

Ministry of Justice statement in fee-paid judicial litigation: June 2020

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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](#).

[Performing Arts given green light to resume outdoors on July 11](#)

- Small pilots of performances indoors with socially distanced audience to take place to inform future plans
- New government guidance outlines how nation's beloved theatres and performance venues can get back up and running safely
- New planning rules to protect theatres, concert halls and live music performance venues

Performing arts can now take place outdoors from 11 July with a socially distanced audience present, Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden announced today.

This means that outdoor theatres, opera, dance and music can resume from Saturday so long as they take place outside and with a limited and socially distanced audience. This gives the green light for the likes of outdoor opera at Glyndebourne, Sussex and plays at Cornwall's Minack Theatre, to go ahead. London's West End will also return through the Six, The Musical Drive-In.

The Government will also work with the sector to pilot a number of small indoor performances with a social distanced audience to help inform plans about how best to get indoor venues back up and running.

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport is working alongside sector bodies including UK Theatre, the Association of British Orchestras and the Musicians' Union to identify suitable pilots. This will include working with London Symphony Orchestra at St Luke's as well as the London Palladium and Butlins amongst others.

A change in planning rules will also mean theatres, concert halls and live music performance venues will be protected from demolition or change of use by developers, stopping those that have been made temporarily vacant during lockdown disappearing altogether and giving extra security to these businesses as they start to re-open.

Today's announcements follows the government's announcement of £1.57 billion of funding for the arts, culture and heritage sector earlier this week, the biggest ever one off investment in these industries.

[New guidance](#), published by the Department for Digital Culture, Media and Sport today, will help performing arts organisations, venue operators and participants in the UK understand how they can work and take part in the performing arts safely, and keep their audiences safe.

The guidance follows the government's five-stage roadmap outlining how we will get audiences back into performing arts venues. It provides advice on all aspects of performance, from casting, sound and lighting, costume and fitting, to cloakrooms, orchestra pits, hair and make-up.

Singing and the playing of brass and wind instruments will be permitted in a managed and controlled professional working environment to minimise risk.

The Secretary of State has also commissioned a scientific study on the risks associated with singing and brass instruments which will be done in partnership with Public Health England, professional musicians from the Royal Opera House and the BBC and scientists from Imperial College, London and Bristol University. This will help inform our work on getting the performing arts fully back up and running safely, by testing what can be done safely.

The guidance makes clear that the following measures should be considered to allow for safe resumption of performances:

- A reduction in venue capacity and limited ticket sales to ensure social

distancing can be maintained

- All tickets must be purchased online and venues are encouraged to move towards e-ticketing for help with track and trace
- Venues should have clearly communicated social distancing marking in place in areas where queues form and adopt a limited entry approach *. Increased deep cleaning of auditoriums
- Performances should be scheduled to allow sufficient time to undertake deep cleaning before the next audience arrives
- Singing and the playing of brass and wind instruments in groups or in front of an audience is limited to professionals only
- Performers, conductors, musicians must observe social distancing wherever possible

Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden said:

Our culture, heritage and arts are too precious to lose. That's why we're protecting venues like theatres from redevelopment if they fall on hard times.

We are also giving further clarity on restart dates in our roadmap back to performance. From July 11 we can all enjoy performances outdoors with social distancing and we are working hard to get indoor audiences back as soon as we safely can, following pilots. Our scientific research project will also help speed up this journey.

Combined with our £1.57bn rescue package, this is a comprehensive plan to help our brilliant arts organisations weather the covid storm and bounce back stronger.

Housing and Communities Secretary, Robert Jenrick said:

The UK has a leading cultural industry that is the envy of the world. Our theatres, concert halls and live music performance venues are one of the reasons that the country has this reputation and they are essential to our national culture. That's why we are protecting them for the enjoyment of future generations.

Alongside the £1.57 billion investment to protect Britain's cultural, arts and heritage institutions, I am ensuring the buildings that represent these institutions can't be destroyed and are properly protected in the planning system.

All venues will be instructed to produce risk assessments and review their cleaning regimes, however deep cleaning and social distancing systems, including floor markings are all required to be completed in a way that does not damage the historic fabric of any listed buildings.

The guidance is part of the government's clear, phased approach to recovering

from the coronavirus pandemic, as outlined in the Prime Minister's roadmap.

Notes to editors:

This guidance will be for organisations in England. Organisations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland should adhere to the advice of the devolved administrations at all times.

This guidance will be updated as the evidence develops around singing, wind and brass instruments, and the wider public health context.

The five stages of the phased return to professional performing arts is as follows:

- Stage One – Rehearsal and training (no audiences and adhering to social distancing guidelines)
- Stage Two – Performances for broadcast and recording purposes (adhering to social distancing guidelines)
- Stage Three – Performances outdoors with an audience plus pilots for indoor performances with a limited distance audience from July 11. We will now also work with the sector to get small pilots started as soon as possible and will set out further details in due course.
- Stage Four – Performances allowed indoors / outdoors (but with a limited distanced audience indoors)
- Stage Five – Performances allowed indoors / outdoors (with a fuller audience indoors)

[Government announces gyms and pools to reopen safely](#)

The Government has outlined the measures that will allow outdoor pools to reopen from 11 July and indoor gyms, swimming pools and sports facilities to reopen from 25 July, ensuring millions of people can get back into more sport and fitness activities.

