



Bowls Scotland

Return to the Green COVID-19 Guidance 2021

Version 4: 26 April 2021

INTRODUCTION

Bowls Scotland continues to fully support and follow the Scottish Government guidelines relating to COVID-19, including ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all members of Bowls Scotland. Lawn Bowling can be undertaken, providing all activity is consistent with current Scottish Government guidance on health, physical distancing, and hygiene – clubs need to ensure that members/players, volunteers, and visitors are fully aware and can adapt to changes in guidance at short notice.

Working in partnership with the Scottish Government, Public Health Scotland, **sportscotland** and our members, we have produced guidance for clubs in line with Scottish Government guidance on sport and physical activity. This guidance is not a 'one size fits all' approach as we appreciate bowling facilities vary across Scotland and as such individual bowling clubs should risk assess appropriately to ensure these procedures can be implemented.

This guidance will be subject to review should the Scottish Government issue further advice and updates. We would encourage you to read through all the guidance and supporting information thoroughly.

Please continue to err on the side of caution; clubs should not open unless all the necessary measures to ensure the safety of players and volunteers can be implemented. Players, volunteers, and visitors who are symptomatic and household members should self-isolate for 10 days as per NHS Scotland guidance. No one who is self-isolating should attend the club.

Scottish Government's [strategic framework document \(version: April 2021\)](#) for managing COVID-19 provides a 0-4 Level approach to restrictions with each local authority area (or sub-area) placed in a relevant protection Level depending upon its COVID-19 status. Clubs and players/members should be aware of their local area protection level and associated restrictions which may be in place and should consider this as part of risk assessment planning. Further information on protection levels that will apply in each local authority area are available at [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): allocation of protection levels to local authorities](#). A local post code checker is also available at [COVID restrictions by protection level in areas of Scotland](#).

All clubs are required to have Test & Protect procedures in place and appoint a COVID Officer to ensure the safe and managed return of lawn bowls in 2021.

Our message remains clear that public health and wellbeing remains the most pressing priority and we all have a responsibility to do what we can to continue to suppress the spread of the virus. Any club found in breach of the guidance may be deemed as bringing the game into disrepute and be subject to Bowls Scotland disciplinary action.

CONTENTS

<u>Definitions – For the purpose of this guidance</u>	<u>Page 4</u>
<u>Return to the Green Guidance Section 1: Facilities</u>	<u>Page 4</u>
- <u>Planning and Preparation</u>	<u>Page 4</u>
- <u>Toilets and Changing / Locker Rooms</u>	<u>Page 5</u>
- <u>Equipment Provision and Use</u>	<u>Page 5</u>
- <u>Bookings and Payment</u>	<u>Page 6</u>
- <u>Communications with Members</u>	<u>Page 6</u>
- <u>Health, Safety and Hygiene</u>	<u>Page 7</u>
- <u>Face Coverings</u>	<u>Page 7</u>
- <u>Test and Protect</u>	<u>Page 8</u>
<u>Return to the Green Guidance Section 2: Bowling Activity</u>	<u>Page 9</u>
- <u>Travel Guidance</u>	<u>Page 9</u>
- <u>On the Green Play</u>	<u>Page 9</u>
- <u>Competitions</u>	<u>Page 10</u>
- <u>Spectating</u>	<u>Page 11</u>
- <u>Coaching</u>	<u>Page 11</u>
- <u>Indoor Club House Activities</u>	<u>Page 12</u>
<u>Additional Support, Resources and Templates</u>	<u>Page 13</u>

DEFINITIONS – FOR THE PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDANCE

1. **Bowling Activity** refers to bowling activities which are undertaken in a structured and managed way following specific rules and regulations outlined in Bowls Scotland Return to the Green guidance. All organised activity should have documented risk assessments completed by a COVID Officer and mitigating actions put in place to ensure the health, safety and welfare of players, volunteers, and coaches.
2. **Non-contact sport or activity** is defined as “a sport or activity in which the participants are physically separated by playing rules such as to make it difficult for them to make physical contact during an activity”. Lawn Bowls is considered by **sportscotland** as a Non-contact sport.
3. **Competitions** refers to where players or teams compete against different opponents as part of an organised league or competition.
4. **Bowling Bubble** refers to an outdoor sporting ‘field of play bubble’ that can consist of a maximum amount of people including players, coaches, officials, and other support staff at any one time, depending on the COVID protection level.
5. **Levels** refers to COVID protection levels (sometimes known as tiers or tier system) set out measures that can be applied nationally or locally depending on the prevalence of the virus across Scotland. Each area has a COVID protection level. There are 5 different levels starting from 0 to 4. The lowest level is 0 and the highest level is 4. Levels are reviewed on a regular basis.

RETURN TO THE GREEN GUIDANCE SECTION 1: FACILITIES

PLANNING & PREPARATION

1. It is the responsibility of each club to appoint a responsible person/s, referred to as the COVID Officer, to act as the point of contact on all things related to COVID-19. A COVID Officer role descriptor can be found here: <https://www.bowlsscotland.com/clubs/club-support-covid-19>

An [e-learning module for COVID officers](#) is available to support those undertaking the role.
2. The COVID officer/s **MUST** ensure that full risk assessments, processes and mitigating actions are in place before any clubhouse or bowling activity takes place. Specific consideration should be given to the needs of those who are at greater risk.
3. As with any normal season, clubs should ensure check they have the correct and full insurance cover is in place and valid before any activity takes place.
4. Clubs should check with their landlord that they have permission to re-open.
5. Clubs should only re-open when it is safe to do so, in accordance with Scottish Government and Bowls Scotland guidance.
6. No face to face meetings permitted in Level 3 and 4.
Face to face club meetings are only permitted in Level 0-2 where social distancing, household and hygiene rules are in place.

7. Clubs must ensure that all players, volunteers, and visitors are aware of the requirement to adhere to Scottish Government and Bowls Scotland guidance prior to any bowling activity being undertaken and reserve the right to intervene where there are any clear and visible breaches of this guidance by participants.
8. Where a player with a disability requires functional support to help them participate coaches, carers or those supporting the participant can provide this without maintaining physical distancing. In such circumstance the responsible 'COVID Officer' should consider appropriate mitigating actions as part of the risk assessment. For instance, providing appropriate PPE, limiting the number of participants an individual provides functional support to, limiting the duration spent in proximity, or a combination of actions.
9. To protect club employees, relevant work placed risk assessments and consultation should take place in advance of any activity being undertaken. See the Businesses, workplaces, and self-employed people section at [Scottish Government: Coronavirus in Scotland](#).

TOILETS AND CHANGING FACILITIES / LOCKER ROOMS

10. Club houses should remain closed apart for toilet access and one-off access to storage areas and locker rooms to retrieve personal equipment which is essential. Personal equipment should not be returned to these areas. Changing rooms and showering facilities can also be used for players who require additional support such as disabled people or those with additional support needs.
11. Where changing rooms and showering facilities are to be used specific guidance relating to use of 'Changing and Showers' is available at [Getting Your Facilities Fit for Sport](#).
12. Clubs may open toilets if they follow the guidelines outlined on the Scottish Government website [Opening Public Toilets Guidelines](#).
13. Where equipment cannot reasonably be taken home and is stored on site, access to retrieve and return such equipment to storage areas is allowed if appropriate risk assessments are undertaken.

EQUIPMENT PROVISION AND USE

14. Clubs should remove equipment that is not essential for all bowling activity. For example, 2m Sticks, Score Boards, Chalk, Pushers etc. (Please note at Level 3 and 4, the equipment outlined above is not permitted).
15. For use of any essential equipment in Levels 0 – 2, clubs should risk assess and have appropriate cleaning measures in place to reduce the risk of contamination.
16. Benches are permitted for the following reasons ONLY:
 - a. Players changing shoes.
 - b. Players preparing or finishing play.
 - c. Spectators (spectating guidance in this document MUST be followed)
17. Bins may be provided but should be regularly checked, cleaned/sanitised, emptied and disposed of using appropriate personal protective equipment. Bins should be removed at Level 4.

