



ENGLAND
NETBALL



MANAGING COVID-19 WITHIN NETBALL

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INTRODUCTION

This document should be used by all organisers of any netball activity outside of the Elite Framework (Vitality Roses and Vitality Netball Superleague athletes). Organisers should familiarise themselves with this guidance. It replaces the 'Restart Guidance' that was in place during the steps and stages of Government restrictions.

In addition to this guidance, members of England Netball will gain access to the Care Package which includes a series of further enhanced resources and tools to make bringing this guidance to life as simple as possible.

COVID-19 has not disappeared. Although many of the restrictions have been removed, the virus is still prevalent and appears likely to remain so for some time. It is for these reasons that this guidance document is crucially important; it sets out all the actions netball organisers must take in line with the latest [Government guidance](#), as well as clear recommendations to protect and give confidence to the Netball Family. Everyone involved in netball should familiarise themselves with the guidance and play a role in keeping the risk of COVID-19 transmitting at netball to a minimum.

Despite there being fewer legal restrictions in place, it is still essential that any organisation running netball activity is aware of the risks of COVID-19 transmitting during netball activity and puts in place measures to mitigate these risks.

Consideration should be given to formal and informal netball activity and this guidance applies to all netball activities including (but not limited to) training activities, matches, trials, netball participation programmes and tournament style competitions as well as netball activity within schools, colleges and universities. The guidance also applies to variations of netball such as Walking Netball, Nets and should be in place for both adults and those under 18.

This guidance should be used from Monday 19th July 2021 until further notice. It has been reviewed in January 2022 in line with Government guidance around Omicron variant and it should continued to be used in any netball activity.

Should you have any queries that are not covered within this document, please visit www.englandnetball.co.uk/about/covid-19-support or email participation@englandnetball.co.uk

GUIDANCE FOR MANAGING COVID-19 WITHIN NETBALL

Due to the continued prevalence of COVID-19, netball organisations must continue to complete the following actions before any netball activities:

- ✓ Complete a risk assessment and risk mitigation plan for each specific activity/venue. This must reference the ways in which COVID-19 will be managed.
- ✓ Appoint a COVID-19 Officer, or a lead who oversees the management of COVID-19, who should familiarise themselves with this guidance. For member organisations of England Netball, these individuals will continue to be supported with enhanced communications, resources and tools.
- ✓ Consider the fitness levels of players (at all levels). With many players having had months away from court, care and attention should be given to a careful and progressive return to minimise the risk of injury. Time must be allowed for all players to complete a full warm up and cool down before and after every netball activity.
- ✓ Have in place clear communications with those involved in netball activity to ensure they understand the guidance, particularly around isolation and symptoms of COVID-19.
- ✓ Continue to report to covid@englandnetball.co.uk when multiple cases (2 or more) arise in a single club, team, match or session within a 14 day period. This is so we can monitor the spread of COVID-19 and support when necessary

Use of the COVID-19 rule modifications are still permitted and netball organisers should consider the feelings and situations of participants within their activity. For some who are at increased risk or others who due to their personal situation or profession need to limit the risk of exposure, it may be more appropriate to continue to play using the COVID-19 rule modifications. Collectively, we need to ensure that the whole Netball Family can return to court feeling confident and have an enjoyable experience.



ON COURT

With the lifting of restrictions, the COVID-19 rule modifications no longer apply and the standard rules of netball can now be used. The standard version of rules for Bee Netball, Nets and Walking Netball can also be reverted to.

There is no longer a limit on the length of time or number of matches/ training sessions an individual can attend in a single day. Care should continue to be taken and it should be remembered that increased contact time and increased interactions pose a greater risk of transmission of COVID-19 and the need to self-isolate if someone subsequently tests positive.



TEST, TRACE AND ISOLATION

The Government guidance around testing and self-isolation is evolving regularly and can vary based on vaccination status and/or age. Care should be taken by all to ensure they are complying with the current Government guidance. Please read the most recent updates **here**.

The key points to remember are:

- ✓ From the 11 January 22 if you have a positive lateral flow test you no longer need to get a PCR test to confirm the result you must start your isolation period immediately.
- ✓ If you have symptoms please arrange to get a PCR test at the earliest opportunity and do not attend netball activity.
- ✓ Current guidance is if you are fully vaccinated the isolation period may be reduced to 7 days if you have a negative lateral flow test on day 6 & 7. Please refer to the government website to check the latest guidance should a positive test be received.
- ✓ Anyone who tests positive must not attend any netball activity in any capacity.
- ✓ Anyone who is identified as a close contact of someone who tests positive and is fully vaccinated or under 18 can continue to attend netball activity, they should however do a lateral flow test before attending and can only attend if this test is negative.
- ✓ Anyone who is identified as a close contact of someone who tests positive and is not fully vaccinated or under 18 must self isolate for 10 days and can not attend any netball activity.
- ✓ Registers should be maintained at netball activity so that COVID-19 Officers can advise on close contacts should any positive cases arise in the 48 hours following the activity.

