

ISDS Action Plan – Returning to Trialing

Introduction

COVID-19 has impacted everyone around the world. It has caused immeasurable difficulties to many individuals, families, businesses and disrupted the way of life for many. The difficulties it has caused for sheep dog trialing must be put into stark contrast to the difficulties some people have and still face. For that reason, it is important to emphasize that whilst this document sets out what may be possible at each phase of a return to trialing, public health is the number one priority for all of us. Societies and individual members should be cautious in the implementation of these and always apply sensible decision-making based on the local situation.

I hope this action plan helps provide our members with the knowledge that we are taking steps to support our members and help them return to trialing in a safe manner. I can only offer genuine apologies for the plan and support not being provided sooner. We have faced several difficulties in recent times and being an organisation who has members across the globe has made providing advice extremely difficult and a time-consuming process. What I can say is that all at the ISDS are always committed to supporting our members and that resolve is only strengthened when we face such difficulties.

COVID-19 is an ongoing issue and our action plan will no doubt need flexibility. Not only do we have the health considerations to consider. We also must consider the consequences to our competitions and maintaining their integrity. With that in mind we welcome comment about each phase of the action plan from our members. We know there will be difficult decisions to be made in the coming months and we will be better placed to make those decisions if our members share their views with us.

If you do have any concerns, please email office@isds.org.uk

It may take some time before trialing is back to normal and I'm sure there will be a few bumps in the road along the way. Thank you for continuing to respect the guidance from the Government and for your ongoing support and patience.

Stay Safe



Ian Fleming
Chairman International Sheepdog Trials

Public health is the number one priority

Do not leave your home to go sheep dog trailing if Government advice means you should stay at home because you or someone you live with has or has had symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19), or you are in one of the more vulnerable categories and have been advised to shield from the coronavirus. See www.nhs.uk/coronavirus for more details.

Don't forget your responsibilities

Remember that any new responsibilities to hold sheep dog trials during the period of coronavirus restrictions are in addition to your normal responsibilities as a member or society.

Always check Government guidance

ISDS will make best endeavor to ensure the advice and guidance we provide is up to date. However, the situation and guidance from Government is regularly and rapidly changing. Members and societies should always ensure they check relevant guidance from the Government. The latest advice from the Government is available below

Different National Government advice and guidance

Members and societies should ensure they have read the relevant Government guidelines for their country;

[England](#)

[Ireland](#)

[Scotland](#)

[Wales](#)

Check local restrictions

The UK Government is using 'local restrictions' to manage spikes in certain locations. The action plan and advice in this document is designed to apply to the current national-level guidance. Members and societies should check what local restrictions may be in effect for their area on the Government website and communicate to all members

Test and Trace

Members and societies should ensure they facilitate national test and trace schemes which are in place.

[England](#)

[Ireland](#)

[Scotland](#)

[Wales](#)

Key Facts About Coronavirus

- Coronavirus (COVID-19) is a virus not a bacterium - therefore the most effective way to avoid spreading it is to regularly wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water or, if they are not available, alcohol-based hand-sanitiser.
- Coronavirus (COVID-19) is a novel virus that hasn't been seen before in humans so there is little research available about the virus, how it is transmitted and what is best avoided.
- The virus can be passed from person to person by an infected person touching, breathing on or coughing or sneezing on a surface and spreading virus particles (known as 'shedding').
- The virus has an incubation period where someone may be able to pass on the virus but may not be experiencing any symptoms.

This means we have to work from an assumption that anyone could have the virus and, therefore, maintain our distance from people outside of our households (as set out by the Government) and clean after ourselves and other people as if we/they might have the virus.

- The risk of transmission of the virus is much greater indoors versus outdoors.