18. Cleaning products (soapy water) must be made available by the club. Players must use the cleaning products after each game to cleanse all mats and jacks (ensure these are completely dry before use on the green again)
19. Players should use separate mats and jacks, however if this is not possible, whichever player collects the mats and jack is responsible for all contact with the equipment before, during and after the game.
20. As a suggestion jacks or mats can be set at short, medium, or long by the same player after each end rather than rolling the jack down the rink for position.
21. Where shared equipment is necessary for an activity appropriate hygiene measures must be put in place before, during and after use.
22. Players **should not**:
 - a. Pick up any other player's bowl.
 - b. Share equipment e.g., cloths, measures, etc.
 - c. Moisten their hands with saliva before delivery.
 - d. Shake hands, high-five or have any physical contact with any other people at any time.

BOOKINGS AND PAYMENT

23. Clubs should organise a system for booking and allocation of rink times that ensures the safety of players.
24. Clubs should encourage players to make bookings online where possible. However, some people might not have access to internet and alternative measures should be put in place e.g., phone bookings.
25. Clubs should leave an adequate amount of time between booking slots to minimise the number of players arriving and leaving at any one time and allow for any shared equipment to be sanitised.
26. Where possible use online or contactless payment options and avoid handling cash.

COMMUNICATION WITH MEMBERS

27. Clubs should communicate clearly and regularly with members setting out what they are doing to manage risk, and what advice they are giving to individuals before, during and after visits to the bowling club.
28. Clubs should make members aware in advance of measures you are putting in place at your venue, and guidelines they are asked to follow.
29. Clubs should communicate clearly opening times and how members can safely access the club, if relevant, for example through a booking system.
30. Clubs should ensure signage on guidelines for participating safely and promoting hygiene measures are clearly displayed, up to date and in accessible formats.
31. Clubs should consider how to reach people when publishing information and how this can be accessible to all.

32. Special attention should also be given to how clubs communicate physical distancing rules to young people off the bowling green

HEALTH, SAFETY AND HYGIENE

33. Scottish Government has produced the [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): FACTS poster including translations and accessible formats](#). Where possible operators should use this document to reinforce messages. FACTS stand for: **F**ace Coverings, **A**void crowded places, **C**lean your hands regularly, **T**wo metre distance and **S**elf isolate and book a test if you have symptoms.
34. Clubs should ensure that first aid equipment has been updated appropriately for the COVID-19 pandemic and first aiders have appropriate training. All first aid equipment should be accessible.
35. 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 Officer' should consider processes for managing this as part of their risk assessment. This could include but not be limited to:
- Provision of suitable PPE
 - Training of coaches/supervising adults
 - A parent or carer being present with children or vulnerable adults.
36. Cleaning of equipment, hand and respiratory hygiene are core measures to be implemented and provision should be made for these.
37. Clear guidance and plans are needed for cleaning of facilities and equipment, and waste disposal. For instance, common touchpoint surfaces (gates, door handles etc) should where possible be left open but if not possible, regular cleaning with disposable gloves should be undertaken.
38. Make hand sanitizers or wipes available for use in all relevant areas. 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.
39. Be aware that some people may face greater challenges implementing regular handwashing because of additional support needs. Some people may need to use touch to help them get information from their environment and physical support. It is important they are not prevented from doing this, but operators should be aware that this increases the likelihood of virus transmission
40. [Getting your Facilities Fit for Sport](#) provides a checklist for health, hygiene and cleaning considerations and actions.

FACE COVERINGS

41. Clubs should ensure players and visitors wear face coverings in the club house facility. This is a **mandatory** requirement except where an exemption applies e.g., if you have a health condition or are disabled, including hidden disabilities such as autism, dementia, or a learning disability. The [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): public use of face coverings](#) provides guidance on general use and exemptions.

