

RETURN TO PLAY PROTOCOLS

UPDATED: 21/1/22

Based on Welsh Government Coronavirus guidance (available [here](#))



SUMMARY

WELSH GOVERNMENT KEY MESSAGES:

- get both jabs and when invited, get your booster
- limit your contacts
- outdoors is safer than indoors
- do a lateral flow test before seeing others
- if you have symptoms, self-isolate and book a PCR test
- wear a face covering

WELSH GOVERNMENT GUIDANCE:

- 2 metre social distancing will be required in offices and all public premises.
- A maximum of 30 people can attend and a further 30 people can spectate at indoor events – there are no limits on the number of children U18 that can take part or spectators attending events for children U18.
- There are no limits to the number of people taking part or spectating at outdoor events.
- If changing rooms are to be used, then a risk assessment must be carried out to confirm that social distancing measures can be adhered to. If social distancing is not possible, the changing rooms should not be used.
- **From 28th January** – changes will come into effect regarding the use of changing rooms and indoor activity to reflect changes in government guidance from this date.



TRAINING

- Clubs and leagues will need to be led by the facility provider on the number of people permitted to train at an indoor or outdoor venue
- Based on WG guidance, we would still deem the following training numbers appropriate providing groups are separate and don't mix

Age categories	Indoor sports hall	Half-pitch (min. 45 x 45m)	Full-size pitch (min.90x45m)
All age groups	1 group of 20 players	1 group of 40 players	2 groups of 40 players

- All persons involved must complete a self-assessment for COVID-19 symptoms check prior to every training session.
- Take regular lateral flow tests prior to training
- Coaches, officials, first aiders and COVID Officers are exempt from this number
- 1:16 (qualified coach:player) ratio must be adhered to at all times for U18s
- All training equipment – including goalposts – must be sanitised before and after every training session or fixture
- Clubs should follow guidelines on cleaning in a non-healthcare setting [here](#)



MATCHES

- Following changes to Welsh government guidance from Saturday 15th January, the limit on the number of people that can be involved in match outdoors will be determined by competition rules and regulations
- The number of people that can be involved in a match outdoors will also have to consider any regulations in place by the facility provider, if using private facilities
- The number of people that can be involved in a match indoors is limited to 30, although there is no limit on activities for children U18
- Teams won't be sanctioned if they request a fixture postponement due to
 - positive cases of COVID-19 affecting a team's ability to fulfil a fixture
 - unavailability of changing rooms either if they are closed or if 2m social distancing cannot be maintained safely during their use
 - being unable to manage spectators safely within the permitted number as set out by Welsh Government



MATCH-DAY PROTOCOLS

1. We would advise all persons involved to complete a lateral flow test and be temperature tested prior to being allowed entry into the playing area.
2. The host club must ensure, upon arrival, that all persons involved have completed a self-assessment for COVID-19 symptoms check. Entry should be refused to anyone who is unable to provide assurance that they have done so and that to the best of their knowledge it is safe for them to take part. Anyone refused entry on this basis must be instructed to immediately self-isolate.
3. Clubs should strictly limit the time spent congregating at a venue before activity begins. Meet-up times should reflect this.
4. **Changing rooms can be used, if necessary, provided 2m social distancing is maintained and changing room protocols are followed.** We would encourage players to arrive and depart in their playing kit to limit their use given the increased risk of infection in indoor venues.
5. Where possible, avoid travelling with people from other households in private cars, however if this cannot be avoided the guidance issued by Welsh Government should be followed at all times.
6. No-one should leave home to participate in the match if they have been informed to self-isolate.
7. 2 designated areas should be marked pitch-side – these should be used to house home and away team players and coaches during match-play
8. Water bottles or other refreshment containers, should in no circumstances be shared. Participants will need to bring their own, in a named container.
9. The coach/COVID officer is responsible for disinfecting each ball when it goes out of play.
10. Toilets should be opened for pre-match, match and for 30 minutes following. Toilets should be cleaned regularly in line with Welsh Government guidance for sports, clubs and facilities. Toilet capacity should be managed via entry and exit with face coverings worn whilst indoors.
11. All equipment – including goalposts – must be sanitised before and after every fixture. Clubs should follow guidelines on cleaning in a non-healthcare setting here
12. Ground staff are permitted on the pitch before the warm-up and 15 minutes after the conclusion of the match



CHANGING ROOM PROTOCOLS

1. Changing facilities may only be used providing 2m social distancing can be maintained which should be determined by a formal risk assessment. If a risk assessment determines social distancing can't be adhered to, players must arrive and depart in playing kit to limit their use.
2. If social distancing can be maintained, the following measures must be followed:
3. Where mains water has been turned off or unused since the close of the premises at lockdown, when it is reconnected it will need running through to flush away any microbiological or chemical residues built up while the water supply was disconnected (see additional Welsh Government guidance, '[Principles to prepare for safe management of indoor and outdoor facilities](#)') This should also be included within the Risk Assessment.
4. Ensure players and visiting teams are aware of restrictions, procedures and responsibilities before entering the changing facilities Only essential personnel should access changing rooms (players, medical staff, coaches/ team managers and safeguarding officers for junior and youth matches)
5. Ensure face coverings are worn in all indoor technical facilities such as changing rooms and medical room areas in accordance with Welsh Government guidelines
6. Existing player welfare and safety policies should not be compromised
7. Allow more time for players to change, stagger changing times and spend the least possible amount of time in the changing rooms.
8. Changing rooms and showers to remain closed to players and officials during game including half time - access to medical room and toilet facilities only during match
9. If changing rooms need to be used, maximise ventilation available in the rooms
10. Ensure washing facilities are available to wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds or use a hand sanitiser
11. Use signage to increase awareness of hygiene practices including i.e. Increased frequency of hand washing

