Northampton Leisure Trust

Swimming Pools
Safe Environment Plan

October 2020

Contents

Covid-19: Swimming Pools

Introduction

This Plan sits within and must be read in conjunction with NLT's 'Safe Environment Plan'

Our first priority remains the safety of everyone, participants and staff. We will at all times be led by the latest government guidance and regulations. This guidance is based on Swim England's 'Returning to the Pool' guidance document, V7 published 1st September 2020 https://swimming.app.box.com/s/aydu72bn10zwui6mgv34pmi8od8e9ko7/file/722440253255

The guidance covers;

- Operators
- Users
- Community Swimming

Pool operations will have to be different in order to meet Social Distancing (SD) requirements and protect staff and swimmers from CV19 transmission / spread.

This highlights the continued requirements for SD and enhanced hygiene regimes. The document includes details on getting pools back to operational requirements, programming, understanding the new needs of users coming out of isolation and protecting and training the workforce.

Other sections will provide guidance for pool users and practical advice relating to the control of CV19.

Covid-19 Officer

We have a dedicated officers responsible for CV19 considerations (Area Business Managers), making sure that they are up to date with central or local government recommendations. They are aware of the rules and guidance set out by the facility.

Pool water and pool hall management

Pool water

The Pool Water Treatment Advisory Group (PWTAG) is the recognised body for swimming water quality standards in the UK, NLT ensure their pools operate within the guidance detailed in PWTAG technical notes which can be found at **pwtag.org**.

All NLT swimming pools are disinfected with chlorine (as a primary disinfectant) with a secondary disinfection method in the form of UV light at Danes Camp and Mounts Bath. SARS-CoV-2 is an enveloped virus that is sensitive to chlorination.

This enables the NLT to state with confidence that CV19 should not be transmissible through the swimming pool water if the pools are operated in line with this guidance and that of PWTAG.
Covid-19 Recommended Pool Chemical levels
Free Chlorine – min 1.5mg/l
pH – 7.0

All pools will have microbiological bacterial water tests completed monthly

Lifeguards

Lifeguard stations will have disinfectant spray and blue roll at each, to enable wipe-downs prior to use.

Lifeguards are made aware of the importance of proactive and preventative supervision, this will minimise the necessity for [pool] interventions

All lifeguards will attend Team Training session and take a competency test prior to resuming lifeguarding

Air handling/circulation in pool halls

Generally our pools air conditioning systems do not need adjustment, however where required advice has been sought from a heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) adviser.

All heating/cooling, ventilation systems have been checked by a suitably competent person prior to opening. A separate risk assessment has been carried out to consider points including increasing natural and mechanical ventilation whilst maintaining acceptable internal environment conditions (air velocity, temperature, humidity, Ventilation/ACH) and the short or long term solutions considered and applied.

Until the understanding of the significance of the various transmission routes of SARS-CoV2 develops, NLT aim to supply outside air to occupants at a minimum of 20L per person per second.

Anecdotal evidence shows that warmer temperatures and high humidity all play a part in mitigating the risk of airborne transmission. Additionally the increased ratio of air to participants in a swimming pool hall lowers the risk further. This takes a risk averse approach to reduce indoor pollution without significant capital expenditure.

Risk assessment

As NLT pools are operated within recommended disinfection levels and pH values as set out by **pwtag.org** it greatly reduces the potential for transmission of CV19 in the swimming pool

water. This allows us to focus on reducing the potential transmission via inhalation of air droplets within the atmosphere and touch points around the building.

Entry and egress from pools are pinch points where users may congregate and should be considered. Implementing a one-way system of entry and exit is a possible solution to reducing this risk.

Risk assessing social distancing in the water

Maintaining SD is essential in order to reduce the risk of transmission of CV 19 between participants, this is important both whilst in and out of the water.

