

Cycling UK – Returning to group cycling overview

Advice and guidance for Cycling UK staff, volunteers and participants navigating coronavirus

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Statement from Cycling UK's Director of Influence and Engagement

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Statement from Cycling UK

As the national cycling charity, our aim is to support the UK's population to cycle. This remains true, especially during this period of coronavirus.

Above all, the safety and welfare of Cycling UK's staff, volunteers, and participants at our rides and events, including the beneficiaries of our cycling programmes and the general public are always our main priority.

We are closely monitoring the situation and taking advice from government, the NHS and partners throughout.

Introduction

This document has been designed in accordance with each country's government's restrictions and has taken into consideration all areas of group cycling that have been affected by coronavirus.

Cycling UK has created this guidance for you to use when resuming rides and group activity when you feel confident and safe to do so, and the easing of restrictions allow. The message that underpins all group-based activity is to only undertake activities and tasks that you feel comfortable and safe in doing.

In the event that your nation, region, county, city or town has a temporary lockdown due to an increase in local coronavirus cases, we expect groups to cease Cycling UK activity immediately and follow local advice.

Staff, volunteers and participants

We want to ensure that all staff, volunteers and participants are safe and fit to undertake and/or lead Cycling UK activities. To do this, there are four checks to make:

1. **Symptoms** - if an individual has personally experienced symptoms or been around anyone that has shown [Covid-19 symptoms](#), then under no circumstances can they undertake any activity and they **MUST** cease all Cycling UK activity immediately. They will need to self-isolate in accordance with the current government guidance for each nation.
2. **Comfort** – if an individual volunteer and/or participant doesn't feel comfortable undertaking an activity, or if they have worries or concerns around the session, it may be best that they do not take part in it until they feel confident to do so.

Ultimately, Cycling UK activity sessions take place for fun and for people to enjoy the benefits of cycling. We want our ride leaders to feel confident and happy to undertake the role of providing a safe and reassuring space for cycling. There is no requirement or pressure on them to undertake an activity if they choose not to.

3. **Vulnerability** – if anyone is deemed extremely clinically vulnerable, they need to consider if they are ready to return to group cycling activity. We are still leaving this to an individual's discretion: as cycling is a preventative activity, they should think about whether it is a good idea to undertake it or not for the benefit of their mental and physical health.
4. **Registration** – ensure that all volunteers involved in group activities, such as ride leaders, are logged and their personal details, emergency contact and role are up to date. We recommend using our volunteer platform [Assemble](#) as a way of doing this.

Through Assemble, volunteers will also have access to all relevant documentation and any further updates they need for their roles.

Please contact our groups officer for further assistance:
groups@cyclingsuk.org.

Promoting responsibility

It is imperative that you take these four checks above into consideration before undertaking an activity, especially when leading one. It is the responsibility of the individual participant to ensure the above have been considered to enable them to make an informed decision of whether to participate or not. Please only undertake any activity when you feel safe and comfortable doing so.

Social distancing

Please see [Coronavirus: a guide to cycling as a group](#) for more information on this. When out for a group ride, the key requirements for social distancing are as follows:

Know the rules

It is vital you are aware of the current rules and guidance in your nation. These rules are changed regularly and differ between nations.

To help you understand the latest advice and guidance, Cycling UK has produced a definitive [Coronavirus: guidance for cyclists](#) article, and also specific [Coronavirus: guidance for cycling groups](#). These pages are updated regularly to make sure everyone is well-informed and can make appropriate decisions.

Additionally, targeted 'local lockdowns' in certain areas to suppress spikes may mean social distancing rules change from time to time.

It is also worth regularly checking your national and local government website for any guidance or rules specific to your area.

Plan ahead

With proper planning, many risks can be mitigated. When choosing a route, consider avoiding town and village centres where possible.

It may also be worth planning around any local beauty spots that you know people will flock to during nice weather. Now is an excellent time to avoid honeypot areas and head off the beaten track.

Quieter roads also make it easier to space out to prevent the group from getting too bunched up, taking particular care at tight junctions.

It may be a better option to forgo the usual mid-ride coffee and cake. If you do have a particular stop in mind, doublecheck the establishment will be open when you plan on visiting and what facilities they will have open. Alternatively, you can get creative and bring [your cafe stop with you](#). But please do not share refreshments around unless people are in your 'bubble'!

Consider what tools and equipment everyone should bring with them to deal with a puncture or mechanical. Whilst everyone should ride with basic equipment (spare inner tubes, tyre levers, mini pump or CO2 and a multi-tool) to get them home, it is common to see other items shared out between the group – we do not advise this currently.

Be responsible

When out cycling, you should always be aware of what's going on around you and be considerate of others. Be sure to give cyclists you're overtaking a wide berth and leave plenty of space behind you before you cut back in.

