



**COVID-19 PHASE 3 Guidelines:
RETURN TO SPORT AND PHYSICAL
ACTIVITY
November 2020**



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INTRODUCTION

Organised sporting activities can be undertaken, providing all activity is consistent with current Scottish Government guidance on health, physical distancing and hygiene – please remember that these may change at short notice. Information on Scottish Government’s approach to managing COVID-19 is available at [Scottish Government: Coronavirus in Scotland](#) .

People who are symptomatic should self-isolate for 10 days and household members for 14 days as per info on NHS guidance. No one who is self-isolating should attend a sports facility or activity.

To manage a safe return to organised sport and physical activities all clubs, facility operators and deliverers (herein referred to as ‘operators’) should put in place Test & Protect procedures to help break chains of transmission of Coronavirus (COVID-19). Further information is available within this guidance and at [Scottish Government: Test & Protect](#).

Scottish Government has introduced a new [strategic framework document](#) for managing COVID-19 which became effective from 2 November 2020. This provides a 5-Level approach to restrictions with each local authority area (or sub-area) placed in a relevant protection level depending upon its COVID-19 status which will be reviewed weekly.

Clubs, venues and participants should be aware of their local area protection level and associated restrictions which may be in place and should consider this as part of risk assessment planning. Broad guidance for sporting activity which should be followed within each Level is set out in Table A below.

Further information on protection levels that will apply in each local authority area are available at [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): allocation of protection levels to local authorities](#).

Table A: Sport & Physical Activity Protection Levels

		Level 0	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
OUTDOOR SPORT Organised outdoor sport, competition, events and Physical Activity (PA)	Overview	An outdoor sporting 'field of play bubble' can consist of a maximum of 30 people including coaches, officials and other support staff at any one time. Multiple bubbles, each with up to 30 people, can be used in training, competition or small-scale sporting events if all guidance is followed (200 max per day unless with exemption).				
	Children & Young people (u18 years)	Contact & non-contact sport & PA permitted	Contact & non-contact sport & PA permitted	Contact & non-contact sport & PA permitted	Contact & non-contact sport & PA permitted	Non-contact sport & PA permitted Contact sport & PA prohibited
	Adults (18+ years)				Non-contact sport & PA permitted Contact sport & PA prohibited	
COACHING	Overview	General guidance is available within this document for coaches, leaders, personal trainers, deliverers and instructors, <i>herein referred to as coach/es</i> . In addition Getting Coaches Ready for Sport provides a 4-stage approach/checklist to further support coaches to plan and deliver safe sessions.				
	Outdoor coaching	The local protection level in place for sport and physical activity will dictate what activity can be coached and to whom in that area. See above for further information.				
PERFORMANCE SPORT	Professional & Performance	Professional & performance sports with Resumption of Performance Sport guidance in place and approved by Scottish Government or sportscotland is permitted at all Levels.				
TRAVEL	Outdoor Sport & Physical Activity	For further information please refer to Travel Guidance within this document.				

HOSPITALITY & RETAIL	Clubs & Sports Facilities	<p>Clubhouses and sports facilities which provide catering and bar services, can operate providing they adhere to Scottish Government guidance appropriate to the protection level in which they are operating. Further information is available at Coronavirus (COVID-19): tourism and hospitality sector guidance.</p> <p>Retail units operated by sports facility operators may reopen provided all specific Scottish Government guidance for retailers appropriate to the protection level in which they are operating is in place and adhered to. Further information from the Scottish Government is available at Retail Sector Guidance.</p>	
TOILETS, CHANGING & SHOWER ROOMS	Clubs & Sports Facilities	<p>Where changing rooms and showering facilities are to be used specific guidance relating to use of 'Changing and Showers' is available at Getting Your Facilities Fit for Sport. This is applicable at all levels where facilities remain open.</p> <p>Operators may open public toilets if they follow the guidelines outlined on the Scottish Government website Opening Public Toilets Guidelines</p>	<p>Indoor sports facilities closed.</p> <p>Toilets and changing rooms of outdoor sports facilities closed.</p>
WORKFORCE	Contractors & Staff	<p>Sports facility operators must ensure that Scottish Government guidance on workforce planning in sport & leisure facilities is followed for contractors and staff and ensure existing health and safety advice is maintained and aligned. This should be detailed in the risk assessment.</p>	
	Meeting Rooms	<p>Consider whether meetings and training must be completed in person or whether alternative approaches can be used. If it is essential that meetings and training takes place in person, Scottish Government guidance for general workplaces must be followed and a risk assessment should be completed.</p>	

