

BACK TO SQUASH

ADVICE FOR THE SAFE RETURN TO PLAY FOR CLUBS, VENUES AND COACHES



Advice for the safe return to play for Clubs, Venues and Coaches

Published: 16 July 2021

Version 1

IMPORTANT: Disclaimer

You must remain aware of the latest Government and Public Health England guidelines for your region/specific location. The latest guidance can be found on the following links (correct at time of publishing):

- UK Government Guidelines - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-covid-19>
- HSE Guidelines - <https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/coronavirus.htm>

Introduction

Following the UK Government's announcement that England is moving to step 4 of the roadmap from 19 July 2021, the game of squash is now permitted to be played with no limitations or additional health and safety measures in place. However, it has been stressed by the UK Government that the COVID-19 virus is still prevalent, and that all members of society are expected to play their part in keeping one another as safe as possible whilst returning to more typical daily activities. While legal requirements are being removed, employers and organisations will still have a legal duty to manage risks to those affected by their business, and are advised to maintain appropriate procedures (such as conducting risk assessments) and the recommendations laid out in this document.

Recent insight (from research conducted by England Squash) shows that a level of nervousness remains within the squash community, and that many people are uncertain about returning to indoor venues. Additionally, whilst many clubs have opened their doors again, some have reported fewer members playing, and a high percentage of coaches have reported that fewer people are attending their sessions. This tells us how important it is to give players the confidence that they can return to play safely at their club. Maintaining a degree of safety measures is likely to be a significant factor in building player confidence.

It remains the role of England Squash, alongside other sports governing bodies and Sport England, to ensure a safe and measured return to sport and leisure activity for all participants. Only with the support of the whole squash community, can we continue to provide a safe environment for squash to be enjoyed by anyone who wishes to deliver, play, or watch the sport.

The aim of this document is to provide recommendations and support to clubs, venues and coaches during the next phase of returning to play, with advice based on previous guidance and best practice. Each club has its own unique set of circumstances, and it is their responsibility to determine what they can do to make both returning and new players feel welcome, comfortable, and safe.

England Squash is committed to supporting clubs and the wider squash community throughout this period, so please get in touch if you have any questions, queries or requirements that we can help with.

England Squash has a nominated COVID-19 Officer, who you can email at enquiries@englandsquash.com – they will endeavour to answer your questions and concerns or highlight where you can find further information.

Previous versions of this document will become out-of-date from 19 July 2021, and should only be used for reference.

Definitions

Clubs – anywhere that squash is played in an organised manner, including all commercial, educational, rented, members clubs, and public facilities or venues, whether affiliated to England Squash or not.

Coaches – individuals that hold a valid England Squash coaching qualification, providing organised on-court activity including coaching, practice and training in group and/or individual sessions. **Note:** Coaches must only practice within what is allowed at their level of qualification at all times.

Members – squash players who pay a membership fee for access to a club.

Organised squash – for the purposes of this document, and in line with Government guidance, is any activity or event that is led or supervised by a qualified coach, qualified instructor, club official, or governing body, and follows measures including this COVID-secure guidance.

Spectators – Visitors attending the club/venue for the purposes of watching/observing/supporting others participate in squash activity. This may include parents, carers, and coaches, adults or juniors and must be included the total number of people within your club/venue.

Workforce/staff – all paid or unpaid personnel, including volunteers and third-party contractors who support the ongoing running of the club.

1. Recommendations for clubs and venues

There are no longer any restrictions on how to operate your facility or how you can deliver squash in your community. This means that your members can return to using the changing rooms, you can go back to your usual court booking schedule, and limits on numbers inside the building no longer apply. However, as you reopen clubs and courts and welcome your players back, please consider ways to give them confidence that they will be safe, whilst giving them every opportunity to play. Consider your own health and safety and that of your workforce at all times.

