

# COVID-19 SAFEGUARDING RISK ASSESSMENT GUIDANCE

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## *Carrying out risk assessments during the Covid-19 pandemic*

### CLUB RESPONSIBILITIES

Affiliated clubs organising and/or hosting football activities have a legal duty to take reasonable care to avoid acts or omissions which are a reasonably foreseeable risk. A risk assessment is a systematic review of the tasks, jobs or processes involved when your club organises, facilitates and/or hosts football activities. The purpose is to identify the significant hazards, the risk of someone being harmed and deciding what further control measures you must take to reduce the risk to an acceptable level.

Risk assessments should cover all risks, including those associated with the Covid-19 pandemic and how the club intends to ensure that its members and activities will operate within the Government guidance.

The public health crisis is constantly developing and so should clubs' response to it. Clubs are responsible for ensuring that risk assessments are completed, continually reviewed in light of changing Government guidance, feedback and observations from staff.

### RISK ASSESSMENTS – FIVE KEY STEPS

Club officials and coaches should keep the below five steps in mind at all times to ensure the safety of participants.

**Clubs should review the measures implemented in response to these regularly, particularly when Government advice or guidance changes.**

- 1.** Keep up to date with Government and FA guidance. Please ensure that they are followed at all times and communicate the guidelines to all individuals connected with your club. Please see the latest detailed FA guidance on grassroots football activity.
- 2.** Contact the club's insurance provider to ensure that your club is suitably covered to undertake activities in the current public health crisis. See additional notes below.
- 3.** Undertake regular risk assessments of the club's activities, ensuring that each one is named, signed and dated by those completing and approving it – see below for more details. Risk assessments are 'living documents' and should be updated and reviewed regularly and kept in active use to mitigate any new or changing risks. Undertake specific employee/volunteer risk assessments for anyone undertaking high-risk roles or tasks.
- 4.** Adapt activities and update the club's policies in light of steps 1-3. Policies to be updated include: Health and Safety Policy; and Data Privacy Policy to cover the handling of data.
- 5.** Ensure that everyone – board/committee members, coaches, first aiders, volunteers, parents and players – is aware of the club's Covid-19 protocols.

**Do not undertake an activity if the club has any concerns about the safety of club officials and/or participants.**

# COVID-19 SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS FOR A SAFEGUARDING RISK ASSESSMENT

## COMMUNICATIONS WITH PARENTS/CARERS RE: ACTIVITY FOR CHILDREN

Coaching children, as we all adjust to changing requirements in respect of Covid-19, will have its challenges. Parents/carers need to be kept informed and make their decision on what they feel is right for their child.

Below is a non-exhaustive list of issues clubs may want to consider when preparing a risk assessment during the Covid-19 pandemic:

1. Gaining informed written consent for involvement in any activity.
  - a. Where a child is aged 15 years or younger then parents/carers must give informed written consent via a consent form or e-mail trail, before their child can take part in football activity. Clubs need to decide how they retain a record of those parents/carers who have given consent (e.g. retain email, log consent form). NB: While The FA supports informed written self-consent from those aged 16 and 17 years of age – in these unusual times clubs may wish to seek parent/carer consent for these two age groups as well.
  - b. Clubs need to ensure that parents/carers are fully informed about any football activity being considered and the measures that are in place to ensure that the activity follows current Government guidance. Identify how the club will do this e.g. by providing written information to parents/carers outlining the activity being offered and measures being taken to manage risks via and inviting permission via a consent form (see [FA safeguarding Guidance Notes 8.2](#) for an example form), or via an e-mail.

If consent is sought via e-mail, clubs will need to ensure they use wording such as:

requires parental consent before your child takes part in any football activities.

By replying to this e-mail and stating “**I consent for my child to take part**”, you are confirming that you have read and understood the activities being offered to your child and agree with the measures the club has put in place to manage any risks, including its Covid-19 measures in line with current Government guidance.