SPORTS FACILITY & PARTICIPATION GUIDANCE

1. It is the responsibility of each club committee or venue (herein referred to as operator) to appoint a responsible person/s, referred to as the [COVID officer](#), to act as the point of contact on all things related to COVID-19. An [e-learning module for COVID officers](#) is available to support those undertaking the role.
2. The COVID officer **must** ensure that full risk assessments, processes and mitigating actions are in place before any sport or leisure activity takes place. Specific consideration should be given to the needs of those who are at greater risk including some older adults or those with disabilities.
3. Operators should check with their insurance company that correct and full insurance cover is in place and valid before any activity takes place.
4. Operators should only re-open facilities when it is safe to do so, in accordance with Scottish Government guidance.
5. Operators must ensure that users are made aware of the requirement to adhere to the WWS guidance prior to any activity being undertaken at the venue and reserve the right to intervene where there are any clear and visible breaches of this guidance by participants. Where such breaches take place operators should notify the COVID Officer and they should in turn take appropriate action to mitigate future risk and protect participants and the wider public.

Travel Guidance

6. Travel guidance outlined by the Scottish Government should always be followed. Further information on what travel is permitted is available at [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): guidance on travel and transport](#).
7. Information for each local authority area, including their level is available at [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): local protection levels](#) including a post code checker.
8. Specific information on car sharing is available from [Transport Scotland: advice on how to travel safely](#).
9. Sport & Physical Activity;

9.1 Participants can travel freely for organised sport and physical activity or informal exercise within their own Local Authority area. See Table A for information on what organised sport or physical activity is allowed at each Level. For informal exercise general household rules should be followed.

9.2 Level 4 guidance

- 9.2.1 Participants (all ages) should not drive/be driven in or out of Level 4 areas for the purposes of exercise. Travel in and out of Level 4 areas should only take place during the course of

outdoor exercise where it requires the crossing of boundaries, such as walking, cycling, running, or a golf course that straddles the boundary of two areas and starts/finishes at the same place.

9.3 Level 0-3 guidance

- 9.3.1 Participants 18 years of age or over (adults) who live in a Level 3 area should only travel locally (within around 5 miles of their local authority area) to take part in sport or physical activity outdoors. Adults living in a Level 3 area should not take part in contact sport or physical activity.
- 9.3.2 Participants aged 18 years or over (adults) who live in a Level 0, 1 or 2 area should, where possible, minimise unnecessary travel between areas and not travel to a Level 3 or 4 area to take part in organised sport or physical activity.
- 9.3.3 Participants under 18 years of age can travel to and from Level 0, 1, 2 and 3 areas (but not Level 4) to take part in organised sport and physical activity other than team sports.
- 9.3.6 Operators should risk assess all activity and it is strongly recommended that where at all possible training and competition should take place locally.

Definitions - for the purposes of this guidance

10. **‘Organised sporting or physical activity’** refers to activities which are undertaken in a structured and managed way following WWS specific rules and guidance (which fully apply the related Scottish Government and **sportscotland** guidance). All organised activity should be overseen by a Covid Officer with documented risk assessments undertaken and mitigating actions put in place to ensure the health, safety and welfare of participants, coaches and officials.
11. **Contact sport or activity** is defined as “a sport or activity in which the participants necessarily come into bodily contact or as a matter of course encroach within 2m of one another” – such as multi-person ringo rides.
12. **Non-contact sport or activity** is defined as “a sport or activity in which the participants are physically separated”. Waterskiing and wakeboarding are non-contact sports.
13. **Sports competition** refers to where participants compete against different participants as part of an organised league or competition.

