

SDS Return to Sport and Physical Activity 5 Tier (updated 2 November)



System Guidance Paper

This guidance is being produced to support athletes, participants with a disability, SDS Branches, coaches, volunteers, and staff in relation to the Scottish Government's Route Map for a Return of Sport and Physical Activity in Scotland and the new 5 Tier System of Protections Framework which can be viewed here [covid-19-scotlands-strategic-framework.pdf](https://www.scotland.nhs.uk/covid-19-scotlands-strategic-framework.pdf).

The free NHS Scotland Protect Scotland app has been designed to help us protect each other, reduce the spread of Coronavirus and avoid further lockdowns. By using the app and following current public health measures we can all stay safe when we meet up, socialise, work or travel. To find out more and download the app please visit protect.scot.

Sporting activities can now be undertaken, providing all activity is consistent with current Scottish Government guidance on health, physical distancing and hygiene – you will also need to make sure that your club, facility and participants are made aware and can adapt to changes in guidance at short notice. Information on Scottish Governments approach to managing COVID-19 is available at [Scottish Government: Coronavirus in Scotland](https://www.scotland.nhs.uk/coronavirus-in-scotland).

Where Scottish Government local measures and restrictions are in place guidance detailed will supersede the corresponding guidance identified within this section. See [here](#) and Appendix 1 below for latest update.

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 sport and leisure activities it is a mandatory requirement that all clubs, facility operators and deliverers put in place comprehensive 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](https://www.scotland.nhs.uk/test-and-protect).

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SGBs, clubs 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	
INDOOR SPORT Organised indoor sport, competition, events and Physical Activity (PA)	Overview	The number of participants allowed to take part in organised indoor sport or physical activity should follow Scottish Government guidance on the opening of sport and leisure facilities and sport specific SGB Guidance . 'Group' activity refers to adults, from more than 2 households (6 members) who take part in organised sport or physical activity. 'Individual exercise' refers to organised sport or physical activity within household rules i.e. 1:1 coaching. For further information see definitions within this guidance.				

	Children & Young people (u18 years)		Contact & non-contact sport & PA permitted	Contact & non-contact sport & PA permitted	Contact & non-contact sport & PA permitted	Indoor sport & PA prohibited: Leisure Centres, gyms and other indoor sports facilities closed. Exemptions available for professional /performance sport
	Adults (18+ years)	Contact & non-contact sport & PA permitted	Non-contact sport & PA permitted Contact sport & PA prohibited	Non-contact sport & PA permitted Contact sport & PA prohibited	Indoor <u>individual exercise only</u> No contact or non-contact group activity	
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.				
	Indoor & Outdoor coaching	The local protection level in place for sport and physical activity will dictate what activity can be coached, indoors and outdoors and to whom in that area. See indoor / outdoor above for further information. Coaches can take multiple indoor sessions per day, however the numbers allowed in each session will depend upon the protection level in place.				
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	Indoor / Outdoor Sport & Physical Activity	For further information please refer to Scottish Government's Travel Guidance . The main implications for sport are as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You should avoid travel to other areas regardless of their level unless essential. • For exercise/sport – there is an exemption, however, it is limited – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ At level 4 – not permitted to drive outside LA area for exercise – but are permitted to cross boundaries in the process of exercising i.e. a circular cycling route or if a golf course straddles 2 LA boundaries. No exemptions. ○ At level 3 – permitted to travel around 5 miles outside own area for exercise. Shouldn't go into a level 4. 				

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Can travel freely for exercise within your own LA area. ○ U18s – can travel freely for exercise at levels 0-3. Should not travel in or out of a level 4 area. ○ Team sports – should compete locally in all levels and at all ages. Teams should not travel in or out of tiers 3 or 4. 	
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 <u>remain open</u>.</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	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.	
	Meeting Rooms	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.	

Where a participant with a disability requires functional support to enable their participation in physical activity and sport this can be provided without maintaining physical distancing. This support can be provided by a coach or other individual. In such circumstance the responsible 'Covid Officer' should consider appropriate mitigating actions as part of the risk assessment in consultation with the participant. This process is reflective of making "reasonable adjustment," in line with the Equality Act 2010.

