

# Badminton England Return To Play Update

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## Introduction

I am delighted that the Government's announcement to move to Step 3 of its roadmap out of the current lockdown, means a major step forward for badminton and the badminton community in England. For the first time in more than a year, the nation is now able to get back on court and we can celebrate the whole badminton community can get back to playing.

Throughout the pandemic, we have remained close to colleagues in Government, particularly at the various stages of lockdowns being eased, and as a result of that work, particularly in recent weeks, organised indoor sport has achieved an exemption from the rule of six which means more people can return to play, club nights can return with more players, we can start to host competitions and coaches can return to supporting more players.

Alongside our collaboration with Government, the part the badminton community has played can never been underestimated. Your adherence to all measures faced to date, your response to previous restarts and recognising the importance of following guidance when may have been able to restart previously, has been fantastic, so a huge thank you to you all.

We will update our return to play guidance on our website as more detail becomes available to help our clubs, counties, coaches, volunteers and players get back on court safely. Currently, we are working closely with facility providers to understand availability and to access courts as quickly as possible.

To help you return safely and provide reassurance to facilities operating strict capacity limits, we have specified group sizes of up to 16 players from Step 3. We very much hope this will allow the majority of clubs and players to return, with the anticipation that restrictions might be eased further at Step 4.

I have no doubt that there will remain many challenges – some of you will, unfortunately, find that your venues are not ready to reopen. We remain in constant dialogue with facility operators and are doing everything we can to encourage more public school and leisure facilities to reopen.

We also expect some of you may be anxious about returning after such a long period of time and that some clubs and groups may take time to return to full strength. Please be reassured that whatever your circumstances, we are here to help with guidance, tools, resources and support to get you back on court as soon as you are able or ready to. We will continue to release updated resources and guidance documents at our return to play hub on [www.badmintonengland.co.uk](http://www.badmintonengland.co.uk) or you can contact us directly via our [contact form](#).

This has been an incredibly difficult year in so many ways, but as the roll out of the vaccination programme continues, I want to say another huge thank you to the wonderful badminton community for your incredible support over the past year and for everything you have all done to keep our players engaged - from trying to get shuttles into mugs to playing outdoors and from playing safely when you have had the chance to get back on court to simply making sure that all your members, players, volunteers, officials and coaches are safe and healthy.

As we move into a very busy Olympic and Paralympic period, we will be helping you to celebrate badminton's return, provide opportunities to play and, crucially, raise the profile of the sport and help local clubs and coaches to do the same and maximise the opportunities the summer's big events provide. I look forward to a successful summer in Tokyo but an equally successful return for the thousands of clubs and hundreds of thousands of players up and down the country.

Adrian Christy  
Chief Executive

# Roadmap

Step 1  
8 March



- Schools reopen
- **Curricular and extracurricular/out of school hours delivery** of badminton in schools permitted – schools have final decision on what is permitted – see Government guidance
- **Disabled people** – organised group play permitted indoors and outdoors
- **Pathway players** – socially distanced training for pathway players at recognised elite training venues

Step 1  
29 March



- Rule of 6 or two households applies outdoors; organised outdoors sport permitted
- **Recreational (self-organised) outdoor badminton** – permitted with maximum 6 players or two households
- **Organised (by club/coach) outdoor badminton sessions** – permitted; group size of 15 (coach to player ratio 1:15)
- **1-1 coaching** – permitted for adults and juniors (coaches permitted to coach a household); no limit on number of clients in a day

Step 2  
12 April



- Indoor leisure centres permitted to reopen; adult activity permitted for individuals or household only; Young people activity permitted (Under 18s – includes those 17 on 31/8/20 who have turned 18 since)
- **Adults** – household only singles or doubles permitted
- **Young people** – junior clubs/organised sessions/coached sessions – all permitted with a maximum group size of 1 coach to 15 players. More than one group permitted based on social distancing being adhered to.
- **1-1 coaching** – permitted for adults and juniors (coaches permitted to coach a household); no limit on number of clients in a day
- **Tournaments** – localised junior tournaments permitted

