



# GUIDANCE AND BEST PRACTICE FOR SCHOOLS

## POP UP SWIMMING POOLS

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW TO EFFECTIVELY MANAGE THE RISKS OF TEMPORARY POOLS IN YOUR SCHOOLS

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## **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 ***“Only in situations where access to established water facilities is not feasible, temporary pools can serve to broaden opportunities for aquatic engagement.” (Swim England)***
- 1.2 Schools wanting to hire pop-up/temporary pools (or any other type of pool) used for teaching swimming should know it is a high-risk activity and must only be considered following appropriate professional guidance including legal and health and safety advice.
- 1.3 To help schools in making informed decisions, Calderdale’s Health and Safety Team have provided this guidance which should be thoroughly reviewed so that Headteachers are aware of their roles and responsibilities, in order to make informed decisions prior to engaging with any temporary swimming pool facility service providers.
- 1.4 Calderdale Council emphasizes the importance of schools adhering to the guidelines set forth by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), with a particular emphasis on [HSG 179](#), which is tailored to the management of swimming pool facilities and the [Pool Water Treatment Advisory Group \(PWTAG\)](#) take note of [PWTAG’s Code of Practice](#).
- 1.5 PWTAG have also released a technical note titled ‘Hiring out above ground domestic pop-up/temporary pools’ [Technical Note 65 \(TN65\)](#) which offers comprehensive information and recommendations on the proper utilisation of pop-up/temporary pools for commercial purposes and how to comply with the law.
- 1.6 Pop-up/temporary pools are now being used at numerous locations throughout the country to facilitate the provision of school swimming lessons and water safety sessions. This development has prompted Calderdale Council to underscore the critical health and safety considerations that must be thoroughly evaluated prior to the usage of pop-up/temporary pools for schools throughout Calderdale.
- 1.7 School swimming and water safety lessons are integral components of the national curriculum, playing a vital role in equipping children with water competency skills.
- 1.8 Should an incident occur to a child during a swimming lesson in a ‘pop up’ pool facility, resulting in the child going to hospital, such an incident will likely meet the reporting criteria outlined in the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR 2013). Following subsequent notification to the enforcing authority, it is possible that the HSE will investigate. Therefore, it is essential that your schools can demonstrate (as the employer) that you have made all the necessary assurance checks and monitored the safety of the ‘pop up’ pool management.

## **2 BENEFIT ANALYSIS – USING COUNCIL MAINTAINED POOLS.**

- 2.1 When schools utilise Council maintained pools for swimming lessons, the safety responsibilities rest with the Council’s swimming pool management teams.

- 2.2 Using Calderdale Council pools for school swimming lessons safeguards our facilities for future generations.
- 2.3 The use of pop-up/temporary pools for delivering school swimming lessons in areas that cannot access regular swimming pool facilities should clearly be considered. However, from a safety perspective we are aware of at least one serious incident in the Yorkshire and Humber region involving the use of a pop-up pool facility, and we strongly believe that the standard of lifeguarding in CMBC swimming pools cannot be matched. The Council's pools provide the best opportunity for children to learn how to swim in a professional environment with an assurance that all needs can be met, and all relevant safety standards are being followed.
- 2.4 Aside from being an invaluable life skill, learning to swim is a lifelong journey into health and wellbeing, and for some children their school swimming lessons are their first visit to a leisure centre. By not engaging with our facilities, children may not understand the importance of leisure centres within their community and will miss out on having this experience. In addition, as pools are used less frequently by the community the risk of closure increases. In the last five years, it is reported that 85 Council maintained pools have closed and have not been replaced across the UK.
- 2.5 Despite several fatal drownings in Council managed pools across the Yorkshire and Humber region, **there has never been a fatal drowning in a Calderdale Council pool.** The main reason for this is that all Calderdale pools meet the full requirements of HSG179, and the standard of lifeguarding is exemplary.
- 2.6 Calderdale pools are also accessible for all and have a variety of equipment such as pool hoists to enable access for all. However, a temporary pool may not mirror this level of accessibility which could mean that children with a physical disability may not be able to take part.
- 2.7 The dimensions of traditional pools allow for stamina to be developed; the restrictive dimensions of temporary pools will not allow for stamina to be gained in the same way.
- 2.8 When children attend swimming lessons at a council run facility, they can complete the national curriculum outcomes as Calderdale pools are built in accordance with specific guidance e.g., length and depth are suitable for all outcomes.
- 2.9 Pop-up/temporary pools prevent some outcomes being completed to the required standard such as:
- Children are required to swim a minimum of 25m of a recognised stroke without stopping. Temporary pools are 10m in length and therefore children would need to swim 3 lengths of the pool, turning at each end to achieve this.
  - Children are required to perform a self-rescue including treading water and it is best practice to complete this in deep water due to it being a vital skill which may be needed in an emergency. Temporary pools are shallow where most children

