

Recreational team sport to return safely this summer

- New guidance to enable competitive grassroots sport to be played – starting with cricket from 11 July
- Sports governing bodies must submit detailed safety plans before restarting
- Supporters allowed at grassroots games in small numbers, providing social distancing is adhered to

Recreational team sports will be permitted to begin returning outdoors from this weekend, under government guidance published today (9 July).

The framework sets out the principles that sports must follow to enable the safe return of grassroots fixtures and games. It was produced by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport with input from Public Health England, the Department for Health and Social Care and Sport England.

It will allow different households to participate in training and competitive matches while ensuring the risks of transmitting Covid-19 are minimised. It lays the groundwork for recreational cricket to return on 11 July after the England and Wales Cricket Board submitted thorough plans for the sport's safe return – with more sports set to follow.

Supporters will also be allowed to attend community fixtures in small numbers provided they are in groups of two households only, or no larger than six people from different households, and adhere to social distancing measures.

It marks another step towards the phased return of all sport and physical activity, supporting the millions of people who enjoy staying active by playing team sports to access the physical, mental and social benefits they bring.

Sports Minister Nigel Huddleston said:

This is fantastic news for the millions of people who miss playing sport with their friends and teammates.

This guidance sets out how community sport can be done safely, so many more sports can get going again.

Sports Governing Bodies are now putting stringent measures in place so that the millions of people that play, officiate and volunteer can keep safe while enjoying all the benefits that grassroots sport brings.

Each individual sport will submit to the government an action plan and related guidance, demonstrating its mitigations, how it plans to operate, and

any adaptations required, before they can be approved to restart.

The action plans must recognise that the return of recreational sport may need to be paused in the event of a raised Covid-19 threat level either nationally or locally.

Measures in today's guidance include:

- Activity organisers should support track and trace efforts by collecting information on participants at both training and matches.
- All players, officials, volunteers and spectators must undergo a self-assessment for any Covid-19 symptoms. If they or anyone they live with has symptoms, they should not train, play or attend matches, and should instead self-isolate in line with public health guidance.
- Participants and spectators should minimise the use of public transport and car-sharing with anyone outside their household. They should instead walk or cycle to matches where they can.
- Clubs should strictly limit the time spent congregating at a venue before a match begins. Where possible, players should arrive changed and ready to warm up, limiting time spent waiting around or in changing rooms.
- All sports must adhere to social distancing throughout warm-ups and breaks in play, and avoid equipment sharing where possible. Players should also avoid unnecessary close contact such as handshakes or huddles.
- Sports where a single ball needs to be touched by multiple players, such as basketball, cricket and football, need to include in their action plans how they will reduce the risk of this transmitting the virus – for example by cleaning when it goes out of play.
- Club toilets will need to be opened for pre-match, during the match and for 30 minutes afterwards, but they must be cleaned regularly in line with public health guidance.
- Clubhouses and bars can be opened in line with government guidance on hospitality, with groups limited to six people.

Rules on exercise were initially relaxed from 14 May, to allow people greater access to local, outdoor physical activity. This allowed the public to go outside for unlimited exercise, alone or with their household, or one other person while adhering to social distancing rules. It also permitted outdoor sports facilities such as golf courses and tennis courts to reopen, with strict safety measures in place.

On 1 June the Government published guidance which allowed people to exercise outside with up to five others from different households, provided that strict social distancing guidelines were followed. This meant that people who played team sports could meet to train together and take part in conditioning or fitness sessions without contact.

Today's framework should be read in conjunction with [wider government guidance](#) on meeting others and social distancing.

ENDS

Notes to editors:

Sport is a devolved matter and this guidance is applicable to recreational sports in England. Those in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland should refer to guidance from the devolved administrations.

Please also see the latest Government [guidance for the public on the phased return of sport and recreation](#), and guidance for [elite sport](#).