

COMMUNITY GAME COVID REGULATIONS



RFL Community Game Guidance

The purpose of this guidance is to provide guidance to community clubs for training sessions, matches and any other rugby league activity events and set out the processes and procedures in place to monitor any Covid-19 reported cases relating to participants within the Community Game.

This guidance has been updated on 27th January 2022, to reflect the Government's removal of Plan B restrictions which were put in place in December 2021, in response to the risks of the Omicron variant. While the Government have removed all restrictions, they are still encouraging caution in certain situations.

It is important that all participants remain vigilant and continue to follow the RFL and Government guidance.

The latest changes are summarised below.

- From 17th January: It is possible to end self-isolation after five full days if you have two negative Lateral Flow Tests (LFTs) taken on consecutive days. The first LFT should not be taken before the fifth day after your symptoms started (or the day your test was taken if you did not have symptoms). The self-isolation period remains 10 full days for those without negative results from two LFTs taken a day apart. – Government guidance on staying at home for households with possible or confirmed Covid-19 is [here](#). – Guidance for contact with a confirmed Covid-19 case outside of a household can be found [here](#).
- From 27th January: – Venues and events will no longer be required by law to check visitors' NHS Covid Pass. The NHS Covid Pass can still be used on a voluntary basis. – There is no longer a legal requirement to wear a face covering. However, the Government suggests that you continue to wear a face mask in crowded or enclosed spaces where you may come into contact with people you do not normally meet.
- On travel: – All participants may travel to games with no restrictions in place for domestic travel. – Government advice on requirements for international arrivals must be followed. More detail can be found [here](#). This means you cannot play football until you receive a negative test or complete your isolation period.

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

Risk Assessments

Clubs should review their risk assessments and where appropriate update them, to ensure they are aligned with government requirements and guidance. Clubs should also 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.

Pre-Attendance Symptom Check

It is recommended that all players, officials, and volunteers undergo a self-assessment for any Covid-19 symptoms, as set out in the section below, before leaving home to participate in the sport.

Reporting Symptoms

All participants (players, coaches, support staff) have a responsibility to notify the Club Covid Officer should they display symptoms of Covid-19 as detailed below, or if they have a positive Covid-19 test (irrespective of symptoms) within 48 hours of a training session and/or match.

- A high temperature
- A new, continuous cough
- A loss of, or change to, their sense of smell or taste

Anyone with symptoms should ask for an NHS test online or phone to arrange a test by calling 119. The Club Covid Officer shall reinforce this to relevant individual.

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They must complete the test within 5 days of the symptoms starting.

The Club Covid Officer must report any positive tests within Teams by completing a COVID-19 incident report form available [HERE](#).

Should a team have 5 or more positive cases within a 10-day period that team should be shut down for 5 days following the last team interaction with a known positive case.

Information on the multiple positive cases should be reviewed to understand if the cases were due to non-Rugby League related activity and this information shared with the Club's local PHE. Instructions from PHE should be followed, which may take precedence over RFL advised shutdown.

Any close contacts should follow the government guidelines on self-isolation which can be found [HERE](#)

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 is 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 on this can be found online [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.

Covid Vaccines

The vaccine and the vaccine programme have allowed us to restart society and a number of major organised sporting events. The best protection for everyone is the vaccine. Clubs should promote the benefits of the vaccine to its participants we have created a document to assist you with this which can be found [HERE](#).

- If a player has received two doses of the Pfizer vaccine, it will reduce their chances of being ill by 85%, and their chances of ending up in hospital or dying by 95%. The vaccine also reduces is also known to reduce transmission.
- If a player is fully vaccinated, they no longer need to isolate if they're a close contact of a positive case. They should still take a PCR test to ensure they are not positive themselves and follow [guidance on how to avoid catching and spreading COVID-19](#).
- The most common side-effects are feeling tired, headaches, aches, and mild sickness but these rarely last longer than a few days. Serious side-effects, such as heart inflammation, are extremely

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rare. The risk of heart inflammation is much higher from COVID-19 than from having the vaccine. Those who have received vaccination should be mindful of a rest period in the days following where side-effects and/or symptoms are present.

Personal Hygiene

Good hygiene practices are still one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of COVID-19. These include:

- Regular handwashing with soap and water and/or using alcohol-based hand sanitiser before, during (where applicable) and after rugby league activity.
- Using a tissue whilst coughing or sneezing (and disposing of the tissue in a sealed bin) or where unavoidable the crook of an elbow.
- Avoiding spitting or chewing gum to reduce the risk of cross contamination.
- Ensuring water bottles are not shared with others.
- Ensuring clothing and/or training bibs are not shared with others. Ideally individuals should take clothing home to wash themselves.

Hygiene during Activity

- Carrying out regular cleaning/sanitising of equipment and kit before, during (where applicable) and after rugby league activity.
- Ensuring the sharing of equipment is kept to a minimum.
- Ensuring, where possible, activity take place outdoors, and if indoors ensuring spaces are well ventilated.

Test and Trace

Clubs are no longer required to collect participants' contact details or keep records of their 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.

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Guidance following a Positive 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 PCR 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 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.

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 League 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/activity. 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 activity, 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.