will be able to touch the floor and are therefore not deep enough to meet this outcome.

- Jumping in is an essential water safety skill as it can replicate the feeling of falling into water and the face being submerged. It is not possible to jump in into a temporary pool.
- Climbing out of the pool without the use of steps. This is not possible in a temporary pool due to them not having a poolside.

2.10 Calderdale pools give children the best opportunity to achieve the national curriculum outcomes to the best of their ability in a professional and safe environment.

2.11 There may be hidden costs associated with running pop-up pools in the winter or during colder periods in terms of utility bills for energy.

### **3 BENEFIT ANALYSIS – USING POP UP OR TEMPORARY POOLS.**

3.1 There are several factors that schools are taking into consideration when deciding to use pop-up/temporary pools. This includes but is not limited to; the convenience and availability of facilities, cost, the reduction of time spent traveling to off-site locations, and the opportunity to potentially involve more students in swimming lessons.

3.2 School swimming should not be narrowly focused upon short-term cost-saving measures. This will not be seen favourably by the enforcing authority (HSE) post-accident.

3.3 When using a pop-up/temporary pool in a school setting, it's crucial to consider potential knock-on hazards such as slippery floors, transitioning pupils to and from the pool facility etc. to ensure the safety and well-being of students.

3.4 It is important to assess whether a temporary pool can effectively support the acquisition of essential skills needed to meet curriculum standards before its implementation.

3.5 It is crucial to seek professional advice, including legal and health and safety considerations, before going ahead with any agreements.

3.6 It is imperative that swimming pool service providers can supply their own risk assessment, demonstrate appropriate insurance coverage, provide DBS information, and offer assurances regarding safety and security measures.

3.7 Swimming service providers should refer to their own documentation to decide the appropriate number of lifeguards, swimming teachers, and their qualifications for different student groups, as well as safe working practices. The assurance checklist in Appendix 1 identifies the best practice that should be achieved.

3.8 The service providers typically face challenges in meeting the requirements of students with mobility impairments, but they may be able to cater to the needs of students with certain behavioural needs in collaboration with school staff.

Therefore, if the project is intended for long-term implementation, the school must strategize on how to ensure equal access to swimming facilities for all students. A hybrid approach, such as having groups use a nearby leisure facility while others use an on-site pool, may be a suitable solution.

#### **4 APPROPRIATE SERVICE PROVIDER SELECTION.**

- 4.1 The school is directly responsible for entering into a contractual agreement with any service provider, ensuring that the service provider possesses the necessary qualifications and training to safely deliver and set up facilities in the correct manner.
- 4.2 It is imperative for schools to demonstrate that they have conducted thorough assurance checks on potential service providers, including verifying their competency and certifications in pool management, lifeguarding, and teaching.
- 4.3 Despite great information gathering, it is strongly advised that schools do not solely rely on the experiences of other schools. Legally, every school must conduct their own assurance exercise to determine the service provider's suitability. Schools should only engage with service providers who have been deemed competent and can demonstrate the appropriate qualifications for the safe and effective management of the pool facilities.
- 4.4 Schools must check the service providers terms of the Service Level Agreement (SLA). The pool may be appointed for exclusive use by your school, whereby the facility may not be hired out to other schools as this may fall outside the scope of the SLA and insurance coverage.