Government Guidance outline is: Staying alert and safe (SD) first published 11 May 2020 (updated 22 September 2020). The principle that individuals should keep their distance from people outside their household wherever possible, remains the correct approach. "Transmission is affected by both **duration** and **proximity** of contact" Therefore in the process of assessing risk, and determining maximum occupancies for swimming activities, NLT consider methods to adjust the following variables:

Distance: The greater the distance between participants the lower the level of risk of transmission via air droplets.

Duration: The shorter the duration (time) at which participants are within close proximity, the lower the level of risk of transmission via air droplets.

Activity: The way in which participants move during their activity will determine how you can control the above two parameters, for example lane swimming is a controlled setting where participants are guided to swim in a set direction.

Consequently, the further the distance away from other participants the lower the risk level of transmission and the less time they are within close proximity of another person, this lowers again the risk of transmission. The combination of both, along with the type of activity, provides a risk factor profile that operators can use to determine what and how specific activities within the pool can be programmed. Therefore whilst static in the water, participants should always follow current government guidance on social distancing, however whilst travelling, duration can be considered as a mitigating factor to risk. For example, during a swimming lesson where the activity is controlled, it will be unavoidable that whilst passing participants will come in to close proximity of each other, however the duration of time would be significantly low, providing reassurance that the risk of transmission of infection would be low enough to be deemed as acceptable.

Maximum pool capacities

Government guidance, as outlined in 'Providers of grassroots sport and gym/leisure facilities' document, suggests a minimum of $3m^2$ of water space per bather (under normal conditions). This however must be taken as a starting point to risk assess the specific activity and the space required to safely maintain SD for each participant in order to mitigate risk. Taking the above parameters into account; distance, time and activity, each activity is assessed individually to ascertain the specific bather loading, considering the activity's effect on the distance and time at which swimmers can maintain safe social distancing. For example, an activity such as public swimming, where participants are moving freely and more randomly around the designated area in the pool, will require a higher square metre area per participant in order to maintain a safe level of risk. In comparison an activity like aqua aerobics, where movement is controlled and close contact can be easily avoided, a lower square metre area per participant such as a minimum of $6m^2$ should be sufficient.

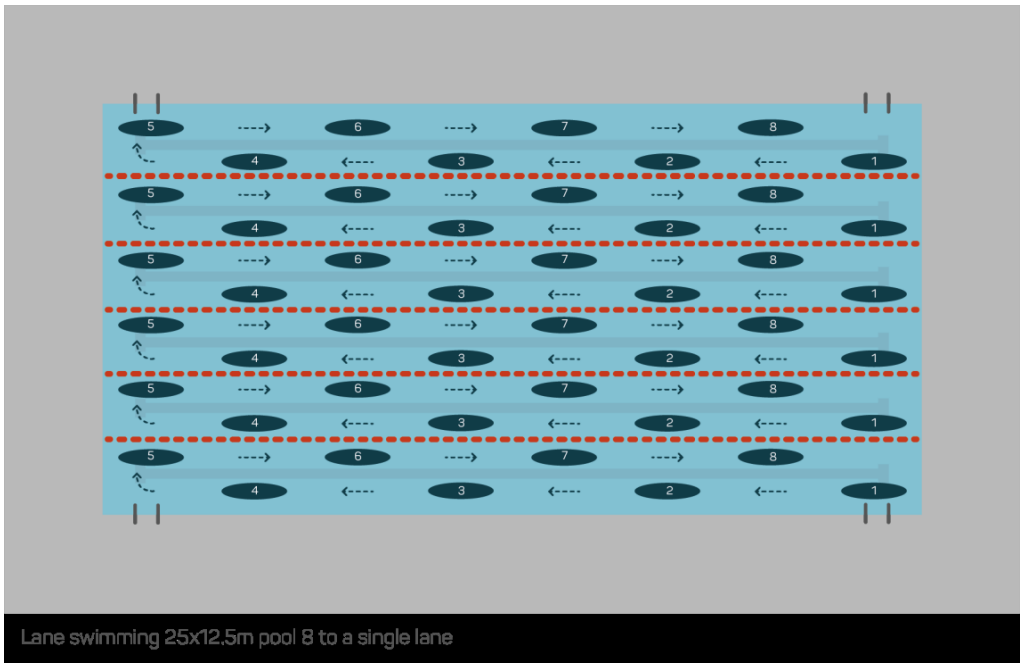
Other factors such as depth, demographics of the participants and ability are also considered.

