

COVID-19 RISK ASSESSMENT FOOTBALL ACTIVITIES



Pace FC and Pace Youth FC are committed to grassroots football in our community. We have produced this risk assessment to bring back training to all our teams in line with the most up to date guidance issued by The FA to restart grassroots football.

Our risk assessment has been produced in line with FA guidance which based itself on the Government guidance issued on Monday 1st June 2020 (with latest update being 24th September 2020), which saw the easing of lockdown restrictions on gatherings, public spaces and outdoor activities and the phased return of outdoor sport and recreation.

The return of grassroots football is something that we know many are keen to see, but at this stage of the nation's response to COVID-19, it must be done with careful consideration for everyone's safety, especially vulnerable people.

As the weeks progress, Government restrictions and advice from The FA may or may not be eased further. If they are, we'll update our guidance accordingly. It's essential everyone is clear about the restrictions and works together to manage social distancing and strong hand hygiene.

The guidance from The FA on 17th July 2020 is that a phased approach to the re-introduction of competitive grassroots football is recommended. This phased approach is summarised as;

- Until 31st July - Competitive training sessions of up to 30 persons (including coaches)
- From 1st August – Competitive matches permitted, such as pre-season friendlies, festivals and small sided football competitions
- From September – Grassroots leagues are permitted to commence

All documents for The FA Guidance can be accessed from our County FA website here (website accessed 27th September 2020):

<https://www.hampshirefa.com/news/2020/sep/24/important-covid-19-updates>

On the following pages are copies of the checklist provided by Hampshire FA to assist clubs and coaches in returning to competitive football. All Pace Youth club coaches and officials use these as their guidance along with this risk assessment to ensure they conduct training and matchdays in an appropriate manner.

Please note Pace and Pace Youth are an affiliated Charter Standard club with Hampshire FA (Affiliation numbers W-HAM6671 and W-HAM6004 respectively). We hold in-date Public Liability and Personal Accident insurances with Bluefin Sport.

The club only use Testwood School, Totton for their training activities and (home) matches as this is a safe and controlled environment for all of our participants.

In line with the latest FA guidance Pace have assigned Ian Lewis (Club Secretary) as the club's nominated COVID-19 Lead. The club are following the UK Government advice on NHS Track and Trace by recording details of persons attending all training sessions and matches. These details will be kept for 21 days and then destroyed in accordance with the club's GDPR policy.


Prior to commencing any and every training session or match team managers/coaches conduct self-checks on themselves and their players, and any persons in their households, for symptoms of COVID-19. If any of these persons have symptoms they do not attend the session/match and put themselves into isolation and request a test in accordance with NHS guidelines. All players parents are requested to confirm that they are attending prior to training/match and that they accept their child taking part in the football activities.

Documents appended to this Risk Assessment:

1. The FA COVID-19 Guidance on Indoor and Outdoor Football Summary
2. The FA Master Guidance Re-starting Outdoor Football

RE-STARTING OUTDOOR COMPETITIVE GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL – SUMMARY

COVID-19 GUIDANCE



FOR CLUBS, PLAYERS, COACHES, CLUB OFFICIALS, CLUB WELFARE OFFICERS, MATCH OFFICIALS, LEAGUE OFFICIALS, VOLUNTEERS, PARENTS/CARERS SPECTATORS AND FOOTBALL FACILITY PROVIDERS – Published: 18 July 2020

This document outlines actions to be taken before, during and after all competitive grassroots football activity in England. It should be read in conjunction with the latest UK Government Covid-19 guidance available [here](#) and the more detailed guidance document produced by The FA, available [here](#).

In outdoor competitive training and matches, physical contact is now allowed, but for all other activity (e.g. warm-ups/cool-downs) the government guidance on social distancing should be observed, read [here](#).

Should Government guidance change in response to the current Covid-19 Alert Level, The FA guidance will be updated accordingly.

BEFORE ACTIVITY	DURING TRAINING & MATCH PLAY	AFTER ACTIVITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Everyone should self-assess for Covid-19 symptoms before every training session or match. If you are symptomatic or living in a household with possible or actual Covid-19 infection you must not participate or attend. You should stay home and follow the latest Government guidance.Clubs/facility providers should appoint a Covid-19 officer and conduct a thorough risk assessment before re-opening or re-starting competitive activity. They should also follow current 'NHS test and trace' protocols, such as keeping an attendance register.Personal hygiene measures should be carried out by everyone and hand sanitisers brought and used at the training/match venue.The sharing of kit and equipment should be avoided, but where equipment is shared, it must be cleaned before use by another person.Goal posts and corner poles should be wiped down before matches, after matches and at half time.Follow Government guidance for travel, including minimising use of public transport.Active participants should arrive changed and ready to take part.Youth team coaches should re-acquaint themselves with all safeguarding policies and procedures.Meet-up times should be adjusted to avoid time spent congregating at a venue.Use of clubhouses, hospitality facilities, changing rooms and toilets must adhere to Government guidance. <p>Anyone who is deemed vulnerable in respect of Covid-19 is reminded to follow the Government's guidance, only returning to football when it's right for them to do so.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Competitive training can take place for all participants, in an outdoor setting provided this takes place in groups of no more than 30 (including coaches).Competitive match play is permitted, with social distancing in place before and after the session, and in any breaks in play.The sharing of kit and equipment should be avoided and participants should bring their own drinks or refreshments, in named containers.When the ball goes out of play, it should not be retrieved by non-participants and should be retrieved using the feet rather than the hands where possible.Participants must not spit and should avoid shouting or raising their voices when facing each other, as detailed in The FA Covid-19 Code of Behaviour.Set plays; players are encouraged to avoid unnecessarily long set-up or close marking. Other modifications apply to specific situations, such as goal celebrations being discouraged. Read more in The FA's more detailed guidance here.Youth football coaches are encouraged to limit persistent close proximity of participants during match play and training.Observing rigorous hygiene standards, injuries can be treated. See full guidance here.Spectator groups should be limited to six people per group and spread out in line with wider Government guidance.Match fee payments should be cashless – consider using The FA Matchday App.Small-sided football should include more regular hygiene breaks in activity and players discouraged from touching or tackling against boards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Hands should be washed at the earliest opportunity and personal equipment should be wiped down with a disinfectant.Unless absolutely necessary, participants should take their kit home and wash it themselves, or by family members. Post-activity showers should be taken at home.Everyone must continue to maintain social distancing including in any facilities where groups of people congregate (e.g. clubhouses).Everyone should leave following the traffic-flow system the club or facility provider has put place.Anyone who becomes infected after training/matches should report this to the NHS test and trace system.

