

A practical guide for event organisers returning to athletics competition

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 beyond level 0.

Version 6 – updated on 09 August 2021



Introduction

To ensure that it is safe to progress 'Beyond Level 0', guidance is being linked to the 'Gateway condition'. This relates the amount of vaccine coverage to the Scottish Government's new strategic intent to 'suppress the virus at a level consistent with alleviating its harms'.

Most legal restrictions relating to Covid-19 will be lifted on the 9th August 2021 when Scotland moves to 'Beyond Level 0'. This includes restrictions on physical distancing and the size of social gatherings. Additionally, no businesses will have to legally remain closed.

Whilst these changes will signal the end of most restrictions for sport and physical activity it will not however signal the end of the epidemic. Covid-19 is a disease that will need to be managed for the foreseeable future and to maintain progress in returning to more normality, it is important that people continue to abide by a set of baseline measures covered by Scottish Government guidance and where relevant legislation. This includes:

- Good hand hygiene and surface cleaning.
- Continued promotion of good ventilation.
- Requirement for face coverings in certain settings (e.g., public transport, retail).
- Continued compliance with Test and Protect, including self-isolation when necessary.
- Ongoing need for outbreak management capability, including active surveillance.
- Continue to encourage a greater degree of working from home than pre-COVID-19. Where this is possible and appropriate, it will not only assist with controlling transmission of the virus, but also promote wellbeing more generally.

Participant and Spectator Numbers

Participant and Spectator numbers remain restricted beyond level 0, but now with up to **5000** allowed at outdoor events and **2000** at indoor events. (seeking clarification on this point) Any event organiser wishing to increase spectator numbers must seek an exemption from the relevant Local Authority and obtain permission from other relevant bodies from which the organiser would normally require agreement to run the competition/event.

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1. Competition Timelines – Summer 2021 and Winter 2021 22

July to September 2021

- July - Level 0 across Scotland
- August - Scotland to move beyond level 0 with all legislative restrictions removed.
- Return to National Championships (Track and Field and Hill)
- Events continue to grow in size as restrictions are lifted further, including number of athletes and spectators.

October 2021 onwards

- Anticipated full return to competition structures and events

2. Pre-Competition Planning

Event organisers planning to host an athletics event will need to consider several 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 to ensure it is open and all COVID-19 requirements are in place, or the landowner of the space you intend to use for an off-track event to ensure it is still available.
- Consider the maximum number of attendees at the event and how this can be controlled. This will include athletes, coaches, officials, contractors, venue staff and first aid personnel, as well as any parents/guardians supervising children or vulnerable adults.
- Plan how the event will be conducted. This should include the flow of athletes, officials and other attendees from arrival through competition and departure. Create a map or other visual representation to share with attendees, if possible. This should also involve consultation with venue staff for stadium events.
- 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.
- Be aware of where your attendees may be travelling from and consider whether any will be affected by national or international restrictions.
- Determine the format of your competition. Be aware that some events may not be possible due to restrictions, and others may need to be adapted. Considerations might include the staging of time trial or smaller wave starts in 'bubbles'; 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 2021 and Winter 2021-22, 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.
- Event organisers should discuss with the **scottishathletics** Covid Coordinator and/or Events Team any concerns they may have regarding holding an event prior to submitting their licence application.

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 event licence 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 UKA Level 2 official should a sufficient number of graded officials not be available.

Considerations when appointing your officials include:

- It is the event organiser's responsibility to co-ordinate officials and volunteers for their event.
- A Meeting Manager must be appointed for all track and field events. They must be qualified to at least UKA Level 2 and are to be responsible for the safe running of the whole event.
- Additional helpers and officials must be recruited to ensure that any track and field event complies with the [Safe Athletics: Track & Field Safety Guide for Competition](#)
- A Race Referee should be appointed for all off-track events. They must be suitably qualified and are to be responsible for ensuring that the event conforms to UKA rules.
- Where possible, officials should be selected from those living within close proximity to the venue. Only once all avenues for suitably qualified officials locally have been explored should the event organiser expand the search further.
- Evidence of officials' attendance will be required post event. Event organisers must keep a register of all officials, volunteers and helpers and inform **scottishathletics** of the number of officials involved, as well as the names of those in Chief/Referee roles, through the event returns process.

