

Return to Sport Expert Group

17 September 2020

On 15 September 2020, the Government published a framework for restrictive measures to guide Ireland over the short to medium-term in managing Covid-19.

The framework consists of 5 Levels. The lower Levels of the framework will be activated when there is low incidence of the disease, with isolated outbreaks, low community transmission. The higher Levels will be used to deal with higher incidences of the disease. It will be possible for different regions and counties to be at a different Level to the National Level, depending on the incidence of the virus in that particular region or county.

Sporting Organisations protocols and restrictions should reflect each of the relevant levels. There should be clear differences in sporting activity between the higher and lower levels of the plan.

Since its publication, Sporting Bodies are seeking clarity on some aspects of the framework, in particular measures set out in Level 2, Level 3 and the additional advice around Dublin.

The below guidance has been prepared by the Return to Sport Expert Group in addressing the queries arising and providing some practical interpretation of the Framework for the sector. Please refer to Appendix 1 for the extracted elements of Framework, which relate to sport.

Professional & Elite Sport

High Performance is defined by Sport Ireland as covering those who are:

- Professional Sports People or Sports people who participate within professional competition.
- A Member of a high performance team funded by Sport Ireland.
- Those who compete at major international events including European and World Champions, Olympic and Paralympic Games. Specifically, the athletes and players associated with the below list:
 - *Athletes on the 2020 International Carding Scheme*
 - *Players on the 2020 Team Ireland Golf Scheme*
 - *Senior riders in Show-Jumping, Eventing & Dressage*
 - *Senior team players in Hockey, Cricket, and Rugby Sevens.*

Return to Sport Expert Group

17 September 2020

Inter-county Sport

Refers to members of an inter-county team, in a competition organised by the organisations commonly known and referred to as the Gaelic Athletic Association, the Ladies Gaelic Football Association or the Camogie Association.

Senior Club Championship

Refers to a Sports ongoing Senior National Competition or equivalent.

Support Personnel

Coaches, Trainers or essential support personnel are also included in respect to the activity referred above.

Patrons / Spectators:

The limits on patrons/spectators refer to those individuals who attend an event purely to spectate. These individuals do not have a specific or active role/function in the delivery of the Event. Players, Officials, Support Personnel, Media etc. are not included in Spectator Figures.

Domestic travel

In certain Levels of the Plan, people will be advised to stay in their county or other defined geographical area apart from work, education and other essential purposes, if appropriate. Where Sporting Activity is allowed i.e. for professional, elite, inter-county sports, senior club championship etc. travel will be permissible by participants and support personnel to fulfil these pre-existing fixtures. Travel for sports training or competition outside of these purposes should not take place. In addition, travel should not take place to spectate sport when there is a 'no travel' notice.

Indoor / Outdoor Limits for Sporting Activity

Outdoor: Further clarification on the previous figures of 200 is currently being sought and will be circulated in due course. Until then the previous maximum number of 200 should not be exceeded.

Indoor: Additional work will need to be conducted with the sector on determining indoor figures which take into account the size of the venue and the nature of activities. At present the previous maximum number of 50 should not be exceeded.

Training Levels 2 & 3

Level 2 Training

Outdoors: training can take place in pods of up to 15 (exemption for professional/elite/inter-county sports/senior club championship).

Indoors: training, exercise and dance classes can take place in pods of up to 6 inside (exemption for professional/elite/inter-county sports/senior club championship).

Level 3 Training

Outdoors: Non-contact training only in pods of up to 15 (exemption for professional/elite/inter-county sports/senior club championship).

Indoors: Individual training only. No exercise or dance classes.