The following table shows guidance for square meters require per person for the following activities allowing for SD: -

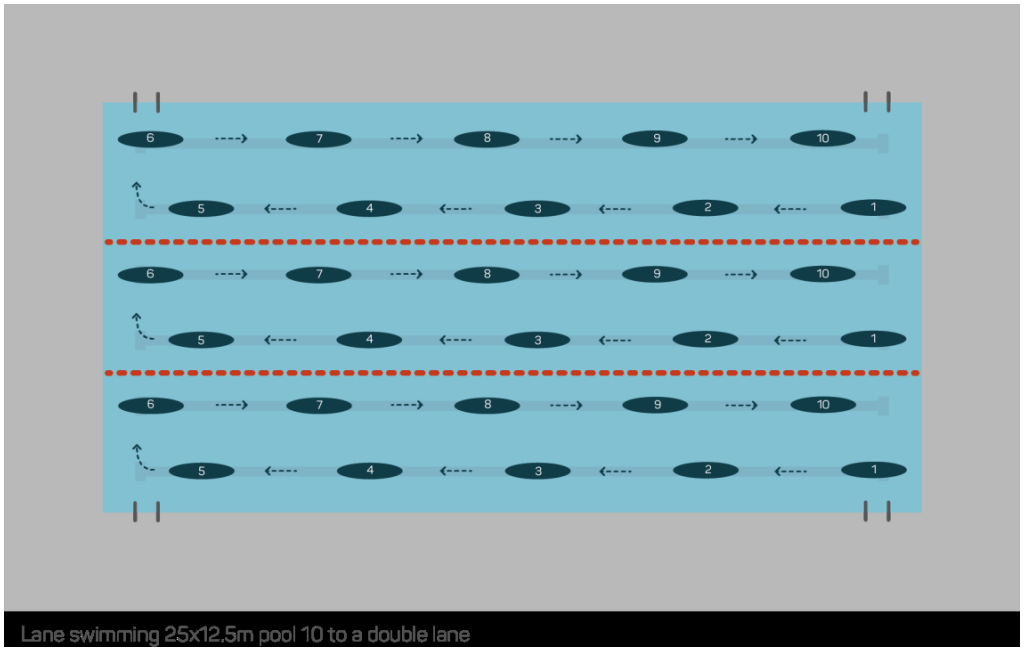
- Lane swimming — minimum of $6m^2$ per person
- Open- public swimming for individuals e.g. 50+ — minimum of $9m^2$ per person
- Open- public swimming for families — minimum $6m^2$ per person
- Aqua aerobics or other similar (static) activity — minimum $6m^2$ per person
- Swim lessons — minimum $6m^2$ per person

Activity	Social distance feasibility in normal operating conditions. Likelihood of:			Notes	Risk controls Further information on pool layout and other mitigating factors can be found in each activity specific area of the guidance.
	Distance between participants and others less than 2 metres	Duration of time at which distancing is less than 2 metres	Inability to control participants direction of travel and movements		
Community Swimming – Lane Swimming	Medium	Low	Low	Participants should only come within 2 metres whilst passing therefore duration of time is limited. Directional lane signage and lane etiquette should be displayed to provide a level of control.	Lane management – adjusted activities e.g.: 10 per double lane. Recommended minimum – 6 m2 per person.
Community Swimming – Open Public Swim (individuals)	High	High	High	Public swim is an unstructured session therefore controlling direction of travel of swimmers is largely removed.	Reduced bather loads: Recommended minimum – 9 m2 per person.
Community Swimming –	High	High	High	Public swim is an unstructured	Families will not require

