

# NATIONAL LEAGUE SYSTEM: COVID-19 UPDATED GUIDANCE



**FOLLOWING THE GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCEMENT THAT THE LATEST NATIONAL LOCKDOWN WILL END ON WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 2, THE COUNTRY WILL RETURN TO A THREE-TIER COVID-19 ALERT SYSTEM.**

There have been some changes to the restrictions within each tier, which impact on the National League System. The main points are listed in the chart below. Clubs are advised to consider these new restrictions and to amend their Risk Assessments and Action Plans accordingly, while also reflecting on their Risk Assessment from learnings gained since football returned in July.

|                | TIER 3: VERY HIGH ALERT  | TIER 2: HIGH ALERT   | TIER 1: MEDIUM ALERT   |
|----------------|--|--|--|
| <b>Matches</b> | <p><b>Competitive matches can resume, however Clubs are reminded that:</b></p> <p><b>BEFORE:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signage should be put up at all facilities/pitches to provide clear direction on protocols.</li> <li>• Social distancing must always be adhered to on arrival and when not in play.</li> <li>• The sharing of essential equipment is permitted. Strict hygiene protocols must be adhered to.</li> <li>• <b><u>NHS Test and Trace</u></b> must be in operation at all grounds/facilities.</li> </ul> <p><b>DURING:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All substitutes and team officials should maintain social distancing. No celebrations or team huddles.</li> </ul> <p><b>AFTER:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No socialising at the ground/pitch after games.</li> <li>• Bars, pubs, cafes and restaurants must be closed – they are only permitted to sell by takeaway/click-and-collect.</li> </ul> | <p><b>Competitive matches can resume, however Clubs are reminded that:</b></p> <p><b>BEFORE:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signage should be put up at all facilities/pitches to provide clear direction on protocols.</li> <li>• Social distancing must always be adhered to on arrival and when not in play.</li> <li>• The sharing of essential equipment is permitted. Strict hygiene protocols must be adhered to.</li> <li>• <b><u>NHS Test and Trace</u></b> must be in operation at all grounds/facilities.</li> </ul> <p><b>DURING:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All substitutes and team officials should maintain social distancing. No celebrations or team huddles.</li> </ul> <p><b>AFTER:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limit socialising at the ground/pitch after games.</li> </ul> | <p><b>Competitive matches can resume, however Clubs are reminded that:</b></p> <p><b>BEFORE:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signage should be put up at all facilities/pitches to provide clear direction on protocols.</li> <li>• Social distancing must always be adhered to on arrival and when not in play.</li> <li>• The sharing of essential equipment is permitted. Strict hygiene protocols must be adhered to.</li> <li>• <b><u>NHS Test and Trace</u></b> must be in operation at all grounds/facilities.</li> </ul> <p><b>DURING:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All substitutes and team officials should maintain social distancing. No celebrations or team huddles.</li> </ul> <p><b>AFTER:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limit socialising at the ground/pitch after games.</li> </ul> |

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There have been some changes to the restrictions within each tier, which impact on the National League System. The main points are listed in the chart below. Clubs are advised to consider these new restrictions and to amend their Risk Assessments and Action Plans accordingly, while also reflecting on their Risk Assessment from learnings gained since football returned in July.

|                 | TIER 3: VERY HIGH ALERT   | TIER 2: HIGH ALERT  | TIER 1: MEDIUM ALERT  |
|-----------------|---|---|---|
| <b>Training</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>All participants should minimise contact in training where possible, e.g. minimise tackles/ any drills or practices that require close contact.</b></li> <li>• All protocols on social distancing, hand sanitising, equipment sharing, facilities and <b>NHS Test and Trace</b> must be strictly adhered to.</li> <li>• No indoor football (including futsal) is allowed.</li> <li>• There are exceptions for indoor disability football, football within education settings (e.g. schools/ college/university) and supervised football for under-18s, which can take place with larger groups mixing.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outdoor training can take place.</li> <li>• All protocols on social distancing, hand sanitising, equipment sharing, facilities and <b>NHS Test and Trace</b> must be strictly adhered to.</li> <li>• Indoor football (including futsal) is only allowed if it is possible for people to avoid mixing with people they do not live with (or with whom they share a support bubble).</li> <li>• There are exceptions for indoor disability football, football within education settings (e.g. schools/ college/university) and supervised football for under-18s, which can take place with larger groups mixing.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outdoor training can take place.</li> <li>• All protocols on social distancing, hand sanitising, equipment sharing, facilities and <b>NHS Test and Trace</b> must be strictly adhered to.</li> <li>• Indoor football (including futsal) is only allowed if it is possible for people to avoid mixing with people they do not live with (or with whom they share a support bubble).</li> <li>• There are exceptions for indoor disability football, football within education settings (e.g. schools/ college/university) and supervised football for under-18s, which can take place with larger groups mixing.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Travel</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Players and essential club staff at Steps 3-6 of the National League System can travel into and out of Tier 3 areas.</li> <li>• Clubs must consider minimising shared or group travel wherever possible.</li> <li>• Travel as individual support groups where possible.</li> <li>• Face coverings should be worn if sharing transport.</li> <li>• Consider seating arrangements to maximise distance between people in the vehicle</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Players and essential club staff at Steps 3-6 of the National League System can travel into and out of Tier 3 areas.</li> <li>• Clubs must consider minimising shared or group travel wherever possible.</li> <li>• Travel as individual support groups where possible.</li> <li>• Face coverings should be worn if sharing transport.</li> <li>• Consider seating arrangements to maximise distance between people in the vehicle.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Players and essential club staff at Steps 3-6 of the National League System can travel into and out of Tier 3 areas.</li> <li>• Clubs must consider minimising shared or group travel wherever possible.</li> <li>• Travel as individual support groups where possible.</li> <li>• Face coverings should be worn if sharing transport.</li> <li>• Consider seating arrangements to maximise distance between people in the vehicle</li> </ul>  |