4. Event Licensing

Event organisers are now welcome to apply for **scottishathletics** event licences for competitions of all disciplines of athletics scheduled to take place up to 31st March 2022.

- 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 and a 'standard' licence in off-track disciplines.
- For any competition results to appear on ranking websites like Power of 10 or Run Britain, a licence must be granted by the governing body and sufficient officials be on duty throughout the event. This also includes any competition held in a virtual format. Some events may be licensed but still ineligible to be used for ranking purposes if sufficient qualified officials are not in place.
- All track and field facilities used for competition must have, or be working towards, TrackMark status <https://www.uka.org.uk/governance/facilities/> in line with UKA licensing standards.
- UKA public liability cover will apply to competitions that are licensed and promoted by an affiliated event organiser. 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.
- Full and detailed risk assessments, event management plans and attendee information documentation must be prepared, and submitted to **scottishathletics** upon requested.
- More information about the licensing process can be found here: <https://www.scottishathletics.org.uk/events/organising-an-event/>

5. Competition Preparation

Once an event licence is in place, the event organiser should begin finalising their plans for how the event will be delivered. This includes regular liaison with the venue/landowner and local authority, 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.
- Organisers should contact the Scottish Athletics Covid Officer or Events team to discuss their event plan prior to licenses being approved.
- **scottishathletics** will consider the proposed plans for each venue/course on a case by case basis.
- Venues must have adequate space for parking/warm up/cool down etc to maintain a free flow of people.

Venue Liaison

The event organiser should work with their venue to ensure that their event site will adhere to all government guidance. They must name a **COVID-19 Officer** for the competition, such as a club volunteer or responsible colleague. They will complete, often 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 venue staff, contractors, officials, athletes, coaches, parents, first aid, catering, etc.
- Arrangements for any build and de-rig of event infrastructure
- Ingress and egress, including routes from parking to the event area, for all competitors, parents/guardians and officials/volunteers whilst maintaining sufficient space for individuals. This could include one-way systems and/or restricted access to specific areas.
- Oversight of young athletes by parents – where can parents wait for athletes and how many can be accommodated within the venue?
- Hygiene/cleaning requirements for equipment and facilities to meet COVID 19 guidance.
- Catering arrangements (if any) for public and event staff/officials.
- 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 and changing facilities (if available), meeting all guidance on hygiene/cleaning requirements. This includes accessible toilets, which must be available.

Event organisers must refer to the latest Government and **scottishathletics** guidelines for up to date information on number of attendees and any other requirements.

Event Programming

Event organisers must consider the format of their event in advance and ensure that it complies with any restrictions in place on the day.

Programming considerations may include but are not limited to:

- Entries should be taken online or prior to the event to ensure numbers of attendees and scheduling of events can be planned in advance.
- 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 by an official using appropriate PPE, and any registration/declarations areas must be of a suitable size.
- Events must be timetabled and planned according to pre-entries. Enough time must be planned between heats/groups/events to ensure maximum numbers are not exceeded, including during any warm up periods.

Promotion of Events

Once your licence has been approved, you will be able to advertise your competition 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 (for parents/guardians), 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 to them prior to the event about how the event will run. This includes information on access, egress, event provisions, competitor and spectator management, competition management and timetables. All health and 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 you with the communication of information.

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, 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.

Event Staff/Volunteers, Suppliers and Contractors

- All event staff, suppliers and contractors involved in the delivery of an event 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.

- Event 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 organiser's named COVID-19 Officer 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.
 - The maximum capacity and layout for each area.
 - Information on the management, movement and scheduling of contractors, volunteers and staff and their vehicles to allow sufficient space 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 signage plan to support the implementation of the guidelines.