DISCLAIMER:

This guidance is for general information only and does not constitute legal advice, nor it is a replacement for such, nor does it replace any Government or FHE advice nor does it provide any specific commentary or advice on health-related issues. Affected organisations should therefore ensure that they seek independent advice from medical practitioners, or healthcare providers, prior to implementing any re-opening plan, as required. Independent legal advice should be sought, as required and depending on your, or relevant circumstances. While efforts have been taken to ensure the accuracy of this information at the time of publication, the reader is reminded to check the Government website to obtain the most up-to-date information regarding social distancing and any other Government measures.

THANK YOU! NOW LET'S GET OUR GREAT GAME GOING AGAIN – SAFELY.

COVID-19 RETURN TO COMPETITIVE TRAINING CHECKLIST: CLUBS

- Ensure club is affiliated with Hampshire FA for 2020/21
- Ensure required insurance confirmed and purchased through Hampshire FA for 2020/21
- Nominate COVID-19 Lead to establish and monitor delivery within FA guidelines
- Agree COVID-19 action plan and roles and responsibilities for all involved*
- Complete COVID-19 risk assessment for all relevant venues
- Source and distribute any required signage and cleaning equipment
- Review FA First Guidance and ensure nominated first aiders have sufficient PPE
- Notify coaches, players and parents/carers of their roles and responsibilities (see additional checklists)
- Establish method for obtaining written consent to participate from all players or parents/spectators
- Establish method for confirming self-assessment upon attendance at each training session
- Establish method for recording **ALL** attendance and storing information for a minimum of 21 days (to support NHS Test & Trace)

**This checklist can form the basis of your action plan*



COVID-19 RETURN TO COMPETITIVE TRAINING CHECKLIST: MANAGERS AND COACHES

- Review **FA Guidance on Re-Starting Outdoor Competitive Football** in full
- Review club/venue **COVID-19 Risk Assessment** (and contribute where required)
- Adhere to FA travel Guidance (**FA Guidance on Re-Starting Outdoor Competitive Football; P6**)
- Complete self-assessment before attending every session
- Ensure every parent/player provides consent to participate
- Ensure every parent/player confirms the following prior to each session:
 1. Who is attending (including parent/carer)
 2. Self-assessment completed and clear (including parent/carer)
- Limit participant numbers to a maximum of 30 (including coaches*)
- Practice social distancing wherever possible and consider within practice design
- Maintain clean equipment and avoid sharing between players
- Disinfect footballs during breaks in play
- Ensure everyone adheres to FA Code of Behaviour (**FA Guidance on Re-Starting Outdoor Competitive Football; P12**)
- Allow parents/carers to attend to their players' injuries unless life/limb threatening - refer to **FA First Aid Guidance** for details
- Advise spectators to practice social distancing and do not gather in groups of more than six

**Ensure appropriate coach:player ratios are maintained - FA safeguarding guidance notes 5.5*



COVID-19 RETURN TO COMPETITIVE TRAINING CHECKLIST: PARENTS AND CARERS

- Adhere to FA travel Guidance ([FA Guidance on Re-Starting Outdoor Competitive Football; P6](#))
- Adhere to any additional requirements put in place by training/playing venue
- Ensure player arrives appropriately dressed and ready to play (including laces tied!)
- Ensure player has their own labelled drinks bottle, hand sanitizer and kit/equipment
- Confirm consent for your player to participate
- Upon arrival to each session provide/confirm the following information:
 1. Who is attending (including parent/carer)
 2. Self-assessment completed and clear (including parent/carer)
- Players - practice social distancing whenever possible (pre, post, during breaks, etc.)
- Parents/carers - practice social distancing and do not gather in groups of more than six
- Adhere to FA Code of Behaviour ([FA Guidance on Re-Starting Outdoor Competitive Football; P12](#))
- Parents/carers to attend to their players' injuries (coaches/managers will only intervene if life/limb threatening) - refer to [FA First Aid Guidance](#) for details
- Ensure good hygiene practice



1: Risk Assessment Details – COVID 19 Grassroots Football			
Revision	3	Sign Off Date	27/09/2020
Initial Date Risk Assessment Created		26 th June 2020	
Date of Risk Assessment Review		27 th September 2020	
Date of Next Review		October 2020 (or earlier if guidance changes)	
Name of Risk Assessor		Ian Lewis (Pace Club Secretary)	
Signature of risk assessor			
Key Legislation		UK Government Guidelines on COVID-19 The English FA Guidelines on COVID-19	
Residual risk evaluation Severity		4 Life Threatening	
Residual risk evaluation Probability		2 Rare	
Residual risk evaluation Score		4 Rather Small	

2: Risk Assessment	
Name of Risk Assessment	Coronavirus (Covid-19) Risk Assessment

Introductory Notes / Description
<p>The information for this risk assessment has been prepared by a non-medically trained volunteer for Pace Football Club and is based on the information publicly available.</p> <p>The risk assessment is subject to regular updating.</p> <p>Risk assessment is to be read in conjunction with The FA Guidance for providers of outdoor football facility; FA Guidance for Players; FA Guidance for Coaches; FA Guidance for Parents and Carers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID-19 is a new strain of coronavirus which is classified as an airborne High Consequence Infectious Disease (HCID) • COVID-19 is most likely to be transmitted from person to person. It is probable that the risk increases the longer someone has close contact with an infected person. • The incubation period of COVID-19 is thought to be between 2 to 14 days but can be up to 24 days. However, if you remain well for 14 days after contact with someone with COVID-19, you are unlikely to have contracted the virus. <p>Symptoms of COVID-19 are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raised temperature • New, continuous / persistent cough • Shortness of breath • Loss or change to your sense of smell or taste <p>The symptoms are like other common illnesses such as cold and flu therefore having these symptoms does not mean you have the virus, but you should take action as below if you have these symptoms as a precautionary measure.</p> <p>COVID-19 can cause (in rare cases) severe symptoms such as pneumonia. People with underlying health conditions such as diabetes, cancer and other chronic conditions, people with a weakened</p>

immune system and older people, the symptoms can be more severe. In extreme cases, the virus is fatal, however this is very rare.

In the majority of cases, the body's immune system responds effectively to the virus. Once the body has killed the virus, it is not thought that you can be re-infected with the same coronavirus. At present, there is no vaccine for COVID-19 although work is ongoing to develop one.

If you have any concerns or require further advice, contact NHS online in the first instance at: <https://111.nhs.uk/> If you think you have contracted COVID-19, do not visit your GP or come to training. Instead, use the NHS online services. Use a mobile or landline telephone to contact the football club secretary and other members of your family or close friends. Remember to always keep calm. In an emergency, call 999.

