

COVID-19: GUIDANCE SHORT MAT BOWLS CLUBS

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INTRODUCTION

Based on the roadmap Welsh Government have announced, Wales will move to Alert Level 2 from **Monday 27th December**. (Wales Coronavirus Control Plan - <https://gov.wales/coronavirus-control-plans>).

Any form of play within clubs will be subject to social-distancing and clubs must be confident they can implement appropriate safety measures and risk assessments. This is to ensure that they can comply and protect their staff, volunteers and members.

This guidance supplements the Welsh Government regulations and directives by covering situations specific to the sport of bowls. It is a live document and will be updated as Welsh Government advice changes.

BowlsWales and WSMBA are seeking to support those clubs that wish to reopen and members who would like to play, and to do so safely in accordance with the guidance set out by the Welsh Government.

All clubs who wish to return to the green play at their own risk using this as guidance and to follow the Welsh Government restrictions. Clubs can decide individually whether they wish to reopen having considered the Welsh Government advice and the risk assessment of their facilities.

This guidance is not a 'one size fits all' approach, and any guidance or recommendations made in this document will vary dependent on each club. However, the responsibility for the reopening of bowling facilities rests solely with each club and this advice and guidance seeks to guide and support clubs through this process.

We appreciate bowling facilities vary across Wales and as such individual clubs should risk assess appropriately to ensure these procedures can be implemented. Key elements are needed to be considered and assessed to ensure the safety of the clubs and its members.

This guidance document contains the following Sections and applies only to Short mat bowling clubs in Wales that wish to re-open:

1. Clubs – Summary of Recommended Action
2. Players – Summary of Recommended Action
3. Frequently Asked Questions
4. Additional Information

All matches and use of the club is the legal obligation of the organiser including the club, COVID officer and attendees.

If you have any questions, please e-mail: enquiries@bowlswales.com or WSMBA Secretary on hwynjones@aol.com. We are here to help, and we will endeavour to respond.

We hope you all stay both safe and healthy and that we can overcome these challenging times by supporting each other where we can. The coming weeks and months may also provide an opportunity for you to encourage members of your own household, who currently don't play, to give bowls a try – **clubs are reminded to ensure that any activity by non-members is in accordance with their insurers.**

Clubs – Recommended Actions

All clubs must follow the guidance below (the guidance may be adapted if necessary, for your club, as long as it remains consistent with Welsh Government regulations and social distancing requirements):

Play arrangements

Risk Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please find the link to an example template – BowlsWales and WSMBA Risk Assessment • In addition, other risk assessment templates can be found online. • contacting facility provider/landlords to collaborate on risk assessments
Off-site booking system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For mat allocation (E.g., Google Calendar)
Test, Trace & Protect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clubs are advised to follow Welsh Government Test, Trace & Protect guidance. This enables the clubs to track who is using the facilities if they show symptoms following the activity. You should hold records for 21 days from the date of each separate visit that a staff member, customer or visitor made. • Link here - https://gov.wales/keeping-records-staff-customers-and-visitors-test-trace-protect
COVID-19 officer role description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clubs should appoint a COVID officer to oversee the contact details of participants during training/competitions for Test, Trace & Protect. • Clubs can use a budding system with local clubs to share the use of COVID officer – Must ensure that all process and procedures specific to that club is detailed and outlined • Clubs can find COVID-19 officer role description here https://bowls-wales.com/covid-19/
COVID-19 Club Checklist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support here – BowlsWales and WSMBA COVID Checklist
COVID-19 Club Officer training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training is available through the Welsh Sport Association and can be found on BowlsWales website here https://bowls-wales.com/covid-19/
Travel Arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Club's must ensure to follow current Welsh Government regulations • Traveling with another household is not recommended but if it is required, social distancing must be followed and face masks must be worn.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://gov.wales/travelling-safely-during-coronavirus-pandemic-guidance-public-html
Time slots	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum of 20 minutes between allocated slots to enable players to arrive/depart safely
Number of people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of people allowed on each rink is governed by current Welsh Government guidance and restrictions on adhering to social distancing • A maximum of 30 people can take part in indoor organised activity • Under 11's do not count towards this rule • https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-02/coronavirus-control-plan-alert-levels-in-wales-coming-out-of-lockdown.pdf
Mat use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At any one time the number of mats in use is governed by current Welsh Government guidance and restrictions on adhering to social distancing • Each mat is treated as a separate entity and can have a maximum of 8 people per rink. The total number on the green must not exceed 30 • It is recommended to ensure there is plenty of space between mats in use and ensure that social distancing is followed. All games are to be kept separate to avoid gatherings • Players must stay within their own mat and leave immediately after playing. Do not mix with other mats during and after play. • https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-02/coronavirus-control-plan-alert-levels-in-wales-coming-out-of-lockdown.pdf
Spectators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spectators are not permitted
Personal belongings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be kept to a minimum or if possible, left in the car