Permitted Sport and Leisure Activities

14. **Participants and operators should follow guidance based on the area protection level in which the sporting activity is to take place. A summary**

of what sporting activity can be undertaken at each protection level is available in Table A and should be read in conjunction with the rest of this document.

15. As soon as a participant has completed their activity they should leave the field of activity and venue.
16. No spectating should take place other than where a parent or carer is supervising a child or vulnerable adult or when following specific [sector guidance for events](#).
17. No formal presentation ceremonies should take place during or after a sporting activity or competition as the focus should be on reducing the numbers in attendance at any one time.
18. Holiday camps, extended sports activity or events which would not normally come under the jurisdiction of WWS should refer to the appropriate local authority, umbrella body or care commission guidance. Organisers of these activities may alternatively wish to use Scottish Government household, physical distancing and group size limits.

Outdoor Sport & Leisure Activity

19. Operators may open outdoor areas if documented risk assessments are undertaken and all appropriate measures are put in place to ensure the safety of participants, staff and volunteers and where activity is undertaken in line with guidance for the appropriate protection level. Please also refer to guidance produced by **sportscotland** at: [Getting Your Facilities Fit for Sport](#).
20. Information relating to outdoor sport and physical activity that can be undertaken by protection Level and age group is available in Table A.

Outdoor sporting bubbles for competition or small-scale events

21. An outdoor sporting 'field of play bubble' can consist of a maximum of 30 people including coaches, officials and other support staff at any one time. In exceptional circumstances, numbers may be increased, but only if approved directly by Scottish Government or where specific Scottish Governing Bodies of sport (SGBs) guidance and mitigating actions have been agreed by **sportscotland**.
22. Multiple outdoor sporting bubbles, each with up to 30 people, can be used in competition or small-scale sporting events. In such cases operators and organisers should undertake comprehensive risk assessment to ensure that these bubbles do not mix at any time including before, during or after the activity.
23. Total numbers taking part in competition or events, other than detailed below, should not exceed 200 people in any one day, including organisers, officials and participants. Once an individual has completed their activity, they should immediately vacate the 'field of play' and are then subject to normal household rules.

- 23.1 Permanent outdoor sport, leisure and club facilities which are accessed on a regular basis by the general public and/or club members and have in place a designated COVID officer and appropriate risk assessments may exceed the limit of 200 people, in a single day, if mitigating measures are put in place to protect participants and staff. This may for instance include operating separate activity zones, implementing staggered time slots and putting in place other measures to ensure participation bubbles remain separate including consideration of parking and access/egress.
- 23.2 Any further exemptions or variation to competition or event participant numbers, including the addition of spectators, must be agreed directly with Scottish Government and may be subject to relevant Scottish Government guidance.
24. Where outdoor competition or events are planned and include multiple bubbles; operators and organisers should, as part of their risk assessment, consult with relevant local authorities, environmental health, the police or other body responsible for the safety of the public. Agreement must be reached with these bodies before the training, event or competition takes place.
25. Operators and organisers should note that the situation around COVID-19 is fluid and activities may need to be cancelled at short notice should there be a change in local or national restrictions. In such circumstances plans should be in place to notify participants of event cancellation and to ensure they do not attend the venue.
26. Operators should familiarise participants with guidelines before running competitions.
27. Outdoor coaching can take place if physical distancing is always maintained.

Coaching

28. The guidance below is to support coaches, leaders, personal trainers, deliverers and instructors, **herein referred to as coach/es**. In addition, please see [Getting Coaches Ready for Sport](#) which provides a 4-stage approach/checklist to help coaches get ready for delivering sport and physical activity. It can be used as it is or amended to reflect the sport or delivery activity.
29. Coaches operating within clubs and facilities should liaise with the relevant COVID Officer before undertaking coaching and all sporting or physical activity must adhere to operator and WWS guidance.
30. Coaches and others supporting activity should attempt to keep physically distant, but it is recognised that this will not always be possible to ensure the safety of participants. In such circumstances the responsible 'Covid Officer' should consider appropriate mitigating actions as part of the risk assessment.

