



**Working together for a safe return to gymnastics**

# **British Gymnastics Coach Contact Framework Action Plan**

**Please note this currently only applies to clubs and delivery providers in England.**

**15/3/2021  
Version 1**

## Phase 1 Approval

Phase One of the British Gymnastics Coach Contact Framework has now been approved for under 18 participants by the DCMS, allowing recognised gymnastics environments across England to begin delivery of manual support.

Whilst the framework provides a clear three phased approach, it is essential that those delivering gymnastics **ONLY** permit coach contact activities in line with Phase One. The full framework has been released to show the transition to full coach contact over time. The DCMS will be advising British Gymnastics of when it is safe and appropriate for movement into phase 2 and 3 and therefore until permission is granted from the government the additional phases are for information only.  
(Phase 1 does not allow manual support for O18 participants)

## Introduction

The British Gymnastics Coach Contact Framework Action Plan has been developed as a result of detailed risk assessments specific to manual support activities in alignment with the Return to Coach Contact Sport Framework.

This Action Plan outlines the additional controls approved to reduce the risk of transmission or contraction of the Coronavirus, to allow for identified activities to resume safely.

The disciplines which are covered within the Coach Contact Framework Action Plan include:

- Acrobatic Gymnastics
- Aerobic Gymnastics
- Double mini tramp
- Disability Gymnastics
- Gymnastics for All
- Men's Artistic Gymnastics
- Preschool Gymnastics
- Rhythmic Gymnastics
- Team Gym
- Tumbling Gymnastics
- Trampoline
- Women's Artistic Gymnastics

## What is coach contact?

Coach contact is defined as manual support or assistance and is a common practice in gymnastics coaching, which serves important purposes during the skill learning process and in the general

practise and performance contexts. Physical contact between a coach and a gymnast is less than 2m, for longer than 3 seconds.

British Gymnastics coaches/instructors are educated on key topics such as when to manually support, the intended impact of manual support, and how to use manually support to ensure safe practise and progression.

By educating coaches in these areas, they can use their professional judgement and decision-making skills to select the most appropriate methods for safe skill progression.

By allowing coaches to manually support under specific guidance participants will be more likely to safely learn and progress new skills, regain skills they may have already had in their repertoire prior to the coronavirus pandemic. Consequently, they will gain enjoyment and satisfaction from their participation, and will be more likely to remain motivated to continue participation in gymnastics.

Gymnastics skills are complex movements which often require the participant to manipulate and coordinate a variety of limbs at different times, at speed, whilst rotating around various axes. Adding to this complexity is the inherent risk that arises from gymnastics, performing skills at height and against gravity on or with apparatus. It is because of this complexity that safe development is at the heart of every gymnastics coach's process and forms a significant part of their coach education.

### **Manual support may occur if:**

- If the methodical activity or apparatus adaptation is new or carries risks and the coach wants to ensure the participant can perform it safely.
- If the methodical activity or apparatus adaptation is new and the participant is apprehensive.
- If the participant is attempting or practising the full skill and there is a risk of injury during the skill or upon landing.
- If there is a risk of overuse injury, or repetitive stress or strain due to forces associated with the amount of practise required to learn and master the full skill.

### **Intended impact:**

- **Height:** To give more height when a participant is performing a skill, for example a forward somersault, to give them more time in the air to perform the skill safely and develop their proprioceptive and kinaesthetic understanding.
- **Rotation:** To assist in the rotation during a skill or control rotation upon landing, for example in a backward somersault, to ensure the participant lands safely on their feet and avoids injury.
- **Speed:** To control the speed at which the participant performs a skill to assist in understanding the skill, develop spatial awareness and perform safely, for example in the second flight of a vault. Additionally, to control speed and travel upon landing do reduce the risk of injury, for example at the end of a tumble.
- **Reduced impact:** To control the amount of force the participant might be subjected to in key joints such as the wrists, shoulders, ankles and knees when perform a skill, for example in acrobatic skills such as backward walkover.