It should be noted that fully vaccinated is currently an individual who received 2 vaccinations more than 2 weeks ago.

OFF COURT RISK MITIGATIONS

To enable the game to return to standard formats on court and to ensure the continued protection of the Netball Family, many of the off court risk mitigations should, where possible, remain in place and be encouraged. These include:

- ✓ Clear communications with participants, coaches, officials, volunteers and spectators involved. Netball organisers should continue to encourage and enable the following;
 - **Self assessment** before attending any netball activity – simply assessing if they have any COVID-19 symptoms (high temperature, a new continuous cough, a loss or change to sense of smell or taste). They should be advised against attending if they have these symptoms and should take a COVID-19 test as per Government guidance

- Make an **informed decision** by participants considering their own health and circumstances to make an informed choice about being involved. Use of COVID-19 rule modifications reduce the risk in comparison to standard netball rules

- **Self isolation** – make sure it is understood people should not attend any netball activity if they are required to self-isolate

- Continue to promote clear messages around **hand hygiene** during all netball activity

- ✓ Maintaining sensible one way systems or other traffic flow systems as people arrive at any netball activity to avoid unnecessary and avoidable congestion
- ✓ Maintaining social distancing when not on court. There is no legal requirement to distance, but it should be encouraged where possible, particularly indoors
- ✓ Spectators are permitted but should, where possible, be encouraged to maintain social distancing and wear a face covering indoors, particularly if there are larger numbers of spectators
- ✓ Items such as water bottles and whistles should not be shared

SANITISATION AND HYGIENE

In line with Government recommendations, to enable the game on court to return to standard rules whilst continuing to protect the Netball Family and minimise risk of transmission, sanitisation protocols should still be implemented. The following should remain in place, particularly in areas and at times when cases of COVID-19 are high:

- ✓ Netballs should continue to be sanitised. Within matches, this should be done at every break/quarter time and within training sessions and participation programmes, this should as a minimum be at the start and end of every session
- ✓ Care should be taken when sharing bibs to minimise the risk of droplet transmission. Where possible sharing of bibs should be minimised and bibs should be washed after each use. Single sets of bibs being used by multiple teams over multiple games during matches/ tournaments should be avoided
- ✓ Anyone arriving at any netball activity should sanitise their hands. Within matches, we recommend sanitising hands at every break or quarter time and within training activities, it should be encouraged during any drinks or water breaks
- ✓ Any equipment used within a training session such as spots, cones and ladders should be sanitised after use

VENUES

All venues are now able to open and netball can take place indoors or outdoors.

There is a lower risk of transmission outdoors and we would encourage netball organisations to work with indoor venues to increase ventilation levels where possible through the opening of doors and windows.

Venues should continue to maintain regular cleaning and netball organisers should understand any additional requirements the venue may have in place.

Netball organisers should also continue to communicate with venue operators to complete their risk assessment and risk mitigation plan to ensure the risk of transmission continues to be kept to a minimum.

There is no legal requirement for venues to display NHS Test and Trace QR codes, however it is still encouraged that businesses and venues display these and where available, netball organisers should encourage their use.



TOURNAMENTS AND FESTIVALS

With the removal of many of the restrictions, particularly limits to the amount of time players can participate in netball per day, netball tournaments and festivals are permitted from 19th July 2021.

