



COMMUNITY RUGBY LEAGUE **COVID-19** COMMUNITY GAME GUIDANCE

THIS GUIDANCE FOR STEP FOUR COMES INTO EFFECT ON MONDAY 19TH JULY.

On Monday 19th July, England will move to step four of its roadmap in easing Covid restrictions. This means almost all legal restrictions of social contact will be removed. However, the Government is encouraging people to act with caution and in respect of team sports in accordance with NGB Guidance. Our guidelines have been amended to fall in line with the new Government guidelines and can be found below.

The move to step four of the roadmap is applicable to society as a whole. Recent weeks have shown both in a team sports setting and in wider society there are still significant public health challenges in terms of increasing numbers having to self-isolate and rising infection rates. This is particularly true in many of the areas where the majority of our activity takes place.

The majority of our players have yet to be fully vaccinated. The season so far has been challenging in terms of the numbers of games across all levels of the sport being postponed with Covid a significant factor. The situation is likely to get worse before it improves if the 19th of July is perceived as 'freedom day' and infection rates continue to rise. We would urge clubs to take a pragmatic and cautious approach to the easing of restrictions and message accordingly.

The summary key points are below, with more detail on subsequent pages:

1. Changes to the Team Sports Framework.
2. No limits of how many people can meet.
3. One-metre-plus rule is removed.
4. The definition of close contact remains the

same, however the rules on self-isolation will be changing from the 16th of August.

5. Changing rooms can be used, however participants should use their own judgment and minimise use where possible to avoid close contact in a crowded area for a prolonged time.
6. No capacity limits for spectators, but good practice is encouraged.
7. Hospitality is permitted without restrictions.
8. NHS Test and Trace QR codes are not required by law but are encouraged.
9. No travel restrictions.

DETAILED GUIDANCE ON STEP FOUR RESTRICTIONS FOR COMMUNITY RUGBY LEAGUE

TEAM SPORTS FRAMEWORK

In previous RFL guidance, we set out the required adaptations to the playing of the game, to align to the Government's team sports framework. As part of step four and for the remainder of the year the removal of scrums will remain in place. The reintroduction of scrums would lead to further transmission and impact on public health. It would also inevitably lead to close contacts (i.e., anyone in a scrum would be a close contact) that would lead to requirements to self-isolate impacting on fixture completion rates.

CLOSE CONTACT AND SELF-ISOLATION

It is important to note that the definition of close contact remains the same in step four. Examples of close contact include:

- Face-to-face contact under one metre for any length of time – including talking to someone or being coughed on;
- Being within one metre of each other for one minute or longer;

- Being within two metres of each other for more than 15 minutes in total in one day;
- Travelling in the same vehicle.

It is important to note that players must continue to self-assess and if they are experiencing any symptoms and awaiting a test result, they must stay at home.

It should be noted that local authorities and/or Government do have the power to insist on self-isolation based on prevalence in the Community at that time and their assessment of the factors involved in each case (as necessary).

QR CODES

While there is no legal requirement for use of QR codes, Government is encouraging businesses and facilities to continue using these.

CHANGING ROOMS

Changing rooms can be used. However, given that the definition of close contact is not changing, participants may wish to consider this and minimise use of changing facilities where possible to avoid prolonged contact with people in a crowded space. Clubs and facilities may also wish to consider taking precautions to avoid close contact, for example, asking participants to socially distance and ensure thorough ventilation.

SPECTATORS

As part of step four, there are no limits on spectators for indoor or outdoor activity, this includes parents and carers. All facilities can open without restrictions on capacity; however, facilities should follow Government guidance on how to best manage crowds, particularly for bigger events

HOSPITALITY

All outdoor and indoor hospitality will be allowed as part of step four and can operate without restrictions on capacity limits or how people order food and drink.

TRAVEL

All participants may travel to games with no restrictions in place for travel. Participants should be aware that travelling in cars is now permitted, however this does mean that they will likely be in close contact and should manage any risks linked to this.

Minibuses and coaches are now permitted to be used.

TEAM SHEETS

Team sheets are no longer required to be completed by each team individually. Clubs must complete team sheets in accordance with the relevant Competition Rules.



1. CLUB PREPARATIONS



All participants prior to returning to train and play in Rugby League matches must have re-registered or registered to play Rugby League and have reviewed and completed the opt in terms and conditions. This will ensure that participants are aware of the increase in transmission risk associated with partaking in activity and should ensure that all participants are clear that they are opting to participate in Rugby League.

All participants (players, coaches, officials, volunteers and spectators) should check for symptoms of COVID-19 prior to attending any activity at Clubs. In line with current UK Government Guidance, if an individual is symptomatic and/or living in a household with a possible COVID-19 infection they should remain at home and follow UK Government guidance. In addition, any participants who have been asked to isolate

by NHS Test and Trace because they are a contact of a known COVID-19 case, or they have returned from a 'red list' country, or from an 'amber list' country and not been fully vaccinated, must self-isolate immediately.

Personal hygiene measures should be carried out at home before, during and after Rugby League activity.

Participants are advised to bring their own hand sanitiser where possible and maintain frequent hand hygiene measures.

It is recommended Clubs maintain records of all staff, volunteers, members, and visitors in attendance at their venue. This information should be collected via an NHS QR code or a paper form. Further information can be found **HERE**.



2. CLUB COVID OFFICER



Each Club should appoint a Club Covid Officer to help assist in ensuring that the Club has taken the appropriate measures to resume activity. The Club ultimately has the responsibility to ensure that there are risk assessments in place for the Club and the activity that is taking place, however, to assist in the implementation of these a Covid Officer should be introduced to ease the burden and be a lead in this area.