### **How to use manual support:**

- Use approved manual support techniques as per coach education courses and resources.

- Support on approved sites of the participant's body as per the intended impact and the guidance provided on coach education courses and in respective resources.
- Only provide manual support if through assessment and professional judgements it is deemed to be required. Coaches should consider other methodical activities or adapted apparatus approaches first.
- Only provide manual support for as long as required to deem the participant's attempts safe.
- Avoid creating a dependency for the participant where they only believe they can attempt a methodical/progression or skill with manual support. In instances such as these coaches are educated to regress the skill to the preceding methodical or utilise an adapted apparatus approach.

All manual support work in the identified planned activities will involve direct physical contact between gymnast and coach/instructor. This may include contact such as:

- Hand to limb contact
- Hand to shoulder
- Hand to feet
- Hand to torso
- Face to face proximity
- Prolonged (3+secs)

*Coaches/instructors should avoid hand to hand manual support during any supported activity and use appropriate body parts or training aids where possible.*

It is the club's/gymnastics providers responsibility to understand the organisational increase in risk by returning to coach contact. As each individual coach is deemed as a contact, the risk of transmission is much higher. It is therefore the decision of the club whether to follow the Step Forward Return to Coach Contact Framework. The club/gymnastics/provider must also understand their position as a covid-secure venue will change where contact less than 2m is taking place.

## **Clubs/gymnastics providers action plan**

**Gymnastics clubs/providers wishing to resume manual support within the planned activities must:**

- Already meet the requirements as set out in the relevant government guidance and have been operational for a minimum of two weeks maintaining the appropriate controls.
- Follow all further transmission mitigating control measures required as stipulated within the **British Gymnastics Coach Contact Framework Action Plan**.
- Prior to taking part in manual support activities, gymnasts (and parents / carers) and coaches/instructors must opt-in to agreement with the code of behaviour and other associated controls yet can opt-out and stop manual support at any point.
- Educate staff and gymnasts in the required practices and controls as indicated within the **British Gymnastics Coach Contact Framework Action Plan** and associated risk assessments completed by the club/provider. Appropriate records for NHS Test and Trace must be kept.
- Ensure all gymnasts, coaches/instructors (and parents/carers) who wish to resume working manual support activities understand the risks, their responsibilities and abide by all control measures as outlined within the **British Gymnastics Coach Contact Framework Action Plan**.
- Be responsible for highlighting to the coaches/instructors that they are putting themselves in a position of risk (by being a contact) which may have implications for them if a child they had supported tests positive for Coronavirus.
- Coaches/instructors will be using a phased return to manual support activities as shown in the table below - note that the club/gymnastics provider should already be operating as per the Step Forward Plan and therefore, gymnasts and coaches/instructors will already be working independently of each other with social distancing in place. This should be in place for a minimum of 2 weeks prior to the phased return to coach contact commences:

Phase Number	Approval status	Manual Support Allowed?	Detail
1	Active (under 18 only)	Yes – but limited to 15 minutes per day **	During this phased return to coach contact, each coach/instructor must limit the coach contact and manual support for one identified group* for a maximum of 15 minutes per session.  <i>Manual support may not be provided for any other group or individuals once the identified group for each coach/instructor has been decided.</i>
2	Not yet active	Yes – but limited to 15 minutes per day per group	Following this period, the coach/instructor may resume coach contact and manually support multiple groups for a maximum of 15 minutes per group.
3	Not yet active	Yes	Following the first two phases, coach contact can resume for all pre-planned activity.

*\*groups sizes cannot exceed current local and national guidance and British Gymnastics Coach: Gymnast ratios*

*\*\*unless following the Team Sport Framework. The Team Sport Framework provides a separate action plan and control measures for identified team sport activities and disciplines, where a club or gymnastics provider is delivering under the Team Sport and Return to Coach Contact Frameworks, both action plans must be adhered to. Where the Team Sport Framework states no contact is permitted between coaches and gymnasts this is still true unless the Return to Contact Coaching Framework has been implemented and control measures adopted.*

It is the responsibility of the club/gymnastics provider and coach/instructor to review the programme, understand the increased risk, and ensure manual support activities are kept to a minimum.

