

# **COVID-19: UPDATED GUIDANCE ON INDOOR AND OUTDOOR GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL**

**FOLLOWING THE UK GOVERNMENT'S ANNOUNCEMENT ON 22 SEPTEMBER, ALL COVID-SECURE GUIDELINES ARE NOW LEGAL OBLIGATIONS, WITH WHICH EVERYONE MUST ADHERE. FAILURE TO DO SO WILL RESULT IN FINES AS THE PRIME MINISTER SET OUT IN HIS SPEECH TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.**

**FOR CLUBS, PLAYERS, COACHES, CLUB OFFICIALS, CLUB WELFARE OFFICERS, MATCH OFFICIALS, LEAGUE OFFICIALS, VOLUNTEERS, PARENTS/CARERS SPECTATORS AND FOOTBALL FACILITY PROVIDERS – Published: 23 September 2020**

## **BEFORE ACTIVITY**

- Everyone should self-assess for Covid-19 symptoms before every training session or match. If you are symptomatic or living in a household with possible or actual Covid-19 infection you must not participate or attend. You should stay home and follow the latest Government guidance.
- Clubs/facility providers should appoint a Covid-19 officer and conduct a thorough risk assessment before re-opening or re-starting competitive activity. They should also follow current 'NHS test and trace' protocols, such as keeping an attendance register.
- Personal hygiene measures should be carried out by everyone and hand sanitisers brought and used at the training/match venue.
- All participants must follow Government advice on face coverings.
- The sharing of kit and equipment should be avoided, but where equipment is shared, it must be cleaned before use by another person.
- Goal posts and corner poles should be wiped down before matches, after matches and at half time.
- Follow Government guidance for travel, including minimising use of public transport.
- Active participants should arrive changed and ready to take part.
- Youth team coaches should re-acquaint themselves with all safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Meet-up times should be adjusted to avoid time spent congregating at a venue.
- Use of clubhouses, hospitality facilities, changing rooms and toilets must adhere to Government guidance.
- Anyone who is deemed vulnerable in respect of Covid-19 is reminded to follow the Government's guidance, only returning to football when it's right for them to do so.

## **DURING TRAINING AND MATCH PLAY**

- Competitive training can take place for all participants, in an outdoor setting provided this takes place in groups of no more than 30 (including coaches).
- Indoor play can continue to take place, provided groups of more than six do not mix (i.e. a maximum of 3 v 3 matches can be played indoors). If groups of six are likely to mix, these indoor activities must not go ahead. There are exemptions for organised indoor team sports for disabled people and also for children (under-18s). Therefore, disabled people and children can continue to play indoor sport without restrictions on numbers.

- Competitive match play is permitted, with social distancing in place before and after the session, and in any breaks in play.
- The sharing of kit and equipment should be avoided and participants should bring their own drinks or refreshments, in named containers.
- When the ball goes out of play, it should not be retrieved by non-participants and should be retrieved using the feet rather than the hands where possible.
- Participants must not spit and should avoid shouting or raising their voices when facing each other, as detailed in The FA Covid-19 Code of Behaviour.
- Set plays: players are encouraged to avoid unnecessarily long set-up or close marking. Other modifications apply to specific situations, such as goal celebrations being discouraged.
- Youth football coaches are encouraged to limit persistent close proximity of participants during match play and training.
- Observing rigorous hygiene standards, injuries can be treated.
- Spectator groups should be limited to six people per group and spread out in line with wider Government guidance.
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- Match fee payments should be cashless.
- Small-sided football should include more regular hygiene breaks in activity and players discouraged from touching or tackling against boards.

### **AFTER ACTIVITY**

- Hands should be washed at the earliest opportunity and personal equipment should be wiped down with a disinfectant.
- Unless absolutely necessary, participants should take their kit home and wash it themselves, or by family members. Postactivity showers should be taken at home.
- Everyone must continue to maintain social distancing including in any facilities where groups of people congregate (e.g. clubhouses).
- Everyone should leave following the traffic-flow system the club or facility provider has put place
- Anyone who becomes infected after training/matches should report this to the NHS test and trace system.
- Hospitality venues, such as clubhouse bars, must close at 10pm latest.

### **NHS TEST & TRACE**

NHS Test and Trace is a key part of the country's ongoing COVID-19 response. If we can rapidly detect people who have recently come into close contact with a new COVID-19 case, we can take swift action to minimise transmission of the virus. This is important to help avoid further societal and economic restrictions, including local lockdowns, and will allow us to return to a more normal way of life.

NHS Test and Trace includes dedicated contact tracing staff working at national level who work closely with local public health experts. Local public health experts include Public Health England (PHE), health protection teams and local authority public health staff.

The NHS COVID-19 app has a feature that allows users to quickly and easily 'check in' to your venue by scanning the code. The information stays on the user's phone. In England, you do not have to ask people who choose to 'check in' using the official NHS QR code to provide their contact details. If there is an outbreak associated with a venue, a message will be sent to the relevant app users with the necessary public health advice.

This will help to avoid the reintroduction of lockdown measures and support the country to return to, and maintain, a more normal way of life.

You must also continue to follow other government guidance to minimise the transmission of COVID-19. This includes maintaining a safe working environment and following social distancing guidelines.