Additional considerations:

- Utilise other rooms or temporary space to minimise the amount of players in one space - consider closing space where social distancing may be difficult
- Apply floor markings and mark spaces on benches and showers to encourage social distancing
- Participants should be encouraged to shower at home and be encouraged to only use the changing room showers in inclement weather



SPECTATORS

Following changes to government guidance from the 21st January, there are no limits on the number of spectators that can watch a match outdoors

A maximum of 30 spectators are permitted to watch a match indoors - there are no limits on adults supervising or spectating at training/matches for children U18.

It is the home team's responsibility to implement all reasonable steps to manage spectators. Differentiated guidance is in place for enclosed and non-enclosed grounds.

The following measures will need to be adhered to:

- Consult with facility provider, if using private facilities
- Risk assessment completed by the club or organization - when confirming the risk assessment, clubs must give due consideration to all pinch points where there may be close contacts and clubs must encourage distancing within these areas of the stadium. For example;
 - When queuing to enter or exit the stadium;
 - When queuing for refreshments;
 - When queuing for sanitary facilities or inside the sanitary facilities;
 - When walking along narrow walkways and paths inside the stadium;
 - When passing other fans;
 - Encourage spectators to apply social distancing when choosing their place to watch the match in the stands or terraces.
- Home team will need to put measures in place to ensure they can capture contact details for all spectators for track, trace and protect service purposes



SPECTATORS

Playing or training on an enclosed ground or pitch:

If playing or training on an enclosed ground, clubs will need to follow the FAWs Return to Spectating Regulations available [here](#) and adhere to the spectators limits set out by Welsh Government for outdoor and indoor team sports.

Playing or training on a non-closed ground or pitch e.g. public park:

- Clubs should consult with their facility provider to determine if the number of spectators permitted at the venue is less than the number permitted by the FAW / Welsh Government.
- Clubs should consult with their facility provider to determine what level of responsibility the club has in managing spectators at a non-enclosed ground or pitch and this should be agreed by both parties prior to the return of matches.
- The FAW would advise that the club's responsibility related to managing spectators should be the pitch perimeter of a non-enclosed ground.

Once this has been determined, clubs must

- Complete an updated risk assessment and share this with the facility provider.
- Put measures in place to ensure spectators maintain 2m social distancing from each other and be at least 2m away from the field of play.
- Ensure that any person(s) present on premises occupied by the Club are reasonably safe by communicating this guidance clearly.



SELF-ISOLATION AND CONTACT TRACING

If you've tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19), you must self-isolate for 7 days.

- You can leave self-isolation after 7 full days (on day 8 of your self-isolation period). You should take a lateral flow test (LFT) on day 6 of your self-isolation period and another lateral flow test 24 hours later.

If you are a fully vaccinated adult or aged between 5 and 17 you do not need to self-isolate if identified as a close contact but you are strongly advised to:

- take a lateral flow device (LFD) test before you leave the house every day for 7 days or until 10 days since your last contact with the person who tested positive for COVID-19 if this is earlier.
- upload all tests results on GOV.UK even if negative or void. This helps improve our understanding of infection rates across the UK and helps inform how we manage the pandemic to keep people safe whilst keeping life as normal as possible.

If you are 18 and over and not fully vaccinated, you must self-isolate from the day you were last in contact with the person who tested positive for COVID-19 and for the next 10 days.

- You should also take a PCR test on day 2 and day 8. It is important that you take the tests even if you feel well as you may have COVID-19 even if you do not have symptoms.
- Even if these tests are negative, you should complete the isolation period. This is because if you have been infected, it can take time for symptoms to develop or to become infectious to others.



TRACK, TRACE AND PROTECT

- Maintaining records of players, coaches, volunteers, officials and supporters is one of the reasonable measures you can take to minimise the risk of exposure to COVID-19 at your club / organisation. The following information should be captured:
 - The names of individuals
 - A contact telephone number for each individual
 - Date of visit and arrival and departure time
- By sharing these records with the NHS Wales Test, Trace, Protect service when requested, you can help to identify people who may have been exposed to the virus.



CLUB NEXT STEPS

- Club management committees should meet to review the latest Return to Play protocols and supporting guidance
- A NEW COVID-19 risk assessment must be completed by all clubs
- If clubs are accessing private facilities, they should consult the facility provider and share their risk assessment which will be considered alongside providers own risk assessment
- A risk assessment must be completed by the club at each training and fixture venue used by the club
- The risk assessment must be reviewed regularly and kept up to date at all time
- The FAW has developed a risk assessment guide and template for clubs and is available [here](#)
- Clubs/organisations should visit [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) | Topic | GOV.WALES](#) for more information

A club risk assessment does not need to be shared with, or approved by FAW