Self-Isolation

Anyone who meets one or more of the following criteria should not come to site:

- Has a high temperature, a new persistent cough or loss or change to your sense of smell or taste - follow the guidance on self-isolation
- Is a vulnerable person (by virtue of their age, underlying health condition, clinical condition or are pregnant)
- Is within 14 days of the day when the first member of their household showed symptoms of Coronavirus

Anyone who is living with someone who is shielding from Coronavirus should stringently follow guidance on social distancing and minimise contact outside the home.

What are the hazards?	Control Measures
Coaches / Players becoming infected with COVID-19	<p>Maintaining good personal hygiene is the first line of defence.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wash hands thoroughly paying attention to around and under nails, the backs of hands and between fingers. Wash hands for at least 20 seconds using the approved 20-second rule. • Wash hands on arriving to training. • Washing hands for 20 seconds with soap and running water is preferable to hand sanitiser. However, hand sanitiser is a good alternative when soap and water is not available. Hand sanitisers of 60% alcohol or more are most effective. Disinfectant wipes are also an alternative to hand washing and hand-sanitiser. Coaches should remind all players and parents where these facilities are. • Use a disinfectant wipe or spray to clean all equipment that is going to be used in the training session or match before commencement. The coach should also clean all equipment again after training or match. • The amount of equipment used is to be as limited as possible. All equipment is to be cleaned before and after a training session. • All open wounds(cuts), no matter how small is suitable dressed (plaster) • All coaches/players will not shake hands.

What are the hazards?	Control Measures
<p>Arrivals and Departures – How can we promote social distancing to ensure a safe entrance to the training/match pitch.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To assist with social distancing and safety while arriving and departing the Testwood School site, guidance to be provided by the club to participants on parking so that groups can enter/exit the school without excessive contact with others. • Guidance will be provided to all for entry/exit lanes for the field to assist with social distancing. • Coaches to lead players and parents (parents will need to be present for first aid) to designated zone. Spectators to carry out social distancing whilst in attendance and keep within the government guidelines. • On entering the pitch a hand sanitiser station should be provided for use by players / coaches. These shall be used during breaks in-play, and on completion of the training/matches. • On departure, coaches/Players/Parents are to use the one-way system back to the parking areas.

What are the hazards?	Control Measures
<p>In session – alongside FA guidance, how can we provide a safe training session/matchday.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pace FC will only permit a maximum of 30 persons (including coaches) to take part in a training session. There will be numerous teams training at the same time and these will be separated by a significant distance to prevent interaction. • In accordance with FA Safeguarding at all times two persons that hold FA accepted DBS CRC shall be in attendance at each training session and match. • During training each team will stay in their own zone for the duration of the session. • The coach will mark with cones a social distancing area for each player. The only person to enter this zone will be the player and they are to keep their drinks and kit in this zone only. Drinks breaks for players will be taken in their area. • Parents must be in attendance in the event of first aid being required and as per FA guidance on child welfare. • Parents to either have their own socially distant area or share their child's. • To limit the number of people present it is to be encouraged that only 1 parent attends a training session or match wherever possible. • Spectators at matches must not gather in socially distanced groups of more than 6 people. • Goals – these may be used however only coaches to move roller goals, or pop-up goals used. Posts (and

	<p>crossbar where possible) are to be cleaned before/after use.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any players acting as a goalkeeper must wear and shall only use their own goalkeeping gloves, gloves shall not be shared with others. • Stagger start and finish times to minimise numbers entering and leaving at same time. • Players advised not to touch any equipment (cones, kit bag etc)
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What are the hazards?	Control Measures
Emergency Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If your child gets injured, a member of their household can aid them but others will still need to socially distance unless a life or limb-threatening injury necessitates breaking guidelines to provide. • First-aider or other medical personnel present, they should be equipped with the appropriate PPE to protect themselves and others if they need to break social-distancing guidelines to provide medical assistance. • All coaches to ensure they have appropriate PPE in accordance with current FA guidance (refer to latest FA guidance attached) and as a minimum; gloves and a mask to carry out any emergency care. • Appropriate wipes, sanitiser, disinfectant spray to be provided by the teams and available during training sessions and matches.

3: Facilities and other considerations
<p>Promote social distancing as highlighted in the risk assessment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Pace FC hut will remain closed for the time being but can be accessed should the defibrillator be required • Signs / Visual Information to remind / reinforce social distancing & to prevent touching fences or surfaces. • Being outside reduces capability of transmission
<p>Toilets: Handwash to be provided in toilets. Toilet facilities at Testwood School will be available, these are cleaned regularly by school staff. The number of people permitted at any time will be limited.</p>
<p>Pre-training education – document to be produced to all parents prior to training and matches.</p>
<p>NHS Test and Trace is fully supported and coaches are documenting attendees at all training and matches. These details are passed on to the COVID-19 Lead who maintains the record for 21 days and then destroys the information in accordance with GDPR.</p> <p>All persons attending Testwood School are requested to download the NHS COVID-19 APP for Test and Trace. Testwood School have provided posters with the relevant QR code to scan. Should anyone not be able to use the APP they must have their details recorded and passed to the Covid Lead.</p>

Quantitative Risk Evaluation System

		Severity				
		Minor injury/ negligible 1	Moderate injury/ harmful 2	Non-fatal injury 3	Life threatening 4	Fatal injury 5
P R O B A B I L I T Y	Rare 1	Extremely Small 1	Very Small 2	Very Small 3	Rather Small 4	Moderate 5
	Unlikely 2	Very Small 2	Rather Small 2	Rather Small 3	Moderate 4	High 5
	Possibly 3	Rather Small 3	Rather Small 6	Moderate 9	High 12	Very High 15
	Likely 4	Moderate 4	Moderate 8	High 12	Very High 16	Extremely High 20
	Almost certain 5	Moderate 5	High 10	Very High 15	Extremely High 20	Extremely High 25

1 – 3	Low-risk activity
4 – 9	Medium-risk activity
10 – 25	High-risk activity

P R O B A B I L I T Y	Rare 1	May only occur in exceptional circumstances	< 3%
	Unlikely 2	Could occur sometimes	3 – 10%
	Possibly 3	Might occur sometimes	11- 50%
	Likely 4	Will probably occur in most circumstances	51- 90%
	Almost certain 5	Is expected to occur in most circumstances	> 90%

S E V E R I T Y	Minor injury/ negligible 1	Hazard may cause minor injury, illness, first aid treatment. Employee can continue to work	E.g., small cuts, local burns, headaches
	Moderate injury/ harmful 2	Hazard may cause an accident that causes an employee to be absent for 1 – 14 days	E.g., twisted ankle, moderate bruising
	Non-fatal injury 3	Hazard may cause an accident that causes an employee to be absent for 15 consecutive days till recovery. No permanent damage	E.g., broken leg
	Life threatening 4	Hazard may cause severe injury illness or permanent partial loss of one or more bodily functions or loss of production capability. Irreparable permanent damage	E.g., loss of leg, organ damage
	Fatal injury 5	Hazard may cause death	E.g., death, cancer

COVID-19: UPDATED GUIDANCE ON INDOOR AND OUTDOOR GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL : A SUMMARY

FOLLOWING THE UK GOVERNMENT'S ANNOUNCEMENT ON 22 SEPTEMBER, ALL COVID-SECURE GUIDELINES ARE NOW LEGAL OBLIGATIONS, WITH WHICH EVERYONE MUST ADHERE. FAILURE TO DO SO WILL RESULT IN FINES AS THE PRIME MINISTER SET OUT IN HIS SPEECH TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, A TRANSCRIPT OF WHICH YOU CAN READ [HERE](#).



