

Swimwear Guidance

The Swim England Swimming Leadership Group were asked to consider a relaxation of Regulation 411, for individuals who as a result of either their religious beliefs or a pre-existing medical condition would like to wear a swimsuit which would otherwise be considered “Illegal” at a competitive swimming event.

Having given consideration to the questions the Swimming Leadership Group would like to offer the following advice to all those involved in competitive swimming either as an event organiser, participant, technical official or volunteer.

This guidance is for Swim England events only – Swim Wales and Scottish Swimming have not as yet amended their rules/guidance

Alternative Wear

At all levels of licensed meet (1,2,3 and 4), and Swim England National Events (Summer, Winter, County Team and Masters Championships) the event referee(s) shall remain in control of the competition and shall remain free to use their discretion, experience, training and common sense in order to make decisions with regard to ensuring a fair and even competition for all participants.

At all levels of licensed meet (1,2,3 and 4), and Swim England National Events (Summer, Winter, County Team and Masters Championships) the Swim England Swimming Leadership Group has decided to allow a relaxation of Regulation 411, so that for either religious or medical reasons swimmers may compete in a swim suit that covers more of the body than would otherwise be permitted.

- Suits shall be made of a textile material as per the current World Aquatics Rules.
- There is no limit to how many pieces the suit is made up from (i.e. “Trousers/bottoms”, top and head covering).
- Suits which the referee believes would be capable of enhancing a swimmers performance will not be permitted.
- Swimmers wishing to swim in such a suit shall (either themselves or their representative) present the suit to the event referee for inspection prior to their swim. Alternatively, a Certificate of Exception with a listed swimwear exception may be presented.
- The referee’s decision shall be final.

Once the referee has been informed of a swimmer wishing to wear a suit, as described above, there is no requirement for the referee to question the swimmer further, the Swim England Swimming Leadership Group do not want athletes being asked why they wish to wear the suit. The same process is to be followed if the referee is presented with a Certificate of Exception including a listed swimwear exception.

Some examples of swimwear which would be considered to be acceptable under this guidance would be:

Male



- 1 Swimming trunks
- 2 Swimming shorts
- 3 Knee length shorts including board shorts
- 4 Lycra leggings (Including below knee)
- 5 Short and long-sleeve close-fitting t-shirts

Female



- 1 Bikini's/Tankini's
- 2 Swimming costumes
- 3 Lycra leggings (Including below knee)
- 4 Short and long-sleeve close-fitting t-shirts
- 5 Swim dresses
- 6 Swimming shorts
- 7 Knee length shorts including board shorts

Please note, the categories above are not intended to be prescriptive. Where appropriate, swimwear may be chosen from either category.