

**COMMUNITY RUGBY LEAGUE**

**COVID-19 »»  
RETURN  
TO PLAY**

**JUNE 2020**



**The priority of the Rugby Football League (RFL) is the Health and Wellbeing of our participants and the general safety of the wider community during the COVID-19 Pandemic.**

This COVID-19 Return To Play Plan should be read in conjunction with the following guidance;

- **DCMS accessed [here](#)**
- **Sport England accessed [here](#)**
- **RFL accessed [here](#)**

We will continue to be led by the latest Government advice and progress through the steps will only take place when Government guidance permits.

It is not therefore possible to date when there will be progression through each of the four steps outlined in the plan. As progression is intrinsically linked to Government Alert Levels there remains a possibility we could go backwards as well as forwards through each stage.

# CORONAVIRUS GOVERNMENT ALERT LEVELS IN ENGLAND

Risk of healthcare services being overwhelmed

5

Lockdown begins

Transmission is high or rising exponentially

4

Social distancing continues

Virus is in general circulation

3

Gradual relaxation of restrictions

Number of cases and transmission is low

2

Minimal social distancing, enhanced tracing

COVID-19 is no longer present in UK

1

Routine international monitoring

## THIS IS THE RFL RETURN TO PLAY (RTP) STAGED APPROACH TO RUGBY LEAGUE IN ENGLAND, USING THE GOVERNMENT ALERT LEVELS AS A GUIDANCE

5	Home-based virtual activity undertaken by an individual or household. Can be part of wider team or group activity delivered through web-based platforms. A focus on mental as well as physical wellbeing.	RFL RTP STAGE 1
4 3	Includes social distance fitness and skill activity evolving from small group activity into team based sessions.	RFL RTP STAGE 2
3 2	Possible introduction of social variants - Touch RL, Tag RL, X League. Possibility of no social distancing regulations but no contact sport countered by rule changes to minimise risk. Partial return of low risk age groups to full contact.	RFL RTP STAGE 3
2 1	Return to full contact Rugby League.	RFL RTP STAGE 4

THERE MUST BE ADHERENCE WITH ALL RELEVANT GOVERNMENT GUIDANCE AT EACH STAGE.

**5**  
GOVERNMENT  
ALERT

**LOCKDOWN, SOCIAL DISTANCING, NO ORGANISED COMMUNITY RUGBY LEAGUE, INDIVIDUAL OR FAMILY GROUP ACTIVITY ONLY.**

**RFL RTP  
STAGE**

**1**

**ACTIVE & ENGAGED**

- ENSURING ALL MEMBERS OF THE RUGBY FOOTBALL COMMUNITY ARE ABLE TO REMAIN ACTIVE AND ENGAGED.
- HOME SETTING OR THROUGH BEING ABLE TO EXERCISE LOCALLY, INDIVIDUALLY OR WITH PEOPLE FROM SAME HOUSEHOLD.

**PHYSICAL & MENTAL WELLBEING**

- INITIAL FOCUS ON BOTH PHYSICAL AND MENTAL WELLBEING

**VIRTUAL RL**

- PROGRESSION FROM INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITY TO VIRTUAL CLUBS ACTIVITY.
- USE OF WEB-BASED PLATFORMS.

**4 & 3**  
GOVERNMENT  
ALERT

**SOCIAL DISTANCING CONTINUES.  
NON-CONTACT GROUP ACTIVITY.**

**RFL RTP  
STAGE**

**2**

**VIRTUAL RL/SMALL GROUP BASED ACTIVITY**

- COMBINATION OF STAGE 1 HOMEBASED VIRTUAL ACTIVITY AND SMALL GROUP FITNESS AND SKILL SESSIONS.
- NON-CONTACT WITH SOCIAL DISTANCING MEASURES IN PLACE.

**SMALL GROUP TO TEAM ACTIVITY**

- PROGRESSION FROM SMALL GROUPS TO TEAM-BASED FITNESS AND SKILLS SESSIONS.
- REMAINING NON-CONTACT WITH SOCIAL DISTANCING MEASURES IN PLACE.

