



# **CIMSPA Guidance**

# **Participant to workforce ratios**

**Dated: November 2024**

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## **Purpose & Audience**

The purpose of this statement is to provide guidance to employers, education providers and CIMSPA members on appropriate participant to workforce ratios.

## **Background**

CIMSPA has been asked by its members and partners to provide guidance regarding the number of participants a member of the workforce it is appropriate to work with at any one time. It's difficult to provide a definitive and prescriptive answer as there are too many scenarios to consider such as, the role the member of the workforce is performing & their training and experience, the space available to work in, the types of participant taking part in the activity, the type of activity, any risks or hazards associated with the activity, etc.

What we want to avoid in the distribution of this guidance is placing restrictions on activities that may be completely appropriate and/or restricting people's ability to access these activities.

Considering the above we have provided below a set of principles that an employer, education provider or member of the workforce should consider when determining the ratio of participants to members of the workforce, we've also added some brief frequently asked questions.

This guidance is dynamic and can be updated at any time, if the guidance doesn't answer your query please let us know via the contact details below and we will update it to cover your question. It's been designed to help you, not to create restrictions on your practices.

## **The principles – considerations when determining participant to workforce ratios**

### **Principle 1**

All activities must be thoroughly and effectively risk assessed. A systematic and dynamic approach to risk management must be applied in all settings at all times. As part of the planning of activity this risk assessment should consider the participant to workforce ratio, considering the points referenced in the introduction.

### **Principle 2**

All members of the workforce should be appropriately trained in the activities they are delivering. The most effective way to check whether the member of the workforce is current, competent and safe is to check whether they are a CIMSPA member.

### **Principle 3**

The role the workforce is undertaking should be considered. All members of the workforce should be working in line with the scope of practice as outlined within the relevant professional standard, details can be found here. [CIMSPA Professional Standards for job roles in our sector | CIMSPA](#)

As you will see in the scopes of practice it is outlined that.

- Gym Instructors. Can induct individuals & small groups and plan, monitor and review gym based exercise programmes.
- Group exercise instructors. Can plan deliver and review group exercise programmes.
- Personal Trainers. Can coach clients on a one to one and small group basis.

**Principle 4**

The type of participant must be considered. Along with principle 5 & 6 the type of participant you're working with must be considered as participants with more complex needs may require more support. E.g. working with people who are inexperienced in fitness activity presents very different challenges to working with people who are experienced.

**Principle 5**

The type of activity must be considered. Along with principle 4 & 6 the type of activity must be considered as some activities require more support from the member of the workforce than other activities.

**Principle 6**

The environment you're working in must be considered. Along with principle 4 & 5 the environment you're working in must be considered as some environments may provide greater support to the workforce than others. E.g. delivering a session in a gym or leisure centre presents very different risks to operating in a park.



## **Frequently asked questions**

### **What is a small group?**

That will be determined by the principles above but generally a small group is between 2 – 10 participants.

### **I'm a personal trainer and I want to deliver to larger groups?**

We would advise picking up additional training such as a group exercise instructor qualification.

### **I hold an exercise referral qualification, does that make a difference?**

Yes as part of your exercise referral qualification it covers how to work with larger groups. Though we would strongly advise the principles above are considered when determining the appropriate group to workforce ratio of an exercise referral class.

### **What would happen if something went wrong in a group session?**

Should a worst case scenario happen its likely the first question would be were they working in line with the risk assessment and or standard operating procedures, its important these things are considered.

### **Contact for further correspondence**

CIMSPA: [info@cimspa.co.uk](mailto:info@cimspa.co.uk)