



Return to Play Plan for Baseball and Softball for England, Wales & Scotland

24 September 2020, v10



Baseball • 
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WELCOME BACK!

At BaseballSoftballUK, we're passionate about the sports and we hope that's pretty obvious.

The coronavirus and subsequent lockdown has taken a huge toll on much of the country and, like many others, we were gutted to have had to suspend our national programmes and events, as well as close Farnham Park Baseball and Softball Complex and our Home Plate Bar and Kitchen clubhouse, with most of the BSUK team then needing to furlough. Not to mention missing out on the Cubs and Cardinals at London Stadium!

So, after shutting down on 17 March with no clear outcome in sight, we're delighted to be able to share with you our Return to Play Plan for outdoor baseball/softball in England. Launched 29 July, with Wales included 31 July, for resumption on 1 August, Scotland was finally added 26 August for resumption from 28 August. We created it in consultation with a large cross-section of players, umpires and administrators from the baseball/softball community before presenting it to various Government departments for review and approval. Finally, on 21 September, Indoor guidance was incorporated across the three Home Nations against Government guidance, updated four days later.

We hope you will read the entire document to understand our approach, the background 'admin' for organisers to work through and some of the terms used. However, if time is short, we've also summarised the most important bits for you here. They are:

- Game-Specific Modifications – what you need to do before, during and after play.
- Health & Safety Measures:
 - o Risk Assessments – we've outlined what you need to think about and created handy forms so you don't have to start from scratch.
 - o Participant Registration – another outline with more handy forms and examples.
 - o Covid-19 Officer Role – respect this hero who's going to help keep you safe.
 - o Participant Code of Conduct – a quick guide to what we expect from you.

We're unsure when restrictions will continue to ease and in what form. We're unsure if there will be other waves, spikes or lockdowns. What we *will* do is continue to lobby Government for a full easing of restrictions, when appropriate, for baseball/softball to be played – both outdoor and indoor. So, for the time being, these guidelines and framework are the 'new normal' for our sports and we'll likely see them in place for a while to come.

Please support your friends and teammates who put in the hours volunteering to organise the sports you love by following the guidance they will communicate to you to keep everyone safe during the process of resuming play.

We've organised sessions for participating Federations, affiliated organisations and leagues to talk through this guidance and help support them – and their members in turn – throughout. The guidelines will also keep evolving, so let me know if you'd like to see anything added.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to get in touch with me directly at ReturnToPlay@bsuk.com or with any of the team at BaseballSoftballUK. Meanwhile, check out our Return to Play [online hub](#) for all the latest info.

See you on a diamond soon!



Joëlle Watkins

Head of Commercial, BaseballSoftballUK

INTRODUCTION

BaseballSoftballUK (BSUK) is the development agency for Baseball/Softball in the United Kingdom, funded by Sport England. Since 2000, BaseballSoftballUK has been providing membership services to the sports' governing bodies, the British Baseball Federation (BBF) and British Softball Federation (BSF).

We have produced a Covid-19 Return to Play framework and guidance for those involved in the organisation, delivery and participation of baseball/softball in the UK in order to facilitate a safe return to the sports in line with approvals from the UK Government.

This guidance focuses on the key aspects needed to incorporate Covid-19 social distancing and enhanced hygiene requirements to help mitigate associated risks. The guiding principles are intended to set out sufficient information for the baseball/softball community to discharge its duty of care in a reasonable, proportionate, confident and sport-specific way. The guidance is not exhaustive and therefore also includes signposts to extensive, existing information created by relevant authorities.

When reviewing this guidance, it is important to note the following:

- Guidance allows for groups of up to 30 people maximum to gather for the purpose of playing baseball/softball outdoors or indoors as and where specified and for social distancing to be breached only in circumstances required and outlined on the field of play – without modification of the rules themselves.
- Government advice is subject to change at short or no notice. BaseballSoftballUK will therefore regularly review and update this guidance, publishing updates on the BaseballSoftballUK website www.baseballsoftballuk.com/returntoplay and promoting alerts through our digital channels (social media and email).
- Government policy as relates to Covid-19 is devolved, so advice on public health, social distancing and sport differs for England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Whilst this guidance has been approved by the Department of Digital, Media, Culture and Sport (DCMS), Public Health England (PHE) and Sport England, it is intended to cover the United Kingdom as best practice. Additional guidance and approvals were sought and obtained directly from Sport Wales for Wales and with sportScotland for Scotland.
- The guidance provides over-arching best practice for the safe return of baseball/softball regardless of the affiliation structure of leagues, clubs, teams and events. The guidance will help mitigate the risk of Covid-19 transmission – it cannot eliminate it completely.

Who is this guidance aimed at?

The return to play framework is for baseball/softball participants including activity providers, coaches, event organisers, players, spectators, umpires and volunteers. It applies to baseball, slowpitch softball and fastpitch softball, at adult and youth levels.