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|                                | TIER 3: VERY HIGH ALERT  | TIER 2: HIGH ALERT   | TIER 1: MEDIUM ALERT  |
|--------------------------------|--|--|---|
| <b>Changing Rooms</b>          | <p><b>Clubs must demonstrate that they are adhering to protocols on use of changing rooms. Indoor close contact outside of household or support bubble is prohibited. Use must be essential and done so as quickly as possible.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As a foundation, changing rooms should be used for changing and showering only and done so as quickly as possible.</li> <li>Clubs should factor staggering the use to minimise numbers.</li> <li>Other indoor spaces should also be kept to an absolute minimum.</li> <li>Where able, clubs should seek alternative, outdoor spaces for team meetings and observe social distancing at all times.</li> <li>Indoor spaces need to have maximum ventilation as possible.</li> </ul> | <p><b>Clubs must demonstrate that they are adhering to protocols on use of changing rooms. Indoor close contact outside of household or support bubble is prohibited. Use must be essential and done so as quickly as possible.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As a foundation, changing rooms should be used for changing and showering only and done so as quickly as possible.</li> <li>Clubs should factor staggering the use to minimise numbers.</li> <li>Other indoor spaces should also be kept to an absolute minimum.</li> <li>Where able, clubs should seek alternative, outdoor spaces for team meetings and observe social distancing at all times.</li> <li>Indoor spaces need to have maximum ventilation as possible.</li> </ul> | <p><b>Clubs must demonstrate that they are adhering to protocols on use of changing rooms. The rule of six applies indoors. Clubs must plan usage accordingly.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As a foundation, changing rooms should be used for changing and showering only and done so as quickly as possible.</li> <li>Clubs should factor staggering the use to minimise numbers.</li> <li>Other indoor spaces should also be kept to an absolute minimum.</li> <li>Where able, clubs should seek alternative, outdoor spaces for team meetings and observe social distancing at all times.</li> <li>Indoor spaces need to have maximum ventilation as possible.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Spectators</b>              | <p><b>Clubs are able to admit spectators at Stage 1 (15%) capacities in accordance with the NLS Spectator Guidance (See Appendix C on page 17 of main NLS Guidance). Clubs are strongly advised to liaise with their Local Authority for agreement on capacity limits prior to progressing to admittance.</b> Spectators <b>must</b> remain in their household / social bubble in groups of six and must not mix with any other spectator groups, which is enforceable by law. Any reports of breaches of spectator limits or social distancing may result in clubs returning to behind closed doors. This guidance does not supersede any directives from Local Public Health or Authorities.</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As per National League System Guidance. See Appendix C on page 17 of main NLS Guidance.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As per National League System Guidance. See Appendix C on page 17 of main NLS Guidance.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Clubhouses/ hospitality</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clubhouses must remain closed, except for those areas required for use such as changing rooms and toilets. Clubhouses who wish to operate outside matchdays need to follow the Government guidance for the food and drink sector.</li> </ul>  | <p><b>Clubs are strongly advised to liaise with their local authority/licensing officer to understand how Tier-by-Tier hospitality guidance will be applied to their club, e.g. protocols on takeaways for consumption at the venue etc.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clubhouses must close unless they operate as if they were a restaurant. This means serving substantial meals, like a main lunchtime or evening meal. They may only serve alcohol as part of such a meal. All food and drink to be ordered and consumed at the table. Tables can only be same household.</li> </ul>   | <p><b>Clubs are strongly advised to liaise with their local authority/licensing officer to understand how Tier-by-Tier hospitality guidance will be applied to their club, e.g. protocols on takeaways for consumption at the venue etc.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clubhouses can operate but must do so by table service (ordered and consumed at the table) only and observing the rule of six.</li> </ul>   |