

FAQs on Return to Football guidance

See below answers to the frequently asked questions. This update focuses on the new Local Restriction Tiers announced by government, which came into effect on Wednesday 2nd December.

How are areas defined under the new Local Restriction Tiers?

The list of areas which fall under each Local Restriction Tier can be found on the Government website [here](#). To find out which area you are in, use the Government postcode lookup tool [here](#). You can find more information on how the Government has defined the tiers [here](#).

Are U18s able to travel in and out of tier 3 areas in order to play grassroots football?

Yes, under 18s are exempt from travel restrictions and are able to travel in and out of a tier 3 area to play. This includes young people who were 17 at the start of the academic year, even if they turn 18 during the remainder of that year.

Can we still travel to play football as a result of the new Local Restriction Tiers?

Yes. However, there are some restrictions in place. Adults cannot travel into or out of a Tier 3 area however there is an **exemption for U18's and disability groups**. If you live in a Tier 3 or Tier 2 area you should aim to travel within your household group or support bubble and follow the government safer travel guidance. If you live in a Tier 1 area follow the government safer travel guidance. You may travel through a Tier 3 area. Government safer travel guidance [here](#).

Can we travel from one Tier 3 area to another and what if Tier 3 areas start to merge and become one large area made up of multiple areas?

You should not travel between neighbouring Tier 3 areas, even if they share a border. Each Tier 3 area is seen as separate, they are not one continuous area.

Can we hold tournaments for under 18s?

Yes, as long as all FA and Government guidance is being followed, including guidance on social distancing, equipment sharing and changing rooms. Contact your County FA if you are holding a tournament.

How do the Local Restriction Tiers impact our clubhouses & hospitality?

Clubs and facilities with internal spaces have a responsibility to ensure they are compliant with the latest government guidelines for sport facility providers, indoor settings and hospitality venues, [here](#) and [here](#).

Are spectators still permitted as a result of the new Local Restriction Tiers?

Yes. Spectators are permitted in all Tiers but must adhere to legal gathering limits and following social distancing guidelines relevant to each tier.

What happens if people do not follow the rules?

Sporting activities are permitted despite wider restrictions because of the benefits of sport and **physical activity for people's physical and mental wellbeing**. If people act irresponsibly when participating in sport (including off the pitch, and when socialising before and after activity) they jeopardize public health and undermine the case for safe sport to take place.

The FA have agreed a process for reporting any incidents of non-compliance to your local CFA. CFA's will then follow up on these reports.

If there are serious or consistent concerns Government will remove our approval to play football. It is imperative that everyone strictly follows all guidance.

Can we use changing rooms?

Changing rooms and shower facilities can be used, but participants must adhere to gathering limits while indoors, and maintain social distancing wherever possible. You should encourage participants to avoid or minimise use where possible (e.g. by arriving in kit and showering at home) and to minimise the time they spend in the changing area. Team talks/briefings and other gatherings should not take place in changing rooms under any circumstances. Access should be maintained for those with disabilities, and will be important for sports such as swimming, or outdoor sports in bad weather. Further advice on how to open your changing rooms safely can be found in the updated facility operator guidance on FA.com

When is indoor football/futsal returning?

Organised indoor football and futsal is currently permitted in Tier 1 areas if the rule of six is followed and in Tier 2 areas if the rule of six is followed and it is possible for people to avoid mixing with others that they do not live or share a support bubble with. Indoor football and futsal are not permitted in Tier 3 areas.

However, in all three tiers there are exceptions for indoor disability football and futsal, sport for educational purposes and supervised sport and physical activity for under-18s, which can take place with larger groups mixing. (So, as an example, in tier 3 under 18s can play futsal indoors but adults cannot).

We will continue to work with team sports, Sport England and the Government on the full and safe return of indoor football and futsal at the appropriate time.

What happens if a player tests positive for Covid-19?

If there is a player who has tested positive, they must from that point self-isolate (or if they have symptoms, from the moment of symptoms) and NHS Test and Trace will pick up from this point. The player should contact NHS 111.

The Club can carry on, but be mindful to ensure all the guidelines are strictly followed on social distancing, hand washing etc. If Test and Trace contact them, they must provide the details and then if deemed anyone needs to isolate on their instruction, do so.

What happens if I have played an opposition team and one of their players has tested positive for Covid-19?

Match play is not considered 'close contact' so no action is needed unless individuals experience symptoms, in which case they must self-isolate from that point as per [Government guidance](#).

A player has had Covid-19 but is now recovered – can they play? (Do they need a negative test?)

As long as the player is no longer symptomatic and has fully recovered then it would be fine for them to play, without a negative test, as long as they have finished the specified quarantine period.

However, the player should follow advice from a medical professional on when is best to return to exercise. They should also not rush back if they do not feel well enough.

I am a healthcare worker and regularly in contact with people with Covid-19 – can I play?

As long as you do not have any symptoms (as is the case for any other participant) and are not self-isolating, then you are able to play. Please adhere to [Government guidance](#) on this.

What if my club is not ready to return to full competitive training and matches?

The FA has worked with the government to develop approval for the restart of competitive grassroots football; however, each club should fully understand the guidelines before deciding to commence activity. Each club must only return to competitive football when they are ready and have the appropriate measures in place as developed by The FA and general government guidance. There is no pressure to return. **Everyone's health, wellbeing and safety** are the priorities.

What happens if a player, parent, match official or coach shows Covid-19 symptoms before, during or after a match?

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:

- A high temperature (above 37.8°C);
- A new, continuous cough;
- A loss of, or change to, their sense of smell or taste.

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. If an individual becomes symptomatic post an activity they must follow the NHS Test and Trace guidance found [here](#).

Are we allowed to share kit and equipment such as balls, goalkeeper gloves and training tops? The sharing of equipment must be avoided where possible. Where equipment is shared, equipment must be cleaned before use by another person.

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.

Do we need to support NHS Test and Trace efforts?

Yes, clubs and facility providers should support NHS test and trace efforts by collecting name and contact information on participants at both training and matches. This information should be stored for 21 days in-line with the Government Recreational Team Sport Framework then deleted and collected/processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and in line with GDPR principles. 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. Clubs and facility providers should follow current UK Government NHS test and trace guidance, which is available [here](#), with detail on how to maintain test and trace records [here](#).

What does this mean for clubs with teams in the National League System or the **Women's Football Pyramid**, is there a set of specific guidance for players and spectators at this level of the game?

Guidance for the National League System and **Women's Football Pyramid** is available [on FA.com](#).

What about Walking Football, is there any specific guidance around this?

As a format of football, Walking Football is covered by all the same guidelines that are provided by The FA.