COVID-19: SUPPLEMENTARY GUIDANCE FOR LAWN BOWLS CLUBS
Issued: 2nd June 2020

The physical and mental wellbeing of our bowls community is of paramount importance. Bowls England wants to support those clubs that wish to reopen and members who would like to play, to do so safely and in accordance with Government guidance.

The Government announced on 13th May that facilities associated with outdoor sports and physical activities, including lawn bowls, could reopen.

Additional Government guidance released on 1st June 2020 states: *"You can play lawn bowls where facilities have reopened, but you can only take part in these activities by yourself, or with members of your household or with no more than five other people outside of your household, as long as you are able to maintain social distancing."*.

The guidance we have developed below supplements the Government guidance by covering situations specific to the sport of lawn bowls. It is a live document and will be updated if advice changes and we continue to actively seek the latest advice from Government.

Individual clubs must decide whether they wish to reopen having taken into account Government advice and members must similarly determine whether they wish to participate at the current time

This guidance document contains the following Sections:

1. Clubs – Summary of Recommended Action
2. Players – Summary of Recommended Action
3. Frequently Asked Questions
4. Back2Bowls
5. Additional Information

If you have any questions, please e-mail: enquiries@bowlsengland.com. We are here to help and we will endeavour to respond within three working days.

We hope you all stay healthy and that we all get through these challenging times by looking to help each other where we can. The coming weeks and months may also provide an opportunity for you to encourage members of your own household, who currently don't play, to give bowls a try – clubs are reminded to ensure that any activity by non-members is in accordance with their insurers.

Meanwhile, keep safe, take care, look after yourself and, when you do return to the green, enjoy your bowls.

Stay alert, control the virus, save lives.

1. Clubs – Summary of Recommended Action

Bowls England recommends that all clubs consider the guidance below. This may be adapted as necessary for your club, so long as it remains consistent with Government advice and social distancing requirements. This is particularly relevant with regard to rink usage and the maximum numbers of people that each club feels it can manage on the premises safely at any one time:

Play arrangements

- Off-site booking system for rink allocation
- Minimum of 20 minutes between allocated time slots to enable players to arrive/depart safely
- Clubs to communicate in advance with players to advise on social distancing requirements that are being applied on arrival at the club – for example not leaving cars until a certain time before their allocated time slot
- Only play on alternate rinks 1, 3, 5 OR 2, 4, 6 (keep an empty rink between rinks that are being played on)
- Whilst the Government guidance now enables triples play, clubs may also wish to consider alternative formats with reduced numbers per rink – for example singles and pairs – in order for social distancing to be more easily maintained
- Capping the number of occasions a player can book a rink each week to ensure that the available capacity is distributed fairly

Playing Formats

The following playing formats are in accordance with Government guidelines:

- Up to six individuals from different households playing on a single rink

Social distancing rules must be strictly adhered to; you must remain at least two metres apart from other bowlers (who are not part of your household) at all times.

Clubhouse and Facilities

- Until further notice, all clubhouses must be closed
- Limited essential access (for example to use the toilets and hand washing facilities) may be allowed by the club
- Sanitiser must be available for cleaning hands and equipment before and after playing
- Clubs may wish to allow spectators, however their attendance must be in line with Government guidelines on social distancing and the ability of the club to accommodate the additional numbers

Social distancing rules must be strictly adhered to; you must remain at least two metres apart from other bowlers (who are not part of your household) at all times.

Equipment

To minimise the risk of infection, only essential items (as below) should be utilised during any session:

- Mat
- Bowls
- Jack
- Rink markers
- Gloves
- Scorecards (these should be retained by one person only if required)
- Bowling arm/lifter (for use by one person only if required)
- Bowling aids (for players with a disability if required)

To minimise the risk of infection, any other equipment is not deemed essential equipment at this time and clubs should give consideration as to whether they wish to utilise or not. This includes:

- Scoreboards
- Bowls pushers
- Ditch markers
- 2m distance sticks
- Chalk

2. Players – Summary of Recommended Actions

Bowls England recommends that all players follow the guidance below (the guidance may be adapted if necessary to meet individual needs, so long as they remain consistent with Government advice and social distancing requirements):

In advance

- Do not go to the club if you are experiencing any coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms or any cold or flu-like symptoms, in particular a cough or a high temperature. Use the NHS 111 website or helpline and seek advice. For your own protection, follow the advice about self-isolation if you are, or are living with, someone in one of the vulnerable groups
- Dress appropriately before you get to the club to avoid the need to change clothes – change shoes immediately before and after your game
- Travel to the green on your own or with members of your own household only – do not offer a lift to, or accept a lift from, anyone outside your household. Do not arrive more than 10 minutes before your allocated booking time.

