



COVID-19: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS – LAWN BOWLS

Issued: 21st May 2020

INTRODUCTION

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.

Government guidance released on 13th May 2020 stated: *“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 one person outside of your household, as long as you are able to maintain social distancing.”*

Bowls England issued its sport-specific guidance on 14th May 2020 to supplement the Government guidance by covering situations specific to the sport of lawn bowls. Since that date, we have understandably received many enquiries from members seeking additional clarification on specific points and have therefore compiled this ‘frequently asked questions’ document to further assist. This ‘frequently asked questions’ document must be read in conjunction with our guidance issued on 14th May 2020.

In preparing this additional document, we remind you that with nearly 2,000 individual clubs it is impossible for Bowls England to issue a ‘one size fits all’ policy – the guidance may be adapted if necessary for your club, so long as it remains consistent with Government advice and social distancing requirements.

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.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. 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.

2. 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.

3. 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 - no more than two, unless members of the same household - 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.

4. 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.

Bowls England has requested clarification on the participation of those classed as 'clinically vulnerable' within the sport. To date, we have received no further reply. Until any response is received, we can only advise that those within the 'clinically vulnerable' category must make a personal judgement on their participation in accordance with Government guidance.

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.

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>

5. How can we exercise at home?

Bowls England has launched three workout videos for our bowlers, so you can stay fit and healthy at home if you don't wish to return to the green just yet.

The workouts have been created especially for Bowls England by experienced Personal Trainer and Wellness Coach, Kate Swinson, to motivate and support our bowlers with the fitness and wellness services we need.

The three workouts vary in intensity and have been specifically designed for bowlers. They range from an introduction level, suitable for all ages and abilities, that focuses on balance, flexibility and core strength, to a more advanced full body workout for the more physically able and a high intensity cardio workout for those who want even more.

To view the workout videos, visit: <https://www.youtube.com/c/BowlsEnglandTV>

6. Can I receive coaching?

Yes – one on one coaching is permitted if outside and remaining a minimum of two metres apart.

7. 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.

8. Can we use the club toilets?

Yes – toilets and throughways may be kept open, but guidance on hygiene and social distancing should be followed.

9. Can we use the changing rooms?

No – all indoor facilities, apart from toilets and throughways, should be kept closed.

10. 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.

11. How can we book a rink without visiting the club?

Clubs are encouraged to utilise an off-site booking system for rink allocation – this could be offline (e.g. diary managed by allocated club members) or online (e.g. Google Calendar). Bowls England is preparing some additional guidance to assist clubs wishing to pursue online booking options.

12. We have two greens – does that mean we can increase the number of players allowed on site at the same time?

The maximum capacity is for each club to determine according to the number of greens/rinks available – for example clubs with additional greens may wish to consider increasing capacity accordingly so long as they consider it is safe to do so.

13. How do we ensure that mats and jacks are clean?

The Government guidance currently states that cleaning protocols should be put in place to limit coronavirus transmission in public places. It is advised that touch points (e.g. handrails and gates) should be particular areas of focus for increased cleaning. Frequent cleaning of equipment between uses and any work areas used, using your usual cleaning products, is advised. Bowls England has requested the input of greens maintenance advisors regarding any specific treatments with regard to equipment and will advise further when additional information is available.

14. Can we play a pairs game comprising two ‘couples’ from two separate households so long as social distancing is observed?

No – the current Government guidance states that groups of more than two people must all be from the same household. Bowls England will lobby Government for consideration to be given to this current restriction.

15. How can I get my playing surface back to a ‘fit for play’ condition should a ban on play be lifted?

It is important that some form of reduced but regular maintenance work has been carried out during the period of ‘lockdown’ as per the guidance issued by Bowls England on 3rd April 2020. The length of time needed to become fully playable and to what standard will depend on the condition of the surface in the first place. If you require any further advice, please contact the Bowls England Greens Advisory Service – e-mail greens@bowlsengland.com

16. Can ‘non-members’ participate in activities at our club?

Every club is different and will have its own rules on participation by non-members. Clubs are reminded to ensure that any activity by non-members is in accordance with the requirements of their insurers.

17. Are we as a club responsible for provision of hand sanitiser to all players?

The Government guidance for facilities states as follows:

To help everyone maintain good hygiene, consideration should be given to:

- *Using signs and posters to build awareness of good handwashing technique, the need to increase handwashing frequency, avoid touching your face and to cough or sneeze into your arm*
- *Providing regular reminders and signage to maintain hygiene standards*
- *Providing hand sanitiser in multiple locations in addition to washrooms*
- *Setting clear use and cleaning guidance for toilets to ensure they are kept clean and social distancing is achieved as much as possible*
- *Enhancing cleaning for busy areas*
- *Providing more waste facilities and more frequent rubbish collection*
- *Replacing hand dryers with paper towels in handwashing facilities*
- *Minimising use of portable toilets*
- *Sufficient provision of automated hand sanitising dispensers in public places*

18. Can we allocate someone to ‘manage’ sessions/attendance in addition to those who are playing?

Yes – clubs may consider the use of ‘staff’ if they consider this will enable them to reopen safely as part of their risk assessment.

19. How do we prepare a risk assessment?

Guidance and templates are available to view/download at:

www.sportenglandclubmatters.com/club-planning/governance/managing-risk/risk-assesment/

A bowls-specific risk assessment template is available to view/download at:

www.bowlsengland.com/coronavirus-guidance/

20. Has Bowls England produced a poster that we can put up at our Club?

Yes – Bowls England has designed a COVID-19 Safety Information Poster for Clubs to use in conjunction with Warwick District Council. To download the poster, visit:

<https://www.bowlsengland.com/coronavirus-guidance/>

21. Bowls England has refunded all our affiliation fees – are we still affiliated?

Yes – all clubs who initially paid fees for the 2020 season are recognised as affiliated despite the refund of affiliation fees.

22. Can we now hold a Committee Meeting so long as ‘social distancing’ is adhered to?

No – the Government guidance states that a gathering of more than two people from different households is not permitted. Sport England has produced specific guidance to assist clubs who wish to meet ‘virtually’ at: <https://learn.sportenglandclubmatters.com/course/view.php?id=71>

23. Can we share our ideas on social media?

Yes - Clubs are encouraged to think creatively about how best to make their sport or activity possible within the guidelines, and we would love to hear from you. 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

We remind you that the Government advises that clubs should only reopen or restart activities as soon as they feel able to do so safely. We are aware that there is a huge difference of opinion between our members on restarting – please be respectful of each other and the wider bowling community when commenting on our channels.

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>