42. Be aware that face coverings discriminate against some deaf people who need to look at lips to help communicate. Clubs should make coaches and volunteers aware that it is okay to remove their face coverings to communicate with someone who relies on lip reading and facial expressions. Physical distancing must always be maintained.
43. Face coverings may not be required when using hospitality services, for example when sitting for a meal or bar service. However, face coverings must be worn when moving around the club house. For further information refer to [Scottish Government Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): tourism and hospitality sector guidance](#).

TEST AND PROTECT

44. [Test and Protect](#) is Scotland's way of putting into practice NHS Scotland's test, trace, isolate and support strategy. Containing outbreaks early is crucial to reduce the spread of COVID-19, protect the NHS and save lives, and avoid the reintroduction of social and economic lockdown. This will support the country to return to, and maintain, a more normal way of life.
45. Maintaining customer records:
 - a. Clubs should where possible collect the name, contact number, date of visit, time of arrival, and the departure time of all those attending facilities or activities. Where attending as a small household group, the contact details for one member – a 'lead member' – will be sufficient.
 - b. Clubs should store information for 21 days and share it when requested to do so by public health officers.
 - c. The [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): Test and Protect information leaflet provides information on the Test and Protect service from NHS Scotland](#).
46. Registration with the Information Commissioner's Office
 - a. To gather and store customer information securely, clubs may need to be registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). This will be the case if you are using an electronic system to gather and store data.
 - b. If you are unsure whether you need to register, please contact the ICO via their helpline on 0303 123 1113 or visit www.ico.org.uk.
47. Protect Scotland App
 - a. NHS Scotland has launched a free mobile app designed to help with contact tracing efforts and slow the spread of COVID-19. The app will alert users if they have been in close contact with another app user who tests positive for coronavirus.
 - b. Supported by a dedicated Protect Scotland website, the app is an extra tool complementing existing person-to-person contact tracing which remains the main component of NHS Scotland's Test and Protect system.
 - c. Further information on the Protect Scotland app is available at www.protect.scot.
48. What should someone do if they have coronavirus symptoms?
 - a. If a person has a continuous cough, high temperature, or loss or change in taste or smell, they should self-isolate and request a coronavirus test right away. Further information is available at www.NHSinform.scot/test-and-protect or by calling **0800 028 2816** if they cannot get online.
 - b. The [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): Test and Protect information leaflet](#) provides information on the Test and Protect service from NHS Scotland

- c. Bowls Scotland has created a flow chart for clubs if someone test positive at the club: <https://www.bowlsscotland.com/media/2269/2020-10-19-positive-test-process.pdf>

RETURN TO THE GREEN GUIDANCE SECTION 2: BOWLING ACTIVITY

TRAVEL GUIDANCE

1. Travel guidance outlined by the Scottish Government should always be followed. Further information on what travel is permitted is available at [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): guidance on travel and transport](#).
2. Information for each local government area, including their level is available at [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): local protection levels](#) including a post code checker.
3. Specific information on car sharing is available from [Transport Scotland: advice on how to travel safely](#).
4. A travel summary is provided in the accompanying [Bowls Scotland Overview Summary Document](#)

Children & Young People (17 years or under)

5. Participants aged 17 years or under can travel to and from [Level 0, 1, 2 and 3](#) areas to take part in organised bowling activity, training, and competition.
6. Children and young people [may travel to and from a Level 4](#) area for organised bowling activity if that is where their club or activity usually takes place.

Adults (18 years or over)

7. Players aged 18 years or over can travel to and from Level 0, 1 and 2 area to take part in organised bowling activity, training, and competition. They should not travel to a Level 3 or 4 area.
8. Adults living in a Level 3 area should only travel locally or to another Level 3 area to take part in organised bowling activity and training.
9. Adults living in a Level 4 area should only travel locally (within their own local authority area) to take part in organised bowling activity.

ON THE GREEN PLAY

10. It is the responsibility of each club to appoint a responsible person/s, referred to as the COVID Officer, to act as the point of contact on all things related to COVID-19 and have documented risk assessments in place and appropriate measures to ensure the safety of players, coaches, and volunteers and where activity is undertaken in line with guidance for the appropriate protection level. Please also refer to guidance produced by [sportscotland](#) at: [Getting Your Facilities Fit for Sport](#).