- ✓ Particular care should be taken when organising a netball tournament or festival and enhanced risk assessments should be completed for the event. There is a risk management template from the Government available [here](#). The document should be shared with all volunteers and staff supporting the event and should also consider people with disabilities. Risk assessments should be shared with entrants to your tournament or festival
- ✓ Where positive case numbers are high, consideration should be given to both using COVID-19 rule modifications and holding tournaments/festival outdoors to limit the risk of transmission.
- ✓ Schedules of tournaments or festivals should, where possible, limit game lengths to no more than 12 minutes (6 minutes each way). This will help limit the length of time individuals could be in close contact with others
- ✓ Netball organisers should pay particular attention to the following key areas:
 - **Ensure that nobody attends who has tested positive for COVID-19** or lives in a household with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. Planning should consider participants, spectators, umpires, coaches, volunteers, suppliers and organisers
 - **Provide adequate ventilation** – outdoor venues are preferable for tournaments and festivals as they have far greater ventilation. If indoor tournaments are required, organisers should work with the venue operator to maximise ventilation by opening doors and windows or by use of fans and ducts (or a combination of both)
 - **Clean regularly** – this includes scorers tables, refreshment stands, netball posts, gate entrances and other frequently used surfaces. These should be identified in the risk assessment and cleaned regularly throughout the event
 - **Enable people to check in at your venue** – organisers should work with the venue operator to encourage all attendees to check in using the venue NHS Test and Trace QR code. If organising a large scale tournament, consider having an NHS Test and Trace QR code specifically for the event
 - **Communicate and train** – ensure that everyone attending and supporting the running of the event are clear on all protocols and understand their roles and responsibilities to help minimise the spread of COVID-19
- ✓ For tournaments or festivals that have large numbers of attendees (teams and spectators), lateral flow tests should be encouraged on the day of the event before travelling. There is not a legal requirement for this, but it is strongly encouraged to protect the Netball Family. Some netball organisers may want to ask for confirmation of negative lateral flow tests. This should be done in an open and transparent way across the event.

COVID-19 VACCINES AND TESTS

The Government has stated that there are no limitations on people who are not yet fully vaccinated continuing to participate in netball activity (in line with this guidance). Netball organisers should, however, be mindful that unvaccinated adults are of greater risk.

There is no legal requirement to complete a COVID-19 test before any netball activity, but while positive cases remain high it is encouraged that all within the Netball Family complete regular (twice weekly) Lateral Flow Tests at home to help limit the spread of the virus. Information on obtaining lateral flow tests is available [here](#).

MANAGING CONCERNS

As many of the legal restrictions have been lifted, the responsibility for carefully managing COVID-19 within netball sits collectively with the Netball Family, and everyone has a part to play.

If you have any immediate concerns about your involvement or the actions and plans that are in place within your local netball activity, in the first instance these should be discussed with the relevant COVID-19 Officer or safeguarding lead.

If you have concerns regarding another netball organisation's practice, initially these can be discussed between COVID-19 Officers. It should be noted however, it is the responsibility of each netball organisation to determine what is needed within their activities, in line with this guidance and Government guidance.

If you are a county or regional COVID-19 Officer or chair and have concerns about the actions of large numbers of clubs, leagues or sessions you should contact the Netball Development Officer (within a county) or the Partnership Manager (regions).

If a formal complaint is made regarding continuous, intentional breaches of the mandatory elements of this guidance and therefore the England Netball Code of Conduct, this should be done in line with point 12.2 of England Netball's Disciplinary Regulations found at www.englandnetball.co.uk/governance/enjoy-ensure-entrust/enjoy-codes-of-conduct-disciplinary-regulations

For organisations that are not members of England Netball, the following steps will be followed:

- Contact will be made by an England Netball Partnership Manager to highlight specific breaches
- Formal written notification will be given of any persistent and intentional breaches
- Ongoing persistent breaches may be reported to the local Health and Safety Executive and Local Authority for action. This activity, if appropriate, will also be removed from the England Netball activity finder

CHANGES TO GOVERNMENT GUIDANCE

There may be occasions where the Government change their guidance, which in turn will require England Netball to update this guidance. As much notice and warning of such steps will be provided by England Netball as possible, but any Government guidance and/ or legal requirements will supersede this guidance and should be complied with.

DISCLAIMER

This guidance has been developed for use by England Netball affiliated members to facilitate a safe return to netball and it is important that all our members ensure that this guidance is adhered to before any return to play. Our action plan and risk assessment for netball has been approved by DCMS, which has confirmed that our plan is consistent with current and relevant Government guidance. Whilst efforts have been taken to ensure the accuracy of the information based on the latest available Government advice, you will appreciate that this is regularly changing, so this guidance should be read in conjunction with the Government's most up to date COVID-19 guidance which can be read at www.gov.uk/coronavirus. We continue to work closely with DCMS and Sport England to set out good practice guidance for those responsible for delivering different aspects of netball and as Government guidance changes, we will update our documentation accordingly. In the interest of assisting all those who are responsible for organising netball activity within England, we are also making this guidance available to non-affiliated commercial leagues to help those leagues understand the game modifications and risk management procedures that need to be in place for a safe return to netball. However, all additional support and guidance on a return to play is strictly reserved for our affiliated members only. England Netball takes no responsibility for the decisions taken by commercial leagues to return to play and each league is responsible for putting in place its own risk assessment, policies and procedures based on its own playing environment and participants to ensure it is compliant with Government guidance. This guidance is not a substitute for taking your own legal advice. If you do not accept and agree to the above terms, then please do not use this guidance.





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