Step 3  
17 May



- Rule of 6 or two households indoors; domestic travel and overnight stays permitted; gatherings of up to 30 permitted outdoors
- **Organised badminton** – singles and doubles permitted; maximum group size 16 for clubs/No Strings Badminton/organised sessions/coached sessions (30 outdoors)
- **Recreational activity** – singles and doubles permitted – rule of 6/two households indoors (30 outdoors)
- **Tournaments** – junior circuit tournaments permitted
- **Coach education** – courses to resume

Step 4  
21 June



- At least five weeks after Step 3, no earlier than 21 June
- No legal limits on social contact
- **Play** – all play permitted
- **Tournaments** – all tournaments permitted
- **Coach education** – courses permitted with no restrictions



## Badminton Activity – Covid-19 Local Restrictions

### Step 3 – Permitted badminton activity from 17th May

Activity Type	Outdoor	Indoor
<b>Social Play*</b>	<b>✓ Permitted</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Singles &amp; doubles</li> <li>Maximum group size of 30</li> </ul>	<b>✓ Permitted</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Singles &amp; doubles</li> <li>Rule of 6 or two households</li> </ul>
<b>Organised group activity**</b>	<b>✓ Permitted</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Singles &amp; doubles</li> <li>Maximum group size 30; more than one group permitted</li> <li>Group coaching permitted (coach to player ratio 1:15)</li> </ul>	<b>✓ Permitted</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Singles &amp; doubles</li> <li>Maximum group size size 16; more than one group permitted</li> <li>Group coaching permitted (coach to player ratio 1:15)</li> </ul>
<b>1:1 Coaching</b>	<b>✓ Permitted</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adults &amp; juniors; no limit on number of clients in a day</li> </ul>	<b>✓ Permitted</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adults &amp; juniors; no limit on number of clients in a day</li> </ul>
<b>Competition</b>	<b>✓ Permitted</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In line with maximum group sizes</li> </ul>	<b>✓ Permitted</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In line with maximum group sizes</li> </ul>
<b>Spectating &amp; Supervising</b>	<b>✓ Spectating permitted</b> ✓ Must adhere to social distancing rules and social gathering limits (30 outdoors; six people/two households indoors); you may have more than one group of spectators but number must be aligned with maximum venue capacity	
<b>Travel</b>	<b>✓ Permitted for sport and exercise (not restricted to local area)</b> • Travel to play badminton permitted; car sharing and overnight stays permitted in line with Government guidance	
<b>Social distancing / masks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social distancing must be observed before and after play – group socialising before and after play limited to group of 30</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social distancing must be observed before and after play – group socialising before and after play limited to group of six/two households</li> <li>Masks to be worn when not participating in badminton activity</li> </ul>

\*Social play is defined as activity that is informal and self-organised

\*\*Organised group activity is defined as activity formally organised by a qualified instructor, club, national governing body, company, or charity



## Let's Talk Badminton

We are also really keen to hear from you and to make sure that we are supporting the badminton community as best as possible. To do this, we are launching 'Let's Talk Badminton', our largest ever consultation exercise. This comprises a series of online consultations, player surveys and drop-in sessions that will allow everyone involved in badminton to help shape the return to play and come back stronger than ever. Click [here](#) to get involved.

## Before playing

Ensure all participants and attendees (including players, officials, organisers, volunteers and spectators) are aware of COVID-19 symptoms and the need to self-assess before attending every sporting activity.