31. Coaches should be aware that local restrictions may be in place for sport and physical activity and this should be considered as part of risk assessment planning and will dictate what activity can be coached, indoors and outdoors and to whom. See Table A for further information about protection levels.

The priority should always be on ensuring the safety of the coach and participants and minimising the risk of virus transmission before, during and after activity.

32. At all times coaches should:

- Plan and risk assess appropriately for the session in advance, be aware of responsibilities, be clear on expectations with participants and build in a review period to reflect on effectiveness and safety of the session.
- ensure signage on guidelines for participating safely and promoting hygiene measures are clearly displayed and up to date.
- check, in advance of delivery, that appropriate insurance policies are in place for all coached activities and that their insurance is valid for the activities they plan to deliver.
- find out about their direct and surrounding delivery environment in advance of the session and contact the facility operator, where relevant, to confirm any changes in processes and procedure.
- Coaches working with children should familiarise themselves with the additional considerations developed by **Children 1st**: [Child Wellbeing and Protection Considerations](#).

Additional Sport & Leisure Activity Considerations

33. Specific consideration should be given to supervision of children under the age of 5 years as it is not appropriate for young children to maintain physical distancing, either practically or in terms of child development. You may, for instance, ask a parent or carer to be present.
34. Where a disabled participant requires functional support to help them participate coaches or carers can provide this without maintaining physical distancing. In such circumstance the responsible 'Covid Officer' should consider appropriate mitigating actions as part of the risk assessment. For instance, providing appropriate PPE, limiting the number of participants an individual provides functional support to, limiting the duration spent in close proximity, or a combination of actions.

35. Where an employee is providing an activity, relevant work placed risk assessments and consultation should take place in advance of any activity being undertaken. See the Businesses, workplaces and self-employed people section at [Scottish Government: Coronavirus in Scotland](#).

Toilets, Changing and Locker Rooms

36. Use of changing rooms and showering facilities should be avoided where possible, although they must be made available for participants who require additional support such as disabled people or those with special needs.
37. Where changing rooms and showering facilities are to be used specific guidance relating to use of 'Changing and Showers' is available at [Getting Your Facilities Fit for Sport](#).
38. Operators may open public toilets if they follow the guidelines outlined on the Scottish Government website [Opening Public Toilets Guidelines](#).
39. Access to indoor locker rooms and storage areas is permitted for dropping off and collecting sports equipment or clothing. The operator should ensure mitigating actions are put in place to minimise the risk of virus transmission including physical distancing, hygiene and cleaning measures.

Equipment Provision and Use

40. Operators should, where possible, remove equipment including benches, scoreboards, tables and any other objects that are not essential for participation purposes.
41. Where the above is not possible appropriate cleaning measures, including provision of sanitiser and disposable gloves, should be put in place to reduce the risk of contamination.
42. All fixed equipment should be checked prior to use to avoid participants having to adjust or touch it.
43. Where shared equipment is necessary for an activity appropriate hygiene measures must be put in place to ensure the equipment is thoroughly cleaned before, during and after use.

Bookings and Payment

44. Encourage people to make bookings online where possible. However, be aware that a proportion of disabled people, people from low income households and older adults do not have access to the internet. Ensure you have alternative measures in place. For example, telephone bookings.

45. Consider introducing buffer periods between sessions to stagger start times so that participants do not all arrive/leave at the same time.
46. Where possible use online or contactless payment options and avoid handling cash. Where people do not have bank accounts it is okay to accept cash payments.