FOR CLUBS, PLAYERS, COACHES, CLUB OFFICIALS, CLUB WELFARE OFFICERS, MATCH OFFICIALS, LEAGUE OFFICIALS, VOLUNTEERS, PARENTS/CARERS SPECTATORS AND FOOTBALL FACILITY PROVIDERS – Published: 23 September 2020

This document outlines actions to be taken before, during and after all outdoor competitive grassroots football activity in England. It should be read in conjunction with the latest UK Government Covid-19 guidance available [here](#) and the more detailed guidance document produced by The FA, available [here](#). Importantly, following the announcement on 22 September the 'rule of six' has been extended to all indoor team sports. This means no indoor football, including futsal, can be played.

In outdoor competitive training and matches, physical contact is now allowed, but for all other activity (e.g. warm-ups/cool-downs) the Government guidance on social distancing should be observed, read [here](#). Should Government guidance change in response to the current Covid-19 Alert Level, The FA guidance will be updated accordingly.

BEFORE ACTIVITY

- Everyone should self-assess for **Covid-19 symptoms** before every training session or match. If you are symptomatic or living in a household with possible or actual Covid-19 infection you must not participate or attend. You should stay home and follow the latest [Government guidance](#).
- Clubs/facility providers should appoint a Covid-19 officer and conduct a thorough general risk assessment, as well as a safeguarding **risk assessment** before re-opening or re-starting competitive activity. They **must** also follow current **'NHS Test and Trace'** protocols, such as keeping an attendance register.
- Personal hygiene measures should be carried out by everyone and hand sanitisers brought and used at the training/match venue.
- All participants must follow Government advice on **face coverings**.
- The sharing of kit and equipment should be avoided, but where equipment is shared, it must be cleaned before use by another person.
- Goal posts and corner poles should be wiped down before matches, after matches and at half time.
- Follow Government guidance for travel, including minimising use of public transport.
- Active participants should arrive changed and ready to take part.
- Youth team coaches should re-acquaint themselves with all safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Meet-up times should be adjusted to avoid time spent congregating at a venue.
- Use of clubhouses, hospitality facilities, changing rooms and toilets must adhere to [Government guidance](#).

Anyone who is deemed vulnerable in respect of Covid-19 is reminded to follow the Government's guidance, only returning to football when it's right for them to do so.

DURING TRAINING AND MATCH PLAY

- Competitive training can take place for all participants, in an outdoor setting provided this takes place in groups of no more than 30 (including coaches).
- Indoor play can continue to take place, provided groups of more than six do not mix (i.e. a maximum of 3 v 3 matches can be played indoors). If groups of six are likely to mix, these indoor activities must not go ahead. There are exemptions for organised indoor team sports for disabled people and also for children (under-18s). Therefore, disabled people and children can continue to play indoor sport without restrictions on numbers.
- Competitive match play is permitted, with social distancing in place before and after the session, and in any breaks in play.
- The sharing of kit and equipment should be avoided and participants should bring their own drinks or refreshments, in named containers.
- When the ball goes out of play, it should not be retrieved by non-participants and should be retrieved using the feet rather than the hands where possible.
- Participants must not spit and should avoid shouting or raising their voices when facing each other, as detailed in The FA Covid-19 Code of Behaviour.
- Set plays: players are encouraged to avoid unnecessarily long set-up or close marking. Other modifications apply to specific situations, such as goal celebrations being discouraged. Read more in The FA's more detailed guidance [here](#).
- Youth football coaches are encouraged to limit persistent close proximity of participants during match play and training.
- Observing rigorous hygiene standards, injuries can be treated. See full guidance [here](#).
- Spectator groups should be limited to six people per group and spread out in line with wider [Government guidance](#). These six-person groups must be preserved - no mingling.
- Match fee payments should be cashless – consider using [The FA Matchday App](#).
- Small-sided football should include more regular hygiene breaks in activity and players discouraged from touching or tackling against boards.

AFTER ACTIVITY

- Hands should be washed at the earliest opportunity and personal equipment should be wiped down with a disinfectant.
- Unless absolutely necessary, participants should take their kit home and wash it themselves, or by family members. Post-activity showers should be taken at home.
- Everyone must continue to maintain **social distancing** including in any facilities where groups of people congregate (e.g. clubhouses).
- Everyone should leave following the traffic-flow system the club or facility provider has put place.
- Anyone who becomes infected after training/matches should report this to the [NHS Test and Trace system](#).
- Hospitality venues, such as clubhouse bars, must close at 10pm latest.

DISCLAIMER:

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should be sought, as required and depending on your, or relevant circumstances. While efforts have been taken to ensure the accuracy of this information at the time of publication, the reader is reminded to check the Government website to obtain the most up-to-date information regarding social distancing and any other Government measures.

THANK YOU! NOW LET'S GET OUR GREAT GAME GOING AGAIN – SAFELY.



COVID - 19: UPDATED GUIDANCE ON INDOOR AND OUTDOOR GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL

Version: 1.4

Published: 23 September 2020

FOR ALL



COVID-19: UPDATED GUIDANCE ON INDOOR AND OUTDOOR GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL

FOLLOWING THE UK GOVERNMENT'S ANNOUNCEMENT ON 22 SEPTEMBER, ALL COVID-SECURE GUIDELINES ARE NOW LEGAL OBLIGATIONS, WITH WHICH EVERYONE MUST ADHERE. FAILURE TO DO SO WILL RESULT IN FINES AS THE PRIME MINISTER SET OUT IN HIS SPEECH TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, A TRANSCRIPT OF WHICH YOU CAN READ [HERE](#).

Government approval for outdoor competitive grassroots football and training sessions remains in place, and this detailed guidance has been produced by The FA to cover these aspects of football in England.

The guidance applies to outdoor youth and adult football, as well as the outdoor small-sided game.

