



Coronavirus statement 2



An update on the coronavirus (COVID-19) situation and what our key priorities for sport and physical recreation are at this time.

27 March 2020

We know this is an incredibly difficult time and the impact on our sporting partners has been immeasurable, however we must firstly thank you for your leadership, decisions, actions and messaging to our sporting sector and the wider community.

Sport NI continues to work with the Department for Communities and with you, our partners, to get a fuller picture about the impact coronavirus (COVID-19) is having on sport.

We want to understand the ongoing and future impact of coronavirus on you, your clubs and members and the sector workforce, and we want to make sure that whatever action we take has the greatest positive impact. So, we want to hear from you now about the issues you are facing and to take on board your ideas and concerns to feed into our plans and inform those of our own Department. Please contact us via coronavirus@sportni.net and let us know:

- How coronavirus is impacting you or your organisation and
- The type of help you think would be most beneficial now and in the future.

Please keep in touch with us via the above email address as you or your organisation's situation changes.

We have two immediate priorities over this period:

- Support our sector to ensure it comes through this period in as strong a position as possible so that we can continue to connect, and transform our communities through sport;
- To encourage people to look after their emotional, mental and physical wellbeing. We will encourage people to stay active, wherever possible in line with Government advice, which we think is now more important than ever. We will also provide wellbeing resources at this difficult time.

Everything we do will be aligned to, and reinforce the HSCNI and PHA messaging at this time:

<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/news/covid-19-coronavirus>

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/coronavirus>

Supporting the sector – flexibilities

As part of delivering on these priorities, we want to offer some specific reassurances to any individual or organisation who receives funding, or any other type of support from us, for their work. We are introducing significant flexibility to reflect our current circumstances in how we manage that support.

We know that:

- We have committed to getting money to sports quickly, both for the current year and the next year (starting on 1st April). This is to ensure that sports will have money to pay staff, alleviate cash-flow concerns, provide assurance to staff, keep the organisations afloat.
- It is highly unlikely targets set for this year will be able to be achieved under the current circumstances. Sport NI recognises this and will not have unreasonable expectations considering what sports can achieve this year.
- At this stage it is unlikely that sports will have a clear picture of what their landscape and context will look like when more activity becomes possible. As these things do become clear, we will make working with sports to understand this a priority, so that the resource that is available can be targeted appropriately.
- The current uncertainty also means that many activities that were anticipated can no longer be delivered or achieved. In many cases this will lead to expenditure not happening. We would encourage sports to think carefully about incurring expenditure in the current environment, so that when we begin to emerge from this current crisis you and we are collectively better positioned to respond to the aftermath of this situation.
- There will be situations that sports find themselves in, dealing with challenges that are unexpected and unprecedented. Sport NI may or may not be able to resolve the situation, but we would be keen to work with sports to positively impact in any way that we can. Such situations are necessarily addressed on a case-by-case basis and moving forward Sport NI commits to having a single point of contact within the organisation for such situations.
- Finally there will be opportunities that arise during this crisis, opportunities for you as a sport, or for your members, staff or

supporters to make a difference. These new opportunities may not align to current investment streams that you are supported through, but where you tell us that additional resource could improve these opportunities, we will look to do that where possible. This however means that expenditure that is no longer happening in other areas may have to be relinquished. This will enable these type of new opportunities to be realised.

Please discuss this with your point of contact within Sport Northern Ireland or contact us through the following ways:

Participation: Angharad Bunt
07810183023 angharadbunt@sportni.net

Infrastructure: Willie Devlin
07891925820 williamdevlin@sportni.net

Sports Development: Simon Toole:
07870493613 simontoole@sportni.net

Performance: Richard Archibald
07816322256 richardarchibald@sportni.net

Sports Institute: Des Jennings
07903710489 desjennings@sportni.net

Performance Systems: Alan Curran:
07583428424 alancurran@sportni.net

Finance: Kirsty McCool:
02890383895 kirstymccool@sportni.net

Tollymore National Outdoor Centre: Trevor Fisher
07788146517 trevorfisher@sportni.net

Communications, Board Secretariat, Data and Information
Requests: Ali Campbell
07703328346 alicampbell@sportni.net

Other funding support

We are also concerned about the impact coronavirus will have on the wider sporting sector, and we are looking at options that will help to mitigate this, including additional emergency small grants funds to help sports clubs and activity providers to help them navigate the Covid-19 crisis.

