

# Coronavirus Statement

## Athletics in England suspension extended until 31 May 2020

24 March 2020

Following the further restrictions on movement put in place by the UK Government last night, UKA and the Home Country Athletics Federations have made the following updates to our previous statement issued on 17 March:

1. **Extending the suspension of all athletics activity in England to the 31 May.** [Initially this had been agreed to the end of April]. This suspension includes all organised athletics activity in the UK, including all competitions, formal club activities, running groups, and all Education activity (coach, official, teacher).
2. Strengthening our position on coaching activity - **We are now mandating that all physical coaching ceases, and only be conducted via virtual means during this period.** Bringing groups of people together to train, however small, can no longer be permitted under the strict 'Stay at home' measures implemented by the UK Government.

These decisions have not been taken lightly and have been made in light of the continuing and real risk to life and to the NHS posed by the spread of the COVID-19 virus in England. We must now do all we can do. We would ask that the athletics community in England continues to help one another by staying connected and supportive of each other whilst at home in these unprecedented times. We will continue to review the situation in line with Government and Public Health guidance.

In addition to providing clarity to clubs, athletes, runners, coaches and officials, we are acutely aware that a number of competition providers have already made the bold decision to postpone their events in recognition that they stand to incur additional contractual costs on facilities that they have booked should they not make that decision now. We will continue to review this decision as the government guidance evolves, but one thing is clear - and that is that athletics, running and sport in general is special and is an important contributor to our way of life, but it is very much secondary to protecting and saving lives at this current time.

In its latest measures to contain the spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19), the UK Government has announced that everyone must now stay at home except in exceptional circumstances.

From last night (Monday 23 March), the only permissible reasons to leave your home are as follows:

- To shop for basic necessities and that should be limited to once a day
- To take exercise once a day - but alone or with those you live with, no gatherings of more than two people
- For medical reasons or to care for a vulnerable person
- To travel to essential work if that cannot be done at home. Further guidance to employers is pending.

While athletics is predominantly an outdoor sport that allows athletes to exercise in the fresh air, the message to all of us is clear, we must play our part in containing the spread of COVID-19. We urge our members to utilise the opportunity to exercise as laid out by both governments, but as such, any informal small group training sessions of athletes or face-to-face coached sessions must now cease (\*unless they are with your own household members as above).

We have witnessed some very creative home and/or garden-based training sessions (safely of course) during the last week, and we would urge clubs and coaches to continue to be innovative during this period. A number of schools have also been task setting for their pupils and it would be of immense value to continue to engage athletes and your members in similar style tasks for athletics.

There are numerous ways in which people can remain active whether that be core strength training at home, HIIT, Circuits, running and so on (whilst adhering to the government guidance) so we will be actively promoting these. We will of course be pushing out digital content relating to exercising at home during this week thanks to the work of our respective coaching and athlete development team members.

England Athletics CEO Chris Jones comments: “We all have a responsibility to play our part in mitigating risk and in reducing the spread of this virus. It will be deflating to many but if we do pull together and adhere to the guidance issued then we will come through this period. In the meantime we will be working tirelessly as partners to provide value to our member clubs, athletes, runners, coaches and volunteers and will be organising activities and providing resources utilising a range of methods such as online forums, webinars and podcasts that will help people prepare for a time when we can all look forward with renewed optimism as an Athletics & Running family.”

These decisions are difficult ones to make, but right now, it is our shared responsibility to prioritise the health of our local communities by working together to follow the Government guidelines. In doing so, this will ensure that we all get back to competing in the sport we love so much sooner.

Good luck and stay safe!

- [www.uka.org.uk](http://www.uka.org.uk)
- [www.englandathletics.org](http://www.englandathletics.org)
- [www.scottishathletics.org.uk](http://www.scottishathletics.org.uk)
- [www.welshathletics.org](http://www.welshathletics.org)
- [www.athleticsni.org](http://www.athleticsni.org)

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Our latest updates can be accessed any time using [www.englandathletics.org/coronavirus](http://www.englandathletics.org/coronavirus)