Playing Formats

The following playing formats are in accordance with Welsh Government guidelines and are recommended by Bowls Wales and WSMBA:

The key areas to factor in are:-

- Social distancing must be maintained
- Implementation of robust hygiene procedures for all equipment used and player's personal care.

In line with Welsh Government regulations on indoor gatherings, a maximum of 30 people are allowed within the facility at any one time. The following rules must be enforced:

- Maximum 30 people in the facility at any one time
- All Mats must be used to ensure an appreciate distance between each to enforce the social distance rule
- Social distancing to be adhered to at all time prior, during and after play
- Face masks must be worn when not engaged in playing
- Players must stay within their own mat and leave immediately after playing. Do not mix with other mats during and after play.

To ensure that social distancing is complied with it is advised that you should only play singles, pairs and triples for clubs with the appropriate space: -

Singles Play

With the dimensions of the mat and how the game is played this is the safest format to be played as distance between players can be easily maintained, across all mats.

Pairs Play

Again, the dimensions of the mat will allow 2 players at each end to have ample space between each other and those players on adjoining mat.

Triples Play

To enable Triples to be played more safely, Clubs should consider a policy of not going onto the mat to discuss the head this will create more space for players on either side and behind the Mat if space allows.

- If you can ensure that 6 players can maintain social distancing at each end of the mat, then a standard game can take place.

For those Clubs who do not have a stand off area at the end of the mat they MUST ensure they have ample space at either side of the Mat.

Clubhouse and Facilities

<p>Entrance & Exit</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure safety of members when entering and exit for the start of new sessions, use one door for entry and another for exit. If this is not possible, ensure there is markers outside and inside to inform members to maintain social distance • Members or participants are discouraged from congregating once session has finished • Club to ensure there is appropriate time slots between sessions to avoid members entering and exiting at the same time.
<p>Club Signage</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure there is appropriate signage to mark how the members can enter and exit the green safely. • Ensure that there is appropriate signage on display for members for to enforce guidelines and inform members not to enter if they appear to show any symptoms.
<p>Changing Facilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changing facilities can be used, ensuring social distancing and a one way system is in place. • It is recommended that members to come dressed ready to play with their bowls and shoes in a bag to avoid gatherings or congregating
<p>Toilet Facilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toilets can be used but ensure that there is an appropriate system of one in one out, maintaining social distancing at all times. • Regular cleaning of the toilets should be undertaken and signage for to encourage hand hygiene

<p>Hygiene & Cleaning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Club to provide hand hygiene stations at the entrance, exit and around the building. • If club cannot provide hand hygiene station, members are informed to bring their own hand sanitiser • Club to enforce a cleaning schedule of the facility pre and post opening, including throughout the use of the facility.
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Ventilation

Welsh Government state the latest science on microdroplet spread may mean exercise in an indoor, non-air ventilated area may carry more risk. Air-conditioned rooms are not particularly effective. The guidance from the Government is that ventilation is an important part of mitigating against the transmission of COVID-19. Ventilation into the building should ensure a fresh air supply is provided to all areas of use. You can do this by ensuring that windows and doors where appropriate are kept open to create air flow is effective at clearing microdroplet airborne particles

Equipment (This will vary according to the code of the game)

To minimise the risk of infection, only essential items (as below) should be utilised during any session and where possible use your own equipment from home:

- Mat (Minimal people to use and ensure that sanitised and cleaned before and after every use)
- Bowls
- Jack (Minimal people to use and ensure that sanitised and cleaned before and after every use)
- Rink Markers
- Gloves (if preferred)
- Scorecards (these should be retained by one person only if required)
- Bowling arm/lifter (for use by one person only if required)
- Visually Impaired players using "strings" on the rink for play require to use sanitising wipes at the completion of each end
- Bowling aids (for players with a disability if required)

All equipment should be cleaned and sanitised before and after use.