- Ensure all participants and attended (including players, officials, organisers, volunteers and spectators) are aware of COVID-19 symptoms and the need to self-assess before attending every sporting activity.
- Keep up to date with [Government guidance](#) on social distancing and gathering sizes.
- Any participant or other attendee reporting symptoms does not attend and is directed to follow NHS and PHE guidance on self-isolation.
- Ensure participants are aware of any increased risk associated with taking part in sporting activity.
- Participants are strongly advised to comply with public health restrictions and avoid high-risk behaviour outside the sports setting to reduce the risk to their fellow participants when they do attend.
- Participants continue to adhere to legal gathering limits before and after sporting activities, act responsibly and limit transmission risk wherever possible.
- Good hand hygiene is essential – wash your hands regularly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds – you should wash your hands before leaving to play and on your return to home.

## Venue

- It is the responsibility of each user (individual, coach, club, group) to understand the specific requirements of the venue you are using.
- **[Updated]** Venues are required to operate a maximum capacity of 100 sq ft per person. Our guidance takes this into account for playing badminton. However, you should check the capacity with the venue and, if you allow spectators to attend, they count towards and must meet the capacity requirements.
- You must follow the venue's guidance to maintain social distancing on entering and leaving the venue and whilst moving around it.
- **[Updated]** You do not need to wear a face covering while playing, but you should wear a face covering at all other times. Coaches are not required to wear face coverings while present in a work or volunteering capacity.
- **[Updated]** Although changing rooms are permitted to open in Step 3, we recommend that you avoid or minimise use by arriving changed and ready to play. Shower at home and do not use the venue's changing area.

## Social Interaction

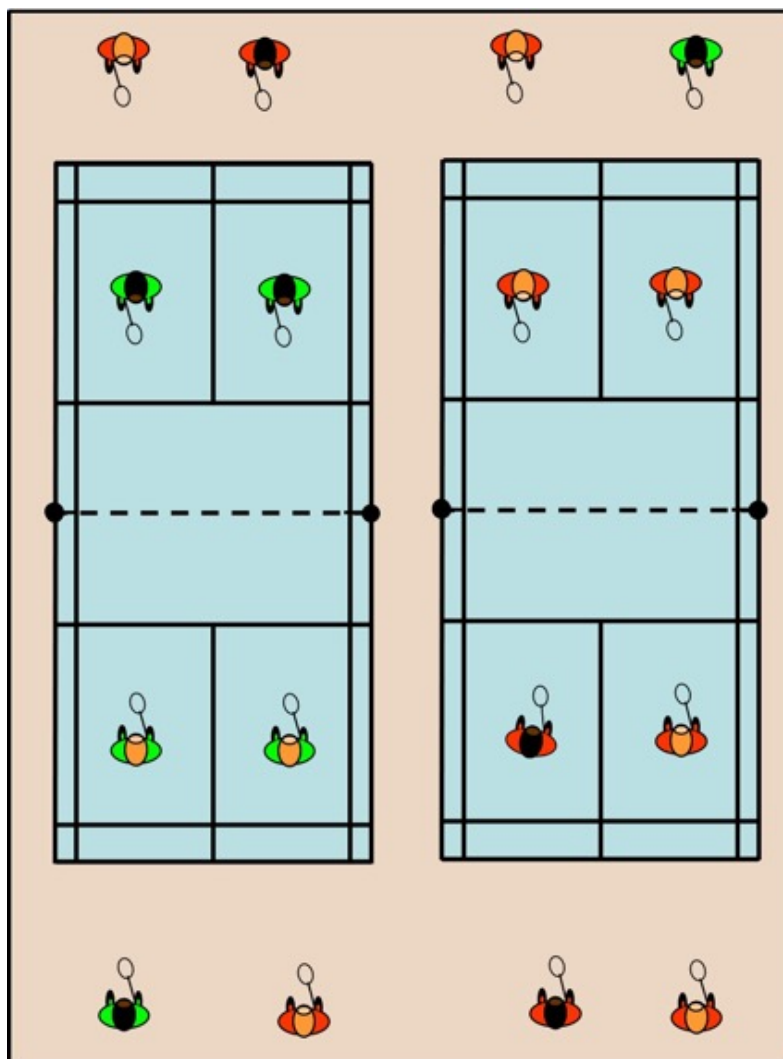
- **[Updated]** Social interaction before and after playing is allowed in line with permitted gathering sizes – 30 outdoors; six or two households indoors.
- Limit the time spent congregating at a venue before and after sporting activity. This could involve having strict meeting times or staggering start times, and advising participants to arrive in kit and ready to warm-up.
- Ensure that participants maintain social distancing throughout warm-ups and when not on court.