#### **5 COMMUNICATIONS**

- 5.1 Maintaining effective communication with service provider employees and all school staff is imperative throughout every phase of the process. It is crucial to appoint nominated representatives from both the service provider and the school to ensure consistent and regular communication.
- 5.2 Additionally, if a school has a pool on site, it should be included in all staff briefings to ensure that all staff members are informed, regardless of whether they are directly involved in pool activities.
- 5.3 Where school colleagues are assuming the role of a 'stand back observer', this role must be clearly defined to those involved. Essentially they are an additional set of 'eyes and ears' and should not be required to intervene with rescues.
- 5.4 **Nobody within the pop-up pool facility should have a mobile phone out at any time unless they are calling 999 as part of an emergency response.**

#### **6 RISK ASSESSMENTS**

- 6.1 It is imperative that the service provider conducts a thorough site-specific risk assessment and supplies a copy to the school for review. Using the service provider's risk assessment, the school must also complete their own risk assessment to outline how all responsibilities will be met. This will also include

ensuring that there are individual risk assessments in place for any pupil with a medical condition. Regular reviews of these assessments are essential to keep their effectiveness, and they must be shared with all relevant parties, including the service provider and school staff.

6.2 Areas to take into consideration to ensure that the assessment is comprehensive and covers all necessary elements:

- Operating parameters
- The placement of the marquee and pool
- Adhere to industry standards.
- Security
- Supervision
- Bathing load
- Filtration
- Water quality
- Water temperature
- Weather conditions
- Wildlife
- Disinfection
- Chemical testing
- Draining the water
- Slip, trips, and falls
- Qualified staff
- Pupil medical need
- Drowning
- Safeguarding
- Supervision Ratios
- Emergency procedures
- First aid and lifesaving equipment

Please note that this is not an exhaustive list (more detail in HSG179 and technical notes).

6.3 If a school has any concerns, they are encouraged to consult with the Health and Safety team.

## **7 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 There are clear legal requirements associated with pop up/temporary pools namely the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974), the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1999), the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (PUWER 1998), Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH 2002), and many other industry standards.

7.2 Prior to renting equipment, schools must ensure that a written contract is in place, outlining the responsibilities of both parties and including necessary indemnities related to the services provided. It is important to note that service providers cannot limit their liability for death or personal injury through contractual terms.

- 7.3 It is essential for schools to understand that they cannot transfer their duty of care to service providers and must supply adequate supervision of students and be prepared to intervene when necessary.
- 7.4 It is also worth noting that planning permission will be required if the temporary structure is going to be in place for more than 28 days, or if it's going to be used for a commercial activity.

## **8 INSURANCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 The service provider must be able to supply proof of valid and adequate public liability insurance of at least £10 million.
- 8.2 A thorough review of the service provider's insurance certificate is recommended. This includes verification of the indemnity level and coverage period to ensure that it still is in effect for the entirety of the installation and hire agreement, not just during the period of pupil use.
- 8.3 Schools must verify with their own insurance service provider to ensure that the coverage is suitable and sufficiently covers all eventualities outside of the third-party hirers being on site.

## **9 SAFEGUARDING AND DBS REQUIREMENTS**

- 9.1 The service provider responsible for hiring lifeguards and swimming instructors should provide the school with a letter of assurance, confirming that all staff possess enhanced DBS certificates. Should the school require additional reassurance, they have the right to request a copy of the certificate for verification.
- 9.2 Furthermore, the service provider should supply a letter of assurance certifying that all staff have undergone Safeguarding training and adhere to a Safeguarding Policy. The school should also share their Safeguarding Policy with the lifeguards and swimming instructors and name a point of contact for reporting any safeguarding concerns (the Designated Safeguarding Lead).
- 9.3 School must have suitable and sufficient procedures in place for safe and effective changing, showering, toileting etc in place that all staff (third party and school) are trained on.
- 9.4 Again, **Nobody within the pop-up pool facility should have a mobile phone out at any time unless they are calling 999 as part of an emergency response.**

## **10 SITE SECURITY**

- 10.1 The primary obligation for safeguarding the pool's integrity and security lies with the pool service provider. However, the school assumes a collaborative role in ensuring the site's safety and security during non-operational hours (evenings and weekends). Schools must have effective measures in place to prevent unauthorised access to the pool, pool plant and chemicals when they are not in use.



