



## Health & Safety Guidelines 2024

### **Health, Safety and welfare - the benefits of running in a recognised Club**

Teesdale Athletic Club aims to provide positive running experiences for all its members and participants in its events. Multiple studies have shown the benefits to be gained from running in terms of physical, social and mental health. Health benefits include reducing the risk of coronary heart disease, dementia, type 2 diabetes and depression by up to 30%.

Running with a group or Club can add shared experience to this, and adds additional benefits of support and challenge. Group running can be as effective as anti-depressants in boosting positive mental health.

The Club also provides the benefits to be gained from volunteering and involvement. We aim, by our provision and organisation, to enhance the positive outcomes possible, while minimising any risk of harm to individuals.

All members and participants in Club events should feel comfortable and safe, while being suitably and reasonably challenged in their fitness development.

### **Club Responsibility**

The Club, in how it plans and provides events and activities, will set out to promote positive health and fitness outcomes for all members and participants.

As far as possible, the Club will protect the health and safety of all members and other participants engaged in Club training, competition and other Club-related activities.

In order to fulfil its responsibility, the Club will:

- Continually seek to make its activities inclusive for all, both in their range and in their delivery.
- Endeavour to provide helpful guidance verbally at events (including training, competitions and other activities),
- Make these Health and Safety Guidelines available on the Club website,
- Ensure that Club Coaches and Leaders have the appropriate training to lead sessions,
- Provide suitable facilities for events, including First Aid and welfare facilities as appropriate,
- Ensure sufficient Risk Assessments are maintained and reviewed for all training sessions. As a minimum there will be a general Risk Assessment covering winter road training routes, a Summer Off-road Risk Assessment, and a proforma provided for other events, such as social runs and internal competitions,
- Hold sufficient suitable Insurance, through affiliation to the recognised national sport governing body,
- Ensure that any Club event is subject to a suitable and sufficient risk assessment.

### **Member Responsibility**

Members should familiarise themselves with the Health and Safety Guidance, and with the Code of Conduct for members. This Guidance includes advice on weather, terrain, personal limitations and protecting other Club members and participants in events.

Members have a responsibility to do their best to prevent harm to themselves, their running partners or members of the public.

The Code of Conduct sets out minimum standards of behaviour for all members. The Club expects members to support each other in their running and participation.

Club Members have a 'duty of care' to not wilfully injure themselves or others by negligent acts or omissions.

By taking membership, individuals agree to abide by these Guidelines.

### **Non-member Responsibility**

Non-members who participate in the Club's events have the same responsibility as Club members in regard to the health, safety and welfare of themselves and other participants.

### **Reporting**

The Club relies on its members to report any problems encountered whilst engaged in Club events, not limited to problems on running routes such as dangerous stiles, damaged pavements, potholes, poor visibility etc.

During a Club event, report to the session leader / host and at other times, report to the Club Chair or Secretary.

Safeguarding concerns **MUST** be reported to the Safeguarding Officer or other authorities. The Committee member receiving the report will record the details of the incident in accordance with England Athletics guidelines. The report will be shared as appropriate, with the membership, run leaders, coaches, the Committee, the Safeguarding Officer, etc.

### **Medical conditions**

All members of the Club declare themselves medically fit to run at their own risk and shall not hold the Club responsible for any incident occurring through a personal medical condition or injury. As appropriate, members should request regular check-ups with their General Practitioner.

Members with any relevant medical conditions agree, where appropriate, to carry with them the relevant details of the condition and their name, address and emergency phone number contact details.

Voluntary disclosure of medical conditions shall be the responsibility of the individual member or their carer in circumstances where they consider an individual risk assessment approach to their welfare may be appropriate.

### **Appropriate clothing**

Members should understand the value of wearing appropriate clothing for the time of year and appropriate shoes for the variations of terrain.

When running in the dark, members must take responsibility for making themselves highly visible by wearing "bright fluorescent clothing with reflective strips / shapes". The event host / leader may, at their discretion, require anyone who they feel is not properly equipped to withdraw from the event.

While the event host / leader may have spare hi-viz available, participants cannot rely on this - they should provide this themselves.

Drivers may find it difficult to see runners in the dark, even in areas with street lights. The Club therefore strongly recommends wearing lights as well as the required clothing.