## [Updated] Group sizes

Maximum groups are as follows:

- Outdoor badminton – 30.
- Indoor organised badminton\* - 16.
  - Adult club/group sessions can operate in groups of up to 16.
  - Coached activity/junior club/group sessions must operate on a ratio of up to 1 coach: 15 players.
  - Competition - 16.
- Indoor social play – 6 or two households.
- Subject to the available space and being able to maintain social distancing, you can operate more than one group in a venue.
- For ease of management, we recommend operating a ratio of 8 people per court but this is subject to your ability to manage social distancing and overall venue capacity.

\* Organised group activity is defined as activity formally organised by a qualified instructor, club, national governing body, company, or charity.



## Organising your session

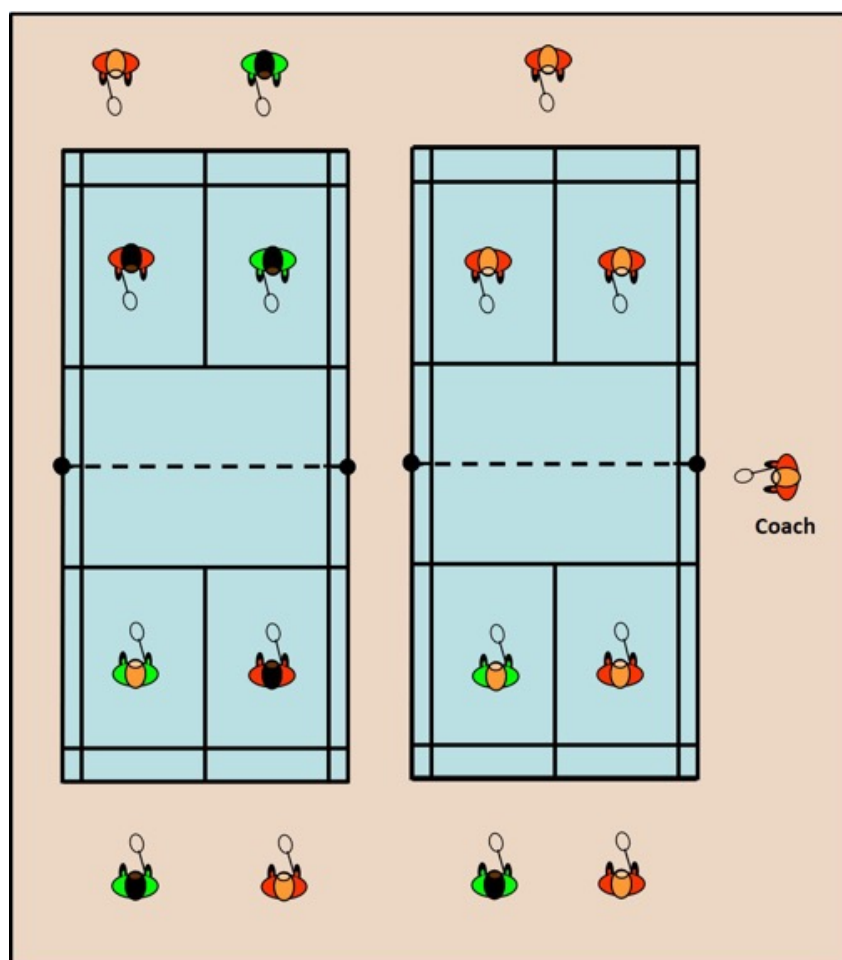
- **[Updated]** A maximum of 16 people can be grouped together; depending on the total space available ensuring that social distancing is maintained – you do not need to sub-divide them into smaller groups, but you may choose to do so.
- **[Updated]** Please refer to the group size section above for an explanation of how group sizes work in different situations.
- Players must stay within their allocated group during a session, but they can rotate within the group providing social distancing is maintained.
- You can have more than one group in a location and groups should be spread over an appropriate number of courts to allow for social distancing to be maintained.
- **[Updated]** Under 18s and adults can play badminton together in the same group.
- **[Updated]** Disabled and non-disabled players can play badminton together in the same group.
- Sessions should be managed by the identified Covid-19 Officer, who is able to take part in play providing they are able to manage the session and do not exceed playing numbers.
- All movement on and off court and around the hall must be controlled by the designated session Covid-19 Officer. You should adopt a one-way flow around the venue where possible.
- You must implement a pre-booking system which will enable you to keep attendance records for all sessions and matches, including who played in what groups for a minimum of 21 days in order to comply with the NHS Test and Trace. Badminton England has made a booking system available to affiliated clubs to manage your sessions and groups.
- If collecting monies from players, you should use online or contactless payment wherever possible.
- If delivering back to back sessions, end the first session early and start the next session late in order to reduce the risk and provide safe change overs of players. If you run back to back club sessions, no players from the first session can attend the second session.
- More advice and tools to help you run and organise sessions can be found [here](#).