We're exploring a number of ideas, and we would invite you to send your ideas and issues to coronavirus@sportni.net to inform how we shape our responses and any available funding.

We will update you directly and via our web site and social media platforms, over the coming weeks, of any sources of advice and assistance that become available. Our intention is to keep you fully informed and update you as soon as we can as to how your organisation will be able to access our help.

Organisational health, whether for a governing body or club, remains crucial at this time. Please find below some sources of guidance, information and signposting for your organisation:

HR, Funding, Protecting Staff and Volunteers, Remote Working
<https://www.nicva.org/article/nicvas-advice-on-managing-the-impact-of-coronavirus> (open in Chrome)

Small Business Rate Relief Scheme if applicable

<https://www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/content/coronavirus-business-support-grant-schemes>

Business Interruption Loan Scheme, Job Retention Scheme, Statutory Sick Pay Rebate, Time To Pay, Financing Facility, VAT Deferral

<https://www.businesssupport.gov.uk/coronavirus-business-support/>

Staff employees - JSA, Universal Credit and Employment & Support Allowance

<https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/landing-pages/covid-19-service-updates>

Volunteer Management

<https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/6dd895-covid-19-communication-pack-for-communities/>

Example of a Governing Body providing good practice club guidance

<https://www.ulsterrugby.com/rugby-in-ulster/rugby-development/clubs/covid-19-guidance-for-clubs/>



Looking after our mental, emotional and physical wellbeing

The coronavirus crisis is unprecedented in modern times and it will have a significantly negative impact on people's level of physical activity and mental and emotional wellbeing.

We will do everything we can to support people to get and stay physically active, only to the basis that they are well enough to do so and that they follow the latest Government guidelines.

Physical activity and our emotional and mental wellbeing matters during this period and, actually, we think it's more important than ever right now. Being active in a way that is right for you can boost your immune system, improve your physical health, help manage stress and anxiety and just generally make you feel better.

In any given day, you can still go outside for one form of exercise, such as a walk, a run or a cycle, if you're well enough and as long as you're on your own, or with members of your household. Please always follow the latest official advice on social distancing, regarding staying more than two metres from others and follow the advice on general hygiene. It's important that you stick stringently to the guidance.

If you're going outside to get active in line with the guidance, you should do this locally, staying close to your home and avoiding places where it may be hard to follow the guidelines or where you may require assistance from the emergency services (e.g. mountain rescue teams).

If going outside is not possible, and with us all now spending more time at home, there's a wealth of free online content to help you get active. If you feel well, we are collating some of this and are encouraging people to share some of the best ideas they find online using the hashtag #SportSafeStrong



In addition to this, we are launching a new wellbeing campaign, using the same hashtag, to highlight how people can continue to get active, even if they're working from home or self-isolating. Wellbeing and physical activity resources will include the following:

- **SportNI Inspire Wellbeing Hub;**
- **Wellbeing App'**
- **Wellbeing online workshops;**
- **Wellbeing resources;**
- **Physical Activity and Skills Based Coaching Sessions;**
- **An Older Peoples Physical Activity Series;**
- **Inclusive and accessible activities for people with disabilities;**
- **Activity sessions led by Every Body Active coaches'**
- **Mindfulness and Yoga; and**
- **On line physical activity resources.**

This will really ramp up in the week commencing 30 March, so more information will be posted on this page then about how you can amplify our message.

Keep connected, keep supporting our community, keep strong.

#sportsafestong

#jointhefightback

#stayathomeni