Definitions

The following definitions are provided for terms used in this document and within templates provided by BaseballSoftballUK:

- 'Baseball/softball' refers to baseball, fastpitch softball and slowpitch softball.
- 'Activity Provider' refers to the organiser/s of an event including participating Federations, affiliated bodies, independent event organisers, leagues, clubs, teams and coaches.
- 'Event' refers to any outdoor or indoor baseball/softball event as and where specified, including casual/friendly games, leagues, tournaments, competitions, training and coaching events for up to 30 participants.
- 'Participant' refers to anyone involved in the organisation of an event including activity providers, coaches, event organisers, players, spectators, umpires and volunteers.

Approach

This guidance was originally prepared based on the [Return to Recreational Team Sport Framework](#) created by Sport England, the DCMS and Public Health England, first published on 17 July 2020, whereby the risk of transmission of coronavirus was categorised into Droplet, Fomite and Population risk criteria to be reviewed against a the Framework. Guidance for Wales was reviewed against Welsh Government advice set out in [Sport, recreation and leisure: guidance for a phased return](#) and [Coronavirus regulations](#). Guidance for Scotland was reviewed against Scottish Government advice set out in [Phase 3: Return to sport and physical activity](#) and [Coronavirus in Scotland](#).

Consultation

This guidance has been informed by extensive research and consultation and will be continually reviewed. It has been created following discussion and consultation with, or informed by, the following:

- The British Softball Federation (BSF), the sport's National Governing Body
- Independent British baseball leagues in the UK (e.g., organisations not affiliated to a Federation) including:
 - o Baseball Scotland (governing body in Scotland)
 - o British Baseball League
 - o East of England Baseball League
 - o South West Baseball League
 - o West Midlands Baseball League
- Cardiff Softball League (affiliated to the BSF)
- Jes Sandhu, British Association of Softball Umpires (BASU)
- Thomas Haywood, baseball umpire (past member of the Amateur Baseball Umpires Association, ABUA)
- Steven Hazard, NHS Paramedic Practitioner and current GB athlete (capped in baseball and softball)
- BaseballSoftballUK staffing body
- Other National Governing Bodies for sport, including Rounders England

Protocols issued by the World Baseball Softball Confederation (WBSC), the global governing body for the sports, have also been consulted, as have Softball Ireland which governs softball in Northern Ireland.

The content of this Return to Play guidance has been widely welcomed across the baseball/softball community. However, the British Baseball Federation indicated they would submit their own protocols and we encouraged them to base it on the mitigations included within our submission. At this time, we understand their published guidance covers outdoor baseball in England only.

Guidance Specific to Scotland

In developing the Return to Play guidance, sportScotland has been particularly helpful and clear in their advice, summarised in this additional statement.

Sporting activities can now be undertaken, providing all activity is consistent with current Scottish Government guidance on health, physical distancing and hygiene – you will also need to make sure that your club, facility and participants are made aware and can adapt to changes in guidance at short notice. Information on Scottish Governments approach to managing COVID-19 is available at [Scottish Government: Coronavirus in Scotland](#).

People who are symptomatic should self-isolate for at least 10 days and household members for 14 days per NHS guidance. No one who is self-isolating should attend a sports facility or activity.

To manage a safe return to sport and leisure activities it is a mandatory requirement that all clubs, facility operators and deliverers put in place comprehensive Test & Protect procedures to help break chains of transmission of Coronavirus (COVID-19). Further information is available within this guidance and at [Scottish Government: Test & Protect](#).

Scottish Governing Bodies, clubs and participants should be aware that the easing of restrictions does not mean that all facilities will open immediately. Clubs, owners and operators will require time to consider all the implications of opening facilities and put plans in place to re-engage staff and to set up operations that ensure the safety of participants, staff and volunteers. This is a difficult time for everyone so please be patient.

RETURN TO PLAY FRAMEWORK

Game-Specific Modifications

This guidance sets out minimum standards for the organisation of adult and youth baseball/softball outdoor or indoor events as specified in England, Wales and Scotland including casual/friendly games, leagues, tournaments and competitions, training and coaching sessions for up to 30 participants. It is expected that Activity Providers will comply with the Government-approved modifications to ensure the safety of participants. We strongly recommend you enjoy friendly games and coaching/ training sessions, rather than organising single site tournaments in order to minimise the number of people you come into contact with. There are no rule modifications to the game whether played outdoor or indoor at this time, mandated or otherwise.

The guidance could change at short notice in response to Covid-19 alert levels or other Government advice. It will help mitigate the risk of Covid-19 transmission and cannot eliminate it completely. The provision of cover by insurers is likely to be conditional on this guidance being adhered to.