## Managing Shuttles and Equipment

- As a club or coach organising a session or match, you should ensure that you provide hand sanitiser for your players.
- Players and coaches must take all their own equipment they need for the session keeping to essential items. You should only use your own racket.
- You should not share equipment, and should clean and wipe down your equipment before and after use.
- Shuttles should be allocated to a group of players in line with how you are organising the session in the location. Players within that group can share shuttles but should adhere to strict hygiene rules and should not handle any shuttles allocated to other groups.
- Bring a full water bottle, clearly marked and do not share food or drink with others.
- Equipment bags should be stored behind the court you are playing on and at least 2 metres from the back of the court and any other players.
- Ensure you take all your belongings with you at the end of the session and do not leave anything on court.
- Avoid using/touching other equipment such as nets, posts, where possible. If you have to set up or take down nets, for example, ensure you wash your hands immediately afterwards in line with Government guidance.

## [Updated] Coaching

- 1-1 coaching is permitted indoors and outdoors; there is no limit on the number of clients in a single day.
- Group coaching is permitted indoors and outdoors. It must be conducted under the following guidance:
  - Coaching can take place in groups of people from different households in line with group sizes specified above (presently 15). No limit on number of groups coached in a single day.
  - A coach can coach on a ratio of up to 1: 15 – you do not need to sub-divide them into smaller groups.
  - Players must stay within their allocated group during a session, but they can rotate within the group providing social distancing is maintained.
  - You can have more than one group in a location and groups should be spread over an appropriate number of courts to allow for social distancing to be maintained.
  - A coach (or assistant coach) is needed for each group (up to 15) if any coaching is to take place. Players cannot move between groups during a session.
  - Coaches are permitted to coach another group after the conclusion of the first session.
- Additional guidance is available on the [Badminton England Resource Hub](#) for coaches on how to manage sessions and support their return to play. This may also be useful for other groups to help them organise sessions.





## [Updated] No Strings Badminton

- No Strings Badminton must conform to the group sizes identified above.
- If there are 16 or more players, they will need to be split into two (or more groups).
- A No Strings session can operate with one coordinator regardless of number of players as these are not coaching sessions, i.e., if you have more than 16 players in a session, you do not need an extra coordinator.
- If the coordinator plays in the No Strings session, you count as one of the 16 players in a group. You can still oversee the session if there is more than one group but cannot mix with anyone outside your playing group.

