

Wednesday 24 Mar 2021

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READ OUR GUIDANCE AHEAD OF A RETURN FOR OUTDOOR GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL



There's a planned return for outdoor grassroots football on 29 March

We can provide an update on the return of outdoor grassroots football and support available to clubs across the grassroots football community.

On Monday 29 March, as part of the next stage of the Government's roadmap out of national lockdown, outdoor sports facilities can open, and organised outdoor football can take place.

We've now published our updated guidance, based on the latest Government advice available, which applies to all outdoor youth and adult football and Futsal, including all formats of the game.

If there are any further updates from the Government, we'll communicate these in due course. We'll also update our guidance as we move through the different steps of the Government's roadmap out of lockdown.

Travel

The Government guidance on travel is that the 'stay at home' rule will end on Monday 29 March, but many restrictions will remain in place. As organised sport can resume, all participants may travel to games but should avoid travel at the busiest times and routes, as well as minimising any unnecessary journeys where possible. All participants must follow the Government's guidance on safer travel.

Changing rooms

Changing rooms cannot be used as part of step one in the roadmap out of lockdown and must remain shut. Toilets will be allowed to open, 30 minutes before and 30 minutes after training and/or matches. All government guidance on hygiene and social distancing measures must be followed.

Spectators

No spectators are allowed at grassroots football as part of step one of the Government's roadmap. One parent or guardian per child is permitted, where clubs and facilities can safely accommodate this and following all appropriate guidance.

Indoor football

Indoor sport is not currently allowed. This is planned to return no earlier than Monday 12 April for U18s and Monday 17 May for adults, as part of steps two and three of the Government's roadmap. Disability football is allowed to take place indoors from the 29 March.

It's extremely important that clubs, players, coaches, match officials, league officials, volunteers, parents, carers, and facility providers continue to strictly follow both the UK Government's latest guidance on COVID-19 and respective bespoke guidance documents from the FA. Any incidents of non-compliance will be reported to the local County Football Association.

Further FA financial support for the game

With the assistance of Sport England, we're pleased to confirm we will be offering funding to County FAs to provide discounted 2021-22 season affiliation. This will be available across the whole of affiliated football, assisting everyone with getting back to the game they love, and especially those from under-represented areas of the game such as women and girls, lower socio-economic groups, minority groups and those with a disability.

We, alongside Sport England, strongly encourage all of those restarting in the weeks ahead to ensure that everyone is able to benefit, no matter their age or gender, from fair and equal access to playing opportunities.

In addition to this, our 'Return to Football Fund', made possible with Sport England funding from the National Lottery, will provide £2.1 million targeted at supporting people in low participation groups to start playing again. It will also fund initiatives aimed at bringing new players into the game and cover the cost of adapting to COVID-19 rules.

Finally, alongside our partners at the Football Foundation, we also recently announced two other new funds to provide further financial support to clubs over the longer term.

The £14 million Grass Pitch Maintenance Fund is providing six-year tapered grants to improve the quality of grass pitches, while the Small Grants fund is available to help clubs pay for essential equipment and machinery they need to start playing again.

Clubs can apply for up to £25k to refurbish their changing rooms, pay for grass pitch drainage, new goalposts, pitch maintenance equipment and portable floodlights.

For more information about the funds and how to apply, visit the Football Foundation website.

Clubs and leagues can access our online support hub and podcasts which includes up to date information, guidance and signposts as well as other useful information relating to funding and support services.

The full return to grassroots football guidance document can be downloaded below.

USEFUL RESOURCES

- Football activity master guidance for re-starting grassroots outdoor football - 24 March 2021 (1.6MB PDF)
COVID-19 safeguarding risk assessment guidance and template - 24 March (3.6MB PDF)
First aid guidance for returning to competitive grassroots football - 24 March 2021 (3MB PDF)
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