The [guidance](#), published by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, has been compiled with input from the trade body ukactive, the Sport and Recreation Alliance, Sport England and other sports bodies, and in consultation with Public Health England and the Health and Safety Executive.

It includes advice for providers of pool, gym and leisure facilities on cleaning, social distancing, and protection for staff to help venues get back up and running safely.

It also supports the re-opening of sports halls which are vital to the return of play for many sports, including badminton and volleyball. Guidance

produced by National Governing Bodies will complement the government guidance and help ensure indoor sports can be played safely from July 25.

Venues must ensure they can enable customers, staff and volunteers to maintain social distancing before, during and after participation.

Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden said:

The reopening of gyms is the news millions across the country have been waiting for with many people desperate to jump on a spinning bike or dive into a pool.

Our comprehensive guidance will ensure gyms, pools and leisure centres have the support they need to reopen safely for their customers and staff.

Helping people return to gyms safely will also help the nation get match-fit to defeat this virus.

Measures set out in the guidance include:

- Limiting the number of people using the facility at any one time, for example by using a timed booking system;
- Reducing class sizes and allowing sufficient time between each class to avoid groups waiting outside during changeover;
- Ensuring an appropriate number of people are in a swimming pool at any one time;
- Spacing out equipment or taking some out of service to maintain social distancing;
- Enhanced cleaning and providing hand sanitizer throughout venues;
- Considering how the way people walk through their venue could be adjusted to reduce contact, with queue management or one-way systems;
- Ensuring adequate ventilation;
- Encouraging the use of outdoor spaces for individual, team or group activities, making sure to comply with the latest restrictions on public gatherings;
- Exercise or dance studios should have temporary floor markings where possible to help people stay distanced during classes;
- Customers and staff should be encouraged to shower and change at home wherever possible, although changing rooms will be available.

Today's announcement follows a recent visit by government, Sport England and public health officials, led by Deputy Chief Medical Officer Professor Jonathan Van-Tam, to a series of ukactive member sites. This allowed officials to see first-hand how the sector is preparing to reopen safely.

Leisure centres and indoor gyms, along with swimming pools and other indoor sports facilities, have been closed since Saturday 21 March as part of measures to prevent the spread of coronavirus.

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 play team sports could meet to train together and take part in conditioning or fitness sessions, although anything involving physical contact was not allowed. It allowed parents to accompany their children to coaching sessions carried out on a one to one basis or in small groups.

Outdoor gyms were permitted to reopen from 4 July while ensuring social distancing.

This latest guidance is part of the Government's carefully-designed package to ease the burdens of lockdown in a way that is expected to keep the R rate, the average number of secondary infections produced by 1 infected person, down. The phased approach is outlined in the Prime Minister's roadmap for easing lockdown. As the Prime Minister has always said, the Government keeps these measures under review, and will not hesitate to apply the handbrakes if required.

ENDS

Notes to editors:

- This guidance is for gyms, swimming pools and indoor sports facilities 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](#).
- In May, [Sport England's weekly survey](#) of 2,000 people found that going to the gym was the leisure activity most people were keen to return to post-lockdown.

[Sentencing of Human Rights Defenders in Turkey: UK and Canada statement](#)

On 3 July, the ex-head of Amnesty International in Turkey, Taner Kilic, was convicted of 'membership of a terrorist organisation' and sentenced to over six years in detention. At the same trial, Idil Eser, Özlem Dalkıran, and Günal Kurşun were sentenced to 25 months detention for 'assisting a terrorist organisation'. All four individuals are known human rights defenders who have

worked to protect and promote human rights and fundamental freedoms in Turkey.

The United Kingdom, with our EU partners, and Canada first raised our concern over the detention of Mr Kilic in June 2017, followed by our concern over the detention on 5 July of the three remaining individuals, alongside seven other human rights defenders, who together were participating in a workshop on the island of Buyukada. We continued to raise our concerns throughout 2017 and 2018, including until Mr Kilic was released from pre-trial detention later that year.

As we said at the time, Mr Kilic's arrest came during a period of increased numbers of criminal proceedings against journalists, academics, human rights defenders, writers and lawyers in Turkey. Such detentions and prosecutions can create an environment in which Turkish civil society feels unable to act freely, and as such are unable to hold their government and authorities to account.

As we said in 2017, we have many shared commitments on the role of civil society organisations and human rights defenders, dating from Helsinki 1975 and including the 2008 Ministerial Declaration, also in Helsinki, on the Occasion of the 60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In that Declaration we, as OSCE participating States, recognised that "human rights are best respected in democratic societies, where decisions are taken with maximum transparency and broad participation. We support a pluralistic, civil society and encourage partnerships between different stakeholders in the promotion and protection of human rights."

As such we are concerned by the criminal sentences handed down to Taner Kilic, Idil Eser, Özlem Dalkıran and Günal Kurşun. We understand that all four have the option to appeal. We will continue to follow their cases very closely.