- If scoring:
 - Social distancing rules must always be strictly adhered to at all times
 - Do not touch your opponents' bowls with your hands
 - Avoid measuring for shot/s but if this is necessary shot bowls should be indicated by pointing at them and not turning them out

1. Players – Summary of Recommended Actions

It is recommended that all players follow the guidance below (the guidance may be adapted if necessary, to meet individual needs, so long as it remains compliant with Welsh Government advice and social distancing requirements):

In advance

- Do not go to the club if you are experiencing any coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms;
 - or any cold or flu-like symptoms
 - a new continuous cough
 - a high temperature
 - a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste
 - Use the NHS 111 website or helpline and seek advice. For your own protection, follow the advice about self-isolation if you are, or are living with, someone in one of the vulnerable groups
- All players, officials, volunteers and spectators must undergo a self-assessment for any COVID-19 symptoms. No-one should leave home to participate in sport if they, or someone they live with, is **symptomatic** - or suspects they may have been exposed to the virus. They should immediately self-isolate. See Welsh Government guidelines here - <https://gov.wales/self-isolation-stay-home-guidance-households-possible-coronavirus>
- Dress appropriately before you get to the club to avoid the need to change clothes – change shoes immediately before and after your game
- Travelling with another household is not recommended but if it is required, social distancing must be followed and face masks must be worn. Do not arrive more than 10 minutes before your allocated booking time.

Personal care

- All players, staff, volunteers & coaches must wear a face covering when attending the indoor facility
- Clean anything you have touched after use

- Take any food or drink you might need with you and take any rubbish home to be suitably disposed
- Wash or sanitise your hands and sanitise any equipment (including bowls, jacks and mats) you use before and after you play – do not assume that the person before you have sanitised the equipment thoroughly
- Sanitise gates, padlocks, keys and door handles before and after use

Clubs are required:

- Carry out an extensive Risk assessment in line with the Clubs Landlord/Local authority/council/facility owner before play can resume. You can find a Risk assessment template here. <https://bowlswales.com/covid-19/>
- To communicate all guidance to all members, staff, volunteers and committees.
- Ensure that all members accept the guidance prior to booking to ensure that all members are adhering to the guidelines for their safety
- Ensure that signages on Clubs key messages and guidance are on display for what is expected by members

2. Frequently Asked Questions

What games can we play?

All activity should be consistent with the Welsh Government guidance regarding health, social distancing and hygiene. That means that participants and others can maintain a safe two metre distance, that good hygiene practices are in place, that equipment is disinfected regularly, and that anyone who is symptomatic or suspects they have been exposed to the virus does not take part and remains at home.

What about competitions within our club?

Any measures clubs can put in place to enable an activity to return needs to be capable of being adapted to follow Welsh Government guidelines on social distancing e.g. strengthening or relaxing measures at short notice. Organisations are encouraged to think creatively about how best to make their sport or activity possible within the guidelines.

The limit on gatherings for organised sport of a maximum of 30 people for organised indoor activity. There is a primary focus of bowling activity at this time for physical and mental well-being. All clubs must ensure that the current Welsh Government regulations and social distancing measures are followed at all times.

Can clinically vulnerable people (such as people aged 70 and over) participate in indoor bowls?

Those who are shielding can continue to leave home to exercise or meet outside with people from another household.

You should strictly follow physical distancing (2 metres or 3 steps away from another person) and you should practice good hygiene using a hand sanitiser and avoiding touching things touched by others.

Full details at: <https://gov.wales/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-people-defined-on-medical-grounds-as-extremely-vulnerable-from-coronavirus-covid-19-html>

What if I appear to show virus symptoms following playing?