The protocols combine to mitigate transmission risks through:

1. Social distancing
2. Enhanced hygiene practices – for participants and equipment
3. Controlled attendance

Before play ↓	During play (outdoor & indoor) ↓	After play ↓
You should adhere to Government social distancing guidance at all times.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check for symptoms of Covid-19. If you are symptomatic and/or living in a household with a possible infection, you must self-isolate for 10 days (subject to change) and follow Government guidance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Groups limited to a maximum of 30 Participants (players, coaches, managers, officials, umpires). <u>Scotland only</u> • A 'field of play bubble' of up to 30 people can be created whilst a sporting activity is taking place, in effect suspending Scottish Government household number guidelines for the duration of the activity. Normal household guidelines remain in place before and after activity for those aged 12+ years. <u>England: Indoor</u> • Group size limited to 6 Participants. Activity can continue to take place with larger numbers present provided groups of more than 6 do not mix. Exemptions apply for children U18 who are not included in the group size limit and for disability activity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all shared equipment (e.g., bases, team bats and balls) is collected and disinfected.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete an opt-in form and attendance register to support NHS contact tracing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adhere to social distancing except when the ball is in play: any incidental close proximity and face-to-face interactions must be kept to an absolute minimum and for the shortest time possible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional, in-person, award ceremonies are not permitted.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shower and change at home. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Outdoor</u> Adhere to social distancing in dugouts. <u>Scotland only</u> • Use of dugouts/benches prohibited; players must bring their own seating. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socialise after the event in line with current Government guidelines on hospitality.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow Government guidance on public transport or car-sharing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disinfect all personal and team equipment before and after warming up and before the game. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leave the venue whilst maintaining social distancing.

Before play ↓	During play (outdoor & indoor) ↓	After play ↓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow advice on use of the specific venue facilities (changing rooms, toilets, clubhouse). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sharing of equipment is discouraged and items disinfected between use if shared. <u>Scotland only</u> Helmets to only ever be shared with one other person in extended household (reflected in batting line up) and with an extra cap or head covering worn underneath. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shower and change at home.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your Covid-19 Officer will ensure the facility is compliant with current Government legislation related to Covid-19. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Umpires must not share indicators, counters or other equipment. 	<u>Scotland & Wales Indoor only (recommended in England)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Face coverings should be worn after (and before) activity and when in non-playing areas of the facility – with exemptions for health conditions or certain disabilities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limit the time spent congregating at a venue before activity begins. Meet-up times should reflect this. Participants should arrive changed and ready to begin if possible. 	<u>Bat handling</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If a player fails to reach base while batting, they must pick up their own bat (by the handle) upon leaving the field. If a player gets on base while batting, the on-deck batter must remove the bat (by the barrel). Sharing bats is discouraged. If shared, they must be disinfected between uses, and batting gloves worn if possible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report any subsequent Covid-19 case of self of household to the NHS, your event organiser and the Covid-19 Officer, your affiliating body and BaseballSoftballUK.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bring your own hand sanitiser where possible, use it and wash your hands regularly. 	<u>Ball handling</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Games: Each team must bring (or be provided with) two game balls for use during defensive innings (ideally new and unopened). Games: mixed Slowpitch outdoor softball only: these should be two 11" and two 12" balls, with a nominated defensive team player on the sidelines (or an offensive player if short) responsible for sanitising balls before returning them into play. Games: each team must disinfect balls after warm up and prior to each inning. Balls used in tagged plays should be taken out of play and disinfected immediately by the defensive team before being returned to play. Umpires should not handle balls. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organisers and teams must bring hand sanitiser, anti- bacterial wipes or spray to disinfect equipment and bin bags for rubbish. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tag plays: these remain permitted and must be conducted and concluded quickly, noting the Ball Handling protocol above. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Players must use hand sanitiser prior to warming up with equipment or the game itself. 	<u>Catchers</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baseball & Fastpitch Softball: must be positioned a minimum of one metre (1m) behind the Batter and only approach to receive a pitched ball. Slowpitch Softball: must be positioned a minimum of 1m behind the batter. 	

<p style="text-align: center;">Before play</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">During play (outdoor & indoor)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">After play</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players must avoid sharing equipment and use their own helmet, glove, mitt, batting gloves, bat, etc., where possible. 	<p><u>Umpires (Plate)</u></p> <p>If the umpire assesses that in calling balls and strikes, a 1m+ distance from the catcher can be regularly maintained, no mitigations are necessary. Otherwise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseball & Fastpitch Softball: the Umpire and Catcher must both wear face coverings, in addition to any protective wire safety masks. • Umpires may choose to call balls and strikes from behind the pitcher, without need for face coverings. • Follow UK, Welsh and Scottish Government guidance on face coverings respectively. 	
	<p><u>Indoor Softball</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fielders should remain 2m away from an offensive player who is occupying a base unless in a tag play situation. • Catchers and umpires should be positioned 1m+ apart, using tape to mark out positions. • Batters waiting to take their turn should be 2m apart. • Games: a safety line extending 2m from home plate (front corner) should be marked out with masking tape for baserunners to run through in order to minimise contact via tag plays (which remain permitted). 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Games: each team may bring up to 14 participants comprising the player roster, base coaches and managers (15 participants permitted if no external umpire/s are attending). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players should bring individual drinks containers and refrain from sharing drinks with other players. 	
<p><u>Outdoor</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The inclusion of a second umpire (field) is discouraged. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No cheering, shouting, loud celebrations, calling out, in-person award ceremonies, etc., permitted. • Indoor activity: Coaches should use a mic, ideally their own head mic, when teaching and avoid shouting. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spectators are discouraged and must adhere to social distancing if present. <p><u>Scotland only:</u> Spectators only permitted if looking after children or vulnerable adults, and must socially distance.</p>		
<p><u>Scotland & Wales Indoor only (recommended in England)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face coverings should be worn before (and after) activity and when in non-playing areas of the facility – with exemptions for health conditions or certain disabilities – as required by sports facility operators. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chewing gum, tobacco or seeds, spitting into gloves/mitts, licking fingers, smoking or vaping not permitted. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity Providers in Scotland should also ensure they adhere to sportScotland guidance at all times. 		

