

Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Secretary's statement on coronavirus (COVID-19): 9 July 2020

[Coronavirus press conference \(9 July 2020\)](#)

For months now, our lives have been on hold.

When the call came in March, we pressed pause on many of the things that brighten our lives.

Meals with friends.

Trips to the cinema or theatre.

We had to close our gyms and swimming pools.

Cancel our holidays.

And postpone some of our favourite events.

But as we've made huge progress against this disease, we've gradually seen the things we love return.

Today, I'm very pleased to announce we can go a little bit further. As of this weekend, our artists, musicians and dancers can start performing live outside to audiences. We'll also have the resumption of recreational sport, followed later by the reopening of our gyms, swimming pools and leisure centres.

Normal life is slowly returning.

This is an important milestone for our performing artists, who have been waiting patiently in the wings since March. Of course we won't see crowds flooding into their venues. But from 11 July, our theatres, operas, dance and music shows can start putting on outdoor performances to socially distanced audiences.

That means theatregoers can experience a live play for the first time in months at places like the stunning Minack Theatre in Cornwall. And music lovers can attend Glyndebourne this summer.

We are taking various measures to make these places safe as they reopen. Venue capacity will be reduced, and organisations encouraged to move to electronic ticketing, to help test and trace.

But our performing artists deserve an audience. And now they will be getting one.

And while those outdoor performances get underway, we will be working with the public health experts to carefully pilot a number of indoor performances – from the London Symphony Orchestra at St Luke’s, to Butlins – to work out how we can confidently usher socially-distanced audiences indoors as soon as possible.

At the same time, we’re funding scientific studies to help us understand and mitigate some specific public health risks, like the impact of singing, wind and brass instruments on transmission.

The more we know about coronavirus in every setting, the safer we will be.

We’re also taking steps through the planning system to protect theatres and venues from demolition or change of use, and of course all of this comms on top of the unprecedented £1.57 billion package of emergency support to help arts, heritage and cultural institutions weather the COVID storm.

But, of course, we want to see all of our venues open as soon as it’s safe to do so.

Today’s announcement brings us a further step closer towards that reality.

Having allowed hairdressers to reopen, beauticians, tattooists, spas, tanning salons and other close-contact services can now do the same I’m pleased to say from Monday. Of course that will be subject to some restrictions on particularly high risk services.

As I’ve seen myself at the Royal Academy this morning, the National Gallery, and as we’ll see shortly from National Museums Liverpool, our cultural institutions are beginning also to welcome back visitors.

As these places begin to reopen their doors, I’m really urging people to get out there and to play their part. Buy the tickets for outdoor plays and music recitals, get to your local gallery and support your local businesses.

We have seen in recent weeks how our landlords, waiters and shop assistants have welcomed customers back with open arms, while doing so much to keep their communities safe. It’s time to give other businesses those same opportunities.

The Chancellor this week set out a bumper package of tourism and hospitality tax breaks, to get these industries firing on all cylinders once more and protect the millions of people who work for them.

That means a VAT cut on everything from tickets to shows, theatres, amusement parks, museums and zoos.

Lower costs for hotels, inns, caravan and campsites.

Vouchers for food and non-alcoholic drinks.

I’m urging the British people to make the most of this summer safely. We need them to support the places that we all love.

And today there is good news for our nation's fitness.

As we all know, exercise is incredibly important for both physical and mental health. Even at the height of lockdown it was considered an essential activity – with countless people hitting their parks for their daily run or transforming their living rooms into temporary gyms.

From this weekend onwards, millions of people will be able to rejoin their local sports teams as soon as their organisations publish approved guidance. Recreational cricket is back on this weekend. Five-a-side football, basketball, hockey and countless other sports will follow shortly after.

From this Saturday, they'll also be able to enjoy outdoor pools and waterparks.

And from Saturday 25th, people will no longer have to work out in the park or on their living room floor. They'll be able to get back into their gyms, their indoor swimming pools, their leisure centres, and jump on the spin bike or treadmill for the first time in months.

Now we've made a number of positive visits to gyms in recent weeks, and of course had hoped to do this sooner. But we really do have to phase this properly. We will be giving gyms the certainty, clarity and time they need to reopen safely, so that the maximum number can open their doors in just two weeks' time.

Again, we've worked intensively with both professional bodies and the experts to get us to this point, and facilities will have to take a number of measures to protect their communities. That includes for example using timed booking systems to limit the number of people using the facility at any one time, and reduced class sizes. Equipment will be spaced out, and there will be enhanced cleaning throughout.

As always, the public will need to do their bit and follow the guidance sensibly and safely. All of the measures we are taking are conditional and reversible. And we will not hesitate to impose lockdowns where there are local spikes – as we saw in Leicester, where things remain closed and of course in any other place when that is necessary.

But the return of gyms and recreational sport is a vital part of our battle against coronavirus.

We need to get the nation to get match-fit to defeat this disease.

And our fight began with a collective effort, and I really hope it will end with one. At the beginning, we all stayed home to protect the NHS and save lives.

Now the British public has a new part to play.

It's time to eat out to help out.

To enjoy the arts to help out.

And to work out to help out.

It's over to all of you to help the country recover safely.

Thank you.

[Suspension of scallop fishing in parts of the North Sea](#)

News story

Scallop fishing in the North Sea around Dogger Bank will be suspended for four weeks from Sunday 12 July 2020



Fresh sea scallops

Scallop fishing in the North Sea around Dogger Bank will be suspended for four weeks from Sunday 12 July to Saturday 8 August to enable data gathering about the state of the shellfish stock.

Following a call for evidence, and engaging with the scallop industry, the four UK Fisheries Administrations have taken the decision to temporarily close the fishery.

A week long consultation took place earlier this month to which a total of 14 responses were received. The majority of responses shared the concerns of the Fisheries Administrations that there is insufficient scientific data currently available to be confident that the scallop stocks in the area can be sustained if these levels of fishing are maintained.

The closure will be in ICES rectangles 39F1, 39F2, 39F3, 38F1, 38F2, 38F3, 37F1 and 37F2. The closure will be reviewed based on the scientific data gathered during the suspension. Evidence to be collated will include information on the age of the stock and whether the stock is spawning.

The Fisheries Administrations appreciate the work that industry has done to date and are committed to continuing to liaise with the scallop industry throughout the closure, during the review and in any subsequent decisions or actions that result from the data gathering.

Fishing licences will be varied to reflect the situation.

Published 9 July 2020

[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)