



Department for
Digital, Culture
Media & Sport

Nigel Huddleston MP
Minister for Sport and Tourism
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Nick Pearson
CEO
Parkrun

INT2021/08257/DC
23 April 2021

Dear Mr Pearson,

Thank you for your letter dated 12 April and for the subsequent meeting held on 21 April.

Sports and physical activity are incredibly important for our physical and mental health, and are a vital weapon against coronavirus. That's why we made sure that people could exercise at least once a day even during the height of the first period of enhanced national restrictions and why we opened up grassroots sport and leisure facilities as soon as it was safe to do so.

Initiatives such as parkrun have had an important impact in driving participation in physical activity and in helping people, particularly those from under-represented groups such as women, disabled people and people from some lower socio-economic groups, to be more physically active. These initiatives are even more important with the government's goal of ensuring that the country builds back fitter after this pandemic.

That is why I was concerned by the problems which you are having regarding the return of parkrun. Government has prioritised the safe return of sport including team sports, contact combat sports and organised sports participation events. Organised outdoor sport is exempt from legal gathering limits and can take place with any number of participants, as long as undertaken in line with published COVID-secure guidance.

This includes organised sport participation events such as parkrun. These events were allowed from 29 March as part of Step 1 of the government's response to the Covid-19 Roadmap. I welcome the extra care and caution which you have taken in delaying your return until rates of infection have further reduced and more people have been vaccinated, and I note that you have also had encouraging preliminary results of research which you commissioned to help understand the risk of transmission your events.

You have prepared overarching guidance which addresses the need for local organisers to carry out a risk assessment for each event, so they can use that and applicable government guidance to help them take all reasonable measures to limit the risk of Covid transmission. As you know, as an organised sport participation event, there is no requirement for your guidance to have been approved by the government or a National Governing Body before parkrun can resume. This is clearly set out in the government's guidance, available on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk). However, I am happy to confirm that your guidance provides a suitable framework within which local organisers can ensure that the required precautions are taken at their events.

I look forward to parkrun's return on the 5th June, and hope to join some of the millions of active runners and volunteers personally at my local event in Evesham as soon as I can.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nigel Huddleston', is centered on the page. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Nigel Huddleston MP
Minister for Sport and Tourism