11. Information on bowling activity permitted by protection level and age group is available in the Bowls Scotland Activity Overview Summary Document.
12. Information outlining bowling activity in Level 4 is available in [Appendix 1](#).
13. Outlined below is the maximum number of people permitted (inclusive of players/coaches/officials and other support staff) in a 'Bowling Bubble' for bowling activity.
 - Level 0: Bowling bubble can consist of a maximum of 30 people.
 - Level 1 & 2: Bowling bubble can consist of a maximum of 30 people.
 - Level 3: Bowling bubble can consist of a maximum of 30 people.
 - Level 4: Bowling bubble can consist of a maximum of 15 people.
14. The above bowling bubble numbers are subject to further confirmation from the Scottish Government for Level 0,1 and 2. Further information will be provided once available.
15. An additional bowling bubble is permitted per club only if a comprehensive risk assessment has been undertaken to ensure that these bubbles do not mix at any time including before, during or after an activity. Once an individual has completed their activity, they should immediately vacate the 'field of play' and are then subject to household rules. Clubs should risk assess the additional bowling bubble along with clubhouse activity, outdoor hospitality, and spectators.
16. Players can only be part of one bowling bubble per day.
17. Clubs should note that the situation around COVID-19 is fluid and activities may need to be cancelled at short notice should there be a change in local or national restrictions. In such circumstance's plans should be in place to notify participants of event cancellation to ensure they do not attend the venue.

COMPETITIONS

General:

18. Clubs must risk assess each individual competition to determine whether they can host an internal/open/friendly competition in line with bowling activity guidance, physical distancing, and good hygiene.
19. The appointed COVID Officer should ensure that all appropriate measures have been taken to allow the competition to take place.
20. Clubs must maintain a register/booking system for everyone attending the club to comply with Test and Protect.
21. All rinks can be used if they fall in line with the bowling bubble guidance.
22. Players, coaches, officials can only be part of one bowling bubble per day and there can be no crossover between bowling bubbles at any level.
23. Players should only travel to/from competition with their own household, and not mix households i.e., car sharing.
24. Competition organisers may consider where appropriate different formats of competition or staggered starts to safely allow the competition to take place.

25. No formal presentation ceremonies should take place during or after a sporting activity or competition as the focus should be on reducing the numbers in attendance at any one time.
26. Competitions should involve as few participants as possible, for the minimum amount of time, whilst still allowing the competition to run effectively. Total participant numbers allowed to take part in competitions is under review by Scottish Government. Further information will be provided once available.
27. Scottish Government household rules apply to all participants off the green.
28. Competitions may need to be cancelled at short notice should there be a change in local or national restrictions. In such circumstance's plans should be in place to notify participants of event cancellation and to ensure they do not attend the venue.
29. All open competitions must have a Tournament License approved prior to the competition taking place. To complete a Tournament License Application, please visit:
<https://www.bowlsscotland.com/competitions/tournament-licenses>

Junior Open Competition Guidance

30. While children and young people 17 and under are exempt from household and physical distancing rules during sporting activity, competition organisers should still seek to reduce risk by minimising the numbers of children taking part in competition where possible.

SPECTATING

31. Bowling clubs can allow access for people to watch bowling **ONLY** if:
 - a. Physical distancing can be maintained for example:
 - b. There is no more than two people to a bench
 - c. Benches must be at least two meters apart
 - d. Benches are cleaned after every use
32. Spectators **MUST** adhere to all other guidance set out by Bowls Scotland and the club.
33. Spectators under the age of 16 should always be accompanied by a parent/carer.
34. Clubs should organise a system for spectating to comply with Test and Protect.

