

FOOTBALL RETURNS AFTER LOCKDOWN

18 July 2020

After 117 days of lockdown, and following the recent announcement from Oliver Dowden, the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, indicating the return of grassroots football the FA have today confirmed how and when it will return.

The proposals, which had been delayed whilst approval was sought from the government and Public Health England, were released today and confirmed as follows: --

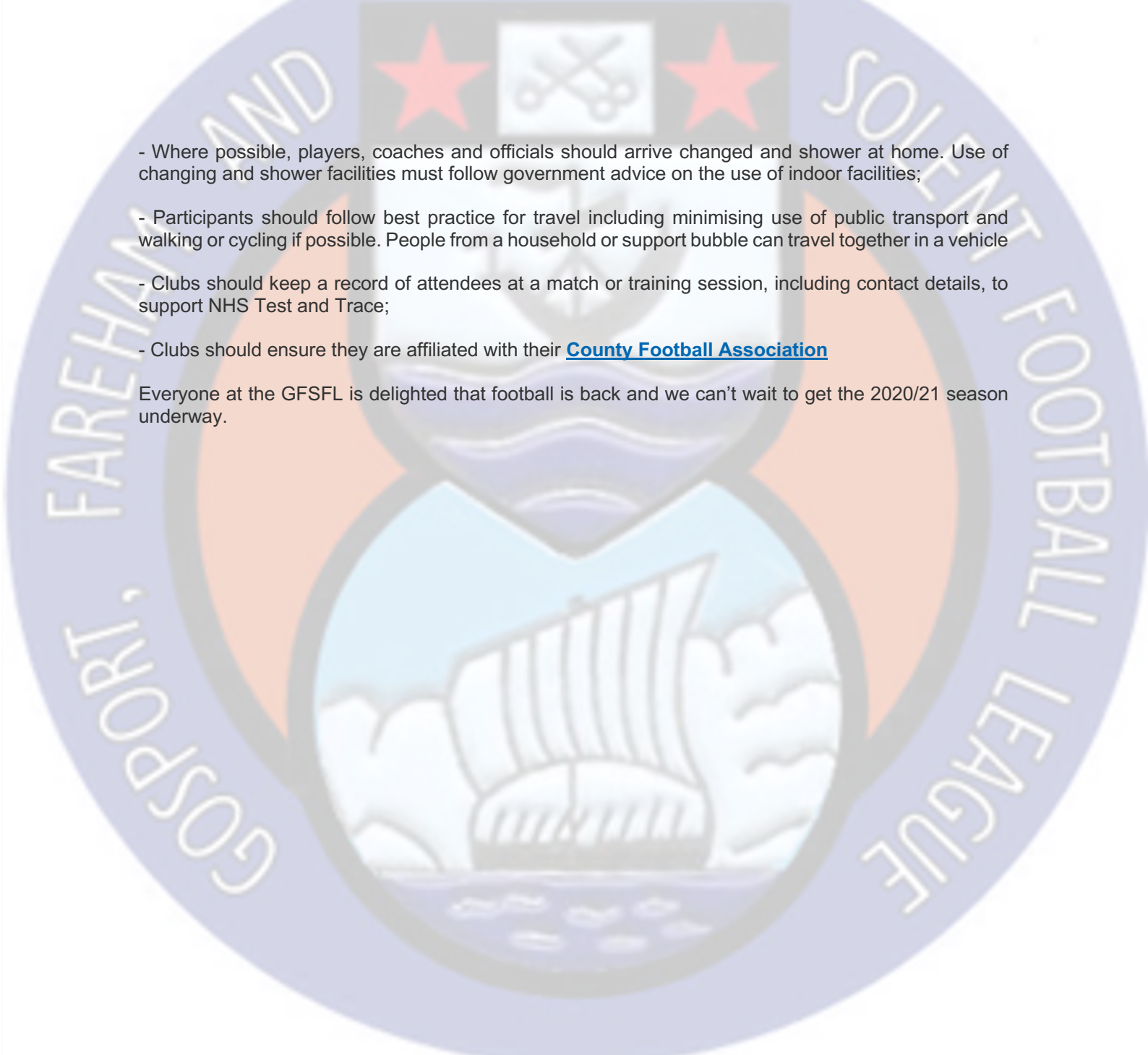
- Until 31 July –clubs can begin competitive training, with the overall group size (inclusive of coaches) being limited to 30 people;
- From August – Competitive matches can begin, for example pre-season fixtures, festivals and small sided football competitions;
- From September – Grassroots leagues, men's National League System, Women's Football Pyramid tiers 3 to 6, and FA Competitions can commence.

Clubs, players, coaches, match officials, league officials, volunteers, parents/carers, spectators and football facility providers should read The FA's full guidelines, which are accessible below, in addition to the [latest Government guidance on COVID-19](#).

A return to competitive football should only happen once clubs and facility providers have completed the necessary risk assessments and comprehensive plans are in place.

A SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS TO CONSIDER FROM THE FA'S GUIDELINES ARE LISTED FOR EASE BELOW:

- Everyone should self-assess for COVID-19 symptoms before every training session or match. If you are symptomatic or living in a household with possible or actual COVID-19 infection you must not participate or attend;
- Clubs and facility providers should ensure that their facility is compliant with current Government legislation and guidance related to COVID-19;
- Competitive training is now permitted, with groups limited to a maximum of 30 people, including coaches;
- Competitive match play is permitted, with social distancing in place before and after the match, and in any breaks in play;
- Players and officials should sanitise hands before and after a game as well as scheduled breaks throughout a game or training session;
- Ball handling should be kept to a minimum with most contact via a boot and the ball disinfected in breaks of play;
- Youth football coaches are encouraged to limit persistent close proximity of participants during match play and training;
- Goal celebrations should be avoided;
- Equipment should not be shared, and goalkeepers should ensure they disinfect their gloves regularly in breaks in training or matches and thoroughly afterwards. Where possible, coaches should only handle equipment in training;



- Where possible, players, coaches and officials should arrive changed and shower at home. Use of changing and shower facilities must follow government advice on the use of indoor facilities;

- Participants should follow best practice for travel including minimising use of public transport and walking or cycling if possible. People from a household or support bubble can travel together in a vehicle

- Clubs should keep a record of attendees at a match or training session, including contact details, to support NHS Test and Trace;

- Clubs should ensure they are affiliated with their [County Football Association](#)

Everyone at the GFSFL is delighted that football is back and we can't wait to get the 2020/21 season underway.