For more information on coronavirus (COVID-19) we recommend visiting the following websites:

- [UK Government coronavirus information](#)
- [NHS coronavirus information](#)
- [World Health Organisation coronavirus information](#)

Following the Government Guidance

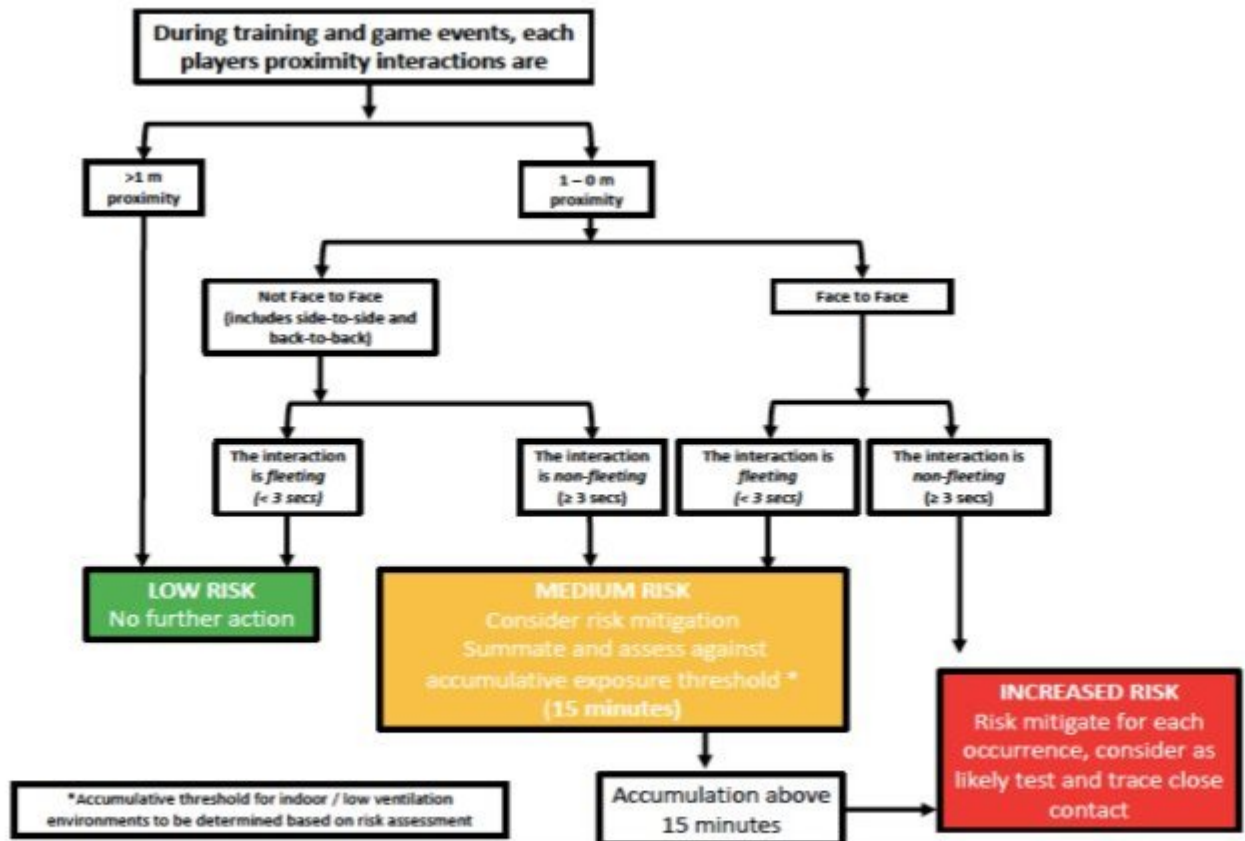
The number one priority for all of us is public health - we all have a responsibility to each other to do what's right to help reduce the spread of the virus.

As a trailing community, this means we must listen to the guidance from the Government and within this document and apply it sensibly at a local level. Every member or society will find unique challenges and scenarios that it must work through and apply an appropriate risk assessment to.

In some cases, there may be variations between how the advice is applied. The trailing community is strongly inter-connected and we would hope that, in most cases, advice and constructive feedback shared between members and societies will ensure appropriate plans and actions are in place.

Assessing The Risk of COVID-19 at Sheep Dog Trials

All those involved in sheep dog trailing will know the environment in which trailing is undertaken. It is outside in the fresh, sometimes extremely fresh, air. Government advice has consistently been pointing people to exercise outside. Government websites provide helpful guidance, not least the below method of assessing risks when undertaking activities



While ultimately, trailing results in nations competing against one another in teams, the actual activity of sheep dog trailing is undertaken with one person and their dog (or two dogs) in isolation. It is clear that following the Government assessment tool the risk of COVID-19 spreading is low. However, it is also true that holding sheep dog trials brings people together. Although the activity itself may result in low risk, hosting sheep dog trials could increase the risk of COVID-19 spreading between those attending. However, there are certain measures hosts can undertake to ensure the risk is reduced to an acceptable level. Further information is provided in the Guide to hosting a COVID-19 safe sheep dog trial.