Open Public Swim (Families)		session therefore controlling direction of travel of swimmers is largely removed.	social distancing. Recommended min – 6 m2 per person



Lane swimming 25x12.5m pool 8 to a single lane



Lane swimming 25x12.5m pool 10 to a double lane

Family swimming

Swimming with members of the same household would not require the social distancing measures detailed above, however swimmers must be well informed and aware that they must maintain the social distancing guidance above with any other swimmers not within their household and staff at all times. For carers the same principles would apply.

Moderate risk users

Those that are categorised as moderate risk of developing complications from Covid-19 infection by the government, such as those over 70 and those who are pregnant, may still wish to take part in aquatic activities. NLT have made provision for these groups in some of the pools' programmes.

NLT encourage users that require additional support or use of disabled facilities, including disabled changing and pool hoists, to make contact with the Contact Centre in advance of their visit. This will avoid multiple users needing to use the disabled facilities at the same time and allow time for the changing facilities and equipment to be cleaned before they may be needed again.

Customer journey

Pre-booking
In order to control numbers and comply with NHS 'Test & Trace' scheme in the pool at any one time, NLT are using bookable sessions only, which will be subjected to the new maximum occupancy levels in the pool and the impact changing rooms may have on these numbers. This is an effective method of controlling and recording the numbers of pool users.

Access and exit routes
Where practicable, one-way systems have been introduced with sufficient space for those who may use mobility scooters or walking aids etc. and areas of contact/touch points reduced.

Changing rooms

Swimmers have a personal responsibility as does NLT in this critical part of the swimming journey. The management of occupancy levels and reviewing both the hygiene and cleaning regime are important. The requirements for SD has been considered which will include the size, style ('village style', changing rooms, group change etc.) as well as the layout of changing rooms to determine changing room capacities enabling SD to be respected by customers and time allocated for cleaning.

To mitigate the effect of this, NLT are adopting a 'beach style turn up and swim' option to minimise time spent in the changing rooms and minimise transmission via touch-points.

What is **'beach style turn up and swim'**?
Come ready changed (costume under clothing) – take clothing off and place directly in a locker.

What will **'beach style turn up and swim'** mean?
Less time spent in changing areas and more time to swim.

Swimmers are asked to bring essential items only – no bags are permitted on poolside

Spectators are not permitted – unless in a carer's role where it is necessary

To minimise time taken to leave after swims hairdryers are not currently available

In changing areas NLT provides toilets, hand washing facilities and hand sanitiser

NLT has implemented sessions to enable effective cleaning regimes, paying particular attention to touch points. These consist of 45 minute or 1-hour swim sessions followed by a minimum of a 30 minute window for swimmers to change and leave, followed by a clean-down of poolside, changing area floors, cubicles and lockers (There are limited lockers available to make the clean-down achievable).

Slides flumes and other features

These activities have been risk assessed on an individual basis to ensure the risk of transmission of CV19 can be adequately controlled. Considerations for social distancing whilst waiting to ride the slide/flume and cleaning of surfaces must be made.

Following PWTAG advice – the pool features at Danes Camp can operate. Pool water features – air bubbles, geysers, sprays etc. can be used – Swim England advise '
Anecdotal evidence shows that warmer temperatures and high humidity all play a part in mitigating the risk of airborne transmission.' All water from features in the pool hall are chlorinated to a higher than normal set-point (1.5) – the moist air will help any airborne virus fall quicker.

Starting blocks

As above, the use of starting blocks would need to be risk assessed on an individual basis, considering surface contamination.

Pool Inflatables

Due to the difficulty in sanitising inflatables, they will not be used

Reviews

Date	3/10/2020		
By	Jim C-M		
Key changes	Reviewed using Swim England revised guidance (25/9/20)		