"Reasonable adjustment" ensures the meaningful inclusion of people with disabilities within physical activity and sport by meeting individual needs.

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

Further information on supporting the inclusion of participants with a disability can be found [here](#).

Equality & Inclusion

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

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.

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 centres 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 who share all characteristics. We know that sport and physical activity can have significant benefits for people's 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.

The information outlined below is generic and should be used to inform the development of suitable sport specific guidance which can be shared with participants, clubs, local authorities/trusts, third sector and other sports facility operators.

Should a return to sport be possible for **your sport** during phase 3 in line with government and **your sport specific Scottish Governing Body** guidelines. Further guidance will be available from your mainstream Scottish Governing Body to advise you on the implications for your individual sport. For further information on **sportscotland's** guidance on Phase 3: return to sport and physical activity click [here](#) and Scottish Governing Bodies guidance click [here](#)

Permitted Sport and Leisure Activities

Travel Guidance

1. 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](#).
2. Information for each local authority area, including their level is available at [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): local protection levels](#) including a post code checker.
3. Specific information on car sharing is available from [Transport Scotland: advice on how to travel safely](#).
4. 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. For team sports follow the guidance below.

- 9.3.4 Team sports (all ages) should, where possible, compete and train locally and in line with guidance outlined in Table 1. Teams should not travel in or out of Level 3 or 4 areas to compete or train.
- 9.3.5 Where a participant is under 18 years of age they may travel/be driven to play for their team if it is located in a higher or lower Level area.
- 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.

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 on pages 2,3 and 4.

- Subject to the guidance below, organised sporting or physical activity can take place indoors or outdoors, in effect suspending physical distancing and household guidelines, for the duration of the activity.
- Where there is likely to be proximity (within 2m) or contact between participants involved in a sporting activity, mitigating actions must be put in place to minimise risk and keep participants safe. For instance:
 - SGB guidance should focus on providing sporting activity involving as few participants as possible, for the minimum amount of time, whilst still allowing the activity to run effectively. This may also require a change to game formats, numbers and/or rules to minimise risk to participants.
 - As soon as a participant has completed training, a competition or event, they should leave the field of play/venue.
- 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](#).
- 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.
- Holiday camps, extended sports activity or events which would not normally come under the jurisdiction of an SGB 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

- Operators may open outdoor sports areas, courts and pitches 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](#).
- 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 training, competition or small-scale events
- 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**.
- Multiple outdoor sporting bubbles, each with up to 30 people, can be used in training, 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.
- Total numbers taking part in training, 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.
 - 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.
 - Any further exemptions or variation to training, 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.
- Where outdoor sports training, 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.

- 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 circumstance's plans should be in place to notify participants of event cancellation and to ensure they do not attend the venue.
- SGBs and operators should introduce a period of training to familiarise participants with guidelines before running competitions.
- Outdoor group coaching for organised sport and physical activity including aerobics and fitness classes can take place with up to 30 people at any one time, including the coach, if physical distancing is always maintained.

Indoor Sport & Leisure Activity

- Indoor sport and leisure facilities can open if Scottish Government [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): Guidance for the opening of indoor and outdoor sport and leisure facilities](#) is fully implemented.
- Appropriate risk assessments and mitigating measures must be put in place to reduce risk and protect participants. For instance, consider physically distanced training, reducing numbers taking part and changing game formats or rules.
- Participants should not congregate before or after an activity. Operators must ensure comprehensive mitigating actions are put in place and documented in their risk assessment to stop this happening. Consider staggering start/arrival times and any other relevant additional measures.
- The number of participants allowed to take part in indoor sport or physical activity must be risk assessed by the operator following Scottish Government [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): guidance on the opening of indoor and outdoor sport and leisure facilities](#) and sport specific [SGB Guidance](#).
- Information relating to indoor sport and physical activity that can be undertaken by protection level and age group is available in Table A.

Coaching

- 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.
- 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 relevant [SGB Guidance](#).

