

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](#).



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:

This guidance is for general information only and does not constitute legal advice, nor is it 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.

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