



Media Release

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NATIONAL GUIDANCE ON RESTRICTED FAMILY SWIMMING LIFTED

Restrictions governing access for children to general swimming sessions at all of the council's swimming pools are to be relaxed following the reversal of national guidelines.

Last October, Harrogate Borough Council amended its swimming admission policies in line with new national guidelines. This meant that children aged four and under could only be allowed into general swimming sessions if they were accompanied on a one to one basis with a parent or responsible carer aged 16 or over. Previous guidelines had allowed for two children under eight to be accompanied by one adult.

The new guidelines, introduced by the Institute of Sport and Recreation Management (ISRM), have not been well received by parents and the Institute has reviewed its position. The Institute is now satisfied that pool operators can revert back to the previous policy of allowing two children under eight to attend a general swimming session with one responsible adult. However, it is now insisting that non-swimmers wear armbands or similar floatation devices.

Councillor Pat Jones, Cabinet Member for Leisure and Amenity Services, has today given the go-ahead for the admission policy to be varied. She said: “The new policy has been difficult to implement and was universally unpopular in the district. I am delighted that these guidelines have now been relaxed.

“As a consequence of these changes in national guidelines, and the continued dissatisfaction from our users, we will reintroduce the policy of two children to one responsible adult.”

From Tuesday, 27 July 2004, the council's swimming pools will allow one responsible adult to attend a general swimming session with two children aged 0 – 7 years. The following conditions/changes to procedure will apply:

- All pools will identify a designated shallow area of water. Armbands or floatation devices will not be allowed outside these areas during general swimming sessions; and
- All children aged under four must wear armbands or appropriate floatation devices at all times during the session.

Councillor Jones added: “We take the safety of all our swimmers very seriously indeed but we have to agree with parents that they are capable of looking after their own children. We now propose to reintroduce the policy of two children to one responsible adult. And because of the new instruction regarding floatation devices, we are removing the small hire charge for armbands.”

FURTHER INFORMATION: Councillor Pat Jones is available for comment on 01423 872466. More technical information is available from Mr Kevin Douglas, Director of Leisure and Amenity Services on 01423 556717.