Participant Code of Conduct

Ensuring a safe return to play for baseball/softball in England, Wales and Scotland will require cooperation and diligence by all Participants during the coronavirus pandemic.

We therefore ask that you please read, understand, adopt and share the Participant Code of Conduct, which will enable everyone to play their part in keeping our sports as safe as possible. Please also support your Covid-19 Officer by helping provide information requested and adhering to guidance they've put into place to support you.

In the spirit of the guidance and in order to minimise the number of people you come into contact with, we strongly advise you enjoy friendly games and coaching/training sessions for the time being, rather than try to organise single site tournaments.

Read and download the Participant Code of Conduct for England, Wales and Scotland [here](#).

Health & Safety Measures

This section provides more information for Activity Providers (organisers, administrators, officials, coaches) who will be organising the return to play for their participating Federation, affiliating body, league, club, team or independent event.

The following measures are to be implemented with guidance and resources provided in each case:

- Risk Assessments – outline of what you need to think about, plus examples
- Participant Registration – outline of the process, plus forms and examples
- Covid-19 Officer Role – key role needed within each tier of organisation
- Participant Code of Conduct – a quick guide of expected behavior

Risk Assessments

For all return to play activity, Activity Organisers must conduct Risk Assessments to mitigate against the transmission of Covid-19. To help you in the process, we've created three Risk Assessments templates which cover outdoor and indoor baseball and softball activity.

They were prepared based on the [Return to Recreational Team Sport Framework](#) created by Sport England, the DCMS and Public Health England, whereby the risk of transmission of coronavirus was categorised into Droplet, Fomite and Population risk criteria to be reviewed against the Framework. Guidance for Wales was reviewed against Welsh Government advice set out in [Sport, recreation and leisure: guidance for a phased return](#) and [Coronavirus regulations](#). Guidance for Scotland was reviewed against Scottish Government advice set out in [Phase 3: Return to sport and physical activity](#) and [Coronavirus in Scotland](#).

- Droplet Risk Assessment template: [focuses on social distancing](#).
- Fomite Risk Assessment template: [focuses on hygiene measures for participants and equipment](#).
- Population Risk Assessment template: [focuses on social distancing, hygiene and controlled attendance](#).

Further Information

- [Creating a risk assessment for clubs and organisations](#) published 25 June by Club Matters (Sport England).
- [Health and Safety Executive Covid-19 risk assessment template](#).

Participant Registration

This section provides guidance on what Activity Providers are required to do to deliver a safe return to play. It should be viewed as an extension of how you already gather and manage data for your organisation.

Every event gathering must collect and keep for a minimum of 21 days contact information for all Participants, including full name, telephone number and email.

As recommended by Sport England and their legal advisors, Sheridans Sports Group, in the context of a return to play it is useful way of:

- i. Capturing data to assist NHS contact tracing efforts and help contain clusters or outbreaks.
- ii. Providing guidance to Participants on their roles and responsibilities.
- iii. Ensuring Participants are aware of the protocols and risks associated with returning to play.

Wales: the same requirement and principles apply for NHS Wales' Test, Trace and Protect strategy, detailed [here](#).

Scotland: the same requirement and principles apply for NHS Scotland's Test and Protect strategy, detailed [here](#).

Who's Involved

Activity Providers are responsible for administering the Participation Registration Process. This is likely to be the person in your organisation who handles data collection and communication. The Covid-19 Officer supports this person and ensures the process is adhered to.

Data should be gathered for all Participants involved in the delivery of an event such as players, coaches, managers, captains, umpires, volunteers, event staff and also spectators. Note, in Scotland, Participant Registration is covered within the Covid-19 Officer [role description](#).

Considerations

The Participant Registration process does not discharge an Activity Provider's liability or duty of care. Data may be gathered either on or offline and should be GDPR compliant and stored safely for 21 days before being destroyed.

