



Lord Dafydd Elis-Thomas MS
Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism
Welsh Government
5th Floor, Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

12 February 2021

Dear Deputy Minister

Welsh Sports Association continues to support the efforts being undertaken across Wales to tackle the ongoing Coronavirus crisis. We are extremely sensitive to the need to control the virus. Alongside our partners in the Welsh Government and Sport Wales we continue to support our members during this necessary pause in sporting activity. We are looking to the future, to reimagine how we may be able to return sport safely and within the regulations later this year.

We are extremely grateful that the Welsh Government felt able to take steps to enable people to meet outdoors to undertake exercise at the last 21 day review, reflecting the messages we had heard from our members and increasing the safety and wellbeing of individuals through this difficult time.

This week as you review the Coronavirus Regulations, we would urge the Welsh Government to consider whether it is able to allow:

1. people to travel locally to undertake exercise and;
2. whether it would be possible to allow limited numbers of under 18s to gather, under the supervision of a maximum of two adults for the purposes of organised sporting activity.

We have heard from our colleagues in Disability Sport Wales that the inability of people who are not formal carers but are friends or training partners of those with impairment to drive to join them exercising has had a detrimental impact on participation. A small tweak to allow individuals to travel locally for exercise would ease this pressure and have significant benefits for a part of the population whose participation has been significantly impacted by the Covid regulations. It would also have secondary benefits in allowing limited activities in angling, horse riding and other outdoor pursuits to begin. With the Police and Local Authorities retaining powers to disperse groups and keep some so called "honeypot" sites closed we don't feel this would have detrimental impact on the situation as it stands.

As schools begin to return, we also think it is the right time to consider other activities we can provide for under 18s. In this light we would urge you to consider easing the regulations to allow small groups of under 18s, under the supervision of no more than two adults, to meet for organised sporting activity. This would be a huge step forward and allow us to restart engagement in this crucial age group leading into the spring and would not step much beyond the current picture which allows two adults to meet outdoors for exercise.



To facilitate this, the Welsh Government may also wish to consider allowing public spaces used for sport and physical activity to reopen.

The situation in Wales remains difficult and we know there continues to be significant pressure on hospitals across the country, and we continue to support the Welsh Government in their actions to control the pandemic. However, we must also acknowledge the significant wellbeing benefits of outdoor exercise and wish to see this encouraged and enabled where possible, we are grateful that the Welsh Government has also publicly acknowledged this in recent weeks. We believe our requests are proportionate to the current situation in Wales.

As the picture in Wales continues to show signs of improving, please consider this request as part of your deliberations on the lockdown regulations over the coming week.

Your sincerely,

Victoria Ward, CEO Wales Sports Association.