

# Ready to Return Official Guidance (v22.1)

**Updated on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2021**

Following the Government announcement on the 9<sup>th</sup> December, England will move to Plan B in response to the risks of the Omicron variant.

Areas highlighted in grey are new additions or changes to the v21.1 document.

## **Guidance coming into place from 10<sup>th</sup> December 2021**

- Face coverings should be worn when not playing, coaching or officiating.
  - Face coverings are not required when exercising, as it is not recommended to wear a face covering while exercising or strenuous activity.
  - Face coverings do not have to be worn in any café/bar/restaurant facilities when seated
  
- You should limit close contact with other people
  - You may choose to take a lateral flow test before being in close contact and also encourage those people you are meeting with to do so, which will help to manage periods of risk. This includes close contact in a higher risk environment, or when spending prolonged periods of time with a vulnerable individual.
  - Your sport provider may ask you to take a COVID-19 test before participating. This helps them to ensure that sport can take place safely, and that participants are not at risk of catching or spreading the virus.
  - These are personal choices which can help reduce your risk of catching or spreading COVID-19. It is important to consider that others may wish to continue to take a more cautious approach. We should all be considerate of this and provide the opportunity and space for others to reduce close contacts if they wish.

## **Guidance in place from 15<sup>th</sup> December for large scale events:**

Spectator attendance at large events may be subject to providing evidence of full vaccination or having tested negative in the last 48 hours (unless exempt from these requirements).

For some events there will be a requirement for individuals to show an NHS COVID Pass for entry. This includes:

- Indoor events with 500 or more attendees, where those attendees are likely to stand or move around for all or part of the event
- Outdoor events with 4000 or more attendees
- Any events with 10,000 or more attendees indoor or outdoor

The use of the NHS COVID Pass is not advised for participation in sporting activity, regardless of number of participants or whether the activity is indoors or outdoors.

Those working or providing services at your event or venue (for example employees, performers, athletes, or suppliers) should not be counted when calculating the numbers of attendees in relation to the attendee thresholds.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/carrying-out-mandatory-covid-19-status-checks-at-your-venue-or-event#venues-and-events-that-must-carry-out-covid-19-status-checks>

If you think your event/competition may have over 500 attendees and need to consider implementing the use of an NHS COVID Pass but are not sure how to approach this, please make contact with us at [help@tabletennisengland.co.uk](mailto:help@tabletennisengland.co.uk).

### **Recommendations/considerations for play:**

It is worth noting that there is still a level of nervousness in returning to indoor activity that clubs and indoor venues should consider.

A Sport England survey in June 2021 showed that only 40% of people feel comfortable going to indoor gyms, leisure centres, or swimming pools, 56% of people with a health condition are still worried about leaving the house to be active and 60% of people say they are worried about the risk of the virus to themselves.

- Keeping track of attendees at sessions is still recommended and the NHS QR-code Track & Trace will remain recommended as good practice for venues to use, you can create a QR code and poster for your own venue [here](#).
- Before attending any sporting activities, all participants, officials, volunteers and spectators should self-assess for symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19). These are:
  - a high temperature
  - a new, continuous cough
  - a loss of, or change to, your sense of smell or taste

If you have one or more of these symptoms you should not attend any sporting activity, even if your symptoms are mild. You should follow [NHS guidance on testing and self-isolation](#).

- We recommend regular cleaning of equipment that individuals are in regular contact with, such as the sides/edges of tables and balls.
- Let fresh air in if you meet indoors.
  - When a person infected with COVID-19 coughs, talks or breathes, they release droplets and aerosols which can be breathed in by another person. The more fresh air you let into enclosed spaces, the less likely a person is to inhale infectious particles.

- You can let in fresh air by uncovering vents and opening doors and windows. Opening your windows for just 10 minutes, or a small amount of time continuously where you can, makes a significant difference. This is particularly important before, during, and after meeting people you do not live with indoors.
- Do not prop fire doors open. If you have an extractor fan at home, for example in your bathroom or kitchen, think about leaving it running for longer than usual with the door closed after someone has used the room. If you are concerned about the costs of heating, opening windows for shorter periods of time can still help to reduce the risk of the virus spreading.
- Carrying out a health and safety risk assessment (a Table Tennis England template can be found [here](#)) is still highly recommended, including the risk of COVID-19, and to take reasonable steps to mitigate the risks you identify. Things to consider might be:
  - cleaning surfaces that people touch regularly;
  - identifying poorly-ventilated areas in the venue and taking steps to improve air flow, such as opening windows and doors
  - communicating to staff and customers the measures you have put in place.
- We strongly recommend that hand sanitising and regular handwashing remains in place and that hand sanitisers remain out at the entrance and exit of the venue
- We strongly recommend that players refrain from breathing or spitting on their bat or the ball. This is likely to increase the risk of particle droplets spreading, alongside negatively impacting players feeling comfortable returning to play.
- Your venue operator may place different or additional measures and restrictions in place, therefore speak to your venue operator about any additional restrictions they may put in place
- There are no recommended court sizes now in place (with the exception of those for certain competitions) and we recommend clubs use their own judgement factoring in the space available, to reduce close contact in their venue.
- Players are still recommended to avoid hand shaking at the end of a game
- For stay at home guidance for people with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection, please visit [here](#).
- For guidance for contacts of people with confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection, please visit [here](#).

You can find the link to the official Government guidance for sports and physical activity [here](#).