Activity Providers will need to follow guidance provided by the [Information Commissioner's Office \(ICO\)](#) on Covid-19 data collection detailed [here](#). Check also whether you need to first register your organisation with the ICO [here](#).

They may also need to undertake a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) per the guidance [here](#) and follow the [six key data protection steps](#).

Process

Activity Providers will need to:

1. Pre-event: communicate Covid-19 guidelines and a protection statement at the time of communicating the event to all Participants.
2. Before the event: gather Participant opt-in data for NHS contact tracing up to a maximum of 14 days beforehand.
3. Day of the event: collect a Participant Attendance Register.

To help you, here are some examples which can be adapted:

- BaseballSoftballUK booking form including Covid-19 Guidelines and Protection Statement for Farnham Park Baseball & Softball Complex: <https://bsuk.co/RTPBookingFP>
- BaseballSoftballUK Covid-19 check-in form for Farnham Park (England), showing Data Capture for NHS Test and Trace: <https://bsuk.co/COVIDData>
- Participant Opt-In Form template: <https://bsuk.co/COVIDOptIn>
- GDPR Statement (generic): <https://bsuk.co/COVIDGDPR>
- Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) template: <https://bsuk.co/DPIA>
- Participant Attendance Form template: <https://bsuk.co/COVIDAttendance>

Find out more

This section should be read in conjunction with:

1. Sport England's legal guidance [here](#).
2. Scotland: [Collecting customer contact details](#) guidance published by sportScotland.

Covid-19 Officer Role

As part of BaseballSoftballUK's commitment to ensuring that the return to community baseball and softball activity is as safe as possible, each Activity Provider must appoint a dedicated 'Covid-19 Officer' who will be central in determining how the overall return to play is conducted for their organisation/event.

This is a requirement sanctioned by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), Sport England, Public Health England and the Health & Safety Executive and is a condition for a return to play. This is also required by Public Health Wales and NHS Wales in line with their Test, Trace, Protect strategy and by NHS Scotland in line with their Test and Protect strategy, detailed [here](#).

Not following this procedure could increase risk of transmission of the coronavirus, as well as invalidating any insurance claims.

Activity Providers include all those involved in planning the return to play for their participating Federation or affiliating body listed above, as well as wholly independent organisers of baseball/softball events.

Events may consist of gatherings limited at the time of issuance of this document of up to 30 participants for the purpose of casual games or larger training or coaching sessions.

Participants are all those involved in the delivery of an event such as players, coaches, managers, captains, umpires, volunteers, event staff and also spectators.

Who should the Covid-19 Officer be?

- Every participating Federation, affiliating body, league, club and team, as well as independent event organisers, must appoint a Covid-19 Officer. Unless otherwise notified, the most senior person in each organisation will be deemed to be the responsible Covid-19 Officer. Please inform BaseballSoftballUK of the Covid-19 Officer nominee at ReturnToPlay@bsuk.com *
- The Covid-19 Officer must be a registered member of their participating Federation or organising body, where affiliated.
- The person taking on the role of Covid-19 Officer should be communicated to all Participants, and where possible, identified on relevant websites and communications.

Role and Responsibilities

- Being the designated contact for guidance updates from BaseballSoftballUK and participating Federation or affiliating body.
- Managing the implementation and compliance with guidance for the organisation and/or event, working with third party venue/facility operators as needed. This area is particularly important for indoor sport.
- Establishing, communicating and executing event and location-specific protocols to mitigate against Covid-19 risks, based on the Risk Assessments provided, and focusing on:
 - Social distancing practices
 - Enhanced hygiene practices – for Participants and Equipment
 - Controlled attendance

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- Ensuring the [Participant Registration](#) process is followed. Note, in Scotland, Participant Registration should be handled by the Covid-19 Officer, see [role description](#).
 - Ensuring and documenting that all members/participants have received a pre-event briefing on personal safety and risk mitigation measures.
 - First Aid provision: minimising the risk of transmission at an event with enhanced First Aid kits containing face masks, face shield, disposable gloves and disposable aprons. Refer to the UK Government's guidance for First Responders [here](#), Welsh Government guidance [here](#) and Scottish Government's Health and Safety Executive guidance [here](#).
 - Signing off the elements of the organisation's Return to Play Risk Assessment which relate to Covid-19 measures. The organisational Risk Assessment must, in turn, be approved by the league/club/team committee. Please refer to the Club Matters (Sport England) '[Creating a risk assessment for clubs and organisations](#)' guidance published 25 June for support.

Covid-19 Response Plan

- Should Covid-19 be traced to a Participant, ensure the Activity Provider/s and your team, club, league, affiliating body, participating Federation and BaseballSoftballUK are aware so they can consider steps such as self-isolating, testing and suspending future events.
- Consider how you will communicate internally and externally, with appropriate spokespeople and communications channels in place.

Find out more

1. Resources, sample risk assessments and guidance for Activity Providers and Covid-19 Officers can be found [here](#).
2. Familiarise yourself with the role and general principles by taking sportScotland's interactive [e-learning module](#).