- 10.2 The pool is usually housed within a robust fabric marquee supplied by the service provider, who bears the responsibility of securing the structure at the conclusion of each day's activities.
- 10.3 To mitigate potential risks, schools are strongly urged to establish comprehensive emergency contact protocols that can be swiftly implemented in the event of a concern raised by law enforcement or neighbouring residents. Vigilance should be exercised in securing all school site access points.

## **11 STAFFING**

- 11.1 Schools hold the overall responsibility and duty of care to safeguard students. The reliance solely upon pool service provider staff for supervision is insufficient to fulfil this role. All staff are to be made aware and adhere to Normal Operating Procedures (NOPS) and Emergency Action Plans (EAPS).
- 11.2 Staff provided by the third-party hirers must be suitably qualified to carry out their role. This should include an appropriate lifeguard, swim teaching and pool plant qualification, with associated CPD training evidenced. Guidance can be found within the assurance checklist in Appendix 1.
- 11.3 Staffing levels must be meticulously planned to encompass the entire duration of the students' presence at the pool facility. This includes oversight during transit from classrooms to changing rooms, preparation for lessons, supervision during classes, and safe return to the school building.
- 11.4 Given that students require ample time to dry off and change, pupil group changeover periods must be factored into staffing considerations and avoid walking on smooth floors within the school when wet. To ensure constant supervision, it is highly probable that multiple staff members will be necessary.

## **12 WATER QUALITY (INCLUDING STATUTORY CHECKS UNDER COSHH 2002)**

- 12.1 Pool operators must carry out an assessment under COSHH to protect their workforce and visitors against health risks from hazardous substances used at work. Having assessed the risks, they must decide what precautions are necessary to prevent or control exposure and then monitor the procedures and make sure that the control measures are used and maintained.
- 12.2 Swimming pools represent unique operational and health risks. They can easily be contaminated by sweat, urine, faeces, hair, and skin, and become places where dangerous microbes flourish. If the pool water chemistry is not correctly managed harmful bacteria such as E. coli, Salmonella and Legionella can accumulate, presenting a serious risk to human health.
- 12.3 Temporary pools are often designed for domestic use and may not have robust filtration systems. The service provider is tasked with ensuring the safety and quality of the pool water, which includes maintaining an adequate supply for filling the pool, monitoring water levels during the hire period, administering necessary chemicals and treatments, and properly draining the pool at the end of the hire period.

- 12.4 It is important to ensure that someone has acquired an agreement (also known as discharge consent) from Yorkshire Water to dispose of pool water after use. Failure to do so could result in significant environmental fines and/or prosecutions where water courses are inadvertently polluted.
- 12.5 Treatment chemicals, typically chlorine tablets, must be securely stored in a locked container with a safety data sheet, away from the pool area. It is the school's responsibility to verify that the service provider complies with this requirement and to prevent access to these hazardous chemicals by school employees and students.
- 12.6 The service provider should appoint their experienced staff to conduct daily recorded chemical checks and at least weekly mechanical maintenance. The swimming pool should be visited at least once a week by a swimming pool technical operator (SPTO) as well as daily water testing.
- 12.7 Refer to [Pool Water Treatment Advisory Group \(PWTAG\) - Technical Note 65 \(TN65\)](#) for further information.

### **13 ELECTRICAL SAFETY**

- 13.1 The public area of the swimming pool would be subject to fixed electrical testing under the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989 and the IET Wiring Regulations.
- 13.2 It is the responsibility of the service provider to offer guidance to schools regarding the necessary external electrical supply needed to ensure the safe operation of the pool. Each school is accountable for coordinating any supplementary tasks needed to establish a suitable external electrical supply and must secure the appropriate certification to verify that the work has been completed to the necessary level of quality.
- 13.3 Whilst the considerations above are not exhaustive, it gives a broad idea of compliance. Calderdale Council would strongly urge decision makers to ensure they are fully abreast of all implications, and potential ramifications ahead of pursuing the use of a temporary pool.