It is also the club/gymnastics providers responsibility to inform gymnasts/parents that they must contact the club if a gymnast displays symptoms or has a positive test. Where a coach/instructor tests positive, a comms plan should be in place to let all gymnasts who are deemed “contacts” know immediately that they should self-isolate.

## Planned Activity

Each individual coach/instructor must consider their own planned activity and the conscious intention to utilise selected and approved manual support or assistance during a specific training session to ensure the safe progression of a gymnastics skill or combination.

The intended outcome should fall in line with the guidance given to coaches / instructors regarding when to use manual support, should have clear rationale regarding the intended impact and should only be used when all available non-contact methodical activities or adaptations in apparatus have been exhausted.

No activity should be unplanned. Where a skill may require a coach / instructor to be within <2m distance of the gymnasts for manual support or for safety measures this control measure must be applied. For any manual support activities, the coach / instructor will be within <2m for more than 3 seconds of contact, depending on the planned repetitions for the activity. Coaches / instructors will be advised to consider the number of repetitions the skill requires, and the motivation behind the manual support of these repetitions. Where possible, coaches / instructors will be encouraged to only manually support a skill to assist in height, speed, rotation, or to reduce impact for a single repetition.

## Action plan

The **British Gymnastics Coach Contact Framework Action Plan** has been developed through the completion of a rigorous risk assessment to put feasible control measures in place to limit the likelihood of transmission or contraction of Coronavirus. Clubs/gymnastics providers wishing to resume manual support activities must follow the points within this action plan and be confident in their control measures to reduce the likelihood of getting or spreading the Coronavirus in their gymnastics environment.

Each individual gymnast and coach/instructor must consider their own circumstances which includes but is not limited to personal underlying health conditions and the increased risk associated with taking part in manual support activities. All gymnasts and coaches/instructors (and their parents/carers for those under the age of eighteen) must be given the option to opt into an agreement, with the controls as outlined within this action plan, accompanying code of behaviour and should have the comprehension of its seriousness, assuming the personal responsibility for their own, and be mindful of others health and safety.

A risk assessment must be completed and implemented by gymnastics clubs/providers to include all control measures as indicated below. A sample risk assessment can be found [here](#) includes eight sections. One to seven relate to standard activities within the gymnastics environment and section eight relating directly to manual support activities.

*(Control measures displayed within the Action Plan table in italics are repetitions from previously cited points).*

Further information can be found in Return to Coach Contact FAQs [here](#)

Key principles	Action plan for identified manual support activities
<b>Prior to activity</b>	<b>Club preparations:</b>  Complete a Covid-19 secure risk assessment and appoint a competent Covid-19 representative or Officer, who is responsible for ensuring the risk assessment is carried out and the control measures are in place and being adhered to.  Following all national and local government guidance and adhere to best practice as outlined within the DCMS “Working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19), for providers of grassroots sport and gym/leisure facilities” guidance and all other relevant guidance specific to circumstance.  Following all transmission mitigating control measures required as stipulated within the British Gymnastics Coach Contact Framework Action Plan.  Educating staff and gymnasts (and parents/carers) in the required practices and controls as indicated within the British Gymnastics Coach Contact Framework Action Plan risk assessment and keeping appropriate records for NHS Test and Trace.  Ensure all gymnasts (and parents/carers) who wish to resume manual support activities understand their responsibilities and abide by all

control measures as outlined within the British Gymnastics Coach Contact Framework Action Plan.

Ensure all gymnasts and coaches/instructors are informed of how-to opt-in to the agreement to return to coach contact as without this in place, activities cannot return. Furthermore, coaches/instructors and gymnasts must be aware that they can also opt-out at any point and therefore cease coach contact activity at any point.

