



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

ATISN 14119

30th July 2020

Dear,

ATISN 14119 – Re-opening of gyms

Thank you for your request to the Welsh Government for information under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) received on 05 July.

Your request referred to the following statements that were made by the First Minister in his briefing dated 03 July and would like to know the evidence that supported them.

*"Right cross the world, gyms are emerging as a source of coronavirus infection", and
"Gyms inside have some particular challenges where coronavirus is concerned"*

The First Minister and the Welsh Government fully acknowledge the importance of exercise for our physical and mental well-being. That is why restrictions are lifted in a safe and orderly manner. We fully encourage the public to continue to exercise using the outdoor sports facilities on offer. We will however continue to take our advice from medical and scientific experts and hope to lift all restrictions in Wales as soon as possible – but **only** when it is safe to do so.

Our approach to reviewing restrictions is informed by a wide range of evidence, including advice from our Chief Medical Officer, Chief Scientific Advisor, SAGE, and our Technical Advisory Group. Decisions are guided by the latest scientific evidence on the specific circumstances and progression of the virus in Wales. The general approach adopted by the Welsh Government has been set out in [Leading Wales out of the coronavirus pandemic: a framework for recovery and Unlocking our society and economy: continuing the conversation](#) and are kept under regular review.

The scientific evidence shows us that the virus lives on surfaces for far longer indoors than out. Evidence up to now has shown that risk transmission and infection is higher indoors in cooler, noisy and humid environments, and where exertion and loudness leads to heavier breathing and louder talking. Viruses rely on particles of infectious material transferring from one host to another so maintaining space between individuals and the surfaces they touch will minimise transmission. Gyms in indoor settings, by definition, bring individuals from different households together, often in small spaces for periods of time, through close congregation. This makes them inherently risky environments for viral transmission. More people, in smaller rooms with poor ventilation will increase the risk of aerosol, direct person-

to-person and contact transmission. These factors may be exacerbated in the indoor gym environment. We are careful looking at examples from overseas and within the UK about Gyms reopening safely to help shape our policy in Wales.

Control measures like 2m distancing, air exchange, engineering and administrative controls alongside regular hand washing and sanitation of equipment and surroundings as a means of reducing transmission are important. There is also a need when considering the re-opening of indoor gyms to think about the health and well-being of the people who work in these environments who would be at a higher risk of infection, and need to be protected from infection by the members of the public they interact with, as well as taking extra precautions themselves.

The Welsh Government reviews the coronavirus regulations every 21 days and, on the basis of the latest available scientific evidence, considers whether they need to stay in place or whether they can be eased. The regulations were reviewed again on 9 July and the outcome of that review has been published on the Welsh Government's website: <https://gov.wales/coronavirus-restrictions-relaxed-further-support-tourism-and-leisure-sectors-wales>. The website also provides some guidance and some frequently asked questions to explain what people can and cannot do during the coronavirus outbreak <https://gov.wales/coronavirus-regulations-guidance>. The outcome of the next review and further information regarding gyms will be announced on or soon after the 31 July.

Thank you for taking the time to let us know your views, I hope this clarifies the Welsh Government's approach to easing lockdown, and the current regulations that apply to indoor gyms.

Further information is available on the following:

- a) Welsh Government publishes its scientific advice on our Coronavirus (COVID-19) website: <https://gov.wales/wales-response-coronavirus>
- b) The Technical Advisory Cell weekly updates and summaries are available here: <https://gov.wales/technical-advisory-cell>
- c) GOV.UK SAGE website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/scientific-advisory-group-for-emergencies-sage-coronavirus-covid-19-response>

The request you sent me contains personal information about you - for example, your name and address. The Welsh Government will be the data processor for this information and, in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation, it will be processed in order to fulfil our public task and meet our legal obligations under the Act to provide you with a response.

We will only use this personal information to deal with your request and any matters which arise as a result of it. We will keep your personal information and all other information relating to your request for three years from the date on which your request is finally closed. Your personal information will then be disposed of securely.

Under data protection legislation, you have the right:

- to be informed of the personal data we hold about you and to access it
- to require us to rectify inaccuracies in that data
- to (in certain circumstances) object to or restrict processing
- for (in certain circumstances) your data to be 'erased'
- to (in certain circumstances) data portability

- to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) who is our independent regulator for data protection

For further information about the information which the Welsh Government holds and its use, or if you wish to exercise your rights under the GDPR, please see contact details below:

Data Protection Officer
Welsh Government
Cathays Park
CARDIFF
CF10 3NQ
Email: DataProtectionOfficer@gov.wales

If you are dissatisfied with the Welsh Government's handling of your request, you can ask for an internal review within 40 working days of the date of this response. Requests for an internal review should be addressed to the Welsh Government's Freedom of Information Officer at:

Information Rights Unit,
Welsh Government,
Cathays Park,
CARDIFF,
CF10 3NQ
Email: Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales

Please remember to quote the ATISN reference number above.

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office,
Wycliffe House,
Water Lane,
Wilmslow,
CHESHIRE,
SK9 5AF.

However, please note that the Commissioner will not normally investigate a complaint until it has been through our own internal review process.

Yours sincerely,