The Club Committee shall ensure that the appointed person will receive all necessary support to undertake the role.

The Covid Officer should not put themselves at risk whilst carrying out the role. Duties of the role include:

- Being aware of and understanding relevant guidance issued by the RFL, government guidance, first aid protocols, and communicating these with relevant club volunteers and monitoring that these are strictly adhered to.
- Reporting any areas of non-compliance immediately to the Club Committee and ensuring that these are addressed.
- If there is a confirmed case ensuring that Test & Trace protocols are followed (see section 4).



3. PRE-ATTENDANCE SYMPTOM CHECK/GENERAL HYGIENE



All players, officials, volunteers and spectators must undergo a self-assessment for any COVID-19 symptoms. No-one should leave home to participate in sport if they, or someone they live with, has symptoms of COVID -19 currently recognised as any of the following:

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

Should an individual have demonstrated any such symptoms, they must follow NHS and PHE guidance on self-isolation

All Individuals are advised to:

- Wash their hands thoroughly before and after sessions (and when returning home);

- Use hand sanitiser at regular intervals (N.B. Children, particularly younger ones, are not always as aware about good hygiene, so special attention should be paid to children's hand hygiene.) More advice can be found **HERE**.

There is further guidance on cleaning available **HERE**.

HEALTH SCREENING REGISTER FOR TRAINING AND MATCHES

There is a requirement for all participants to complete a health screening form which includes a review of potential symptoms before starting activity. There is a template Health Screening Register which can be found **HERE** (PDF) or **HERE** (EXCEL).



4. TEST AND TRACE



All Clubs must ensure that they familiarise themselves with RFL's Test and Trace Protocol which can be found **HERE**.

5. SAFEGUARDING

Please see separate guidance on Safeguarding which can be found **HERE**.

6. BEHAVIOURS AT THE CLUB – DURING TRAINING & PLAYING

It is expected that Clubs will draw up their own protocols, however all participants (players, coaches, officials, volunteers and spectators) should observe the following.

- Must comply with the RFL's Covid-19 Community Game Guidance
- Must not share towels, clothing, water bottles, boots, headgear, guards, etc.
- Must not share lip balm, sunscreen, shampoo or any other toiletry product.
- Must not share disposables such as strapping etc.
- Spitting is prohibited and Clubs should enforce a complete ban on chewing gum.
- Must avoid shouting or raising voices when facing each other during, before and after games
- As the virus is transmitted from respiratory secretions, mouthguard etiquette is very important. Players should refrain from touching or removing their mouthguard, and if they do so must wash their hands. Mouthguards must not be left on shared surfaces or public places but be placed in a personal container and stored with personal possessions.

7. FIRST AID



- 7.1 Injuries during play should still be treated as participant wellbeing is utmost. The best way to protect yourself and others is through good hygiene practices. An increased frequency of cleaning and disinfection of all surfaces and equipment, using standard household cleaning and disinfection products, is recommended. Face Coverings and disposable gloves should be worn by the person administering first aid.
- 7.2 Clubs must follow the RFL's guidance on First Aid which can be found **HERE**.
- 7.3 After contact with an injured participant, it is advised to clean your hands thoroughly with soap and water or alcohol hand sanitiser at the earliest opportunity. Avoid touching your mouth, eyes, and nose.
- 7.4 Physios or their equivalent, should keep a record of each participant they have treated.

8. SPECTATORS

- 8.1 Supporters, parents, and other spectators are permitted to attend indoor and outdoor activity without restriction on capacity. Facilities should ensure they follow government guidance on how to manage crowds
- 8.2 Clubs are encouraged to keep records of spectators. This information can be collected via an NHS QR code or a paper form. Further information can be found **HERE**.
- 8.3 All visitors are encouraged to wash their hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer, especially upon arriving and prior to leaving the facility.



9. AFTER RUGBY LEAGUE ACTIVITY



9.1 Outdoor and indoor hospitality is allowed as part of step four and can operate without restrictions on capacity.

9.2 After match refreshments can be offered. Teams should refer to the relevant Competition Rules for further information.

9.3 Changing rooms can be used as part of step four of the Government's roadmap out of lockdown. Clubs should inform participants that these are areas of

increased risk. Minimal use is still advised to avoid prolonged contact with people in a crowded place. Clubs and facilities may wish to consider extra precautions such as asking individuals to maintain social distancing and ensure areas are suitably ventilated.

10. COMPLIANCE WITH THE GUIDELINES

10.1 During training it is the responsibility of the Coach and the Club COVID-19 Officer to ensure that all guidelines are always adhered to. Parents must also assist in ensuring any children are following instructions.

10.2 In the event there are any breaches to these rules the RFL will be obliged to investigate and act against any league, club, team or participant.

11. RESPECT

11.1 Rugby League prides itself on being a family game which is inclusive, uncompromising and passionate. The RFL continue to promote the RESPECT Code of Conduct and the Enjoy the Game Campaign, further details can be found **HERE**.

11.2 The game will take positive action to ensure that high standards of behaviour are always maintained in Rugby League.

For the avoidance of doubt this includes matches, training and at all other times, and includes comments or behaviour made in person or by any other means, including, but not limited to social media. RESPECT sets out the standards of behaviour which the game expects from the entire Rugby League family. The Game is an inclusive sport and is committed to the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion and will not tolerate any form of discrimination.