COACHING

35. Coaching sessions can take place **ONLY** if the club has a trained COVID Officer in place, responsible for the following:
 - a. Planning and preparing coaching sessions to ensure compliance of Scottish Government and Bowls Scotland Guidance.
 - b. Carry out risk assessments in partnership with the coach/coaches.
 - c. Arranging for coaching equipment to be available prior to the coaching session (with support from the coach/coaches).
 - d. Working with the coach/coaches to ensure participants adhere to player guidance both on and off the green.
 - e. Ensuring an accurate register of attendance is taken

36. All coaches must be PVG checked to deliver coaching sessions.
37. A bowling bubble in Levels 0-3 can consist of a maximum of 30 people including players, coaches, officials, and other support staff at any one time. At Level 4 this is a maximum of 15 people.
38. Coaches can deliver to multiple bowling bubbles per day but must be included in the overall number within each bubble.
39. Coach to Player ratio of 1:8 should be always adhered to.
40. Coaches must maintain physical distancing (2m). However, where close contact with a player is required, then face coverings should be worn by both player and coach.
41. Coaches to ensure players maintain good hygiene before, during and after the coaching session.
42. Coaches and players to ensure any equipment is cleaned/wiped down before and after coaching sessions.
43. Players to use separate mats and jacks, however if this is not possible, nominate a player on each rink who is responsible for all contact with the mats and jack during the coaching session.
44. Players should avoid sharing equipment wherever possible e.g., Bowls, measures, cloths etc.
45. Under 17s are not required to physically distance while participating, however prior to and directly after bowling activity, physical distancing should be adhered to.
46. Coaches working with children should familiarise themselves with the additional considerations developed by **Children 1st**: [Child Wellbeing and Protection Considerations](#).
47. Coaching sessions should ensure they adhere to local tiered restriction levels.
48. Further support and resources are available here: <https://sportscotland.org.uk/covid-19/getting-coaches-ready-for-sport/>
49. Guidance for Players & Parents/Carers:
 - a. Parents/carers should be encouraged to spectate during sessions and must maintain physical distancing. This applies before, during and after the session.
 - b. Parents/Carers who are accompanying their children must abide by Scottish Government physical distancing, good hygiene, and household guidance.
 - c. Parents/Carers to talk to their child about returning to coaching sessions to help them understand the measures that have been taken to keep them safe.
 - d. Parents/Carers to remind their child it is important they focus on having fun and being back on the green with their friends.
 - e. Parents/Carers to encourage their child to wash their hands thoroughly before and after coaching sessions.
 - f. Parents/Carers to ensure their child brings their own water bottle and does not share with anyone else.
 - g. Parents/Carers to be available to support their child if this is required during a coaching session.
 - h. Immediately after the coaching session, parents/carers, and children to leave as promptly as possible and not congregate, while following physical distancing

guidelines.

- i. It is the parents/carers responsibility to ensure both parent and child adhere to club rules as well as Scottish Government guidance on physical distancing, household rules and good hygiene.

INDOOR CLUB HOUSE ACTIVITIES

50. Bowling clubs may want to offer club house activities. Clubs should refer to the Bowls Scotland Activity Overview Summary Document for more information.
51. Bowling clubs should refer to the Bowls Scotland Carpet Bowls and Short Mat Recommendations for Play
52. For Bingo, please note that face covering must always be worn, except when eating or drinking.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES, SUPPORT AND TEMPLATES

Additional resources can be found here: <https://www.bowlsscotland.com/clubs/club-support-covid-19>

- Bowls Scotland Activity Overview Summary Document
- Appendix 1 – Level 4 Additional Information
- Players and Coaches Safety Guidance Poster
- COVID Safety Poster Pack
- Bowls Scotland Carpet Bowls and Short Mat Recommendations for Play
- COVID Officer Role Descriptor
- Sport Turf Services Information
- Green Maintenance Update
- Template Rink Layout
- Template Booking Schedule
- Eurostick Products (PPE / Sanitising)
- What do to if a member gets COVID-19 Flow Chart
- Hosting AGMs and Committee Meetings

General FAQ enquiries should be directed to info@bowlsscotland.com and our National Development Officers are here to help:

Districts 1-10: Stuart Bell 07525 134385 / stuartbell@bowlsscotland.com

Districts 11-24: Daniel Baker 07821 118774 / danielbaker@bowlsscotland.com

Districts 25-32: Lawra Cox 07715 025736 / lawracox@bowlsscotland.com

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