

Introduction

Following the publication of the Government's [Roadmap for Reopening Business and Society](#), Ministers Ross & Griffin announced the establishment of an [Expert Group](#) to provide guidance to Ireland's sporting bodies to prepare for the phased return to sporting activity.

The Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport will chair the Expert Group, which includes medical experts from the Sport Ireland Institute and the sports sector, as well as officials from both the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport and Sport Ireland. The Group also contains a specific representation for disability sport. The Group will also seek external advice and additional expertise as required.

As per the Terms of Reference of establishment, a key function of the Expert Group will be to assess the consistency of sporting organisations 'Return to Sport' protocols with the Roadmap, the [Return to Work Safely Protocol](#) and current public health advice.

In addition the Expert Group will publish a set of guidance notes to answer many of the frequently asked questions submitted by Governing Bodies.

Such guidance will be published on a Phase by Phase basis as the public health situation and advice evolves over time.

Frequently Asked Questions – Phase One

Q: What sporting activity is covered in Phase One?

Following the announcement of the May 1st Roadmap Sport Ireland reviewed its list of recognised National Governing Bodies of sport. The following sports are initially identified for the resumption of activity from May 18th 2020.

- Golf
- Pitch & Putt
- Tennis
- Bowls
- Equestrian
- Athletics
- Cycling
- Triathlon
- Recreational Walking / Hillwalking
- Orienteering
- Angling
- Open water Swimming

- Sailing
- Rowing
- Canoeing
- Surfing

Q: Can additional sports be covered in Phase One?

- Sport Ireland recognised NGBs can submit a request to be included in phase one. Such requests and protocols should be submitted to the Sport Ireland NGB Unit.

Q: What is the 'Chain of Approval' for NGB Protocols?

- NGBs should prepare draft protocols for their individual sports in line with the Government Roadmap, the Return to Work Safely Protocol and current public health advice.
- The Expert Group will assess the consistency of the protocols prepared by the NGBs in line with the above National Guidance and current public health advice.
- The Expert Group may provide recommendations for enhancements to NGB protocols where required.
- D.T.T.A.S will formally communicate to NGBs that protocols are consistent with public health advice once the Expert Group have assessed them.
- Assessed Protocols will be published on D.T.T.A.S website.

Q: Who is responsible for assuming the risk of returning to sport?

- While personal responsibility will be central to adherence of protocols, it remains the responsibility of each sporting body to make their own risk assessment on when to return to sport.

Q: Can people travel more than 5k under Phase One in relation to sport & physical activity?

- It is acknowledged that some travel over the 5km limit may be required for personnel opening & maintaining facilities for the sports included in phases one – e.g. golf courses, tennis courts etc.
- However travel over the 5km radius to participate in sport or physical activity is not currently permitted in phase one. This restriction applies to both the general public and high performance/professional athletes.

Q: Can team sport meet in groups of 4 and train?

- It is not intended that team sports would return during phase one.

Q: Can multiple groups of 4 meet and train under Phase One?

- While a group of 4 people are permitted to exercise in an outdoor setting, multiple groups of 4 which seek to replicate team or group environments would be contrary to the general advice.

Q: Will the Expert Group provide guidance on areas such as hygiene, deep cleaning for facilities etc.?

- In addition to the Governments May 1 Roadmap, Sporting Organisations should also review The Return to Work Safely Protocol as part of their preparations for a return to sport.
- The Expert Group will also provide sample templates and checklists for sports as we progress through the Roadmap.

Q: When will information be provided in relation to Phases 2 to 5?

- Information and guidance will be published on a Phase by Phase basis as the public health situation evolves over time. Sports should continue to engage with the Sport Ireland NGB Unit throughout the 5 phases on their specific issues.