



# The First Steps to Getting Back on the Pitch

Further to the government announcement on 10 May and subsequent updated guidance issued on 13 May (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-phased-return-of-sport-and-recreation>) we can now update on the initial implications for hockey in England.

England Hockey will continue to follow government and Public Health England advice. Timings of any changes to the circumstances for hockey will always be led by government advice during the Covid-19 restrictions. Whilst these are the first steps for returning to play, we would encourage everyone to firstly consider the health of themselves and others.

The updated government advice means it is now possible to undertake the following activity. England Hockey strongly recommends that all involved in any activity follow the guidance beneath.

- Outdoor hockey pitches can now be opened as long as the government guidelines are followed.
- The following ways to play hockey are now available on outdoor pitches:
  - Hockey played by two players (each from different households) under social distancing guidelines.
  - One-to-one sessions involving a coach and a player from different households under social distancing guidelines.
  - Hockey played between a household group (where social distancing is not required)
- Whether coached or uncoached these sessions must be covered by suitable insurance – participants and coaches should ensure they have suitable arrangements in place before participating.
- This means that some one-to-one coaching activity can resume but the participants, coach and the facility must follow the respective government and England Hockey guidance.
- We encourage the fantastic 'hockey at home' initiatives that we have seen throughout the last two months to continue ([examples here](#))

Please be aware that this guidance may change as the circumstances change. In particular, we are still seeking clarification from government on arrangements for one to one coaching of young people given the need for a parent/guardian to be present. There are different interpretations across NGBs on this issue at the moment and therefore we may have to update on this once a decision is made.

## Summary guidance for outdoor hockey sessions one-to-one, or within one household

The following is a summary of the full guidance which is available later in this document:

- Follow Public Health England advice for good hygiene at all times
- Maintain 2m social distance (unless you are from the same household)
- Only meet 1 other person from another household
- Use your own equipment (stick and balls) and avoid touching other equipment (goals etc). If passing, only touch the ball with your stick!
- One-to-one coaching is permitted in line with England Hockey safeguarding guidance

- Think about how you divide the pitch if more than one group is using it to ensure there is sufficient space between groups.
- Book online and leave space (10 minutes) between bookings to avoid bottlenecks
- Do not participate if you are required to self-isolate
- Ensure you are appropriately insured and first aid equipment is available.

## Performance Position

Recent guidelines have been published by the government detailing the possibility for some elite activity. As we consider our social responsibility, strive to prioritise health and well-being and ensure that we are well planned for a return to training; the Great Britain men's and women's international squads are not returning to their Bisham Abbey training base in the next few weeks. We are monitoring the advice offered by the government and looking at a phased return to training for the senior international squads as soon as is appropriate.

In addition, our other international activity including National Age Group Squads and the Great Britain Elite Development Programme will not undertake any activity at present. We are in communication with athletes/ parents/ guardians from those programmes and updates in the coming weeks will provide more information.

## Next Steps

As the longer-term plan for lifting restrictions become clearer England Hockey is developing a structured approach to managing the steps linked to future government guidance. Our aim is to allow all those in the game to understand how we intend to navigate through the next few months. The impact of the expected timeline, and any changes to it, are being assessed alongside the lead in period that is required to change any large-scale activities in hockey. We intend to share this timeline and our expectations of what each step will look like and when decisions will be made over coming weeks.

If you have any questions or feedback please email [clubs@englandhockey.co.uk](mailto:clubs@englandhockey.co.uk)

# Full Government Guidance

**The following recommendations for Hockey in England have been built from the government advice as follows:**

*Overarching Government Guidance for Participants:*

<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>

*Coaches:*

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

*Facility Providers:*

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

*Additional advice from the FIH:* <http://fih.ch/news/covid-19-fih-issues-guidance-to-ensure-playing-fields-are-ready-when-restrictions-end/>

## Detailed guidance for hockey:

These are not exhaustive and should be read in conjunction with the government guidance above. There are three groups that this advice relates to – Participants, Coaches and Facility Operators.

