



England
Rugby

RETURN TO RUGBY

CLUB GUIDANCE

COVID MANAGEMENT GUIDANCE

August 2021

INTRODUCTION

In line with the government changes to COVID restriction and track and trace guidelines from the 16th August this document has been prepared to provide guidance to community clubs for training sessions, matches and any other rugby activity events.

There are now no restrictions on how many people can take part in sport and physical activity, or on the activities they can do. Rugby activity and events can take place with no capacity caps for participants or spectators provided they can be safely accommodated.

However, as most age grade players are currently unvaccinated, it is important that clubs and individuals continue to follow guidance, maintain best practice for hygiene and social distancing and have mitigation measures to reduce the risk of transmission.

The following guidance provides information and recommended practice for clubs to reduce the risk of transmission and manage positive COVID cases effectively.

More information is provided in the [government's grassroots sport participation guidance](#).

PRE-PARTICIPATION

RISK ASSESSMENT

Clubs should review their risk assessments and where appropriate update them to ensure they are aligned with government requirements and guidance and consider the current climate with respect to the potential of Covid-19 transmission and the risk mitigation plans for providing appropriate first aid/immediate care provision during training, matches and other events.

SELF SCREENING

It remains highly recommended that clubs continue to have a process in place to confirm and record that participants and parents who are planning to attend the club have undertaken a Covid-19 self-assessment. Ideally this should be completed prior to arrival at the venue to prevent participants with symptoms coming into contact with other participants.

If they have one or more symptoms (even if they are mild), the individual should not to attend and to follow [NHS guidance on testing and self-isolation](#).

There are a number of different options in the way in which clubs could collate this information:

- **Paper based:** Each participant is asked to print off, complete and bring with them a hard copy of the self-screen checklist prior to training/matches.
- **Online form:** Clubs set up a form online, using a platform such as survey monkey or google forms to collate responses. Clubs must take the necessary precautions to ensure this data is stored securely.
- **Proactive COVID Checker App:** Recommended by Howden, the RFU's insurance broker. The Proactive Digital Covid-19 Symptom Checker provides a simple, digital application to enable team managers and coaches a quick and easy platform to manage their player's self-assessment prior to every training session/match.

It provides a secure and safe way to manage the data protection risks associated with collecting such information and is a low cost option starting at just £2 per club.

Proactive also now offers an affordable incident report app that provides a quick and efficient system to ensure injuries and incidents both on and off the pitch are recorded and maintained in a secure and appropriate manner. Visit [Proactive App](#) for more information on both the COVID-19 Checker and Incident Reporting on-line platform.

The following check list/questions should be included in any paper-based/online forms:

Each participant should self-screen prior to leaving home and training/matches to ensure they do not have any of the following symptoms (confirmed by a parent for those under 18 years old).		
Potential indicators of COVID-19 infection:	Check Negative	Check Positive
A high temperature		
A new continuous cough		
Short of breath		
A sore throat		
Loss of or change in normal sense of taste or smell		
Feeling generally unwell		
Persistent tiredness		
Been in close contact with/living with a suspected or confirmed case of Covid-19 in the previous two weeks.		
Are you or anyone in your household/bubble self-isolating whilst waiting for a test or test results for Covid-19?		

Taken from: Medical Care and First Aid: a framework for organised non-elite sport during the COVID-19 pandemic.

COVID TESTING

Clubs may consider the use of lateral flow testing, asking participants to take a COVID-19 test before participating, where this is practical and possible.

Rapid lateral flow tests help to find cases in people who may have no symptoms but are still infectious and can give the virus to others. [Free Rapid Flow Lateral Tests](#) are distributed by the Government and can be sent to an individual's home address.

NHS COVID PASS

Clubs may also consider using the NHS COVID Pass to reduce the risk of transmission. The NHS COVID Pass allows people to demonstrate that they are at a lower risk of carrying COVID-19 and transmitting it to others, through vaccination, testing or natural immunity. It can help organisations to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19.

The NHS COVID Pass will be available through the NHS App, [the NHS website](#), or as a letter that can be requested by ringing NHS 119. Participants will also be able to show text or email confirmation of test results.

If clubs use the NHS COVID Pass, they should ensure that they comply with all relevant legal obligations and guidance, including on equalities. More information in the [NHS COVID Pass guidance](#)

Even when using the NHS COVID Pass, it is still important that clubs follow the rest of the guidance and continue to put measures in place to reduce the risk of COVID-19 spreading at the club.