### **Pre-Attendance Official Symptom Check**

All participants (gymnasts, coaches / instructors, officials and volunteers) should check for symptoms of COVID-19. In line with UK Government Guidance if an individual displays symptom and/or living in a household with a possible COVID-19 infection they should remain at home and follow UK Government guidance. In addition, any participants who have been asked to isolate by NHS Test and Trace because they are a contact of a known COVID-19 case must not exercise outside their home or garden and must not exercise with others.

### **Pre-training screening**

#### **Prior to session**

**8.1** Increased screening measures to be implemented for gymnasts and coaches/instructors working with manual support:

**8.1.1** Prior to departure and travel to a training venue (within two hours of session start time), all gymnasts and coaches/instructors must complete a self-screening survey to determine whether they can attend the training session.

**8.1.2** Screening for symptoms prior to entry into the building.

**8.1.3** Anyone displaying any symptoms should not enter the venue.

**8.14** All gymnasts (parent/guardian) and coaches/instructors must complete an opt-in agreement to return to manual support activities.

**8.4** All clubs/gymnastic providers, coaches/instructors and gymnasts must abide by the Code of Behaviour which supports the return to manual support activities.

**8.12** All gymnasts and coaches/instructors are made aware of the increase in transmission risk associated with the return of manual support activities.

**8.21** Manual support activity can be introduced through analysing the needs of the group to determine what manual support is necessary to include in programme planning.

**8.22** After this minimum of two weeks gymnastics providers and coaches/instructors may then implement a phased return to coach contact and manual support activities

**8.22.1 Phase 1** - During this phased return to coach contact, each coach/instructor must limit the coach contact and manual

support for one identified group\* for a maximum of 15 minutes per session.

*\*Manual support may not be provided for any other group or individuals once the identified group for each coach/instructor has been decided.*

**8.22.2 Phase 2** - Following this period the coach/instructor may manually support multiple groups for a maximum of 15 minutes per group per day

**8.22.3 Phase 3** - Following the first two phases coach contact can resume for pre-planned activity.

**8.22.4** It is the responsibility of the club/gymnastics provider and coach/instructor to review the programme, understand the increased risk, and ensure manual support activities are kept to a minimum.

### **Test and Trace**

**8.5** Processes must be in place for full adherence with NHS Test & Trace (or home country equivalent) record keeping and any health authority or government guidance given.

### **Arrival at Venues**

**8.6** Travel arrangements to and from training should be considered, with all government guidance adhered to. Public transport should be avoided and travel by car should only be shared with people from within one household. A face covering must be worn when using public transport (current exemptions include children under the age of 11).

### **Opt-in Agreement**

**8.10** All gymnasts (parent/carer) and coaches/instructors must complete an opt-in agreement to return to manual support activities.

**8.10.1** Clubs /gymnastics providers and coaches/instructors must ensure all gymnasts (and parents /carers) are aware what manual support activities they are opting into and that they can withdraw at any time.

**8.10.2** The club/gymnastics provider must inform the lead coach of any gymnast or coach /instructor who hasn't agreed to returning to manual support.

**8.10.3** The club/gymnastics provider must be sensitive to those individuals who may not want to return to manual support and ensure they can still participate fully in the session.

**8.10.4** It is the club's/gymnastic providers responsibility to inform relevant coaches/instructors and parents of any changes to the opt in agreement.

## During activity

### Social distancing during activity (training)

**8.9** Social distancing should be maintained between all users of facilities unless: users come from the same household; to manage needs on account of a disability or specific additional need; working on specific manual support activities

**8.24** All coaches/instructors must wear a face masks/covering in line with government guidance during manual support activities with each gymnast. This must remain on throughout the supported activity and until the gymnast is 2m in distance adhering to social distance guidelines.