Likewise, leave plenty of room if there is another cyclist in front of you when stopping at junctions, and allow them to clear the junction before you move forward.

Consider how traffic coming up behind you may act. We know that even at the best of times, drivers sometimes fail to give cyclists sufficient space when overtaking, and this behaviour may be made worse if your group is taking up more road space than usual.

Although it may be within current guidelines to cycle as a small group, the realities of maintaining proper social distancing measures whilst out cycling may mean that it's not a wise idea to head out with the maximum number of individuals allowed. Smaller groups usually work better in any case.

The [rules for social distance and separation](#) vary across the four nations of the . Remember that the appropriate separation distance when you're riding with others may be affected by whether you're riding behind them, and in their slipstream, and the speed you're travelling. You should therefore also apply your own judgement, remembering that the minimum distance rule is a minimum, and you can and should allow a greater distance where possible.

The Highway Code says you may cycle two abreast (except on narrow or busy roads and when riding round bends) and this may make it easier for vehicles to overtake properly: this [article](#) explains the rules around this in more detail.

Groups of more than two people should be particularly cautious about riding two abreast at present as 'social distancing' makes it harder to quickly switch to riding single file. Small groups should therefore generally avoid riding two abreast, except:

- On wide off-road routes, and
- On very lightly trafficked roads with adequate width and very good sight lines

As always, apply a good deal of judgment to your situation.

Medical considerations

It is important to consider your own personal medical conditions before undertaking an activity. You are responsible for keeping yourself safe.

Avoiding contamination

Guidance for avoiding contamination remains the same:

- Catching coughs and sneezes in a tissue and throwing them away immediately
- Washing hands with soap and water regularly for at least 20 seconds (or using alcohol-based hand sanitiser if you're unable to wash your hands with soap and water)
- Avoiding close contact with people who are unwell
- Wear a mask where required

You can find more advice about avoiding coronavirus on the [NHS website](#) and more information about social distancing for all UK nations on the UK Government's website.

Undertaking an activity

This is a quick summary of actions and precautions that **MUST** be considered before undertaking an activity to make it enjoyable and safe.

Preparing for the activity

- Covid officer
- Health of leader
- First aid
- Consider travel options
- Promoting the activity
- Risk prevention and assessment

During the activity

- Social distancing is paramount
- Encourage personal hygiene
- Promote small and consistent groups

After the activity

- Continue promoting social distancing
- Consider travel options
- Monitor and store data

Preparing for an activity

Covid officer

All groups are strongly advised to follow this four-step process prior to undertaking any activity:

1. Appoint a named person as a [Covid officer](#) to be responsible for undertaking coronavirus awareness training and overseeing the group's adherence to any guidance issued by Cycling UK and that of each nation's government.
2. Have some form of secure record-keeping to support your government's testing and tracing strategy. As a minimum, that means having contact details for everyone on a ride and a way of getting in touch with them later so that people can be notified if someone they were riding with tests positive or later shows symptoms of coronavirus.
3. Undertake a risk assessment that includes:
 - a plan of what to do if someone becomes ill or displays symptoms on a ride; and
 - makes it clear that anyone displaying symptoms should not attend future rides or activities unless and until they have complied with self-isolation guidance and/or been tested clear of Covid-19.
4. Communicate what you are doing to people participating in the activity and alert them to any possible risk if guidance is not followed, particularly if they fall into vulnerable categories. Follow up any concerns they may have.

Health of leader

Ensure that staff, volunteers and participants are well enough to undertake the activity. Minimise contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that staff/volunteers who have coronavirus symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend the session if unwell and don't return until they have self-isolated and symptoms have passed. See self-isolating guidance in the Staff, Volunteer and Participants' section above.

First Aid

Please remember the following key principle:

Cycling UK recommends that first aid is ONLY carried out by a qualified first aider, who should carry a first aid kit up to their level of qualification.

St John Ambulance has information on [how to provide appropriate First Aid](#) in the current pandemic.

Consider travel options

Travelling to/from the location of activity/session: walk or cycle to location if possible, but if you must use a car, then go solo in the vehicle or only with someone from your household. You must use a face mask if using public transport. Remember that in some areas, public transport may still only be used for essential purposes – check with your local operator for full details.

Promoting the activity

You can promote your activity publicly on the Cycling UK website by registering it as an event. You need to identify a way of logging any participants that wish to attend the activity to guarantee you keep to the allocated group size. Most groups have their own way of doing this.

We have the groups toolkit (Member Groups only) on our website that provides an easy way to send out emails to all members with the activity information and to monitor attendees. For all other groups, please contact the [groups officer](#) for support, if you don't already have a process in place.

Alongside that, you should also keep a separate list of names of those who do attend the activity for track and trace. You should keep these lists for no longer than three weeks and remember to store them safely in line with our current [GDPR guidance](#).