However, from Thursday 24 September, organised indoor sport and indoor exercise classes for **adults** can continue to take place with larger numbers present, **provided groups of more than six do not mix** (i.e. a maximum of 3 v 3 matches can be played indoors). If groups of six are likely to mix, these indoor activities must not go ahead.

There are exemptions for organised indoor team sports for **disabled people** and also for **children (under-18s)**. Therefore, disabled people and children can continue to play indoor sport without restrictions on numbers.

Additional guidance for clubs with teams competing in the men's National League System [here](#) and/or the Women's Football Pyramid tiers 3 to 6 can be found [here](#).

This guidance should be read in conjunction with the Government's latest [Covid-19 guidance](#) and is based on the Government's framework for a return to recreational team sport, which can be read [here](#).

In outdoor competitive training and matches, physical contact is allowed, but for all other activity (e.g. warm-ups/cool-downs) the Government guidance on social distancing should be observed. You can read them [here](#), but two-metre social distancing should be observed where possible. Where not possible, 'one-metre plus' distancing should be observed. You can read about the specific football situations when social-distancing still applies from page 7 onwards.

The guidance you are reading is FOR ALL – players, coaches, club officials, club welfare officers, match officials, league officials, volunteers, parents/carers,

spectators. It is also for clubs and football facility providers and should be read in conjunction with the updated additional guidance 'For providers of indoor and outdoor football facilities, including clubs' which is available [here](#).

Should Government guidance change, The FA guidance will be updated accordingly.

In the meantime, please remember anyone who is deemed vulnerable in respect of Covid-19 is reminded to follow the Government's guidance, only returning to football when it's right for them to do so. There is no pressure to return. Everyone's health, wellbeing and safety are the priorities.

Please also bear in mind the recent Public Health England (PHE) report published [here](#), which has highlighted a greater risk from Covid-19 to people from BAME communities. As the current impact of Covid-19 on members of BAME communities is not yet fully understood, we acknowledge that there may be increased concerns and levels of anxiety from within these communities.

When your club decides to return, you must carry out a risk assessment and record the procedures and checks put in place. It's essential everyone is clear about the restrictions and works together to manage social distancing, strict hand hygiene and the other protocols set out in this document.

DEALING WITH LOCAL LOCKDOWNS

In the event of a local lockdown, County FAs should liaise with Local Authorities, who will determine the appropriate restrictions that need to be put in place.

CONTENTS

BEFORE ANY FOOTBALL ACTIVITY TAKES PLACE	4
DURING ALL FOOTBALL ACTIVITY	9
AFTER ALL FOOTBALL ACTIVITY	13
APPENDIX 1: CODE OF BEHAVIOUR	12
APPENDIX 2: SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN	13

BEFORE ANY FOOTBALL ACTIVITY TAKES PLACE

Who?	Topic	Required actions
CLUBS AND FACILITY PROVIDERS	The basics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facility operators should ensure they have read and understood The FA's guidance for 'For providers of indoor and outdoor football facilities, including clubs', available here. Clubs/teams should ensure they are affiliated to their local County FA for the 2020/21 season ahead of any match play. Each club must only return to sport when they are ready and have the appropriate measures in place as developed by The FA and general Government guidance in relation to recreational sport. All clubs must identify a Covid-19 officer who will be responsible for developing a Covid-19 plan and a general risk assessment prior to the restart of any activity. The Covid-19 officer should continually monitor how compliance is being observed within the club. A: specific safeguarding risk assessment must also be produced. The FA has produced guidance on conducting a safeguarding risk assessment, which includes a template for self-completion. It is available here. The Covid-19 officer should consider establishing a Covid-19 group to be responsible for producing and implementing the Covid-19 risk assessment and to oversee the safe return to play. Clubs should also check the insurance policies they have in relation to all football activities (e.g. personal accident and public liability), specifically any changes to insurance provider's advice and guidance on returning to competitive play, ensuring full compliance with its terms. The Covid-19 officer at each club will be responsible for clearly communicating all relevant guidance to its players, coaches and volunteers. <p>Please note: if you have teams that play in the men's National League System or the Women's Football Pyramid tiers 3 to 6, The FA has produced additional and specific guidance for these environments. It is available here for NLS and here for WFP.</p>
	Arrival at venues	<p>Clubs/facilities should consider further mitigations to ensure safe arrival at venues, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In line with current Government guidance, all participants (players, coaches, club and match officials, volunteers, spectators etc.) should check for symptoms of Covid-19. If an individual is symptomatic and/or living in a household with a possible Covid-19 infection they should remain at home and follow Government guidance. In addition, any participants who have been asked to isolate by NHS Test and Trace because they are a contact of a known Covid-19 case, must not exercise outside their home or garden and must not exercise with others; Clear signage (e.g. for one way systems) to manage entry, parking arrangements, traffic flow and general movement around the venue which ensure social distancing can be maintained.
	Safety briefing	<p>In competitive football activities the Covid-19 officer of each club must ensure a safety briefing is provided before the commencement of any fixture. This briefing will remind both sets of players and officials about their responsibilities in complying with the Code of Behaviour set out in Appendix 1 to this guidance.</p>

BEFORE ANY FOOTBALL ACTIVITY TAKES PLACE (CONTINUED)

Who?	Topic	Required actions
CLUBS AND FACILITY PROVIDERS	Changing rooms and showers	<p>Use of changing and shower facilities must follow Government advice on the use of indoor facilities when available.</p> <p>If these facilities remain closed, exceptions may be made where safety and safeguarding measures require their use. For example, to supporting players with disabilities, or when a child needs a change of clothing, etc.</p>
	Toilets	Toilets should be open pre-match or training, during the match or training and for 30 minutes afterwards. See further guidance here
	NHS Test and Trace	<p>Clubs and facility providers must adhere to the NHS Test and Trace system. This means ensuring information for all training sessions and matches is collected by one of the methods set out below.</p> <p>You must register for an official NHS QR code and display the official NHS QR poster from Thursday 24 September to help NHS Test and Trace to identify and notify people who may have been exposed to the virus.</p> <p>In addition, there is an NHS Covid-19 app, which has a feature that allows users to quickly and easily 'check in' to your venue by scanning the code. The information stays on the user's phone. In England, you do not have to ask people who choose to 'check in' using the official NHS QR code to provide their contact details. If there is an outbreak associated with a venue, a message will be sent to the relevant app users with the necessary public health advice.</p> <p>For those who do not have a smart phone, a manual process should be used to collect information. This information should be collected, processed and stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR principles for 21 days in line with the Government Recreational Team Sport Framework then deleted. It should be used only for the purpose of NHS Test and Trace and, where requested to share with the NHS for Test and Trace purposes, the shared information should relate only to the match or training in which the player or supporter tested positive.</p> <p>The Government's current NHS Test and Trace guidance is available here, with detail on how to maintain Test and Trace records here.</p>

