

C - VI. Spectators



The guidance issued by DCMS on the return to recreational team sport has recently been amended to permit clubs to accommodate a limited number of spectators, provided that the club follows current government guidance in relation to COVID-19 and The FA's National League System club guidance which was published on 18 July 2020.

Risk assessments

Clubs must update their risk assessments and action plans, which were required to be prepared under the previous version of the government guidance, to consider and mitigate the risk posed by permitting spectators to attend fixtures (in particular, how they intend to minimise transmission rates and ensure that spectators comply with social distancing).

The risk assessment should focus on:

1. How the club intends to ensure that spectators maintain social distancing whilst at the ground (on arrival, during and after the match and on departure). Clubs may wish to consider:
 - a. marking queues with tape on the floor at 2m intervals wherever possible, but a minimum of 1m+ if not (i.e. at turnstiles and takeaway food areas);
 - b. markings for spectator standing;
 - c. reducing the availability of seats within covered accommodation;
 - d. crowd management processes, i.e. barriers at pinch points and/or introducing a one way flow within the ground; and
 - e. advance purchase ticket schemes, allowing clubs to manage walk ups.
2. How the club intends to maintain appropriate hygiene in spectator areas, including toilets, entrances and exits.
3. How the club intends to inform clubs of any new policies or procedures which will be in place. Clubs may wish to consider signage and use their communication channels to encourage spectators to follow the guidance.
4. Whether the club wishes to implement any COVID-19 screening measures for spectators attending fixtures. If so, what are these measures and how will they be implemented.
5. Whether the club intends to amend its usual refreshment facilities for spectators.
6. What medical provisions the club has in place if spectators fall ill and how this can be provided in accordance with current government guidance.
7. How the club intends to monitor compliance with its risk assessment and action plan and the steps it intends to take if spectators are found to be breaching social distancing measures or increasing the risk of transmission.

Please note that each ground will be unique and will require its own individual risk assessment and action plan.

Arrangements should also be put in place to support track and trace efforts by collecting sufficient written information from spectators to allow NHS Test and Trace to contact them if necessary. More

information can be found here <<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/maintaining-records-of-staff-customers-and-visitors-to-support-nhs-test-and-trace#information-to-collect>>

Spectator limits

The FA has been working with the Sports Grounds Safety Authority (**SGSA**) and DCMS to agree appropriate spectator levels for matches at Steps 3 – 6.

Following those discussions, The FA can confirm the following:

1. During stage 1 (from 22 August 2020 – 30 August 2020), clubs can permit spectators to attend fixtures provided that the number of spectators does not exceed 15% of the minimum ground grading capacity for the relevant Step (or the figures set out in Appendix C). If a club does not play any fixtures in the relevant period, it must have played at least one pre-season friendly or competitive match in accordance with this level of spectators before moving on to stage 2.
2. If clubs are satisfied that they have been able to comply with government guidance (in particular in relation to social distancing) and that they are able to operate in accordance with their action plans during the pilot stage, clubs can permit spectators to attend fixtures from w/c 31st August, provided that the number of spectators does not exceed 30% of the minimum ground grading capacity for the relevant Step (or the figures set out in Appendix C).

These limits shall apply unless and until The FA confirms otherwise. However, The FA will keep these limits under continuous review and reserves the right to amend these limits (upwards or downwards) or extend stage 1 at any time, in particular in response to any change in government guidance. If The FA becomes aware that any club has not complied with the guidance in relation to stage 1, it may direct that individual club to extend stage 1.

Clubs should also be mindful of the impact of any local lockdown which may prevent them from permitting spectators to attend fixtures (or play fixtures at all) and must comply with any guidance given by the government, local authorities or local health services.

Appendix C

Although Ground Grades F, G and H do not specify a minimum ground capacity for Steps 5 and 6, The FA considers 1,000 to be an appropriate threshold to set (given the minimum ground capacity in the grades above), which will also promote a consistent approach across the Steps. The FA does not consider that this threshold will have a negative impact on clubs at Steps 5 and 6 given the number of spectators that ordinarily affect fixtures in Steps 3 - 6.

The FA has calculated 15% of the relevant figures and rounded up/down to reach an appropriate capacity limit. For the avoidance of doubt, clubs should comply with the numbers in the capacity column below.

Stage 1

	STEP GROUND GRADING CAPACITY	STAGE 1	CAPACITY	DATES
Step3	Min 1950	15% capacity	300	Aug 22 nd – Aug 30 th
Step4	Min 1350	15% capacity	200	Aug 22 nd – Aug 30 th
Step5	Min 1000	15% capacity	150	Aug 22 nd – Aug 30 th
Step6	Min 1000	15% capacity	150	Aug 22 nd – Aug 30 th

Stage 2 – Subject to Stage 1 being undertaken.

	STEP GROUND GRADING CAPACITY	STAGE 2	CAPACITY	DATES
Step3	Min 1950	30% Capacity	600	Aug 31 st onwards
Step4	Min 1350	30% Capacity	400	Aug 31 st onwards
Step5	Min 1000	30% Capacity	300	Aug 31 st onwards
Step6	Min 1000	30% Capacity	300	Aug 31 st onwards