Our Plan - Summary

Phasing

To help with planning, we have set out a series of phases of how trialing might return to normal in a stepped approach. An outline of the different phases is set out below and as a reference throughout this document.

Phase	Summary	Planned Date (to be kept under review)
Phase 1	Suspension of all major trials and advice to local societies that all trials should be cancelled.	Implemented on 18 th March 2020
Phase 2	Trials sanctioned by ISDS.	September 2020
Phase 3	Open trials sanctioned by ISDS with national points available.	Provisionally 1 st October 2020 (to be reviewed end September 2020)
Phase 4	National trials to return.	Summer 2021
Phase 5	International trial to return.	Summer 2021
Phase 6	World trials	To be reviewed no later than January 2021

Our Plan - More Detail

It is clear to us that our members are eager to get back to trailing and bring some form of normality to their lives. Many of our members are farmers and are used to an isolated existence. Trailing can often be a key part of members social lives and an important way of assisting those who suffer with mental health. During the COVID-19 pandemic there must be a balance between protecting from the virus and ensuring people do not suffer in other ways. It is a process of constantly weighing up risks and making decisions on what is the best way forward.

The steps put in place in March were appropriate for the time. The Government put in place national lockdown restrictions which affected everyone. However, since March there has been a move by Government to replace national restrictions with local solutions. This has made certain aspects of guidance complicated, however, it has resulted in the ISDS reviewing its position.

It is also clear there is increased appetite from members in all nations to return to trailing. The ISDS has witnessed many local members and societies putting local trials on with increasing frequency throughout August and September. Members and societies have clearly undertaken risk assessments, contacted local authorities and created COVID-19 safe environments.

Having now considered Government guidelines in England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales an action plan to return back to competition has been put in place. That action plan consists of 6 phases. Phase 1 being the phase which was effectively put in place on the 18th March.

Phase 2 is the first step to return to competitive trailing sanctioned by the ISDS. It is a key step for the ISDS to take to ensure the return of trailing is undertaken with the ISDS support and in a COVID-19 safe environment for our members. It is an important step to help the ISDS assess whether a return to trailing as it was before COVID-19 can be performed with minimal risk to our members health and the public at large.

Phase 1

Initially the ISDS were quick to react to the pandemic and issued a statement on the 18th March. The statement read

The ISDS official statement regarding COVID-19

The health and well-being of our members, competitors, sponsors, volunteers and staff is of paramount importance. Advice from the Government and health officials regarding COVID-19 is changing daily with stronger restrictions being implemented and enforced. Considering this, we have concluded that all National, International and World trials will not take place this year. We understand and appreciate the level of disappointment that this will create, however we need to act responsibly during these times of uncertainty.

Local Trials

Based on advice issued by the UK Government on March 16th, specifically regarding restrictions on non-essential travel and contact, we strongly recommend that all local trials are cancelled.

We are receiving cancellation notifications daily and will be updating the trials calendar accordingly.

Points awarded at any local open trials will not be accepted by the ISDS as of today, 18th March; and this will continue until further notice.

Any affiliated local society that has purchased the ISDS Insurance must contact the office to raise a credit, as this insurance will be null and void as of today, 18th March 2020.

Major Trials - National, International & World

World trial entry has closed, please do not complete any further applications for World Trial entry, and those of you that have already entered will be contacted shortly.

We have made the decision that all major ISDS trials will not take place in 2020. The ISDS will now focus on managing the consequences of this, and when this is completed, start to undertake preparations for planning the 2021 major trial calendar. Once a 2021 calendar plan has been formed, a further statement will be released with necessary details.

We appreciate your support during this period of uncertainty.

Phase 2

Phase 2 will see the ISDS sanction and publicise trials. The ISDS will not be able to offer insurance for trials at this time. Societies and members hosting trials will need to obtain their own insurance for the trial. This will be continually reviewed, and updates provided.