### **Physical fitness to participate**

While participants attend sessions for many reasons, the central purpose of training sessions is fitness development (rather than fitness maintenance, or social interaction).

As stated above, the Club aims to make all events inclusive, but it is reasonable to expect some level of physical fitness when starting to attend training sessions. Leaders / hosts shape each session so that different levels of challenge are available, but to be a 'participant' rather than an observer, individuals need to be able to access the lowest level or more.

Typically, on a training session, participants will cover 3 miles and more, climb 200 feet or more, and take part in an hour of activity (including warm-up and cool-down).

The Club recommends that new starters have, at least, completed a recognised running development course such as 'Couch to 5k' before engaging in Club events.

### **The event leader / host**

The leader / host for Club events will:

- Hold a recognised qualification in fitness,
- Have some level of First Aid training,
- Have prepared a plan for the session, including an appropriate warm-up and cool-down,
- Be familiar with any route to be used, including any hazards that participants should be made aware of,
- Be aware of the appropriate Risk Assessment, and any additional session-specific significant risks,
- Be aware of early withdrawal routes should it be necessary to stop a session early,
- Inform, via, Spond, of any specific requirements or recommendations for the coming session, e.g. footwear selection.
- Be able to cancel a session should conditions prevent reasonable safety,
- Carry Spond access,
- Carry a mobile phone,
- Have access to, or carry, appropriate kit for the terrain. This might be FRA recommended kit if running off-road.
- Check whether participants have needs that are not known already,
- Carry out active risk assessment during the event, making necessary changes to avoid or reduce previously unknown hazards. This will include listening to participants and keeping aware of individual's welfare,
- Encourage and enable interaction between participants,
- Make themselves known to all participants,
- Receive and pass on incident and safety reports.

### **Gathering / dispersal**

The event leader / host will endeavour to be first to arrive at, and offer to be last to leave from, the stated meeting point.

Participants must park with due care and attention if they have driven to the session.

Participants must have regard to their own safety as they gather - the meeting point will have space but may have other users and vehicular access.

First-timers must make themselves known to the leader / host, as should anyone who is unfamiliar with the leader / host (so they can record the 'register' on Spond).

The leader / host will ensure that all young and / or vulnerable adult participants are collected or safely and confidently disperse before they leave the meeting point.

### **Attendance register**

The Club uses 'Spond', an app that allows communication between the Club and members. Through Spond, members can book onto Club-led events (and access links to others, such as externally organised races).

Using 'Spond' to book onto events allows the 'host' to access an accurate register, and contact details for those attending. The event host / leader will have access to the register during the event.

### **Staying together**

Inevitably, mixed ability occurs within the group attending an event.

To support inclusion, to enable coaching and to check on participant's welfare, regrouping will take place at appropriate times during training sessions and social runs.

Run leaders and session hosts may operate a 'doubling back' approach, to maintain cohesion, support slower runners, and to provide challenge for faster runners. All members are expected to support this approach.

If anyone decides to leave the group during a session or run, they must inform at least one other runner in the group, but preferably directly to the leader / host. The leader / host will decide on necessary action to support the withdrawing person. This might include cutting short the session for the whole group if necessary.

The run leader / host will check numbers both during and at the end of the event so that all participants can be accounted for.

### **Road Sense**

Routes, for training sessions and runs, will be planned to avoid unlit roads during hours of darkness. The exception will be headtorch runs where the kit requirement will be well-advertised prior to the event. Such runs will be largely off-road.

Routes passing along roads without footpaths should be avoided, generally. When this is not possible, participants must consider the likelihood of meeting other road users, and they must take notice of information given by the leader / host who will have considered this in their planning.

### **First Aid**

Members shall familiarise themselves with any individuals who have a recognised emergency first aid qualification within the club.

### **Club Events**

All sports events organised by the Club shall be kept under review and, if deemed necessary by the Committee, allocated members shall undertake and record risk assessments. All sports events shall be staged in accordance with the rules and guidelines stipulated by England Athletics and their insurers.

## **Guidelines Review**

The Health and Safety Guidelines will be reviewed at least every three years, to ensure that they remain accurate and reflect the Club ethos.

These Guidelines should be read along with the Club's Code of Conduct.

Reviewed, rewritten and adopted: July 2024