BEFORE ANY FOOTBALL ACTIVITY TAKES PLACE (CONTINUED)

Who?	Topic	Required actions
EVERYONE (i.e. players, coaches, match officials, league officials, volunteers, parents/ carers, spectators, clubs and football facility providers)	Covid-19 self-assessment	<p>All players, officials, volunteers and spectators must undergo a self-assessment for any Covid-19- symptoms. No-one should leave home to participate in football if they, or someone they live with, has any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A high temperature (above 37.8°C); • A new, continuous cough; • A loss of, or change to, their sense of smell or taste. <p>This check should be done before each training session and must be recorded in regular risk assessments and it is important to note that no training session should take place without this having been done. Some clubs may wish to have this completed in the form of an online or paper questionnaire at the start of sessions. If symptoms are checked at the start of a session rather than in advance, this should be completed on arrival before the player mixes with others, so that if they have symptoms there is no chance of others being affected.</p> <p>Should an individual have demonstrated any such symptoms, they must not participate. Instead they should follow NHS and PHE guidance on self-isolation available here.</p> <p>Anyone who has already been instructed to self-isolate by a health care practitioner or PHE should continue to follow this advice and may not participate.</p> <p>Clubs will make relevant participants aware of any increased risk associated with taking part in activity, based on the risk assessment undertaken by the club. Everyone should comply with public health restrictions and avoid high-risk behaviour outside the football setting to reduce the risk to fellow participants and other attendees.</p>

BEFORE ANY FOOTBALL ACTIVITY TAKES PLACE (CONTINUED)

Who?	Topic	Required actions
EVERYONE (i.e. players, coaches, match officials, league officials, volunteers, parents/ carers, spectators, clubs and football facility providers)	Travel to training and matches	<p>All participants and other attendees should follow best practice for travel, including minimising use of public transport. Participants should walk or cycle if possible. People from a household or support bubble can travel together in a vehicle.</p> <p>If participants do have to travel with people outside their household or support bubble they should try to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share the transport with the same people each time; • Keep to small groups of people at any one time; • Open windows for ventilation; • Face away from each other; • Clean the car between journeys using standard cleaning products – including door handles and other areas that people may touch; • Ask the driver and all passengers to wear a face covering; • Consider seating arrangements to maximise distance between people in the vehicle – this may mean using more than one coach or minibus if possible, and the wearing of face coverings on coaches or minibuses; • Require regular hand sanitisation by passengers on a coach or minibus; • Limit the time spent at garages, petrol stations and motorway services; • Keep distance from other people and if possible, pay by contactless; • Wash hands for at least 20 seconds or sanitise hands often, and always when exiting or re-entering the vehicle; • When finishing the journey participants should wash their hands for at least 20 seconds or sanitise their hands as soon as possible.
PLAYERS, MATCH OFFICIALS AND COACHES	Changing, showering and use of toilets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where possible, players, match officials and coaches must arrive changed and shower at home; • Toilets should be open pre-match, during the match and for 30 minutes afterwards.
CLUB OFFICIALS, COACHES & CWOs	Safeguarding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please see Appendix 2: Safeguarding Children for guidance and your specific responsibilities in this area.
PLAYERS WITH A DISABILITY	Advance information	<p>If you have additional disability or medical needs, please ensure that you have discussed this specifically with the club and coach. Then you can agree how/if these needs can be met within current Government Covid-19 and FA guidance.</p>

BEFORE ANY FOOTBALL ACTIVITY TAKES PLACE (CONTINUED)

Who?	Topic	Required actions
PARENTS/ CARERS	Advance information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you choose for your child to take part, you will need to give your written consent to the club and or coach. Ensure you are comfortable with the club's Covid-19 planning arrangements before doing so. • You may already be aware that the period of isolation may have resulted in your child becoming anxious or unsure whether to resume previous activities, such as football. Please only support their return to football activity when they feel confident to do so and you feel the activity is safe and right for them. • Your child must arrive changed and ready to exercise. • Ensure your child takes their own water bottle and their own hand sanitiser, both clearly marked with their name. They must not share these with anyone else. • Please ensure your child/children know how to maintain good hygiene and hand washing; • Young children may struggle to maintain social distancing. Please continue to do your best to help your child recognise what two metres or 'one-metre plus' look and feel like – for example, related them to arm spans or standing jumps for example; • Despite the changed circumstances the organiser of the activity still has a responsibility to implement The FA's safeguarding requirements. Anyone involved in activity directly with children (anyone aged under 18), must have an in-date DBS Check, is responsible for ensuring the environment is safe and should have completed some FA safeguarding training; • Coaches must ensure the ratio of coaches to children is appropriate – see FA safeguarding guidance notes 5.5;

DURING ALL FOOTBALL ACTIVITY

Who?	Topic	Required actions
EVERYONE	Social distancing in competitive training	<p>Competitive training can take place for all participants, in an outdoor setting provided this takes place in groups of no more than 30 (including coaches). Indoor play can continue to take place, provided groups of more than six do not mix (i.e. a maximum of 3 v 3 matches can be played indoors). If groups of six are likely to mix, these indoor activities must not go ahead. There are exemptions for organised indoor team sports for disabled people and also for children (under-18s). Therefore, disabled people and children can continue to play indoor sport without restrictions on numbers.</p> <p>Care should be taken on busy sites with limited access points to ensure safe play. Facilities should consider staggering start times and allowing cleaning time between change-overs.</p> <p>Clubs should determine the appropriate ratio of coaches to participants, following the relevant FA safeguarding policy outlined in safeguarding guidance notes 5.5. Sessions might include multiple groups of 30 but only if they can be appropriately socially distanced from each other.</p> <p>In all settings before and after the session, and in any breaks, all participants should practise social distancing, in line with Government guidelines on two metres or 'one metre plus'. You can read these guidelines here.</p> <p>Any spectators at training sessions (including parents and carers) must be restricted to discrete six-person gathering limits and spread out, in line with wider government guidance, ensuring space for officials, coaches and substitutes.</p>
	Social distancing around matches	<p>Competitive match play is now permitted, however, in all settings before and after matches all participants should practise social distancing.</p>

DURING ALL FOOTBALL ACTIVITY (CONTINUED)