### Use of Equipment

**8.33** Additional equipment, including manual supporting aids, e.g., rigs, push in mats, push in pads, foam modules are cleaned before/during/after sessions as required

### Workforce (Staff, Coaches / Instructors & Volunteers)

**8.17** It is the responsibility of the club/gymnastic providers and coach/instructor to review the programme, understand the increased risk, and ensure manual support activities are kept to a minimum.

#### **8.18 Manual support may occur if:**

**8.18.1** The methodical activity or apparatus adaptation is new or carries risks and the coach / instructor wants to ensure the participant can perform it safely.

**8.18.2** The methodical activity or apparatus adaptation is new, and the participant is apprehensive.

**8.18.3** The participant is attempting or practising the full skill and there is a risk of injury during the skill or upon landing.

**8.18.4** There is a risk of overuse injury, or repetitive stress or strain due to forces associated with the amount of practise required to learn and master the full skill.

**8.23** All gymnasts and coaches/instructors should wash/sanitise their hands before, during and after sessions. Where possible, gymnasts should provide their own hand sanitiser.

**8.25** All coaches/instructors should avoid speaking to the gymnasts during the manual support activities unless in the event of an emergency.

**8.26** Before, during and after all manual support activities, the coach and gymnast must avoid touching their mouth, eyes and nose.

**8.27** All coaches/instructors must wear a face mask/covering in line with government guidance during manual support activities with each gymnast. This must remain on throughout the supported activity and until the gymnast is 2m in distance, adhering to social distance guidelines.

**8.27.1** Care should be taken to ensure masks are not left lying around the gym and are disposed of correctly/washed regularly.

**8.27.2** Any coach/instructor who is exempt from wearing a face covering will need to risk assess further with their club/gymnastic provider for

their own safety as well as the gymnasts. (A face shield may be more appropriate to ensure manual support can still be applied).

### **Adult participation**

Following ongoing consultation with the government, our current interpretation of the guidance is that individual training for adults over the age of 18 is permitted within a gymnastics environment or session if all activities are performed individually i.e., only one person on a piece of apparatus at any one-time, individual warmups. However, as there can be regular changes, the government guidelines must be always adhered to as these supersede any advice outlined by British Gymnastics.

There must be no sharing of equipment, close contact between gymnasts or multiple adults on the same piece of apparatus taking turns. Equipment should be cleaned between individual users where possible and regular hand sanitisation in place.

A coach/instructor will need to be present in a supervising role or provide coaching on a one-to-one basis unless specifically requesting manual support for individual skill progression as per the coach contact framework.

The session delivery must follow the existing Step Forward Plan guidance for capacity, social distancing, hand sanitisation and increased provision of cleaning of the facility and equipment.

Adult classes can take place at the same time as sessions for under 18's, however, it is imperative to ensure apparatus are not shared between user groups without appropriate controls (such as the thorough cleaning of equipment and hand sanitisation). Indoor spaces may be zoned to prevent interaction between different user groups. Social distancing must be maintained in all sessions and between all user groups throughout the facility. It is at a request of the individual adult if they require manual support during this time, and the coach/instructor must limit the contact time and include the contact time within the phased plan.

Where possible, coach contact should be considered further when a coach is moving between adult manual support where over 18's is training at the same time as under 18 gymnasts. Further control measures may be required. If a coach/instructor is required to manually support an adult, they must ensure they adhere to appropriate hand hygiene measures highlighted in the risk assessment.

We advise you to check the guidance that is being published by your Local Authority as this will differ in each area, with some local restrictions enforcing greater controls.