### **14 USEFUL LINKS AND FURTHER GUIDANCE**

- [Health and Safety Executive \(HSE\) - HSG 179](#)
- [Pool Water Treatment Advisory Group \(PWTAG\)](#)
- [PWTAG's Code of Practice](#)
- [Technical Note 65 \(TN65\)](#)
- [Swim England's Position on the use of pop-up pools](#)
- [STA pop into School Swimming to Deliver a Free NEW Safety Checklist](#)
- [OEAP Nation guidance including 7.1o Natural Water Bathing, 7.1x Swimming pools, 7.2i Group Safety at Water Margins and 8.1r Swimming Pool Service provider Statement](#)

## **APPENDIX 1 – ASSURANCE CHECKLIST FOR SCHOOLS**

**(Please ask your provider to complete this checklist and provide the required documentation)**

### **Pop Up Swimming Pools – Checklist for Pool Operator**

	<b>Y</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>DOCUMENTATION</b>				
Have you provided the school with a copy of the risk assessment for pool operation?				
Have you provided the school with a copy of the operators Normal Operating Procedures (NOPS) as part of the Pool Safe Operating Procedures document (PSOP)?				
Have you provided the school with a copy of your Emergency Action Plans (EAPS) as part of the Pool Safe Operating Procedures document (PSOP)?				
Have you provided the school with copies of any legal agreements/contracts and any prohibitions around leasing and hiring out arrangements?				
Have you provided the school with details of your Public Liability Certificate confirming a minimum cover of £10 million?				
<b>COSHH</b>				
Have you provided the school with a copy of COSHH risk assessments for the use of HTH or other dosing products?				
Have you provided evidence of your COSHH training and/or any competence in pool dosing?				
Has secure storage for hazardous substances been provided?				
Is medium rate sand filtration (with a flocculant) or other acceptable filtration system in place?				
<b>SLIPS, TRIPS AND FALLS</b>				
Have you confirmed that the adjacent wood floor surface around the pool has some form of slip resistance rating?				
Does the pool tank have slip resistant surfacing				

on pool end walls extending 0.8m below the water level as per Swim England guidance?				
Does the pool tank have slip resistant surfacing on the pool floor in any area where the pool is shallower than 1.35m deep as per Swim England guidance?				
Will there be appropriate storage of equipment and other teaching/coaching aids?				
<b>LIFEGUARD COMPETENCE AND FIRST AID</b>				
Do your lifeguards/instructors hold the RLSS certificate in lifesaving and pool safety? (If not, please provide evidence of equivalent standard)				
Do your swimming teachers hold the National Rescue Award for Swimming Teachers (NRASTC) provided by RLSS to assist with rescues?				
Do your lifeguards/instructors receive regular (monthly) refresher training from a qualified trainer assessor on lifeguarding and first aid? (If not, how do you ensure that they retain their competence)				
Have you confirmed that first aid equipment and/or lifesaving equipment including a defibrillator (with appropriate pads for children) will be provided?				
Have you provided a procedure to deal with serious or imminent dangers (as per Regulation 8 of MHSWR 1999) which includes relevant contact numbers?				
Is there a means of raising the alarm to the school in an emergency (drowning alarms), and/or a telephone line available?				
Does the PSOP cover how conscious and unconscious casualties will be safely removed from the pool (including use of spinal boards)?				
<b>SECURITY</b>				
Are procedures in place to ensure that the facility is locked/secured to prevent entry when not in use (including out of hours)?				
Has the facility been protected to prevent				

