

Open Environments FAQ's

Abuse is usually hidden from view. Adults may not recognise the signs that a child is being abused and children may not recognise that what is happening to them is abuse – or they may be too young, too scared or too ashamed to tell anyone (NSPCC, 2024).

Welsh Gymnastics are committed to providing children with a safe and open environment. Your environment must be open during all gymnastics activities so we can be a part of the change. What does this look like?

Parents, carers or guardians are able to watch their children should they wish to.

Q. But I only have enough space for 16 parents and there are 28 in the class.

A. You do not have to accommodate for all adults. An open environment is where adults who are not staff or part of your club can view the activity and can report concerns should they see anything of concern. This does not mean that you must accommodate everyone.

Q. I wouldn't meet fire regulations if I have more people in my environment.

A. You can have a window into your gym from the waiting area/café/reception.

A. Please reconsider your class sizes and scheduling.

Q. We don't have a window into our gym.

A. You can live stream to your waiting area. If you are unsure how to manage this, several clubs have started doing so, we can send you examples to support you.

Q. I don't have a waiting area for an open environment.

A. You don't need to have a waiting area, there are many ways to have adults within your environment. You can have a seating area within the gym that will accommodate for a small number of people.

Q. Our classes are running at full capacity, would we be expected to decrease number of members to accommodate open environment?

A. Please consider all options above, if this isn't feasible, please consider changing your class structures.

Q. We currently offer provision/spaces to ensure we are financially viable, if we reduce classes, we will be unable to sustain provision. What does Welsh Gymnastics recommend for this?

A. Seating arrangements do not need to take significant amount of square footage, we are happy to visit your environment to talk through this with you.

Q. I am based in a leisure centre or school hall with limited space that is maximised by participants. How am I able to offer an open environment?

A. Please reconsider your class sizes to ensure you can offer a safe and open environment.

Q. What does all environments mean and does this apply to my club or activity?

A. Anywhere that children are participating in Welsh Gymnastics affiliated gymnastics activities.

Q. Does every part of the gym need to be able to be viewed via a livestream or from the window/spectator area? Our environment has internal walls which make some areas difficult to see.

A. No, only the main area needs to be viewed. However, if there is an area that is not in sight of streaming/waiting room you MUST not take minors to this area alone. An appropriate adult must accompany you (2nd adult, coach, staff etc).

Q. When are you expecting clubs to be fully implementing an open environment?

A. The policy will go live in September at which point we will work with clubs over a 3-month period to ensure that the policy is not being breached. However, if you are concerned about your environment, please let your Development Officer know ASAP so that Welsh Gymnastics can support you.

Q. I am worried about how this policy will affect my club. Who can I contact to discuss my individual setting?

A. Speak to your Development Officer in the first instance. Should there be concerns that your club will be unable to meet the basic minimum standards of safeguarding by December they will then refer you to the safeguarding team.

Q. What would you recommend as the appropriate course of action should a spectator break code of conduct rules regularly? (shouting over to their gymnast during class etc)

A. You should remind them of the Codes of Conduct and follow the 3-step sanction system (in collaboration with the Welsh Gymnastics Safeguarding Team).

Q. We do not have a waiting or viewing area and cannot make changes to the building without landlord permission. What options do we have?

A. A few chairs in the environment for parents/carers to attend has been successfully implemented by other clubs with this issue.

Q. What costs are involved in installing a live stream and do WG have any recommended suppliers?

A. This depends on the system that you are considering, and Welsh Gymnastics are unable to provide specific manufacturers. Please speak to us to discuss your funding options.

Q. Should we have a visitor sign-in sheet for spectators coming in?



A. Although we are not making this a requirement, we do recommend that you review your emergency procedures to ensure the safety of your users.

Q. What will happen if I am unable to offer an open environment?

A. Speak with your development officer to consider options and what supports are available. Your development officer will work with the safeguarding team that you met the minimum operating and safeguarding standards. If after full deliberation this is not achievable, we would have to consider de-affiliation.

Q. Why are Welsh Gymnastics making this mandatory?

A. The majority of child abuse cases reported to the NSPCC happens behind closed doors and hidden from view. Let's be part of the change.