



COVID-19 What it means to Groups in England Advice to all parts of UK

The guidance from different governments is getting increasingly complex with local lockdowns and restrictions coming into force as well as changes to the numbers of people who can gather. It is every group's responsibility to keep up with changes to any restrictions that affect their group and ensure they are adhering to them. This may mean a change to your protocols and risk assessment at short notice. Please consider this when developing your plans and inviting participants and volunteers to sessions.

Social distancing (2M/6FT) remains a key message for everyone not from the same household and is the most effective way to protect everyone. Hand hygiene also remains a critical defence from contamination.

Trustee checklists and Covid-19 Risk Assessment should be completed and emailed to RDA National Office groupsupport@rda.org.uk before the group can be signed off as ready and any RDA activity can begin.

England – Stay at Home – 5th January 2021

LATEST: The government announced a lockdown starting on 5 January 2021. This placed the whole country into Tier 4. These regulations became law on 6 January 2021. It is anticipated that this might last to February half term or beyond. We have all been urged to stay at home and avoid mixing with other people as much as possible.

RDA Activities

We are expecting this lockdown will stop RDA activities in almost all cases. There are some limited exemptions, but please consider the moral imperative for us to help stop the spread of the virus (and get back to a more open situation) and the need to make sure that anyone involved in delivering sessions is happy to do so.

Sports facilities (indoor and outdoor) must close, which includes riding centres. Facilities can remain open for people to care for and exercise horses that they care for (includes volunteers as well as staff). This includes in covered arenas (sometimes termed 'indoor' arenas).

Under the law, there is an exemption for "organised outdoor sport" for disabled people – in these cases activity should be outdoors and should be strictly limited to the number required to run a session safely and kept as small as possible. There is also an exemption for activity where it is judged to be medically required or as part of an individual's normal educational provision. In these cases, as before, the activity should be prescribed by a medical professional or confirmed by an education professional that is part of an individual's educational provision and who can attest that it is important for the activity to continue for the participant's health or education.

Any sessions should only go ahead if you have your COVID-19 risk assessment signed off by National Office and are confident you can do this effectively in a COVID-19 safe manner so as not to put individuals at risk, especially considering the high transmission rates of the new COVID-19 strain.

For non-RDA sessions (if your group/ centre provides this), centres cannot remain open for lessons or arena hire.

The law prevents people from gathering indoors for the purposes of sport and physical activity (other than elite) and so the use of mechanical horses in indoor environments is not permitted. It remains unclear about the treatment of covered arenas (sometimes termed 'indoor' arenas) for use by participants. This is permitted for those exercising horses for animal welfare reasons.

Given the increased risk of the new strain of the virus we would strongly recommend against any volunteers coming into closer proximity than social distancing would normally allow (1m) with a disabled person from outside their household to support them to access sport and physical activity in England.

Social Distancing:-

- You should keep 2M away from people outside of your household or keep 1M away plus mitigate the risk of infection by taking other precautions (1M+) – the best mitigation is to set up ways to not have people facing each other e.g. rider looks away whilst stirrup is checked.
- You are at higher risk when you are within 2M of someone and have face-to-face contact with them.

Travel

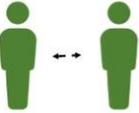
In tier 4, you must not leave your home unless you have a reasonable excuse. Leaving your home for work/ volunteering and to participate in outdoor sport and physical activity is a reasonable excuse.

Travel for outdoor sport or physical activity should be done locally.

Additional Useful Information

If you are clinically vulnerable, you could be at higher risk of severe illness from coronavirus. There is additional advice for [people who are clinically extremely vulnerable to coronavirus](#). Those who are clinically extremely vulnerable should follow resumed shielding guidance and should not attend work, school, college or university. You should limit the time you spend outside the home. You should only go out for medical appointments, exercise or if it is essential.

What can we do in England? (From 5 January 2021—National lockdown)

Category	Regulations and guidance
 <p>National guidance—SOCIAL</p>	<p>You cannot leave your home to meet socially with anyone you do not live with or are not in a support bubble with (if you are legally permitted to form one). You may exercise on your own, with one other person, or with your household or support bubble.</p>
 <p>RDA meetings</p>	<p>You can only leave home for work purposes where it is unreasonable for you to do your job from home. You can also leave home to provide voluntary or charitable services where you cannot do so from home.</p> <p>We are therefore recommending you do not have face to face meetings under this lockdown.</p>
 <p>RDA sessions</p>	<p>We are recommending RDA sessions should stop in almost all cases in England. There are some legal exemptions but please consider the moral imperative for us to help stop the spread of the virus (and get back to a more open situation).</p> <p>Sports facilities (indoor and outdoor) must close. There is an exemption for “organised outdoor sport” for disabled people – activity should be outdoors and should be the minimum number required to run a session safely. There is also an exemption for activity where an activity is medical treatment as part of an individual’s normal educational provision. Written evidence is required for this.</p> <p>Care of horses and exercise by volunteers (as per the exercising of equines policy) is permitted in both covered and outdoor arenas.</p>
 <p>Social Distance (SD)</p>	<p>In all tiers: 2m or 1m plus mitigation</p> <p>In all tiers: A dispensation for disability allows a short term breach of social distancing to allow disabled participants to access sport.</p> <p>We are recommending that due to the risks associated with the new strain of COVID-19 that dispensation should not be used during this lockdown unless absolutely necessary (e.g. as part of prescribed medical treatment).</p>
	<p>Legal requirement to collect and keep details of attendees for 21 days</p>
 <p>Face coverings Outdoors</p>	<p>Face coverings must be worn if breaching social distancing for a specific purpose (see social distancing)</p> <p>RDA rule:</p> <p>Face coverings can be worn—not a substitute for social distancing</p>
	<p>Should not leave home unless there is a reasonable excuse. This includes work and volunteering where this cannot be done from home. This will include travel for care and exercise of horses. Travel for exercise is also considered a reasonable excuse but this should be kept local.</p>