Personal care

- Whilst they may be open, avoid using toilets at the club wherever possible
- Clean anything you have touched after use
- Take any food or drink you might need with you
- Wash or sanitise your hands and sanitise any equipment (including bowls, jacks and mats) you use before and after you play – do not assume that the person before you has sanitised the equipment thoroughly
- Sanitise padlocks, keys and door handles before and after use

Playing the game

- You can play lawn bowls where facilities have reopened, but you can only take part in these activities by yourself, or with members of your household or with no more than five other people outside of your household, as long as you are able to maintain social distancing
- Do not shake hands before, during or after a game
- Do not 'high-five' OR 'hug' other players to celebrate shots or a win
- Mats/jacks (if shared) must be sanitised before and after each session
- If scoring:
    - Social distancing rules must be strictly adhered to at all times
    - Do not touch your opponents' bowls with your hands
    - Avoid measuring for shot/s wherever possible

When you leave

- When you finish playing, change your shoes and leave the club immediately – ensuring that you have sanitised all equipment used and that the club is secure (as applicable)

3. Frequently Asked Questions

When can we reopen?
Outdoor bowls clubs are now allowed to open. Each club, including council-owned sports facilities, will make their own decision about when their facilities are ready to open and can be operated safely. You should only reopen or restart activities as soon as you feel able to do so safely. Until you feel it is safe and responsible to reopen you should remain closed.

What games can we play?
All activity should be consistent with the government guidance regarding health, social distancing and hygiene. That means that participants and others can maintain a safe two metre distance, that good hygiene practices are in place, that equipment is disinfected regularly, and that it is clear that anyone who is symptomatic or suspects they have been exposed to the virus does not take part and remains at home.

What about competitions within our club?
Any measures clubs can put in place to enable an activity to return needs to be capable of being adapted to follow government guidelines on social distancing e.g. strengthening or relaxing measures at short notice. Organisations are encouraged to think creatively about how best to make their sport or activity possible within the guidelines.

The limit on gatherings means that it is unlikely to be possible to organise amateur events or competitions at this time. The primary purpose of bowling activity at this time is for physical and mental well-being.

Can 'clinically vulnerable' people (such as people aged 70 and over) participate in lawn bowls?
The Government guidance for 'clinically vulnerable' groups remains the same. If you are in this group you are advised to stay at home as much as possible and, if you do go out, take particular care to minimise contact with others outside your household.

If you are living in a household with a possible COVID-19 infection or if you are classified as 'clinically extremely vulnerable' on health grounds, the guidance is that you should remain at and exercise at home. You may wish to consider doing the Bowls England Level 1 workout, to help you to stay fit and active. Full details at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do#vulnerable-groups-shielding-70-year-olds-and-over-and-care-homes

Can I receive coaching?
Coach Bowls further recommends that coaches provide coaching to no more than four people at any one time, regardless of their ability, with the addition of a further independent adult for Safeguarding and Health & Safety reasons (who should remain socially distanced). Coaches should coach on no more than two rinks at any one time, to ensure quality of delivery is maintained.

Can we open the club bar and kitchen?
No – Bars and restaurants, including any food or drink facilities inside a clubhouse must remain closed until further notice. Take-away services can be offered, but any hot or cold food must be consumed off the premises, outside of the building.

Can we use the club toilets?
Yes – toilets and throughways may be kept open, but guidance on hygiene and social distancing should be followed.

Can we use the changing rooms?
No – all indoor facilities, apart from toilets and through-ways should be kept closed.

Can we share equipment?
Where possible we recommend that you limit sharing of equipment, for example you should use your own bowls. If you are sharing equipment (mats/jacks) you should wash your hands thoroughly before and after use. It is a decision for clubs/facility managers whether or not they loan/hire out bowls. If you do, we would expect you to follow sensible precautions and clean in between users, as well as following the safely working guidance.

4. Back2Bowls

We would love to see examples of good practice with bowls being enjoyed whilst adhering to the government guidelines. Please post your photos on social media tagging in Bowls England or using the hashtag #back2bowls – we'll share the best with the rest of the bowls community.

Alternatively, send your news direct to: news@bowlsengland.com

5. Additional Information

Further guidance is available as below:

DCMS

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-phased-return-of-sport-and-recreation

Sport England

https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/coronavirus/coronavirus-what-happens-next#your_questions_answered

Sport & Recreation Alliance

https://www.sportandrecreation.org.uk/news/covid-19

Thank you

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