Who?	Topic	Required actions
EVERYONE	Other Covid-19 modifications – in matches (and training where applicable)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-match handshake should not happen. Instead players will be asked to hand-sanitise before kick-off; • Team talk huddles should not take place. Team talks can take place, as long as social-distancing is observed and held outdoors where possible; • Warm-ups/cool-downs should always observe social distancing; • Coaches, other team staff and substitutes are allowed, but must also always observe social distancing on touchlines/dug-outs. Social-distancing must also be observed during interactions when a substitution is being made; • Match preparation meetings by officials should be held by video call; • Set plays – free kicks: referees and coaches should encourage players to get on with the game and not unnecessarily prolong set play set-up, such as defensive walls; • Set plays – corners should also be taken promptly to limit prolonged close marking and goal posts should be wiped down before matches, after matches and at half time. • Goal celebrations should be avoided; • Interactions with referees and match assistants should only happen with players observing social distancing; • Small-sided football should be modified to provide more regular hygiene breaks in activity. Players should be discouraged from touching boards at any time, with tackling against boards discouraged. Referees should consider stopping play when this happens. • Youth football coaches are encouraged to limit persistent close proximity of participants during match play (where young participants may be more likely to cluster around the ball) and provide regular hygiene breaks in activity. • Other formats of the game may require specific adaptations, and participants should work with their club or facility provider to ensure these can be put in place. • Face coverings: All participants should follow the Government guidance on face coverings which you can find here. Unless you have an exemption, face coverings are mandatory for all staff in retail/hospitality outlets (e.g. a clubhouse). This also applies to users of the facility, except when seated at a table to eat or drink.

DURING ALL FOOTBALL ACTIVITY (CONTINUED)

Who?	Topic	Required actions
EVERYONE	Social distancing during breaks (e.g. half-time)	<p>All participants must remain socially distanced during breaks in play, with spaced areas for equipment and refreshment storage for each individual including officials and substitutes. Coaching staff and substitutes, should, for example, spread out and avoid sharing a dug out or bench if social distancing cannot be observed. Players and officials should also observe social distancing during sin-bin instances.</p> <p>Water bottles or other refreshment containers should in no circumstances be shared. Participants are advised to bring their own drinks or refreshments, in a named container.</p> <p>After activity participants must maintain government mandated social distancing for social interaction. This includes in any available changing rooms, showers, and any clubhouse facilities or other venue participants congregate in afterwards.</p> <p>Any payments relating to the fixture (match fees, referee fees or facility fees) should where possible, be made in a cashless manner. The FA Matchday app allows affiliated teams using Full-Time to receive cashless payments from their players.</p>
	Use of equipment	<p>The sharing of equipment must be avoided where possible. Where equipment is shared, equipment must be cleaned before use by another person.</p> <p>Participants should take their kit home to wash it themselves, rather than have one person handling a large quantity of soiled materials. Where kit absolutely has to be shared or kept together (e.g. last-minute stand-in players, shortage of kit, or an essential club function), each person handling it must wash or sanitise their hands immediately after and appropriate cleaning arrangements for the kit must be made.</p>
	Ball transfer	<p>The nature of football means that the ball is not frequently handled. When the ball goes out of play it should not be retrieved by non-participants and should be retrieved using the feet rather than the hands where possible. Where there are breaks in the game, or training, if throw-ins or handling has occurred the ball should be disinfected. Further guidance on disinfecting can be found here.</p>
	Shouting	<p>There is an additional risk of infection in close proximity situations where people are shouting or conversing loudly. This particularly applies indoors (e.g. inside clubhouses) and when face to face. If possible, players should therefore avoid shouting or raising their voices when facing each other during, before and after games. This is included within The FA's Code of Behaviour (see Appendix 1).</p>
	Spitting	<p>Everyone should refrain from spitting. If you need to sneeze or cough, you are encouraged to do so into a tissue or upper sleeve and advised to avoid touching your face. Ensure any tissues are disposed of in a sealed bin as soon as possible.</p>

DURING ALL FOOTBALL ACTIVITY (CONTINUED)

Who?	Topic	Required actions
CLUBS	Code of Behaviour	<p>In Appendix 1 you will find the Code of Behaviour The FA has produced to ensure a commitment for all involved to adhere to Covid-19 adaptations.</p> <p>The Covid-19 officer for each club will be responsible for communicating the code of behaviour to all players, coaches and volunteers within the club.</p> <p>Participants must be clear that they are opting-in to participating as defined in The FA's guidance about risk and risk mitigation.</p>
MEDICS	Treatment of injuries	<p>The FA has produced a detailed First Aid Guidance document for First Aid which can be found here.</p> <p>Injuries during play should still be treated as participant health and safety is of utmost importance. In all cases but particularly where medical treatment is needed, the best form of protection is through rigorous cleaning, personal hygiene and regular hand hygiene.</p> <p>An increased frequency of cleaning and disinfection of all surfaces and equipment, using standard household cleaning and disinfection products, will be recommended in The FA's supporting medical guidance which can be found here.</p> <p>If a participant gets injured, a member of their household can assist if present and appropriate, but others (including match officials and teammates and coaches) will still need to socially distance unless a life- or limb-threatening injury necessitates compromising guidelines to provide emergency care.</p> <p>If there is a first-aider or other medical personnel present, they should be equipped with the appropriate PPE (including face coverings) to protect themselves and others if they need to compromise social-distancing guidelines to provide medical assistance.</p> <p>After contact with an injured participant, the person who has administered first aid should clean their hands thoroughly with soap and water or alcohol hand sanitiser at the earliest opportunity. This advice is applicable to all situations, regardless of whether there was close contact or social distancing was maintained. The first aider should also avoid touching their mouth, eyes and nose.</p> <p>Physios or their equivalent or anyone who is administering any form of treatment, should keep a record of each participant they have come into contact with for NHS Test and Trace purposes. Further information for those who may need to act as a 'first responder' role in a sports setting can be found here.</p> <p>If a participant becomes Covid-19 symptomatic during the activity, they should immediately remove themselves from the session and return home as soon as possible. NHS guidance on further management of symptoms should be followed.</p>
MATCH OFFICIALS	Social distancing	<p>Match officials should observe The FA's guidance in the same way as participants are required to.</p>

AFTER ALL FOOTBALL ACTIVITY

Who?	Topic	Required actions
SPECTATORS	Social distancing	<p>Supporters, parents, and other spectators should remain socially distanced whilst attending events. Spectator groups must be restricted to discrete six-person gathering limits and spread out, in line with wider Government guidance, ensuring space for officials, coaches and substitutes. There should be no mingling between groups. Once in a six-person group, you should stay in it.</p> <p>Specific FA guidance and protocols for clubs who have paying spectators in the men's National League System here and the Women's Football Pyramid tiers 3 to 6 is available here.</p>
PLAYERS, MATCH OFFICIALS AND COACHES	Hygiene	<p>Hands should be washed at the earliest opportunity and personal equipment should be wiped down with a disinfectant.</p> <p>Individuals should take their own kit home to wash it themselves, rather than have one person handling a large quantity of soiled materials. Where kit absolutely has to be shared or kept together (e.g. last-minute stand-in players, shortage of kit, or an essential club function), each person handling it must wash or sanitise their hands immediately after and appropriate cleaning arrangements for the kit must be made.</p> <p>Coaches are encouraged to maintain a record of the regular cleaning of club or team equipment that players use, and review the risk assessments you undertake in between sessions, learning from any changes you need to apply.</p>
EVERYONE	Social distancing	<p>After training sessions and/or matches, participants must maintain government mandated social distancing for social interaction. This includes in any available changing rooms, showers, and any clubhouse facilities or other venue that participants may congregate in afterwards.</p> <p>Bars and restaurants, which includes any food or drink facilities inside a clubhouse, have been able to open since 4 July, in accordance with the Government guidance.</p>
	Departing	Please depart following the traffic-flow system that the venue will have in place.
CLUBS AND FACILITY OWNERS	Hospitality venues (e.g. clubhouse bars)	In line with the Government's announcement on 22 September, these must close at 10pm.