A copy of the club's risk assessment/management documentation (**can be found here/is attached to this email**)

If your child has any specific medical conditions, please ensure that you discuss these with the club welfare officer and or coach and agree the best way to support your child's needs e.g. you staying to watch nearby and taking responsibility to administer the medication. For your information the club may use a form such as the one in [FA safeguarding Guidance Notes 8.2](#) to gather any relevant information from you. **If your child has Covid-19 symptoms they must stay at home and follow Government advice.**

If you wish to withdraw consent to your child participating in any or all activities, please notify

in advance, or as soon as possible.

# COVID-19 SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS FOR A SAFEGUARDING RISK ASSESSMENT (CONTINUED)

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2. Parents should be told to ensure that their child has their own water bottle, hand sanitiser, sun cream and any necessary medication (e.g. inhaler). All items belonging to their child should be labelled with their name and should not be used by anyone else.
3. The impact of Covid-19 may have caused some children to become anxious or unsure about resuming activity. Concerns may relate to levels of fitness, skill or friendship groups, others will be delighted to be able to return to football. Clubs should only support their return to football when they and their parents/carers feel confident for them to do so. Clubs should offer to speak to parents/carers of children about potential issues if needed and make gradual introductions if needed.
4. For more information on safeguarding children and the suitability of staff and volunteers please see The FA's guidance found [here](#).





# COVID-19 SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS FOR A SAFEGUARDING RISK ASSESSMENT (CONTINUED)

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## VENUE

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.

This means that while it will no longer be mandated to wear masks or socially distance, businesses and facilities should think carefully about how best to avoid risk of transmission.

To assist, they may want to consider the following:

### 1. ARRANGEMENTS TO MAINTAIN SOCIAL DISTANCING

- If the venue is open to the public, consider how this will be managed in relation to the Club activity to maintain social distancing;
- Signage to direct the flow of people to assist social distancing;
- Ground markings to remind people of social distancing;
- Reduce congestion at entrances and exits;
- Access to and from toilet facilities;
- One-way systems in/out;
- Consider how parking arrangements will be affected.

### 2. FACILITIES

- Clubs should ensure that they provide accessible facilities and comply with health and safety legislation;
- In step four, the use of masks will become voluntary in all settings, with the Government advising people to use their personal judgement and to take responsibility, depending on the situation. Masks have been shown to be effective in mitigating risk and are still advocated for crowded areas or for meeting people who you do not normally meet, therefore The FA recommends that clubs consider the risks very carefully.
- Ensure access is still provided to accessible toilets, accessible parking bays and accessible access into facilities;

### 3. PROMOTE GOOD HYGIENE AND REGULARLY CLEAN FACILITIES

- Facilities and equipment must be kept clean – if the club has its own venue, ensure regular daily cleaning of the facilities. In particular, identify high contact touch points for which should be cleaned on multiple times across the day more regular cleaning (e.g. door handles, grab rails and vending machines). Follow the Public Health England guidance [here](#) for cleaning in non-healthcare settings and if a Covid-19 case is reported at the facility;
- Direct people to where they can wash their hands;
- Provide signage to remind people of the importance of washing their hands thoroughly;

# COVID-19 SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS FOR A SAFEGUARDING RISK ASSESSMENT (CONTINUED)

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- Players should be informed that spitting should be avoided, as the main mode of transmission of the virus is in respiratory secretions. In addition, clubs should consider enforcing a complete ban on chewing gum, as it is either spat out or rolled into a ball and taken out and thus poses a high risk of cross contamination. Club officials may wish to put a disciplinary measure in place in relation to spitting and chewing gum;
- Encourage participants bring their own named hand sanitiser (use alcohol-based hand sanitiser);
- Provide paper towels for drying hands and sealed bins for placing paper towels and tissues in. If there is any concern that someone may have had symptoms of, or been infected with Covid-19, ensure these are double-bagged in line with Government guidance;
- If hiring a facility, ask for details on how the facilities are compliant with the Government's guidance and ensure club officials are familiar with the procedures that should be followed.