animals accessing the pool?				
<b>PLANT MAINTENANCE</b>				
Have you confirmed how the plant (i.e., filters) will be maintained?				
Have you confirmed that you will provide the school with a record of a daily check of the facility as evidence of best practice?				
Will the facility be visited at least once a week by a swimming pool technical operator (SPTO)?				
Have you confirmed that they you provide evidence of cleaning, dosing etc.?				
Have you confirmed that the water will be tested (and records available) every two hours for chlorine and PH when the pool is being operated as per PWTAG guidance?  (NOTE: Free chlorine should measure at 1-2mg/l and the recommended PH value is between 7.0 and 7.4 and ideally 7.0 to 7.2 when using chlorine-based disinfectants)				
Have you demonstrated your competence in pool plant maintenance and operation? For example, a 'Pool Plant Operators Certificate' provided by PWTAG?				
Is there a Pool Technical Operating Procedure in place for the facility (in line with PWTAG CoP Annex B)?				
<b>HEATING, LIGHTING AND VENTILATION</b>				
Has appropriate lighting been provided? (minimum of 300 lux).				
Will the visibility of the pool be maintained at all times? i.e., no glare or reflections?				
Has appropriate ventilation been achieved to maintain a comfortable air temperature for pool users, whilst not contributing to a build-up of noxious compounds in the pool facilities atmosphere?				
Is the water temperature between 28-30 degrees in line with PWTAG guidance (dependent on the intended users)?				

<b>SIGNAGE</b>				
Has appropriate signage been displayed? E.g., presence of a pool, water depths, no diving etc.				
<b>POOL OPERATION</b>				
Have you confirmed the maximum number of pupils permitted in the pool at any given time? (1 bather per 3m <sup>2</sup> of pool space)				
Have you stated the minimum supervision levels for teaching?				
Where school colleagues are acting in the capacity of a 'stand back observer', has this role and associated responsibilities been clearly defined?				
Is there suitable and safe access and egress to and from the pool?				
Is there suitable and safe access and egress into and out of the pool?				
Are there any arrangements for pre-swim hygiene?				
Are there any arrangements to prevent material getting into the pool from users' feet?				
Have you ensured that the use of mobile phones (and other devices) have been prohibited when the pool is in operation and instructors are teaching lessons (other than to call 999)?				
What safeguards have been put in place for any pupils who are unable to stand up in the pool?				
<b>REPORTING AND RECORDING INCIDENTS</b>				
Is there a formal procedure in place for the reporting and recording of incidents?				
Is there equipment and a clear procedure in place to deal with a child having a toilet accident in the water (i.e., faecal fouling procedure) with specific reference to how long the pool will become non-operational?				
<b>SAFEGUARDING</b>				
Have all appropriate safeguarding				

considerations been made?				
Have DBS checks been conducted on all instructors?				
Have you provided the school with a letter of assurance to confirm that all your staff have completed safeguarding training?				
Has the school shared a copy of their safeguarding policy with you as the pool operator and is there a named point of contact?				
<b>CHANGING FACILITIES</b>				
Have appropriate changing facilities been provided?				
Have appropriate toilet facilities been provided?				
Will showers be provided as part of a pre-cleanse routine to ensure water quality is retained?  (NOTE: If showers are to be used there are further considerations around legionella control that you may need additional advice from H&S about).				
Is there a clear procedure, and are there robust arrangements in place, for getting pupils to and from the pool facility (with reference to adverse weather and appropriate clothing)?				
Is there an expectation that children will not walk on smooth floors in the school with wet feet?				
<b>CDM CONSIDERATIONS</b>				
Have you provided the school with confirmation that the structure has been built to the expected standard and deemed safe to use?				
Has the school saved all relevant documentation on file to evidence their due diligence as the 'client'?				
Will the school undertake routine monitoring and supervision of the pool operator (in line with HSG159) and are you keeping records to evidence that a check has been made?				
Have you provided the school with certification to prove that all fixed electrical installations are				

safe under the Electricity at Work Regulations and IET Wiring requirements?				
Will the pool be erected in a suitably level and firm location to support the weight of the pool structure and water?				
<b>WATER DISPOSAL</b>				
Do the pool surrounds fall to a drainage channel connected directly to waste?				
Have you acquired an agreement/discharge consent from Yorkshire Water to provide (and then dispose of the water) after use? ( <i>NOTE: Pollution of water courses could result in significant fines and/or prosecution</i> )				

	<b>NAME</b>	<b>SIGNED</b>	<b>DATE</b>
<b>Pool Operator:</b>			
<b>Job Title:</b>			