Communication with Members / Customers

47. Operators should communicate clearly and regularly with members and participants setting out what they are doing to manage risk, and what advice they are giving to individuals before, during and after visits to the venue/activity.
48. Make them aware in advance of measures that are being put in place at the venue, and guidelines they are asked to follow.
49. Communicate clearly opening times and how people can safely access a facility, if relevant, for example through a booking or queuing system.
50. Ensure signage on guidelines for participating safely and promoting hygiene measures are clearly displayed, up to date and in accessible formats.
51. When communicating with members and participants, consider how you will reach people who do not have access to the internet. When publishing information on websites, consider how to make it accessible when accessed via a mobile phone or tablet rather than a PC or a laptop.
52. Special attention should also be given to how you communicate physical distancing rules to young people.

Safeguarding

53. All adults involved in coaching / actively engaging with children or vulnerable adults in an organised environment should have undertaken appropriate safeguarding training.
54. Operators should ensure appropriate ratios of coach/adult to child/vulnerable adult as per guidance and follow all related safeguarding advice.
55. Health, safety and welfare policies should always be risk assessed and implemented.
56. Operators should also refer to the additional considerations developed by **Children 1st**: [Child Wellbeing and Protection Considerations](#).

Equality & Inclusion

57. Covid-19 is affecting everyone. But the impact of the pandemic is not being felt equally. Before the pandemic certain groups were less likely to participate in sport and physical activity. These groups are also the most at risk of worsening inequalities due to Covid-19:
- Older people
 - Disabled people
 - Ethnic minorities
 - Women
 - People from deprived communities
58. It is more important than ever to consider inclusive guidance for people who need extra support to be active and sports facility operators should consider this as part of their work to encourage people to return.
59. The evidence emerging has clear implications for how we design and deliver sport and physical activity. Some key areas for consideration include;
- **Communication** – Digital exclusion is a key issue. With so many services and so much information moving online it risks worsening the health impacts of the pandemic. We have to think innovatively about the range of ways we can provide information to people about sport and physical activity.
 - **Accessibility** – Accessibility of our environments is another key issue emerging from the pandemic. As clubs and leisure centers re-open it's important to build understanding of people's specific accessibility needs around things like hygiene, physical distancing and face coverings so we can provide the best possible support to people to take part in sport and physical activity.
 - **Anxiety, mental health and wellbeing** – The pandemic is leading to an increased risk of anxiety and mental ill-health for people. We know that sport and physical activity can have significant benefits for peoples' mental health so it's vital that we continue to promote those benefits, so people are encouraged to get involved.
 - **Confidence** - Confidence to return to sport is a big issue across all groups. We know that some groups are at higher risk from Covid-19 than others (including some ethnic minorities, disabled people and households experiencing poverty). These groups may be even more nervous about returning to sport or starting to participate. They are also less likely to participate in sport in the first place, so we'll need to give extra attention to their needs to help build their confidence.

Health, Safety & Hygiene

60. Scottish Government has produced the [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): FACTS poster including translations and accessible formats](#). Where possible operators should use this document to reinforce messages. FACTS stands for: **F**ace Coverings, **A**void crowded places, **C**lean your hands regularly, **T**wo metre distance and **S**elf isolate and book a test if you have symptoms.
61. Ensure access to first aid and emergency equipment is maintained.
62. Ensure that first aid equipment has been updated appropriately for the COVID-19 pandemic and first aiders have appropriate training.
63. In the event of first aid treatment being required it is recognised that a suitably qualified person, coach or supervising adult may require to attend to the injured participant. The 'Covid Officer' should consider processes for managing this as part of their risk assessment. This could include but not be limited to;
 - Provision of suitable PPE
 - Training of coaches/supervising adults
 - A parent or carer being present with children or vulnerable adults.
64. Cleaning of equipment, hand and respiratory hygiene are core measures to be implemented and provision should be made for these.
65. Clear guidance and plans are needed for cleaning of facilities and equipment, and waste disposal. For instance, common touchpoint surfaces (gates, door handles etc) should where possible be left open but if not possible, regular cleaning with disposable gloves should be undertaken.
66. Make hand sanitizers or wipes available and at the entrance/exit to the venue/facility where this is possible. Hand sanitiser should be at least 60% alcohol based and detergent wipes appropriate for the surface they are being used on. Cleaning products should conform to EN14476 standards.
67. Be aware that disabled people may face greater challenges implementing regular handwashing because of additional support needs. Some disabled people may need to use touch to help them get information from their environment and physical support. It is important they are not prevented from doing this, but operators should be aware that this increases the likelihood of virus transmission.
68. [Getting your Facilities Fit for Sport](#) provides a checklist for health, hygiene and cleaning considerations and actions.