# COVID-19 SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS FOR A SAFEGUARDING RISK ASSESSMENT (CONTINUED)

## HEALTH CHECKS, INJURIES AND ILLNESS

Please refer to medical training and check if a current Medical Emergency Action Plan (MEAP, see page 22), which you will find on TheFA.com [here](#), has been written for the event or venue. See also The FA First Aid Guidance.

If there is a first aider or other medical personnel present, they should be equipped with the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) before treating anyone to protect themselves and others should they need to compromise social distancing guidelines to provide medical assistance during training or matches. They should have updated themselves on any changes in first aid procedure that will be required as a result of the pandemic. This should be obtained from their training organisation or from Resuscitation Council guidance.

## HEALTH CHECKS AND INSURANCE

### Before travelling to the session

Clubs should request that each participant undertakes the following self-screen check list before travelling to a training session or other football activity. If they answer 'yes' to any one of them they should not travel to the training session and follow all applicable Government Guidance (e.g. call NHS 111). It is important to remember some people can pass on the virus before they develop symptoms, or never have symptoms despite being infectious. Despite everyone's best efforts, these cannot be screened out of training.

**TABLE 1: SELF-SCREENING CHECK LIST PRIOR TO EACH TRAINING SESSION**

Each participant should self-screen prior to arrival at training to ensure they do not have any of the following symptoms (confirmed by a parent for those under age 18), as these are potential indicators of Covid-19 infection.	Check negative	Check positive
<b>A high temperature (above 37.8°C)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Some clubs may include on-site temperature checking of participants as part of their SOP, this is more relevant to clubs who employ medical staff.</li></ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>A new continuous cough.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Shortness of breath.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>A sore throat.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Loss of or change in normal sense of taste or smell.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Feeling generally unwell.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Persistent tiredness</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Been in close contact with/living with a suspected or confirmed case of Covid-19 in the previous two weeks.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Finally, are you or anyone in your household/bubble self-isolating whilst waiting for a test or test results for Covid-19?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



# COVID-19 SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS FOR A SAFEGUARDING RISK ASSESSMENT (CONTINUED)

## Arrival at the venue

Coaches at the club should check that each participant completed the self-screen check list before attending and if so, if the self-screen checks were negative for all participants. Ensuring everyone understands the importance of this simple process being completed before travelling is essential to avoid potential transmission.

If a participant says they forgot to self-check before their arrival, then the coach should ask them the health check questions before they join any group at the facility. If they answer 'yes' to one or more of the questions, participants must not take part in the activity and should be told to safely return home.

## During the session

Please refer to The FA First-Aid guidance, for how to manage the situation if anyone appears to be symptomatic during the session. You can find this guidance on The FA.com [here](#).

### 4. INJURIES

If a player gets injured, a member of their household or support bubble, can aid them if for example they are watching from their car, but others will still need to socially distance unless a life threatening, or serious injury necessitates compromising guidelines to provide emergency care.

In all cases, NHS guidance on further management should be followed.

### 5. INSURANCE

Clubs must ensure the relevant insurance cover (public liability and personal accident) is in place.

Please note that even with insurance cover, clubs must still follow Government guidance at all times.

For details on the National Game Insurance Scheme cover during Covid-19 click [here](#).

Please contact your County FA if you have any insurance cover-related queries.

## PLANNING TRAINING SESSIONS AND OTHER FOOTBALL ACTIVITIES

### EQUIPMENT

Please refer to the 'Useful information' section below for Government guidance on cleaning in non-health care settings.

Key considerations for clubs:

- Clean equipment between uses:
  - Identify who will regularly maintain the equipment hygiene e.g. balls, cones, goalposts and bibs;
  - Thoroughly clean the equipment e.g. balls, cones, goalposts, etc.;
  - Bibs should not be used unless they can be washed between sessions.
- Limit sharing of equipment where possible:
  - Ensure equipment is handled as little as possible by as few people as possible;
  - Each participant should bring to training their own water bottles, sun cream and medication each of which should be clearly labelled with their name.
- Have strict hand hygiene:
  - If individuals are going to share equipment, including balls, always ensure the individuals' hands are thoroughly cleansed using alcohol-based hand gel, if clean running water and soap are not available, before and after use.