During phase 2 there will be no national points awarded for trials which are hosted. Even where the hosting of the trial would normally meet the criteria for the awarding of national points.

Members and societies hosting trials will be required to undertake the following;

- A COVID-19 risk assessment. Template and example can be found in the Guide to Hosting COVID-19 safe Sheep Dog Trial.
- All competitors, officials, volunteers and spectators must undergo a self-assessment for any COVID-19 symptoms. No-one should leave home to participate in trailing if they, or someone they live with, has symptoms of COVID-19 currently recognised as any of the following:
 - A high temperature

- A new, continuous cough
 - A loss of, or change to, their sense of smell or taste
- Competitors, officials and all attending trials will be required to maintain social distancing measures in accordance with Government guidance.
- Volunteers and those coming into closer contact with those attending will be required to wear suitable personal protection equipment such as face masks and gloves.
- Competitors, officials and all attending trials will be required to provide their personal details to the host to facilitate track and trace facilities within each nation. Template and example can be found in the Guide to Hosting COVID-19 safe Sheep Dog Trial.
- Competitors, officials and all attending trials will be required to inform the host if they suffer symptoms or testing positive for COVID-19 within 14 days of the trial.
- Hosts will be required to maintain records of all attending for 21 days after the trial.
- Where hosts receive details of an attendee suffering symptoms or testing positive for COVID-19 they must inform the ISDS and comply with local track and trace procedures.

Amongst other advice and guidelines, the ISDS will review outbreaks of COVID-19 which appear to have originated at trials to help assess whether Phase 3 can be implemented in early 2021.

Phase 3

From 1st October 2020 phase 3 will be implemented with National Points being awarded for trials which fulfils the Rules for Trials conditions.

The ISDS anticipate many of the requirements of phase 2 will remain in place. However, this will also be reviewed in December and confirmation provided to the members.

Phase 4

It is the desire and aim of the ISDS to host the 4 national trials in summer 2021. This will only be achieved if it is permissible in each nation in accordance with the current restrictions and guidance from each Government.

At this stage it is anticipated the trials may be reduced in certain aspects. The main aim will maintain the integrity of the competitions while creating a COVID-19 safe environment. Based on current guidelines spectators may not be permitted or may be substantially reduced. ISDS will continue to review this going forward and update Members in light of Government regulation and advice.

The ISDS will review this phase in January 2021. The following dates are currently set for national trials.

England: Dovedale 29th to 31st July

Ireland: Killalee 5th to 7th August

Wales: Caerberllan 6th to 8th August

Scotland: Thurso 19th to 21st August (Brace runs afternoon of Wednesday 18th August)

Phase 5

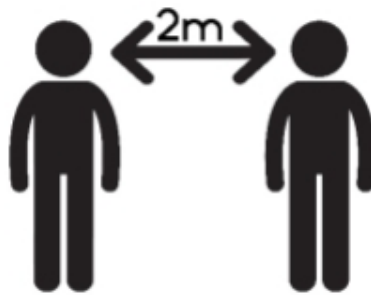
As with phase 4 the ISDS hopes to host the International Trial in 2021. Again, at this stage it is anticipated the trials may be reduced in certain aspects. The main aim will be to maintain the integrity of the competition while providing a COVID-19 safe environment. Based on current guidelines spectators may not be permitted or may be substantially reduced.

The ISDS will review this phase in January 2021.

Phase 6

Holding the World Trials. The ISDS is committed to hosting the World trials at the earliest opportunity. However, there are many more considerations which will need to be assessed. There are clearly increased complications with foreign travel and isolation requirements. At this stage the ISDS does not rule out the hosting of the world trials in 2021, however, we do acknowledge that unless international restrictions are changed significantly then the hosting of the World trial in 2021 may not be possible.

Advice to Trialists



Follow social distancing guidelines at all times



Wash hands regularly with soap and water or use hand sanitiser



Respect the rules set out by your host and help yourself, other competitors and the public stay healthy



Do not visit trials if you or anyone in your house are showing any symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) or whilst you should be self-isolating or shielding

BE KIND

Be kind - your hosts are giving up their time to ensure you are all safe



Don't share equipment