** Covid-19 Officers will have their contact information added to a specific, secure list and will only be contacted on matters relating to the Return to Play Plan. To change your team or organisation's Covid-19 Officer, or to unsubscribe from this list, please contact ReturnToPlay@BSUK.com.*

FURTHER GUIDANCE

Insurance

This section is aimed at outlining key considerations for Activity Providers who will need to ensure their existing insurance policies remain valid and appropriate – in accordance with these guidelines – *before* arranging a return to play. There is no expectation or requirement to establish insurance specifically to cover for the coronavirus itself in the context of return to play.

This section does not provide advice based on specific policies. The provision of insurance does not in itself discharge an Activity Provider's duties of care and adequate Health & Safety protocols will need to be developed and implemented to protect all Participants.

Considerations

Activity Providers are recommended to check the following areas:

- Confirmation that insurers will provide cover if official guidance is followed.
- Premiums for appropriate 'top-up' insurance which may be necessary.
- Revised cover terms at the time of renewal.
- Exemptions for any category of Participants within existing policies.
- Travel cover and medical expenses which, if provided/required, are likely to be revised by the insurance provider.
- Where applicable, Employers' Liability, Professional Indemnity, Public Liability and Occupier's Liability policies, as well as Directors' and Officers' insurance policies.

If an Activity Provider isn't covered by their affiliating body's insurance or is independent, they will need to ensure its own insurance policies are sufficient before returning to play.

An Activity Provider with adequate insurance provision in place will still need to take reasonable steps to ensure it has discharged its duty of care to protect the health and safety of Participants. If followed, the Return to Play guidelines provided by BaseballSoftballUK and approved by Government provide the necessary framework. The provision of cover by insurers is likely to be conditional on these steps being taken.

British Softball Federation (BSF)

The BSF presently offers Civil and Public Liability Insurance until 30 November 2020, which will remain valid for returning clubs or teams who were affiliated, paid-up members in 2019 (details [here](#)). New teams registered in 2020 are also covered. Players registered with Cardiff Softball League (Wales) are covered through the BSF.

British Baseball Federation (BBF)

We understand the BBF presently offers insurance and does not carry Covid-19 exclusions at the time of launch of version one of this document on 29 July. Contact the BBF [here](#).

Affiliating Bodies

- British Baseball League, East of England Baseball League, South West Baseball League: cover is in place for new or returning members.
- Baseball Scotland, West Midlands Baseball League: please check directly with these organisations.

If you are unsure or have specific queries, please check with your participating Federation, affiliating body or independent event organiser whether adequate insurance is in place.

Find out more

Please refer to the legal guidance provided by Sport England and their legal advisors, Sheridans Sports Group, detailed [here](#).

Venues

This section covers guidance on creating a safer playing environment, whether a facility is owned and/or managed by the Activity Provider or whether the Activity Provider is reliant on third party owned or managed facilities. Adherence to these guidelines should be worked out collaboratively between the Activity Provider and facility. Each facility should have a specific facility operations plan that incorporates a full risk assessment.

This area is particularly important for **indoor sport** and the BSUK Risk Assessments have been accordingly updated.

Baseball/Softball Specific Considerations

These considerations apply to outdoor and/or indoor venues and scheduling:

- Social distancing must be applied in dugouts, where their use is permitted.
- No more than two teams are permitted on any one field/activity space/court at the same time. Consideration should be given to providing each team with an opportunity to warm up on the field/activity space/court.
- Temporary fields/activity spaces/courts should not be created in close proximity to one another to make social distancing difficult between teams.
- If three or more teams use the same venue for a game or training, teams not actively competing against each other should not interact.
- Schedules should minimise the need for teams to change fields/activity spaces/courts wherever possible.
- Game and training times should be staggered where possible to avoid congestion in public spaces such as car parks.
- Participants must not congregate in groups or exchange items following a game or training session and must adhere to 2-metre social distancing while departing a venue.
- Visiting teams must be allowed to depart the venue first.
- Indoor: physical distancing should determine how many people can safely be on in activity space/court, while never exceeding the overall maximum capacity for the building, with a recommended minimum of 9 square metres (sqm) per person.

