



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref: ATISN 14950

29 March 2021

Dear

### **ATISN 14950 Open Water Swimming**

Thank you for your request received on 26 February 2021. Apologies for the delay in responding to your query. We have been dealing with large amounts of correspondence during recent weeks on various subjects.

You asked for:

- **Evidence, research and/or statistics on open water swimming being classed as ‘activities that involve a significant degree of risk’, along with any risk scoring matrices and definitions used to come to this conclusion, and any comparisons made against other activities that have previously been advised as acceptable such as cycling.**

*We do not hold the requested information.*

The key factor in the original guidance in terms of the type of activity permitted is risk. This is considered both in terms of the risk of the activity to cause injury, and therefore burden on the emergency services, and the risk of being unable to comply with key covid requirements such as social distancing rules, and the need to stay home. In this case the decision to discourage open water activity was the risk of injury and therefore, to reduce the pressure on the Welsh NHS and the RNLI. The risks involved with open water activities such as drowning, was considered a higher risk than participating in land based activities such as cycling. While we understand some people may be fully experienced and safe at sea, this is not the case for everyone, and there is always a chance of uncontrollable circumstances.

- **Confirmation on whether any existing control measures such as advice from sports governing bodies were evaluated in reaching this conclusion.**

*We do not hold the requested information.*

Although no specific examples were found relating to open water activities, the Welsh Government engaged with many partners and stakeholders, including Sport Wales and the Welsh Sports Association (WSA), who provided us with direct feedback from the various sports governing bodies, to collaboratively develop guidance for a safe return to sport. There have also been regular meetings and discussions with the RNLI throughout the pandemic and the Welsh Government has worked closely with the RNLI on policy and communication considerations.

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 or Email: [Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales](mailto: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