

This document is intended to provide County Cricket Boards (CCBs), leagues and competition organisers with suggestions of action that can be taken against clubs who fail to comply with Government Guidance and/or ECB guidance relating to the return to recreational sport and cricket (“**ECB Guidance**”).

Summary

Over the past year, the ECB has worked collaboratively with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) and Sport England to put in place guidance to try to maximise the safety of those involved in the return to recreational cricket. This includes requiring all organised sport providers to follow the ECB’s Guidance, conduct COVID risk assessments, implement appropriate risk-reduction measures and ensure that specific modifications to training and game-play are made (and communicated to all participants) to try to ensure the safety of all participants.

Sporting activities are permitted despite wider restrictions because of the benefits of sport and physical activity for people’s physical and mental wellbeing. If people act irresponsibly when participating in sport (including off the pitch, and when socialising before and after activity), they jeopardise public health and undermine the case for safe sport to take place.

As the national governing body for cricket in England and Wales, the ECB, together with CCBs, leagues and competition organisers should ensure that organised cricket activities are being run safely and in accordance with Government Guidance and ECB Guidance, and should take action to address any issues on becoming aware of unsafe activities. This includes putting in place additional measures or suspending players, teams, clubs or leagues that do not adhere to Government Guidance and/or ECB Guidance. The Government has warned that if there are serious or consistent concerns with a particular sport which the NGB or organised sport provider cannot or does not address, approval may be revoked so that the sport cannot take place.

Following the return to organised recreational cricket, we anticipate that the vast majority of clubs/teams will operate in accordance with Government Guidance and ECB Guidance, as the majority did successfully in 2020. It is important that all clubs, leagues and activity providers familiarise themselves with the latest guidance which can be found at www.ecb.co.uk/covid-19. ECB Guidance will change in line with each step of the Government roadmap, and we will continue to update our guidance accordingly. Please note that it is the responsibility of the club or activity provider to ensure they remain compliant with the latest Government Guidance and ECB Guidance.

Understanding ‘organised cricket’

Where the guidance mentions ‘organised’ cricket, this means cricket which is formally organised by a qualified coach, club, national governing body, company or charity and follows sport-specific guidance. In the context of cricket, if cricket is not organised by one of these groups (for example, some friends having a game in a park) or the ECB guidance is not being followed (for example, a cricket club ignoring the ECB’s safety measures), this is considered to be informal or self-organised sport.

Taking part in organised cricket sometimes means that some of the other restrictions such as legal gathering limits do not apply when taking part. This is because the ECB has considered the risks and set out ways to mitigate them so people can participate safely. Informal or self-organised sport is not covered by any exemptions.

This document only covers suggested measures for non-compliant ‘organised cricket’ activities. Informal self-organised sport will be subject to wider Government restrictions accordingly.

Examples of steps to be taken to address non-compliance with Government Guidance and/or ECB Guidance: -

CCBs, leagues and competition organisers have a role to play in ensuring that Government Guidance and ECB Guidance is followed so as to ensure that organised cricket is delivered safely and to prevent Government approval for organised cricket from being revoked. Any clubs who do not operate in accordance with Government Guidance and/or ECB Guidance need to be brought back into 'safe operation' quickly and any sanctions imposed by a CCB, league or competition organiser on non-conforming clubs must be fair and proportionate.

Breaches of Government Guidance and/or ECB Guidance could result in the following action (depending on the severity of the breach): -

A written warning to be issued to club and/or community team to 'cease and desist' any operations that are outside of Government Guidance and/or ECB Guidance within 48 hours of the notification of breach. The advice contained within the communication to the club and/or community is to be that fast-acting 'Special Measures' may need to be implemented with immediate effect if the breach is not addressed within 48 hours of the notification and/or there is a further breach of Government Guidance and/or ECB Guidance.

Special measures will allow: -

- The relevant CCB to decide upon the type of support that will potentially be lost by the club or community team not immediately addressing the reported issue(s) (see below).
- Leagues, affiliated to CCB's, or to the National Cricket Conference via the National Asian Cricket Council, to use powers vested in them to deliver fair and proportionate sanctions against a club or community team not immediately addressing the reported issue(s).

Examples of non-compliance: -

- Clubs, venues and individuals not following Government Guidance and/or ECB Guidance, including, without limitation, any of the following breaches:
 - Persistent and/or material non-observance of social distancing and legal gathering size limits at a venue.
 - Clubs and venues not carrying out COVID risk assessments, not putting control measures in place and/or not enforcing these control measures on site.
 - Clubs not managing numbers on site so that social distancing and legal gathering size limits are maintained on and off the field.
 - Clubs not communicating requirements to visitors such as COVID self-assessment and COVID risk assessment and control measures.
 - Use of clubhouses, pavilions and hospitality functions in contravention of current law and Government guidance.
 - Players breaking self-isolation and/or quarantine rules.

Reporting: -

It is reasonable to expect that a CCB, league or competition organiser may be informed of alleged breaches of Government Guidance and/or ECB Guidance by a wide variety of sources, including not only those involved in cricket but also members of the public.

Recording: -

It is expected that a CCB, league or competition organiser will keep a record of date, time, event and action taken.

Examples of special measures to be considered by CCBs, leagues and competition organisers to address non-compliance with Government Guidance and/or ECB Guidance

CCBs, leagues and competition organisers must use their existing powers in a fair and proportionate way and use of their existing powers might include (in each case, to the extent that they have such powers): -

For leagues and competition organisers: -

- Suspension from some or all fixtures for individual teams or whole club
- Player suspensions
- Club fines
- Points deductions from the current competition season

For CCBs: -

- Withdrawal of CCB support to achieve Clubmark Accreditation
- Withdrawal of CCB support for Club Development Planning
- Withdrawal of access to current and future CCB grant aid programmes
- Withdrawal of CCB support for club Coaches & Officials to access relevant courses
- Withdrawal of access to tickets, merchandise, guard of honour opportunities from the First-Class County (or neighbouring county)
- Prohibit entry into future County based Junior Competitions and/or Open Age Competitions

Depending on the nature and severity of the breach, CCBs, leagues and/or competition organisers may be willing to liaise with the club to determine a fair and proportionate sanction and accept an undertaking from the club to comply with the agreed sanction. If this is not accepted by the club or it is not appropriate in the circumstances, the CCB, league and/or competition organiser will need to determine a fair and proportionate sanction and implement it appropriately.