**Communicate and make available all plans regarding the resumption of manual support activities:**

	<p>Make available the relevant outcomes of risk assessments and agree procedures and actions with staff, coaches/instructors, volunteers, gymnasts, and parents/carers.</p> <p>Work closely with venue management (if in a hired space) to agree responsibilities and actions.</p> <p>Keep all members and the local gymnastics community aware of club/gymnastic providers activity and adherence to very strict control measures.</p> <p><b>Injury Treatment</b></p> <p><b>7.1</b> First aiders should familiarise themselves with the symptoms of Covid-19 and ensure that PPE (a fluid repellent mask, gloves and aprons) is well stocked, and they are up to date with current best practices.</p> <p><b>7.2</b> Where possible first aiders should maintain social distancing measures, where treatment of an injured person allows this, however in an emergency, close contact is permitted to administer first aid treatment.</p>
<p><b>Following activity</b></p>	<p><b>8.34</b> Keep a clear record for 21 days would need to detail which coaches had contact with which gymnasts to be able to comply with NHS Test &amp; Trace (or home country equivalents) of all gymnasts that opt-in for coach / instructor contact</p> <p><b>8.35</b> All coaches/instructors must wash their hands and arms with soap and water for 20 seconds following the manual support session.</p> <p><b>8.36</b> Remind gymnasts (including parents / carers) and coaches/instructors that they need to wash all items of clothing and leotards/unitards after every session they attend.</p> <p><b>8.37</b> Additional equipment, including manual supporting aids, e.g., rigs, push in mats, push in pads, foam modules are cleaned</p> <p><b>8.38</b> Adherence to Governmental guidance relating to household members and isolation if symptoms are showing.</p>
<p><b>Manual Support gymnasts or coaches/instructors displaying symptoms and Coronavirus test results</b></p>	<p>If a gymnast or coach/instructor who has been involved in manual support activity develops symptoms of Coronavirus they must self-isolate, get a test as soon as possible and not attend gymnastics sessions.</p> <p>Please keep up to date with all local information and guidance as the information within this document does not supersede any laws or local government decisions regarding symptoms and tests. At the time of publication, the current guidance from the Government and <a href="#">National Health Service</a> implies that the club or delivery provider must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decide who is deemed a potential contact of the individual who is displaying symptoms (individuals who are in the session specific groups or other people who have been working or been within close proximity with the individual who has developed symptoms).</li> <li>• Inform all potential contacts that an individual in the sessions specific group has developed symptoms.</li> <li>• Potential contacts will need to follow the government guidance and self-isolate for the recommended period. If they have no</li> </ul>

symptoms after this point, they will then be able to resume sessions as normal.

If the test result is negative:

- If fit and well, the individual may return to gymnastics, and manual support activity can resume as before.

If the test result is positive:

- All contacts must be told to self-isolate for 14 days and must not attend gymnastics sessions.
- If any contacts are displaying symptoms; they should get a test as soon as possible.

## Help and advice

British Gymnastics in conjunction with the Home Countries has worked hard to produce the Step Forward Plan which includes support, toolkits and resources for our clubs, workforce and members which follows relevant government guidelines allowing gymnastics to return safely. All resources are free to member clubs and accessible on the dedicated pages of the British Gymnastics website: <https://www.british-gymnastics.org/step-forward>

Further guidance is available to British Gymnastics member clubs and delivery providers from the following sources:

### **British Gymnastics**

#### **Customer Support**

**0345 1297129**

[customersupport@british-gymnastics.org](mailto:customersupport@british-gymnastics.org)

[business-support@british-gymnastics.org](mailto:business-support@british-gymnastics.org)

[education@british-gymnastics.org](mailto:education@british-gymnastics.org)

#### **The HSE website**

Working safely during the coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/working-safely/index.htm>

### **Agility Risk & Compliance Ltd (Agility)**

Providing access to expert Health and Safety support through the British Gymnastics dedicated helpline: **01527 571 612**. Any additional support outside of the areas covered within this document can also be sought from the dedicated team at Agility, but you may be charged separately. This line is open Monday to Friday from 8.30am – 5pm.

There is an after hours' service via a mobile number provided at the time of calling. Alternatively, you can email your query to: [bg.hs.advice@agilityrac.com](mailto:bg.hs.advice@agilityrac.com)