## [Updated] Curricular and extracurricular out of school hours delivery

- Curricular and extracurricular/out of school hours delivery has been permitted from 8th March
- Schools have the flexibility to decide how physical education, sport and physical activity will be provided whilst following the measures in their system of controls.
- Schools are able to work with external coaches, clubs and organisations for curricular and extra-curricular activities where they are satisfied that this is safe to do so.
- Coaching curriculum and extracurricular sessions therefore comes under the guidance of schools and you should arrange a meeting with them to understand their procedures, guidelines and restrictions before undertaking any delivery within their environment.

## [Updated] Competition

- Competition or tournaments are permitted at Step 3 for all players in line with the guidance for organising a safe session set out above.
- Competition or tournaments should be run with groups of no more than 16 players, and players cannot be in more than one group per day.
- You can operate more than one group in a competition, and it is permitted to play a final between the winners of two groups to determine an overall winner.
- Organisers are encouraged to seek advice from Badminton England but must ensure that:
  - o Social distancing is maintained at all times when players are not on court.
  - o The total number of all participants, coaches, officials and spectators must be aligned with the ventilation rates permitted by the venue.
- **[Updated]** Specific guidance for tournament organisers is available by emailing [competition@badmintonengland.co.uk](mailto:competition@badmintonengland.co.uk)

## Supervision and Spectators

- All clubs, groups and coaches should ensure they comply with Badminton England's policies for Safeguarding Young People in Badminton and Safeguarding Adults at Risk.
- Clubs must ensure that all safeguarding requirements are in place prior to any junior activity commencing. This means there is a designated Welfare Officer to manage all concerns from parents and young people.
- It is very important to be aware of, and to focus on, mental health and wellbeing at times of uncertainty. Remember that many of your players may have been through a difficult period and need reassuring on their return to play
- Spectators are permitted at Step 3, but need to adhere to social distancing rules and social gathering limits (groups of 30 outdoors and six people/two households indoors). The total number of all participants, coaches, officials and spectators must be aligned with the ventilation rates permitted by the venue. You must also record the details of any spectators, coaches, officials and those attending in a supervisory capacity in the same way as participants to comply with NHS Test and Trace requirements.

## Inclusion

- Remember, some players may need additional support or adaptations to support their participation. Further guidance is available [here](#).

## [Updated] Travel

- You can leave your home to exercise and take part in both informal and organised badminton activity. Car sharing and overnight stays are permitted in line with the relevant Government guidance.

## Injuries and emergencies

- Injuries should still be treated, as participant safety is of the utmost importance. Physios and other medical personnel should take care to protect themselves and others through rigorous cleaning and personal hygiene, including increasing the frequency of cleaning and disinfecting equipment and surfaces. Wearing face coverings is recommended for both medics and patients, where this is possible and practical.
- After contact with an injured participant, physios and other medical personnel should clean their hands thoroughly with soap and water or alcohol hand sanitiser at the earliest opportunity. This advice is applicable to all situations, regardless of whether there was close contact or the minimum social distancing was maintained. They should also avoid touching their mouth, eyes and nose.
- Physios and medical personnel should keep a record of each participant they have come into contact with, to support NHS Test and Trace. Records should be kept for 21 days and then destroyed.
- Those working at a sport event should familiarise themselves with the guidance for first responders, in case of emergency situations.

## Disclaimer

Please note that the subject matter covered in this guidance is in no way exhaustive and the material does not stand on its own nor is intended to be relied upon as a substitute for obtaining specific legal advice. Individual circumstances will differ. The information contained in this guidance is given in good faith but any liability of Badminton England or its professional advisors (including their respective members or employees) to you or any third party which may arise out of the reliance by you or any other party on the contents of this guidance is hereby excluded to the fullest extent permitted by law. Badminton England and its professional advisors accept no duty of care or liability for any loss occasioned, whether caused by negligence or otherwise, to any person acting or refraining from actions as a result of any material in this guidance. We would strongly recommend that you consult professional advisors on specific issues before acting or refraining from action on any of the contents of this guidance.