DURING PARTICIPATION

PERSONAL HYGIENE

- Regular handwashing with soap and water and/or use of alcohol-based hand sanitiser before, during (where applicable) and after rugby activity.
- When coughing or sneezing use a tissue (and dispose of the tissue in a sealed bin) or where unavoidable the crook of an elbow.
- Spitting and use of chewing gum should be avoided to reduce the risk of cross contamination.
- Use own water bottle and do not share it with others.
- Don't share/swap clothing and/or training bibs. Ideally individuals should take clothing home to wash themselves.
- Continue to use a face-covering cloth or mask in indoor spaces.

ENVIRONMENTAL HYGIENE

- Regular cleaning/sanitising of equipment and kit before, during (where applicable) and after rugby activity.
- Keep the sharing of equipment to a minimum.
- Where possible keep indoor spaces well ventilated.

SOCIAL DISTANCING

- Continue to follow government advice on social distancing between yourself and everyone outside of your household before, during and after any rugby activity.
- Avoid groups of people gathering before or after the rugby activity, especially indoors and avoid face-to-face contact increases the risk of transmission, please avoid this where possible even when maintaining distance.

FACE COVERINGS

- Face coverings are no longer required by law, however the government still recommends that people continue to wear them in crowded and enclosed settings, to protect themselves and others.

TEST & TRACE

Clubs are no longer required to collect participants' contact details or keep records of your staff and visitors.

However, the government still advises that clubs continue to display an [NHS QR code](#) for participants/attendees wishing to check in using the app, to support NHS Test and Trace.

Clubs do not have to ask participants to check in or turn them away if they refuse.

Clubs who display an NHS QR code, should also have a system to collect (and securely store) names and contact details for those who ask to check in but do not have the app.

More information is available on the latest [NHS Test and Trace guidance](#) as required by the government.

GUIDANCE FOLLOWING A POSITIVE COVID-19 TEST

A positive test is one confirmed via an NHS approved swab NHS PCR (polymerase chain reaction) test. For more information go to the [Government Get Coronavirus Test](#) page.

If an individual receives a positive COVID test result, they will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace and requested to share information about their activities and close contacts just before and/or after developing symptoms/testing positive. Players/individuals who have taken part in club activities during this period should be encouraged to identify this activity on their Test and Trace record to support the contact tracing process. Further information is available on the [NHS Test and Trace webpage](#).

Action by a club is required if the player/individual attended training and/or visited the club in the 48 hours prior to symptom onset or the date of a positive test, if the case is asymptomatic and/or in the 10 days subsequently. If players/individuals (who have visited the club) develop symptoms of COVID-19 they should seek testing as soon as possible. The club should promptly conduct a risk assessment to identify any close contacts of the case as set out above.

If the club believe that the 'close contact' threshold has been exceeded as per the Team Sports Risk Exposure Framework 2 (see below), all affected individuals who are not fully vaccinated should self-isolate as per the [government test & trace and self-isolation guidelines](#).

Should the confirmed case be unable to identify all those they may have had contact with during play/training at the club, they should state this on their NHS Test and Trace record and this will be escalated through the NHS Test and Trace system who may make contact with the club directly to see if contacts may be identified. Evidence of risk assessments, training session plans and other relevant documentation may be requested as part of this review and should be ready to share with Public Health England (PHE).