Should anyone who attended the club subsequently discover they have any virus symptoms they should immediately inform the club secretary. The designated officer for Track and Trace should be informed and ensure that the correct process of Welsh Government Test, Trace , Protect guidance is followed, link here - <https://gov.wales/test-trace-protect>

Can we open the club bar and kitchen?

Bars and restaurants, including any food or drink facilities inside a clubhouse can reopen inline with Welsh Government regulations from Monday 17th May. The reopening of facilities must follow Government guidance at all times. A takeaway service can be implemented but ensuring that all club protocols are followed for collection.

Can we use the club toilets?

Yes – toilets and throughways may be kept open, but guidance on hygiene should be followed, with a one in one out approach.

Can we use the changing rooms?

Yes – all indoor facilities including changing rooms can be used providing social distancing is followed and a one way system is in place to avoid gatherings or mixing.

Can we share equipment?

Where possible we recommend that you do not share equipment, for example you should use your own bowls. mats and jack should only be handled by one player. It is a decision for clubs/facility managers whether they loan/hire out bowls. If you do, we expect you to follow sensible precautions and clean in between users, as well as the safely working guidance.

How can we book a mat without visiting the club?

Clubs are encouraged to utilise an off-site booking system for rink allocation – this could be offline (e.g. diary managed by allocated club members) or online (e.g. Google Calendar).

How do we ensure that the mats and jacks are clean?

Guidance currently states that cleaning protocols should be put in place to limit coronavirus transmission in public places. It is advised that touch points (e.g. handrails and gates) should be particular areas of focus for increased cleaning. Frequent cleaning of equipment between uses and any work areas used, using your usual cleaning products, is advised.

Can we allocate someone to 'manage' sessions/attendance in addition to those who are playing?

Yes – clubs may consider the use of 'staff' if they consider this will enable them to reopen safely as part of their risk assessment.

Do we need to wear a mask or face covering?

The Welsh Government guidance states that face coverings must be worn indoors by everyone over the age of 11 when not engaged in a physical activity (e.g. when waiting for a class to start, when watching on side-lines), unless they have an exemption. It is not recommended that face coverings be worn during any physical activity. The World Health Organisation advises against wearing a face covering when exercising as sweat can make a face covering become wet more quickly, making it difficult to breathe and promoting the growth of microorganisms. It advises the important preventative measure during exercise is to maintain physical distance from others.

Therefore, all bowls players, coaches, volunteers and staff are required to wear a face covering when not playing e.g. walking in and around the stadium. Face coverings do not need to be worn when playing bowls. Further FAQ's can be found in the additional information below.

If club committees decide, they can still ask member to wear masks on the green if that is club policy.

<https://gov.wales/sport-recreation-and-leisure-guidance-phased-return-html#section-58679>

Has BowlsWales produced a poster that we can put up at our club?

Yes – A COVID-19 Safety Information Poster for Clubs for Indoor Bowls has been designed. To download the poster, visit: <https://bowlswales.com/covid-19/>

3. Additional Information

Further guidance is available as below:

Sport Wales

<https://www.sport.wales/>

Welsh Government

<https://gov.wales/topic/980/latest>

<https://gov.wales/sport-recreation-and-leisure-guidance-phased-return-html#section-46491>

<https://gov.wales/coronavirus-regulations-guidance#section-46351>

<https://gov.wales/face-coverings-frequently-asked-questions>

Press release:

<https://gov.wales/stay-local-to-keep-wales-safe>

Guidance:

Guidance published at <https://gov.wales/guidance-changes-coronavirus-regulations-1-june> and <https://llyw.cymru/canllawiau-ar-newidiadau-i-reoliadaur-coronafeirws-o-1-mehefin>

Q&A:

Published at <https://gov.wales/changes-coronavirus-regulations-1-june-frequently-asked-questions> and in English also at <https://llyw.cymru/newidiadau-i-reoliadaur-coronafeirws-ar-1-mehefin-cwestiynau-cyffredin> until Welsh translation arrives.

WSA

<https://wsa.wales/our-services/sports-advocacy-and-policy/covid-19-support/>

Thank you