General Considerations

Area	Measure
Movement on site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All venues must have entry & exit and parking arrangements that ensure social distancing can be maintained. Venues must display the appropriate signage to facilitate social distancing at all points throughout the facility and car park. Venues will implement traffic flow systems where possible and appropriate. Venues will outline socially-distanced areas for teams, officials and spectators. Venues will ensure that disability access remains available within the site as normal.
Changing rooms and showers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where possible, players must shower at home and arrive changed. Use of changing and shower facilities must follow Government advice on the use of indoor facilities when available. If these facilities remain closed, exceptions may be made where safety and safeguarding measures require their use: e.g., supporting disability athletes, a child needing a change of clothing, etc. <p><u>Scotland only</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Locker Rooms. From 31/08/20, access to indoor locker rooms and storage areas is permitted for the dropping off and collection of sports equipment or clothing. The sports facility operator should ensure mitigating actions are put in place to minimise the risk of virus transmission including physical distancing, hygiene and cleaning measures.
Toilets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Toilets will need to be opened for pre-match, match and for 30 minutes following. Toilets should be cleaned regularly in line with UK Government or Scottish Government guidance for clubhouses/indoor facilities. Toilets capacity should be managed via entry and exit per UK Government or Scottish Government guidance.
Hygiene	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants should refrain from spitting or rinsing out their mouths on or around the playing area. They should also not chew gum, tobacco or seeds, spit, spit into gloves/mitts, lick fingers, smoke or vape. <p><u>Scotland only</u> Health, Safety & Hygiene.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure access to First Aid and emergency equipment, updated appropriately for the Covid-19 pandemic and First Aiders have appropriate training. In the event of First Aid treatment being required, it is recognised that a suitably qualified person, coach or supervising adult may require to attend to the injured participant. The 'Covid-19 Officer' should consider processes for managing this as part of their risk assessment. This could include but not be limited to the provision of suitable PPE; training of coaches/supervising adults; presence of one parent/guardian being required at the activity for children/vulnerable adults. Cleaning of equipment, hand and respiratory hygiene are core measures to be implemented and provision should be made for these. Clear guidance and plans are needed for cleaning of facilities and equipment, and waste disposal. For instance, common touchpoint surfaces (gates, door handles, handrails, etc.) should where possible be left open but if not possible, regular cleaning with disposable gloves undertaken. Make hand sanitisers or wipes available for use in bar and restaurant areas and at the entrance/exit to the venue/facility where this is possible. Hand sanitiser should be at least 60% alcohol-based and detergent wipes appropriate for the surface they are being used on. Cleaning products should conform to EN14476 standards.
Clubhouses and Hospitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants should use clubhouses and hospitality facilities in line with UK Government or Scottish Government guidance on hospitality settings. New rules include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> England: in licensed premises, food and drinks must be ordered from, served and consumed at tables only; staff should wear visors if in close contact with colleagues or customers; clubhouses must display the official NHS Test and Trace QR code. All: face coverings are mandatory for staff and customers when not eating & drinking; bars and restaurants must close at 10pm. Customers in clubhouses and hospitality facilities should be hosted in accordance with UK Government provision. If facilities remain closed, exceptions must be made for essential activity such as provision of First Aid or access to essential equipment for the event. Refer to UK Government advice, Scottish Government advice and Welsh Government advice as needed.

Indoor Venues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face coverings should be worn before and after activity and when in non-playing areas of the facility – with exemptions for health conditions or certain disabilities – as required by sports facility operators. • Physical distancing should determine how many people can safely be on each court/activity space, while never exceeding the overall maximum capacity for the building. A minimum of 9 square metres per person to maintain 2m between Participants is recommended. • Using a well ventilated venue is essential, especially the playing area. • Ideally, ventilation systems should provide 100% fresh air and not recirculate air from one space to another if possible. • Mechanical ventilation can should generate 20 litres per second per person with adjustment of the system, opening doors/windows and reducing capacity as needed. • Please respect UK Government and very specific Scottish Government guidance on venues.
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Find out more

- NEW: [Guidance for people who work in grassroots sport and gym/leisure facilities](#) published 09 September by the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy.
- NEW: [Providers of grassroots sport and gym/leisure facilities: 'Keeping your customers and users of sports and gym/leisure facilities safe'](#) published 11 September by the UK Government.
- NEW: [Operational Guidance: Indoor Sports Halls](#) published August by sportScotland.
- NEW: [Phase 3: Return to sport and physical activity](#) published 10 September by sportScotland.
- NEW: [Guidance on sport and leisure facilities](#) published 04 September by sportScotland.
- NEW: [Sport, recreation and leisure: guidance for a phased return](#) > 'Indoor sports and leisure facilities' published 04 September by the Welsh Government.
- NEW: refer to the updated BSUK Risk Assessments [online](#).
- [ReOpen: Sport and physical sector facility reopening guidance](#) published by the Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity (CIMSPA), the professional development body for the UK's sport and physical activity sector.
- [COVID-19 - A framework for the re-opening of gym, leisure centre and wider fitness industry during social distancing](#) published by UK active.
- [Reopening toolkit for clubs and organisations](#) published 25 June by Club Matters (Sport England).
- [Getting your Facilities Fit for Sport](#) by sportScotland.
- [Health Protection Scotland: General guidance for non-healthcare settings](#).
- [Health Protection Scotland: Cleaning in a non-healthcare setting](#).

