

CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)



GENERAL PRINCIPLES - SAFE RETURN OF LIMITED SPECTATORS TO INDOOR SPORTS EVENTS

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DfC

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General Principles - Safe return of limited Spectators to Indoor Sports Events

The Potential Risks

- Spectators attending an indoor event should be advised to consider if they are putting themselves at higher risk because of their general state of health or any other risk factors.
- At indoor sporting venues the risk of transmission of the virus could be increased significantly for spectators for example:-
 - In congested areas or queues in confined spaces;
 - Through the touching of hard surfaces;
 - When sharing food or drink including utensils; and
 - In crowds where behaviour must be modified to limit the aerosol effect on potential for viral transmission by refraining from shouting, singing or dancing.
- Spectators should be reminded to allow time to enter a venue, refrain from any unnecessary movement around a venue, respect social distancing for other spectators and 'family bubbles' and be prepared to comply with the directions and protocols of the Governing Body, club or venue operator.
- Responsibility for the health and safety of spectators rests, in the first instance, with the event organiser.

The Venue

- All venues should be subject to a risk assessment prior to an organised sporting event or fixture being held.
- The social distancing requirement to be applied for now is 2 meters.
- A crowd management plan should be in place, incorporating the controlled entry and exit of spectators (including staggering entry times), and one-way systems inside the venue to maintain social distancing and minimise the risk of crowd congestion.
- Where possible ticketing/bookings systems should be in place, to assist with social distancing in for example seated venue. This approach will also help manage numbers ie predefined safe capacity.
- Additional hygiene provision, such as hand washing and sanitiser stations, should be in place and well stocked, particularly at entry and exit points to venues and other key points.
- Screens or barriers should be used to separate people from each other when social distancing cannot be maintained particularly at catering and retail outlets, including merchandising and programme sales points.
- Particular attention should be paid to movement in and out of venues, shared

walkways and toilet facilities etc. Signage and floor markings should be developed both inside and outside sports venues to enforce social distancing, and provide information on seating plans, one-way systems and queuing requirements.

- Spectator medical requirements should be considered along with the availability of a Covid isolation room(s).

Spectator Behaviour/Information

- Event organisers and venue operators should provide spectators with information on the arrangements in place to minimise the risk of COVID-19, including any modifications to the venue.
- Spectators must be aware of the new code of behaviour obliging them to take full responsibility for themselves and others by not attending if they have any symptoms or have potentially been exposed to someone with COVID-19.
- Spectators should be encouraged to travel as a family unit, avoid car sharing with those outside their family, be supported with alternative options to using public transport, eg through the provision of information on parking facilities, bike and walking routes.
- Recommending the wearing of masks should be strongly encouraged especially whilst in the event venue and other indoor areas ie toilets and in areas where congestion is likely to develop at certain times.
- Spectators should be made aware of the current Department of Health/Public Health Agency messaging on track and trace and the arrangements for covid testing.

<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/covid-19-coronavirus/testing-and-tracing-covid-19/contact-tracing>

- Attending and leaving a fixture/event will require personal and collective responsibility from all those present to avoid spreading the virus to those present at a fixture/event, the communities in the immediate vicinity of a venue and the wider community.

Stay Safe - Play Safe - Look Out For Each Other

Links to Further Information

- Department of Health Test Trace Protect Support Strategy - <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/Test-Trace-Protect-Support-Strategy.pdf>
- Sport NI Return to Sport Guidance - <http://www.sportni.net/return-to-sport/>
- The Sports Grounds Safety Authority has issued draft guidelines for sports grounds operators. These can be viewed at the following link - <https://sgsa.org.uk/planning-for-social-distancing-at-sports-grounds/>
- NI Business Info provides guidance for employers/venue owners to consider in terms of hospitality provision at the following link - <https://www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/node/23544>

Available in alternative formats