Attendees, Residents and Businesses

- Event organisers should clearly communicate any arrangements for spectators, such as total expected numbers and any pre-registration requirements. Some viewing provision should be made available for parents/guardians (if an event is open to under 18s).
- If appropriate, organisers should update existing plans for attendees and crowd flows to help to ensure numbers in attendance can be managed safely and in line with COVID-19 protocols.
- Event organisers should also take pre-emptive action to combat known points of 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 an off-track course/route.
- Organisers may need to inform local residents and businesses that the event is taking place, explaining how the event is being held safely.

6. Health, Safety and Hygiene

Please reinforce good hygiene practices prior to, during, and after your event, as participants may be asymptomatic. You must stay at home if you:

- Have tested positive for Covid-19.
- Have Covid-19 symptoms.
- Have been asked to self-isolate at home by [Scottish Government Test and Protect system](#).
- If you are returning from a country outside the UK you must follow the Scottish Government guidance on quarantine.

Event Organisers should link with venue staff to ensure that usual access to first aid and emergency equipment is maintained. 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.

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.

Additional safety information can be found through the following links:

[Health & Safety Executive – COVID-19 First Aid Advice](#)

[Resuscitation Council UK – COVID-19](#)

[UK Government – guidance for first responders](#) (Section 7)

Cleaning Advice

- Hand sanitiser should be at least 60% alcohol based and detergent wipes appropriate for the surface they are being used on.
- Cleaning protocols may differ between venues, individual venue guidance for 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 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.
- High Jump and Pole Vault beds should be cleaned / sprayed with a suitable disinfectant solution before and after each session (in competition, this may mean a morning and afternoon session, rather than after each individual athlete). A high mist spray PFC1 grade cleaner should be used on the landing beds.
- Sand Pits should be cleaned with sterilising fluid spray of a suitable concentration to neutralise the virus and raked before and after each session. Pits should be raked as normal between athletes' trials.
- Venue guidance on required cleaning of equipment must be sought and followed at all times, as this may differ from the above suggestions.

7. Event-Specific Guidance

In all cases, normal risk assessment procedures and high-quality practice should be adhered to, as well as the implementation of any additional requirements to promote physical distancing and hygiene. Anyone involved in the competition should ensure that they have followed government hygiene rules including washing hands and cleaning any equipment prior to use, as well as any additional hygiene guidance put in place by the event venue.

Although physical distancing is no longer required within the covid secure environment, scottishathletics understands that not everyone will be comfortable with this and so recommends that athletes and spectators respect the space of others.

Travel to and from the Event

- Organisers should advise attendees to follow Transport Scotland guidance when travelling to and from the event.
- Organisers should adapt their plans to ensure that 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.

Warm Up and Assembly

- If you cannot distribute runner numbers in advance, ensure that your registration/declarations area has sufficient space for those who need to report there.
- Organisers should consider whether some facilities (e.g. bag drop, information desk) 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) where possible.
- It is recommended that event organisers advise athletes to report for their event 'ready to compete' with as little additional baggage as possible.

Off-Track Events

Event organisers must ensure that their start area allows plenty of space for athletes to gather and for officials to carry out their duties. 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 a minimum, ensuring that runners are not congregating in the start area for too long.
- Clear messaging to participants to follow start line protocols (e.g. seeding by predicted time).

Whilst the finish of any event is a positive environment, 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.

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.

8. Post competition

Post competition, the venue must be returned to its original state, ensuring all venue equipment is thoroughly cleaned in line with the venue and government guidelines. Each competitor, official, and volunteer who was in the competition area during the event must be briefed to ensure that they are aware that if they show signs of COVID-19 within one week of the competition, you, the event organiser, must be informed so all other attendees can be contacted. This is in line with the Government Test and Protect system. You should also collect details of coaches and spectators in attendance on the day in case you need to contact them. **scottishathletics** must also be notified if there is a positive COVID-19 case following a licensed competition through the event returns process.

9. **scottishathletics** Staff Contacts

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

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