you cannot distribute runner numbers in advance, physical distancing must be maintained between competitors inside any registration tent/room, and whilst waiting to register. Ensure that your registration/declarations area has sufficient space to accommodate those who need to report there.
- Only competition-essential materials should be included inside a race pack, such as the race number (e.g. no promo materials), whilst reducing packaging as much as possible. Where possible, timing chips should be included in the race pack to avoid additional collection stations on the day and time spent in the registration area. Consultation with timing companies to use disposable chips or bib timing systems may be useful.

### **Start Line Management, Course and Finish**

Event organisers must design their start line procedures so that the density of crowds at the start line is within physical distancing guidelines. This could be achieved by:

- Ensuring that the start line is as wide as possible, and that the time available for participants to cross the start line is maximised.
- Reducing the assembly time before the start to an absolute minimum, ensuring that runners are not congregating in the start area for long.
- Clear messaging to participants to follow start line protocols (e.g. seeding by predicted time).
- Considering setting athletes off in small 'waves' or even individually to allow for physical distancing to be maintained.

Once runners have set off, it is important to ensure that physical distancing measures can be maintained throughout the run:

- Whilst setting athletes off in small waves can help to promote physical distancing, consideration should be given to the location and width of the narrowest point(s) of the course and any areas prone to congestion. Wherever possible, bottlenecks should be avoided and routes/courses altered to avoid these areas to ensure that runners will not congregate in one spot where physical distancing cannot be maintained.
- The density of runners on the course should allow for physically-distanced overtaking.

Whilst the finish of any event is a positive environment, physical distancing and hygiene measures must remain of paramount importance.

- At the end of the race, organisers should ensure that finishers are dispersed quickly away from the finish line, and should take measures to guide participants safely away from the event site.
- Where possible, increase the width of the finish chute to give competitors more space when crossing the finish line – however it is accepted that timing points may limit this. Discuss options with your chip timer to ensure that times can still be recorded.
- Ensure competitors do not sit or lie down within the finish area (unless in the case of a medical issue). Identify volunteers to make sure that competitors are not congregating at the post-finish area. These volunteers should wear PPE appropriate to their role and have hand washing/sanitiser facilities available.
- Following their finish, all competitors must be directed to an open space and organisers should have a plan to disperse everyone off site as efficiently as possible.
- Unnecessary "touch points" (e.g. handing out of medals) should be removed from the finish area.

### **Water/Feed Stations**

- If drinks stations must be used, they should be set up to minimise contact time. Sealed bottles are recommended, rather than open cups, and bottles should be picked up by participants instead of being handed to them.
- In longer-distance events, the use of feed stations should be minimised, and participants encouraged to bring their own hydration and nutrition to the event using bottle belts, hydration backpacks, etc.

### **Post Event and Results**

Athletes must leave the event site as soon as possible following the conclusion of their run. Officials and volunteers should also leave once their duties are complete, having notified the Referee or Chief Marshal of their departure. All attendees must ensure that the designated exit route within the venue's one-way system is followed.

Results should not be posted within the event site. Provisional results could be available online during the event day, and/or final results published electronically following the conclusion of the event.

## **10. Contacts**

Any general event queries should be directed to [events@scottishathletics.org.uk](mailto:events@scottishathletics.org.uk) in the first instance. This includes queries from event organisers, as well as athletes, coaches and clubs.

### **Staff Contacts**

Alasdhair Love  
National Events Manager  
· 07584 146796

[Alasdhair.love@scottishathletics.org.uk](mailto:Alasdhair.love@scottishathletics.org.uk)

Caitlin Watt  
Events Administrator  
· 07718 526373

[events@scottishathletics.org.uk](mailto:events@scottishathletics.org.uk)

Colin Hutchison  
Head of Development  
· 07983 080 925

[colin.hutchison@scottishathletics.org.uk](mailto:colin.hutchison@scottishathletics.org.uk)

Shona Malcolm  
Officials Recruitment & Development Officer  
· 07731 832 567

[shonamalcolm@scottishathletics.org.uk](mailto:shonamalcolm@scottishathletics.org.uk)

Angus Macdonald  
Welfare Officer  
· 07983 081 122

[angus.macdonald@scottishathletics.org.uk](mailto:angus.macdonald@scottishathletics.org.uk)

All other staff contacts can be found at the following link:  
<https://www.scottishathletics.org.uk/about/people/staff/>