Coaches

This paragraph serves to highlight helpful information specially prepared by sportScotland to assist coaching staff prepare for their return to sport, the principles of which can be applied to England and Wales:

1. [Phase 3: Getting coaches ready for a return to sport and physical activity](#) - published 30 July.
2. [Getting coaches ready for sport plan](#) - published August.
3. NEW: [Operational Guidance: Indoor Sports Halls](#) published August by sportScotland.

High Risk Groups: Medical, Black and Minority Ethnic, Disability, Young Players

Medical

Medically High Risk groups as defined by the NHS [here](#) are discouraged from putting themselves at risk in line with [Government guidelines](#). We recommend they do not participate in baseball/softball activity once shielding stops from 01 August 2020. Similarly, for Wales, we do not recommend this group returns to play should shielding stop from 16 August, per the Welsh Government's last update of 16 July outlined [here](#). Participants who identify as [extremely high-risk](#) in Scotland should adhere to NHS Scotland advice outlined [here](#) and we also do not recommend they resume play.

Black and Minority Ethnic

BaseballSoftballUK also recognises the emerging evidence indicating that black and minority ethnic communities (BME) are disproportionately affected by Covid-19. We record via our annual Participant Survey that 14% of Participants nationally identify as BME.

We understand from NHS reporting that mitigations are centred around social distancing and limiting contact and contact time with others. We are confident the Guidance and Health & Safety protocols, including enhanced hygiene practices, will minimise the risk for BME Participants and do not therefore propose additional, specific measures to be implemented.

Sources:

- i. <https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/workforce/addressing-impact-of-covid-19-on-bame-staff-in-the-nhs/safe-working-for-all-nhs-staff/>
- ii. <https://www.nhsemployers.org/covid19/health-safety-and-wellbeing/risk-assessments-for-staff>

Disability

BaseballSoftballUK will continue to work with our partners [Activity Alliance](#), [Disability Sports Coach](#), [Parasport](#) and the [UK Blind Baseball Association](#) to ensure activity is safe and adapted where necessary. These Government-approved guidelines remain applicable for disabled participants.

Young Players

Players under 18 years old and their Parents / Guardians / Carers should continue to follow existing safeguarding measures outlined in the safeguarding section of the BaseballSoftballUK website [here](#). At this time, the modifications laid out in the framework should be applied to youth baseball/softball and there are no additional mandated measures. In Scotland, whilst children do not ordinarily need to adhere to social distancing when playing sport, children over the age of 12 will need to conform to the Return to Play guidelines, including when playing with adults; see sportScotland's [Child Wellbeing and Protection Considerations](#) for more information. In Wales, children under the age of 11 are included in the 30-person limit; see the Welsh Government's [Sport, recreation and leisure: guidance for a phased return](#) for more information.

Find out more

[activity alliance's](#) guidance, published 19 June 2020: [Reopening activity: An inclusive response \[Considerations for community sport and leisure providers on including disabled people and people with long-term health conditions\]](#)

Resource Bank

Contact Us

If you have any questions about this guidance or would like further support, please contact BaseballSoftballUK at: ReturnToPlay@bsuk.com.

Below is a list of official organisations and associated resources for further guidance:

British Softball Federation (BSF)

Email: info@britishsoftball.org

<https://www.britishsoftball.org/>

British Baseball Federation (BBF)

[British Baseball League](#)

[Baseball Scotland](#)

[East of England Baseball League](#)

[South West Baseball League](#)

[West Midlands Baseball League](#)

World Baseball Softball Confederation (WBSC)

Covid-19 Prevention Guidelines:

<https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/static.wbcs.org/assets/cms/documents/bf420054-a523-f0cd-c738-8be0d949a731.pdf>

[Safe Return to Baseball/Softball – Covid-19 Prevention Guidelines](#)

Sport England

Return to Play hub:

<https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/coronavirus/return-play>

Return to Play legal guidance:

<https://sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2020-06/Legal%20risks%20and%20duties%20of%20care%20when%20returning%20to%20play.pdf?M6px4v48lm3EijY0QBae8mkOMcBDBPfh>

Club Matters toolkit to help sports clubs prepare for reopening:

<https://learn.sportenglandclubmatters.com/course/view.php?id=71>

Club Matters social distancing general guidance:

https://learn.sportenglandclubmatters.com/pluginfile.php/31277/mod_resource/content/4/Club%20Matters%20Social%20Distancing%20tips%20SO.pdf

UK Government

Guidance for the public on the phased return of outdoor sport and recreation and recreation in England:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-phased-return-of-sport-and-recreation/guidance-for-the-public-on-the-phased-return-of-outdoor-sport-and-recreation>

Sport Wales

Sport, recreation and leisure: guidance for a phased return:

<https://gov.wales/sport-recreation-and-leisure-guidance-phased-return>

sportScotland

Coronavirus information and resources:

<https://sportscotland.org.uk/covid-19>

This guidance has been created with existing levels of knowledge and will be reviewed regularly. BaseballSoftballUK or those consulted within cannot be held responsible for any damage, injury or illness arising from any interpretation of the contents of this guidance.