

Supporting disabled people during COVID-19

Individuals are now permitted to come into closer proximity than social distancing would normally allow with a disabled person from outside their household to support them to access sport and physical activity in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. In England the requirements for social distancing have been removed from 19th July 2021.

This should be subject to a risk assessment and therefore should be included on your group's risk assessment.

In Wales a robust risk assessment process must be in place which includes:

- Opt-in/out for the athlete/participant
- Opt-in/out for the coach/instructors/support provider in the sport context
- Individual risk assessment (which includes functional ability consideration and mitigation) for the athlete/participant
- Individual risk assessment (which includes functional ability consideration and mitigation) for the coach/instructors/support provider in the sport context

This risk assessment should be documented.

In Scotland there is a specific requirement to have a COVID-19 Officer where this will happen.

From 19th July, social distancing is no longer required in England, 1 m in Scotland and 2 m in Wales and Northern Ireland.

Where individuals come into closer proximity than social distancing would normally allow will likely be considered a close contact under track and trace (or equivalent). This means that you may be required to self-isolate if a rider you are supporting displays symptoms or tests positive to COVID-19. You should therefore think carefully about whether this is something you may be prepared to do.

These individuals coming into closer proximity **MUST** wear a mask or face covering that covers both the nose and mouth for the duration of the activity where this close activity takes place in Scotland and Wales and Northern Ireland. It is strongly recommended in all other places where there are no legal requirements on use of face coverings.

Coming into close proximity (<1m in Scotland and <2m in Wales and Northern Ireland) should only be done:

- for specific reasons. The specific reasons include supporting someone to mount/dismount, checking girth, stirrups, fitting a hat or needing to come closer during the assessment of the new rider or for specific activities such as carriage driving or vaulting.
- only for the length of time that is necessary and
- should only be those individuals who are specifically needed to come into closer proximity

Individuals should consider wearing a face shield/visor or goggles to offer eye protection in addition to a mask with riders who are known to habitually cough or spit when in these closer proximity situations. Horses will need to be trained carefully for this as there have been issues with shields reflecting the light. Face shields/visors should not be worn on their own, they should always be worn with a face covering that covers both the nose and mouth in close proximity situations.

When in these closer proximity situations, we recommend the simplest approach is those supporting individuals should sanitise their hands immediately before and after they have come into contact with the individual. Disposable gloves may be worn instead but these should be disposed of, and double bagged, after supporting each client. Riding gloves should not be worn for this specific activity unless they are stored and washed between clients.

Please refer to our face covering guidance in relation to wearing a [face covering](#).