- Coaches and others supporting organised sporting or physical 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.
- 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.
- Coaches can take organised outdoor group training sessions at all protection levels with a maximum of 30 people involved at any one time or as agreed through approved [SGB Guidance](#) and [Scottish Government \(COVID-19\): guidance on the opening of indoor and outdoor sport and leisure facilities](#).
- Coaches can take multiple indoor sessions per day, however the numbers allowed in each session will depend upon the protection level restrictions in place in the given location.
- Face coverings must be worn by coaches when indoors, except where an exemption applies. For instance;
 - where an individual has a health condition or is disabled, including hidden disabilities, for example, autism, dementia or a learning disability.
 - or if there is a reasonable excuse not to wear a face covering such as;
 - where there is difficulty in communicating with participants who may not be close by and safety is an issue i.e. in a swimming lesson. In such cases alternative measures should be considered such as use of a face visor.
 - being physically active or exercising as part of the coached session.
- 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.
- 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](#)

Local restrictions

Where a locality or region is subject to localised restrictions, not all of the changes above will apply. Details of local restrictions are available [here](#).

Boccia

For the sport of boccia there is the ability to return depending on the readiness of facility providers to open to clubs and sessions for training purposes only.

Competition will be considered in the future. SDS will publish further updates and guidance as and when competition is allowed to return.

SDS has published a separate Return to Boccia Guidance Paper. To access this guidance please follow this link: [Return to Boccia](#)

Travel guidance can be found in Table A on page 3.

General Guidance

To prevent spread of the virus, please follow the **FACTS**:

Face coverings

Avoid crowded places

Clean hands regularly

Two metre distance

Self-isolate and book a test if you have symptoms

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

Shielding is currently paused, and it is the individuals responsibility to decide when it is safe for their return to sport. The advice is highlighted in [here](#). The advice to people is to continue to strictly follow the guidelines on physical distancing, handwashing, surface cleaning and respiratory hygiene guidance on the [NHS Inform website](#).

What to do if someone in the club or session has Covid-19

- 1 Individual(s) should self isolate. A positive test will mean 'Test and Protect' protocol is in place. Sharing the booking list for the session may be helpful.
- 2 You may wish to alert club members present at the same session that there is a positive case. (The person should not be named though).
- 3 Review club protocols and ensure they follow guidelines. Consider a deep clean of all equipment prior to the next session.

sportscotland Phase 3: Return to Sport & Physical Activity

For further guidance on the following areas please refer to the [sportscotland Phase 3 Guidance Paper](#) document produced by **sportscotland**:

Equipment Provision and Use

Travel Guidance

Definitions

Test & Protect

Changing Facilities, Showers & Toilets

Permitted Sports and Leisure Activities

Health, Safety & Hygiene

Physical Distancing

Covid-19 Officer Training [sportscotland Covid Officer E-learning Module](#)

Local Outbreaks or Clusters of Coronavirus Cases

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. 94. 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.

SDS key messages

- This guidance relates only to sport and physical activity in Scotland.
- Further guidance will be available from your mainstream Scottish Governing Body to advise you on the implications for your individual sport. Click [here](#)
- It is the responsibility of the relevant facility operator / COVID officer to ensure that full risk assessments, processes and mitigating actions are in place before any sport or leisure activity takes place and to check if the activity is in an area which is subject to additional Scottish
- Government localised measures and restrictions.
- Guidance for coaches, leaders, personal trainers, and instructors (herein referred to as coaches) is available at Getting your coaches ready for sport.
- During outdoor group training sessions appropriate risk assessed physical distancing and hygiene measures should be put in place to protect participants.

- Face coverings: Mandatory (with limited exceptions) on public transport and in shops
- Be kind, friendly and considerate to everyone you meet
- Follow Public Health guidelines for hygiene
- Any branch or club activity must be in accordance with the guidelines provided
- Exercise well within your capabilities
- For further details please refer to [sportscotland Guidance Paper](#)

Our priority remains to protect the health of our coaches, volunteers, athletes, participant, staff and the wider community and help to suppress the spread of the Covid-19 virus. We should all continue to follow the government's and public health guidelines.