APPENDIX 1

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

Covid-19 is a highly infectious and dangerous disease.

A resumption of contact play is only achievable if those involved create and maintain a controlled environment that minimises the threat of infection.

Risk in sport cannot be completely eradicated but with caution and care these risks can be reduced.

Each player will need to decide when to return to contact football, based on their own circumstances and the arrangements that have been put in place for a safe return. This is particularly the case for players from BAME communities or those with underlying health conditions.

All those returning to competitive grassroots football must adopt the following code of behaviour:

- **Be aware of your own personal health.** If you show any of the Covid-19 symptoms you must stay at home, inform NHS Test and Trace and seek medical advice.
 - **Be responsible.** Read the guidance provided by The FA and by your club so that you are aware of the changes to the game and what is expected of you. This will include things like being prepared to wash your own kit, bringing your own labelled water bottle and being aware of changes to meet-up times.
 - **Practise good hygiene.** Wash your hands regularly and before, during and after a game.
 - **Where possible maintain social distancing.** This won't always be possible in a competitive match environment (for example when tackling an opponent) and that is acceptable. However, before, and after a game you should maintain social distancing.
 - **Face coverings.** Unless you have an exemption, face coverings are mandatory for all staff in retail/hospitality outlets (e.g. a clubhouse). This also applies to users of the facility, except when seated at a table to eat or drink.
- **Support NHS Test and Trace.** You will be asked to provide your details so that in the event of a Covid-19 outbreak those potentially infected can be traced. This is to everyone's benefit so please co-operate.
 - **Do not spit.** Spitting and the rinsing out of mouths is now a recognised risk to health and must not be done. Avoid shouting or raising your voice if face to face with other players.
 - **After the game.** Be aware that other users may be waiting to use the facilities. Changing rooms and showers are likely to be closed and any socialising must follow the **Government's guidance** on social distancing. Please also comply with the Government announcement on 22 September that all hospitality venues (e.g. clubhouse bars) **must** close at 10pm latest.

APPENDIX 2

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN – GUIDANCE FOR CLUB OFFICIALS INCLUDING COACHES AND CLUB WELFARE OFFICERS

- Your club must have completed a safeguarding & Covid-19 risk assessment and briefed you on your responsibilities.
- You are responsible for continuing to ensure the environment is safe and for implementing your club's safeguarding children policy and procedures.
- Coaches working with children must have an in-date FA DBS Check and should have done some FA safeguarding training.
- You must ensure the ratio of coach to different age groups of children is appropriate. See FA safeguarding **guidance note 5.5**, which covers the ratios of adults to children. There must be a minimum of two FA-DBS-Checked adults present at any one time.
- It is essential that parents/carers give informed consent for their child(ren) to participate in your football session. When requesting consent, you have the ideal opportunity to be clear about what is expected of the children and their parents/carers in line with this guidance.
- Ensure you retain a written record of parent/ carer consent. The club may use a form such as the one in FA safeguarding **guidance note 8.2** to gather any relevant information from parents/carers.
- Any children with additional medical or disability needs must be discussed with parents/carers to ensure you, or as the parents/carers, they can provide effective support to facilitate their involvement and appropriately update your risk assessments.

LISTENING TO CHILDREN

While many families have coped well during lockdown, others may not have and for some children the experience will have been very difficult. You may be one of the first people outside the family unit that a child has met in recent times. It's important you know that some children may be struggling for various reasons, including:

- Lacking confidence, as they have felt cut off from their friends;

- Being confused and stressed about how to behave because of social distancing;
- They or someone they care about may have been or still be unwell;
- They may still be grieving because someone they love has died;
- Hearing that people from BAME communities may be more vulnerable to Covid-19;
- They may have been neglected emotionally and/or physically – through lack of food and/or care;
- Children with learning disabilities may find it particularly confusing, as their routine has changed.

You may also have seen media coverage on the increase in:

- Domestic violence – significantly impacting children emotionally and/or physically in households where this has happened;
- Online grooming of children;
- Cyberbullying.

We're sharing this because of your important role in safeguarding. If you are worried about a child as they return to football, it's vital you report your concerns. Doing nothing is not an option.

Please check-in with the children you are coaching/working with, and ask them how they've been and how they're doing. There are five ways to report your concerns if you are worried about a child as they return to football:

- To your club or league Welfare Officer;
- To your County FA Designated Safeguarding Officer. Click **here** for a list of County FA contacts;
- By emailing The FA Safeguarding Team at **safeguarding@TheFA.com**;
- If urgent and you cannot contact your club, league or County FA Designated Safeguarding Officer, you should call the NSPCC 24-hour helpline on 0808 800 5000;
- If it is an emergency because a child or children are at immediate risk, then call the Police on 999.

The NSPCC has produced a great film which reminds us all how best to respond if a child discloses to you. It really is worth taking the two minutes it requires to watch. You can watch the film **[here](#)**.

FINALLY

Thank you in advance for playing your vital part in helping our great game get going again. By observing Government guidance and the football-specific protocols, let's work together to ensure the transition back to competitive grassroots is as smooth and safe as possible.

But remember, if you're not comfortable returning to football, whatever your role, there is no pressure to do so. Everyone's health, wellbeing and safety are the priorities.

DISCLAIMER:

This guidance is for general information only and does not constitute legal advice, nor it is a replacement for such, nor does it replace any Government or PHE advice; nor does it provide any specific commentary or advice on health-related issues. Affected organisations should therefore ensure that they seek independent advice from medical practitioners, or healthcare providers, prior to implementing any re-opening plan, as required. Independent legal advice should be sought, as required and depending on your, or relevant circumstances.

While efforts have been taken to ensure the accuracy of this information at the time of publication, the reader is reminded to check the Government website to obtain the most up-to-date information regarding social distancing and any other Government measures.





FOR ALL

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