While not explicitly noted in the Framework an exemption extends for professional/elite/inter-county sports/senior club championship with regards to indoor training)

'Pod' System

- Organised Sports training / activity / exercise can do so in multiple pods once sufficient space is available and strict public health protocols are in place.
- The use of multiple pod's is to assist with minimising the number of people in a group while acknowledging that some outdoor and indoor facilities have the capacity to cater for larger numbers of people in a safe manner and within public health guidelines. People participating in pod training can be from different households.
- The number of pods in a given facility or area will depend on the overall size of space available. At present, the overall numbers within an Indoor facility should not exceed 50.
- The space between pods will depend on the nature, duration and intensity of the session but it should be clearly evident that the pods are independent groups not interacting with one another. At a very minimum Social Distancing of 2m between pods should be implemented.
- Depending on the frequency of activity (i.e. multiple times in a week) it may be helpful for participants to stay within the same pod.
- A coach or instructor may oversee more than one pod and should be counted in the overall numbers.
- The coach should not move freely between pods but rather oversee the activity of the pods.

Gyms, leisure centres and swimming pools

Return to Sport Expert Group

17 September 2020

Level 2 Gyms & Exercise: These can open with protective measures, taking account of public health advice, including social distancing. Pod systems can be used to facilitate Group Activity where space is available. Maximum limits for indoor venues will remain at 50 at present.

Level 2 Swimming Pools: These can open with protective measures, taking account of public health advice, including social distancing. Pod systems can be used to facilitate Group Activity and lessons where space is available. Maximum limits for indoor venues will remain at 50 at present.

Level 3: Level 3 allows for individual training only, no organised Group Activity including Exercise classes should take place.

Swimming Lessons: Additional Clarification on whether Swimming Lessons can take place in Level 3 has been sought. In the meantime they should be treated as Group Activity and not take place during Level 3.

Appendix 1.

Level 1

Training

- Normal training sessions and games can take place indoors and outdoors with protective measures.

Matches and events

- A maximum of 100 spectators can attend indoor matches or games.
- A maximum of 200 spectators can attend outdoor matches or games.
- Up to 500 spectators can attend outdoor stadia or other fixed outdoor venues with a minimum accredited capacity of 5,000.
- For very large purpose built event facilities (for example: stadia, auditoriums, conference or event centres) specific guidance will be developed with the relevant sectors to take account of size and different conditions for events such as large national and international sporting events.

Gyms, leisure centres and swimming pools

- These can open with protective measures, taking account of public health advice, including social distancing.

Level 2

Training

- Outdoors: training can take place in pods of up to 15 (exemption for professional/elite/inter-county sports/senior club championship).
- Indoors: training, exercise and dance classes can take place in pods of up to 6 inside (exemption for professional/elite/inter-county sports/senior club championship).

Return to Sport Expert Group

17 September 2020

Matches and events

- up to 100 patrons/spectators outdoors and 50 patrons/spectators indoors
- up to 200 for outdoor stadia or other fixed outdoor venues with a minimum accredited capacity of 5,000
- For large purpose built event facilities (such as stadia, auditoriums, conferencing/event centres), specific guidance will be developed with the relevant sectors to take account of size and different conditions for events such as large national and international sporting events.

Gyms, leisure centres and swimming pools

- These can open with protective measures, taking account of public health advice, including social distancing.

Level 3

Training

- Outdoors: Non contact training only in pods of up to 15 (exemption for professional/elite/inter-county sports/senior club championship).
- Indoors: Individual training only. No exercise or dance classes.

Matches and events

- No matches or events to take place.
Exemption: professional/elite/inter-county/club championship/horse-racing can take place behind closed doors.

Gyms, leisure centres and swimming pools

- Gyms/leisure centres/swimming pools open with protective measures, for individual training only. These can open with protective measures, for individual training only.

Level 4

Training

- Outdoors: Non contact training can take place but only in pods of up to 15.
- Indoors: Individual training only. No exercise or dance classes can take place.

Matches and events

- No matches or events to take place.

Return to Sport Expert Group

17 September 2020

Exemption: Professional and elite sport/inter-county/horse-racing can take place behind closed doors.

Gyms, leisure centres and swimming pools

- Gyms/leisure centres/swimming pools closed.

Level 5

Training

- Individual training only. No exercise or dance classes.

Matches and events

- No matches or events to take place.

Gyms, leisure centres and swimming pools

- Gyms/leisure centres/swimming pools closed.