**ACTIVITY FOR ALL**

CONSIDER CONTINUING WITH SOME HOME-BASED VIRTUAL ACTIVITY THROUGHOUT STAGE 2 IF SOME PLAYERS UNABLE TO TAKE PART IN SMALL GROUP OR TEAM-BASED FITNESS AND SKILLS ACTIVITIES.

**3 & 2**  
GOVERNMENT  
ALERT

**GRADUAL RELAXATION OF RESTRICTIONS. MINIMAL SOCIAL DISTANCING. ENHANCED TRACING.**

**RFL RTP  
STAGE**

**3**

**SOCIAL RL**

- SOCIAL DISTANCING CRITERIA IS REDUCED,
- TOUCH OR TAG RL PROGRESSING TO X-LEAGUE SEMI-CONTACT WITH RULE ADAPTIONS TO MINIMISE RISK.

**CONTACT SPORT RESTRICTION**

- SOCIAL DISTANCING REMOVED BUT FULL CONTACT SPORT STILL RESTRICTED.
- LEAGUE AND COMPETITION BASED ACTIVITY STILL PREVENTED.

**CLUB BASED ACTIVITY**

- INTRA CLUB BASED ACTIVITY ONLY.
- SOCIAL RL.
- SMALL SIDED VERSION OF GAME.
- LIMITED CONTACT TRAINING.

**2 & 1**  
GOVERNMENT  
ALERT

**MINIMAL SOCIAL DISTANCING. ROUTINE MONITORING.**

**RFL RTP  
STAGE**

**4**

**PHASED RETURN**

- PHASED RETURN IF THERE IS STILL A PERCEIVED RISK.
- LOCALISED COMPETITIONS ALLOWED.
- PHASED RETURN OF AGE GROUPS DEPENDING ON RISK.

**ADAPTION OF RULES**

- TEMPORARY RULE CHANGES TO REDUCE FACE TO FACE CONTACT TIME.
- INCLUDING REMOVAL OF SCRUMS AND INCREASED USE OF PLAY-THE-BALL RESTARTS.

**RETURN TO  
FULL COMPETITION**

# MINIMISING THE RISK

Individuals must **NOT** attend any Rugby League facility at any stage if in the past 14 days if they:

- Have been unwell or experienced cold and flu like symptoms.
- Have been in contact with a known or suspected case of COVID-19.
- Have experienced respiratory symptoms (even mild).
- Are considered high risk, including the elderly and those with pre-existing medical conditions.

Contact details for all people entering a Rugby League facility must be recorded.

# CLEANING AND HYGIENE

All individuals and clubs must:

- Regularly clean and disinfect surfaces and equipment, before and after every training session.
- Ensure that the use of communal facilities such as stands/patios and toilets is limited.
- Wash hands thoroughly and often, with soap and water or an alcohol based sanitiser. Allow for participants to wash hands before and after training sessions .
- Establish a regular monitoring and cleaning routine for essential communal areas such as public toilets.
- Be mindful when sneezing or coughing; cover with your elbow or tissue and turn away from others.
- Display prominent signage at the venue specifically related to Personal Hygiene and Transmission; Cold and Flu Symptoms and Social Distancing.  
These can be downloaded [here](#).

# SAFEGUARDING

The following areas should be taken into consideration for all Under 18s and Vulnerable Adults and applies to all those working with children in the sport:

- Must continue to comply with RFL Safeguarding Policies and Procedures. [Click here](#).
- Consent must be gained from parents/carers.
- Consideration of the psychological impact that this may have had on children and how coaches/clubs will connect with players before starting back. Outlining what will happen during any activity and provide them with a sense of safety.
- Ensure dialogue with children and young people to make sure they are comfortable and happy to return to Rugby League training.
- Parents/carers should ensure that they are in sight of the session.
- Parents/carers are responsible for the supervising of their children at all times and to reinforce the guidelines for social distancing including themselves.

The RFL are working on additional guidance for Club Welfare Officers and this will be shared as soon as possible with all CWOs.