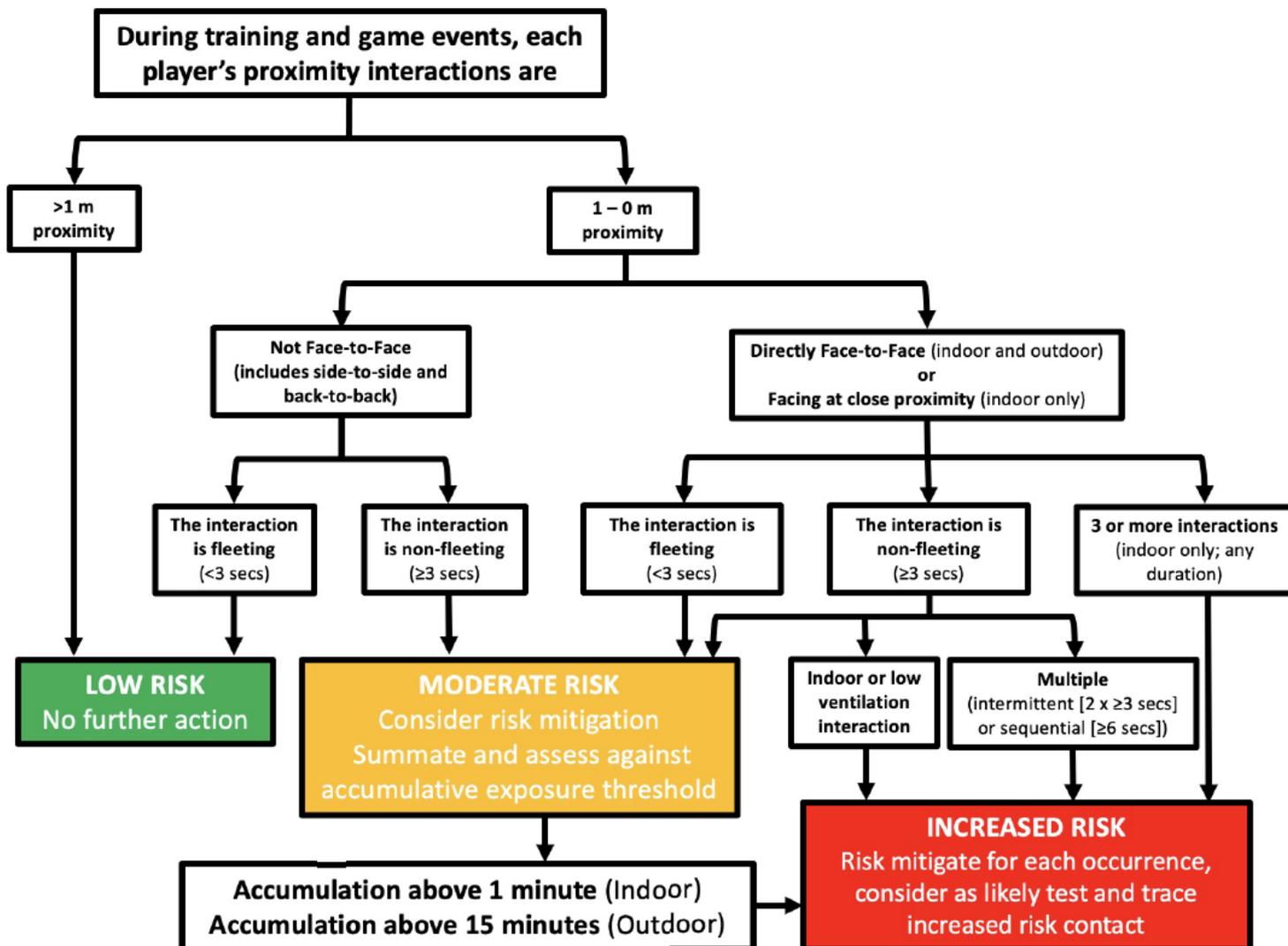
RETURNING TO RUGBY ACTIVITY AFTER COVID

Any player who has had Covid-19 symptoms should seek/follow advice from a health care professional on when is best to return to training. Assuming the player is no longer symptomatic, has fully recovered and has finished their required self-isolation period a return to sport can be considered. Those players who have had symptoms lasting more than seven days during their illness, even if asymptomatic at the time of returning to football, should have full medical clearance before returning to training.

If symptoms resume, or players feel unwell or have persistent tiredness on return to training they should consult their own doctor.

[The Government website](#) provides more detailed information and guidance for grassroots sports providers such as rugby clubs. More information and guidance is also available in the [RFU Return to Rugby section](#).

For players that have participated in any rugby training and/or playing activities, the Team Sport Risk Framework 2 should be applied:



The Team Sports Risk Exposure Framework 2 to identify activities or individuals who are at increased risk of SARS-CoV-2 transmission.

Close contact for players is defined by the Team Sport Risk Exposure Framework 2. Close contact for all other individuals (non-training/playing) is defined by the government guidelines.

NON-PLAYING/TRAINING ACTIVITY CONTACTS

In any confirmed COVID-19 cases identified in individuals that have not played/taken part in training activities, the government guidance on a close contact and test and trace should be followed. Such contacts may include volunteers, spectators, parents or other individuals associated with the club. These individuals should follow the requirement to isolate as set out in the government's [Guidance for contacts of people with confirmed COVID-19](#).