



Return to football - COVID-19 Restrictions

Football is leading the way in trying to ensure all players, spectators, volunteers and their families are safe and that the game can be played at all levels. Durham CFA and Northumberland FA are putting in place further requirements to ensure the game can continue and meets local and national guidelines

Following the new Covid-19 regulations and advice issued in the North East last week, Durham CFA and Northumberland FA have worked closely with their 7 partner local authorities to strengthen the requirements and guidance around football and ensure we can continue to keep playing the sport we all love.

It has become clear that the resurgence of Covid-19 infections are strongly related to social gatherings that do not abide by guidance provided especially regarding travel, social distance, washing of hands and face coverings especially in hospitality areas and although it is recommended that spectators do not attend games we have acted to address this position, while keeping participants actively playing football on the pitch wherever we can.

It is imperative that you do not attend or participate if you are displaying any symptoms of Covid-19, are awaiting a test result or are part of a household which is self-isolating. Please remember to consider Government messaging regarding 'Hands. Face. Space.' Whenever possible.

The following restrictions will apply from midnight on Thursday 24 September 2020 to all football affiliated with Northumberland FA and Durham County FA. These restrictions are above and beyond central FA guidance on the Return to Football which must be adhered to;

<https://www.thefa.com/news/2020/jul/17/grassroots-guidance-for-competitive-football-restart-in-england-170720>

At all levels of football the NHS QR code or similar must be displayed and all in attendance must scan on entry or provide contact details – register here - <https://www.gov.uk/create-coronavirus-qr-poster>

Adult football:

Men's National League System Steps 3 – 6 & Women's Football Pyramid Steps 3-6

- Reduction of spectators – numbers do not exceed 15% of the minimum ground grading capacity – Stage 1
- All spectators should wear face coverings at all times as stated in line with government advice.
- Club houses/bars – It is strongly advised that these remain closed one hour before kick-off and remain closed until one hour after the final whistle. When open clubs must comply with all Government and Local Authority regulations including social distancing and table service requirements. Government guidance states that food and drink can be served outside in an open space if the clubs licence permits.
- Changing facilities may remain closed where the facility owner deems this to be necessary.
- All training must take place without spectators

All Adult Football Outside of the National League System

- No spectators at training or matches.
- Changing rooms closed-only toilets accessible

Youth & Disability Football

- 1 parent/carer per Player at matches/training - these are not classed as spectators but are in attendance to supervise their child from a safeguarding/welfare perspective



- Face coverings should be worn at all times by those in attendance unless a playing participant.
- No other spectators are permitted
- Changing rooms closed and only accessible for toilets or for, safeguarding or welfare issues

Other formats of the game

- No friendly, charity matches or Tournaments at any level will be sanctioned
- No return to indoor football – including indoor training and futsal
- No trials should take place
- Outdoor small sided, walking football and recreational football to be played without spectators in attendance.

Any club or participant found to be non-compliant will be charged under The FA regulations and may have their matches suspended and / or use of facilities withdrawn until such time as they can ensure compliance with all guidance and requirements.

Northumberland FA's Acting Chief Executive, Andrew Rose-Cook, said: "I understand that people will be disappointed at being unable to spectate at many matches, but this is a step which we must take to prevent unnecessary social contact. Covid-19 infections are currently rising at a fast rate in the area and we cannot allow it to spread further at the social gatherings that usually accompany football. The alternative to this is the full suspension of football."

Durham County FA's Chief Executive, John Topping, added: "As we are all aware the North East of England has been placed under local restrictions following the increase in the number of COVID-19 cases, which has mainly arose due to social gatherings, these restrictions have impacted on many people and is also having a detrimental effect on their health and well-being. Following positive meetings between Durham County FA, Northumberland FA, the Football Association, Local Authorities and other organisations, we are delighted to announce that a return to football with necessary restrictions in place can commence from Friday 25th September 2020.

I am sure all will agree that a return to playing football is beneficial for all, but we **MUST** adhere to guidelines put in place so that we do not end up with a total lockdown of football. The position is scheduled to be reviewed on 7 October"

In a joint statement the 7 Local Authorities said : We would like to take the opportunity to thank the County FA's and their national colleagues for the pro-active approach in working with us to introduce additional measures to enable Football to continue safely and play its part in the collective effort to protect the health of our residents.

You should follow local authority advice from your area regarding further guidance, this includes guidance on use of public transport and car sharing;

Durham County Council - <https://www.durham.gov.uk/localrestrictions>

Gateshead Council - <https://www.gateshead.gov.uk/article/16575/Covid-restrictions>

Newcastle City Council - <https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/services/public-health-wellbeing-and-leisure/public-health-services/coronavirus-covid-19>

North Tyneside Council - <https://my.northtyneside.gov.uk/page/26134/coronavirus-covid-19>

Northumberland County Council - <https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/News/2020/Sep/New-COVID-measures-being-introduced-in-Northumberl.aspx>

South Tyneside Council - <https://www.southtyneside.gov.uk/article/70473/Local-restrictions-in-the-North-East>

Sunderland City Council - <https://www.sunderland.gov.uk/article/17375/New-Covid-19-restrictions-for-our-region-17-September>