## Participants

- Preparing to play
  - Booking – use electronic booking process or pay online to the venue.
  - Hygiene – in line with government advice wash hands before and after activity and regularly use hand sanitiser.
  - Equipment – use your own equipment – sticks, balls (mark your own with your initials), gumshield, facemasks (if required), goalkeeping equipment (if appropriate) and ensure water bottles full on arrival, do not share equipment and disinfect or leave for 72 hours after use.
  - Insurance – ensure you are suitably insured for the activity you are undertaking, see England Hockey's Health and Safety advice [here](#).
  - First Aid Provision - Ensure suitable provision is available for first aid. St John's Ambulance advice is available here: <https://www.sja.org.uk/get-advice/first-aid-advice/covid-19-advice-for-first-aiders/>
- Access
  - Travel – Ensure you travel on your own or in your household group.
  - Avoid using public transport
  - Arrive as close as possible to when you need to be there
  - Allow others to leave before you enter the pitch - if you need to wait then do so away from the pitch and clear of the gates
  - Ensure you leave the pitch before the end of your allotted time so that it is empty for the next players
  - Arrive changed and ready to play. Shower at home, and do not use the venue's changing area
  - Do not congregate after playing. No extra-curricular or social activity should take place

- Access to facilities – no inside space (apart from toilets) will be available, ensure you follow the directions and distancing rules as set out by venue.
- Where possible avoid touching gates/fences/goals unless absolutely necessary.
- Playing
  - Think about how you divide the pitch if more than one group using it
  - Maintain social distancing at all times outside of your household group
  - Parents/guardians should ideally be limited to one non-participant with strict social distancing between spectators.
  - If you are a junior and undertaking a one to one coaching session a parent / guardian must be present at all times and follow social distancing guidelines.
- After play
  - Equipment and facilities used should be disinfected between sessions. We would recommend only the facility operators move goals.
  - Good hygiene practice should continue to be followed with equipment disinfected or left for 72 hours.
- If you show symptoms of Covid-19 you should contact anyone you have been in contact with so they can self-isolate in line with government guidance.

## Coaches

- One to one coaching sessions are allowed but as normal parents / carers should be present for sessions involving young people. England Hockey advice on safeguarding is [here](#).
- Preparation
  - Coaches should take all reasonable steps to ensure that sessions are as safe as possible.
  - A risk assessment should be undertaken.
  - Bookings should be online or by phone.
- Social distancing must be maintained at all times to a distance of at least 2m. Coaches should adapt sessions accordingly.
- Equipment
  - It is recommended that players bring their own
  - Where this isn't possible and the coach provides them:
    - Fresh balls should be used for each session – balls should be stored separately after use and disinfected or stored for at least 72 hours before being used again.
    - Coaches should collect balls or the player return them with stick/feet not hands.
    - No contact between player and other coaching equipment – it is recommended that limited equipment is used if possible.
- First Aid
  - Suitable first aid provision should be provided. St John's Ambulance advice is here - <https://www.sja.org.uk/get-advice/first-aid-advice/covid-19-advice-for-first-aiders/>
- Communication
  - Coaches should regularly remind participants (and parents/guardians where appropriate) of the expectations and standards required.
  - Coaches should ensure that the venue has the necessary standards in place before deciding to use the venue and on arrival and departure.
- If you show symptoms of Covid-19 you should contact anyone you have been in contact with so they can self-isolate in line with government guidance.

## Facilities

- It is recommended that club venues carefully consider the cost/benefit of opening at this stage. The circumstances of your venue and the wider financial position (particularly linked to staff where furloughed) should be explored before deciding to open.
- Preparation:
  - Facilities should carefully follow government advice on facility opening.
  - This should include a Covid-19 Risk Assessment
  - Cleaning – suitable cleaning and hygiene arrangements should be put in place.
  - Bookings should be made online or over the phone.
    - Indoor facilities:
      - Should remain closed – clubhouses and changing rooms should remain closed except where it is necessary to access essential systems (e.g. lights/watering systems)
      - Toilets – where easily accessible, could be opened in line with guidance but should be cleaned between sessions with appropriate cleaning fluids and water available.
  - Outdoor facilities:
    - Prepare for sessions with equipment ready and in right place aiming for there to be no contact for players/coaches with doors, gates, fencing, goals wherever possible.
    - First aid equipment accessible and St John's ambulance advice followed <https://www.sja.org.uk/get-advice/first-aid-advice/covid-19-advice-for-first-aiders/>
    - Hand sanitisers should be made available and facility operators clean all common use areas in between sessions.
- Running activity
  - Think about how you divide the pitch if more than one group using it allowing plenty of space between groups.
  - It is recommended to leave time between bookings (10 mins) or stagger bookings to allow for minimal opportunity for bottlenecks to occur.
  - Leave gates / doors open and consider a one-way system if possible (in / out)
  - Consider parking arrangements and maintaining distancing wherever possible including marking 2m distancing if you can.
  - Standard England Hockey safety advice should be followed [here](#).
- Communication
  - Facility operators should provide clear signage and regular reminders for participants of Covid-19 guidelines.
  - Facility operators should ensure that clear and regular communication is in place with coaches reminding them of standards required.
- After
  - Facility operators should disinfect equipment and places that have been used.
- If any users of the venue or venue staff show symptoms of Covid-19 you should contact any users of the venue so they can self-isolate in line with government guidance.