Aligned with [UK Government guidance](#), England Squash recommends the following:

a. Update your club's risk assessment

Update your club's risk assessment in line with the changes that you have made at your club, and the activities/interactions that all parties participate in, specific to your club's set of circumstances. It should still contain risks from COVID-19. (A template can be downloaded [here](#).)

b. Continue with hygiene protocols

During COVID-19, a number of enhanced hygiene protocols were put in place to reduce the risk of transmission, some of which continue to be good practice to keep a high standard of hygiene. Please consider continuing to implement these protocols, including:

- The 'do not wipe your hands on the walls' rule.
- Limit the number of people using changing room facilities at one time.
- A schedule to clean common touch points regularly.
- Asking members/visitors to wash their hands and/or use hand sanitiser on entry, exit, and in between games.

c. Provide adequate ventilation

In addition to hygiene measures, keep doors/windows open and use mechanical ventilation (where possible) to maintain a supply of fresh air to spaces where there are people present.

d. Continue to use the NHS Test & Trace programme

It is no longer a legal requirement for venues/facilities to use the NHS Test & Trace programme, or to capture information on visitors. However, it is recommended that clubs continue to display an [NHS Test & Trace QR code](#) whilst the scheme is in place. Clubs may decide whether they wish to ask visitors to continue to use this.

e. Consider whether members/spectators/workforce should wear a face covering in your facility

It is no longer a legal requirement for people to wear a face covering when inside public spaces. However, clubs where groups of different visitors mix in close proximity, and/or where there are limited ventilation options, are encouraged to continue to ask visitors to wear a face covering. This should not be extended to on court activity.

f. Re-emphasise that members/workforce must not come to the club if they have symptoms

Continue to communicate to your members/workforce that they must not attend the club if they show the symptoms of COVID-19.

g. Communicate the changes you are making

It remains important to continue to communicate any of the changes that you are making with anyone who is visiting the club, including what your expectations are of them. This will give them confidence that you are being pro-active in managing the situation and care for the health and safety of everyone involved.

Also consider how you can offer ways to play for people who are nervous of returning, which may include encouraging them to attend when the club is less busy, or hold smaller sessions for those players.

Train your staff/workforce in any of the changes that you implement.

h. Always keep up to date with UK Government guidelines

It is your responsibility to remain aware of the latest Government and Public Health England guidelines for your region/specific location. The latest guidance can be found on the [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) website.

2. Recommendations for coaches

The restrictions on how you operate and deliver squash have been lifted, meaning that you can return to delivering sessions in the way you did previously, with no limits on numbers that you can have on court. However, as you welcome your players back, please consider ways to give them confidence that they will be safe when taking part in organised activities. Consider your own health and safety and respect the rules of the club/venue at all times.

Aligned with [UK Government guidance](#), England Squash recommends the following:

a. Update your risk assessment

Update your risk assessment in line with the changes that you have made to how you deliver squash, and the activities/interactions that all parties participate in, specific to your set of circumstances. It should still contain risks from COVID-19. (A template can be downloaded [here](#).)

b. Continue with hygiene protocols

During COVID-19, a number of enhanced hygiene protocols were put in place to reduce the risk of transmission before, during and in between coaching sessions, some of which continue to be good practice to keep a high standard of hygiene. Please consider continuing to implement these protocols, including:

- Asking players to wash their hands and/or use hand sanitiser on entry, exit, and in between sessions.
- Cleaning or quarantining shared equipment in between sessions where possible.
- Contact surfaces are cleaned and court ventilated where possible.

c. Re-engage with England Squash's participation programmes

Provide social, group activities using participation our programmes such as Squash 101, Squash Girls Can, Squash 57, and Junior 101 to re-engage less frequent players and attract new ones. Each programme includes session plans, marketing materials and how-to guides to support you which are available via the England Squash app.

d. Ask your players if they have concerns and put necessary safety measures in place

Give your players the opportunity to tell you of any concerns that they might have which might stop them from joining your session(s). For example, if player(s) feel more comfortable that you wear a face covering then you should consider whether that is something that you would do to encourage them to attend more of your sessions. Ultimately it is your decision as to what measures you will retain to give your players confidence in returning to squash.

e. Communicate the changes you are making

It remains important to continue to communicate any of the changes that you are making with anyone who is visiting the club, including what your expectations are of them. This will give them confidence that you are being pro-active in managing the situation and care for the health and safety of everyone involved.

Also consider how you can offer ways to play for people who are nervous of returning, which may include encouraging them to attend when the club is less busy.

f. Always keep up to date with UK Government guidelines

It is your responsibility to remain aware of the latest Government and Public Health England guidelines for your region/specific location. The latest guidance can be found on the [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) website.

Note: coaches may only practice what is allowed at their level of qualification at all times. Level 1 Coaches are, and remain, unqualified to deliver one-to-one coaching.