Face Coverings

69. Operators should ensure participants and visitors wear face coverings, if indoors, before and after activity or when in non-playing areas of the facility. For

example: reception, locker rooms and storage areas. This is a **mandatory** requirement except where an exemption applies, or where there is a 'reasonable excuse' not to wear a face covering e.g. if you have a health condition or are disabled, including hidden disabilities such as autism, dementia or a learning disability.

70. Be aware that face coverings discriminate against some deaf people who need to look at lips to help communicate. Staff in facilities should be made aware that it is okay to remove their face coverings to communicate with someone who relies on lip reading and facial expressions.
71. Face coverings may not be required when using hospitality services such as café's, bars and restaurants. For further information refer to Scottish Government [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): tourism and hospitality sector guidance](#).
72. The [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Phase 3: staying safe and protecting others, face coverings](#) provides guidance on general use and exemptions.

Links to supporting guidance;

[Health Protection Scotland: General guidance for non-healthcare settings](#)

[Health Protection Scotland: Hand hygiene techniques](#)

[HSE: First Aid during the coronavirus](#)

Test and Protect

73. **Test and Protect** is Scotland's way of putting into practice NHS Scotland's test, trace, isolate and support strategy. Containing outbreaks early is crucial to reduce the spread of COVID-19, protect the NHS and save lives, and avoid the reintroduction of social and economic lockdown. This will support the country to return to, and maintain, a more normal way of life.

Maintaining customer records

74. Operators should where possible collect the name, contact number, date of visit, time of arrival, and the departure time of all those attending facilities or activities. Where attending as a small household group, the contact details for one member – a 'lead member' – will be sufficient.
75. Operators should store information for 21 days and share it when requested to do so by public health officers.
76. The Coronavirus (COVID-19): Test and Protect information leaflet provides information on the Test and Protect service from NHS Scotland.

Registration with the Information Commissioner's Office



77. In order to gather and store customer information securely, operators may need to be registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). This will be the case if you are using an electronic system to gather and store data.
78. If you are unsure whether you need to register, please contact the ICO via their helpline on 0303 123 1113, or visit www.ico.org.uk.

Protect Scotland App

79. NHS Scotland has launched a free mobile app designed to help with contact tracing efforts and slow the spread of COVID-19. The app will alert users if they have been in close contact with another app user who tests positive for coronavirus.
80. Supported by a dedicated Protect Scotland website, the app is an extra tool complementing existing person-to-person contact tracing which remains the main component of NHS Scotland's Test and Protect system.
81. Further information on the Protect Scotland app is available at www.protect.scot.

What should someone do if they have coronavirus symptoms?

82. If a person has a continuous cough, high temperature, or loss or change in taste or smell, they should self-isolate and request a coronavirus test right away. Further information is available at www.NHSinform.scot/test-and-protect or by calling **0800 028 2816** if they cannot get online.
83. The [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): Test and Protect information leaflet](#) provides information on the Test and Protect service from NHS Scotland.

Local Outbreaks or Clusters of Coronavirus Cases

84. Scottish Government travel advice and guidance relating to local outbreaks or clusters of coronavirus cases is available at [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): local advice and measures](#).
85. Where a local outbreak has been reported, sports facility operators and deliverers within this locality should review Scottish Government 'local measures' guidance, their facility/operational risk assessment and consider if additional mitigating actions should be put in place to reduce risk. This may, for example, include; suspending activity, enhancing hygiene and physical distancing measures or introducing additional activity restrictions.

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