Risk prevention and assessment

Ensure all necessary actions as above are undertaken, and that all ride and activity leaders are safe and confident to undertake any activity. They can be registered as a volunteer on our volunteer platform [Assemble](#).

During an activity

Social distancing is paramount – ensure you socially distance from other staff/volunteers/participants. When stopping, ensure there is enough room for everyone to stay socially distanced.

You **MUST** follow your government guidelines at all times to keep a safe distance and be alert to any national and local changes.

Ensure you are considering the start and end point of group rides and not meeting in busy public spaces and/or places where there isn't enough room for you all to safely congregate.

Brief the group on safe and socially distanced riding. Highlight any key places where you need to slow down and allow for oncoming traffic and/or areas when space would be limited.

During the briefing, ensure you revisit best practice when cycling, allowing for other road and trail users to go first, leaving a safe amount of room in the process. Remember 'Be nice and say hi' and now also 'Be nice and stand back'.

Encourage personal hygiene:

- Everyone should wash their hands thoroughly for 20 seconds using running water then dry them thoroughly, or use alcohol or a hand rub or sanitiser, ensuring all parts of the hand are covered.
- This is only applicable if you stop at refreshment stops. However, you could include it within your communication prior to the activity.
- Ensure good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach.
- Consider taking face masks where applicable. All leaders are recommended to have an appropriate face mask so in the event of an incident they are able get into a venue.
- Clean frequently touched surfaces often using appropriate products.
- Use own tools/bikes, and do not share during the session if possible.
- Take your own water bottle to keep hydrated and do not share it.
- If you must take food, take what you need for the day for yourself and do not share it: use your own utensils and vessels.

Promote small and consistent groups

Minimise contact where possible by keeping in small groups for face-to-face support sessions. We are still encouraging smaller groups as best practice, even if local rules allow for more.

Keep those groups as consistent as possible when undertaking those activities.

After an activity

- Continue promoting social distancing - if you are finishing at a venue, facility or café, please ensure to continue social distancing.
- Consider travel options - use the same travel advice as above and promote cycling and walking as the best mode of transport to get to the event.
- Monitor and store data -if anyone develops symptoms, they should contact their ride leader or Covid officer as soon as possible and then look on the NHS website for the next steps. If asked, the Covid officer or ride leader should supply details of anyone who was on the ride with the affected person to the NHS.
- Ensure to keep your risk assessments and participants' logs for a period of up

to three weeks stored safely away. In the event that there are any illnesses that develop after your activity, you then have all information recorded to demonstrate that duty of care was taken.

Overview of undertaking an activity

Please use common sense and only undertake and lead activities/tasks you feel comfortable doing. If you have any concerns, please [contact our groups officer](#) or your group's Covid officer.

Events, challenges, and competitions

If your group wishes to put on an event, challenge or competition, we are asking that you get in direct contact with our groups officer via groups@cyclingsuk.org 

Insurance

Note that, in the light of the latest Government advice on coronavirus, and guidance on social distancing designed to reduce the risk of spreading infection, group cover provided under the Organisers' Liability insurance could potentially be invalid if a Member Group or affiliated group decides to go against the advice issued by Cycling UK and arranges large-scale events and/or large group rides that exceed the numbers permitted under each nation's guidance.

For individual cyclists, the Third Party Liability insurance included within membership will protect a member of the public against the risk of a cycling-related incident involving an insured member.

The safety and wellbeing of Cycling UK's staff, volunteers, riders, participants of our cycling programmes and the general public remain our number one priority.

Cycling UK will continue to monitor the situation and will be taking advice from the Government, the health sector and partners.

Supporting documents for Cycling UK groups and volunteers

To support the return to group cycling activities, we have created:

- Coronavirus: return to group cycling overview (this document)
- Coronavirus: returning to group activity checklist
- Coronavirus: risk assessment checklist

- Coronavirus: checklist for Cycling UK volunteers, staff and participants
- Coronavirus: [how to organise a safe group ride](#)

You can download these resources from: [Coronavirus: guidance for cycling groups](#)

Communications and further updates

Cycling UK regularly updates its advice on cycling in groups following government updates across all four nations of the UK. While the general advice remains that people from all nations should follow their own nation's guidance, we are encouraging individuals to ride within smaller groups for safety.

However, always keep an eye on your local and national guidance changes because they are constantly evolving.

Cycling UK's advice remains that it is advisable for people to cycle for their health, fitness and well-being.

We'll continue to monitor the situation carefully and will update groups and areas via the website if any further action is needed, such as the cancellation of rides and events, we will contact groups and event organisers directly.

If you have any questions, please see [Coronavirus: guidance for cyclists](#) and [Coronavirus: guidance for cycling groups](#) or contact [the groups officer](#).