



To all Sporting Organisations

Today 20th August we are calling on your help!

The number of cases of COVID-19 is currently increasing significantly. Daily updates are available on the Department of Health Website: <https://bit.ly/34dhsK9>

We in the Department for Communities are working with colleagues in the Public Health Agency to ask and encourage sporting bodies and clubs to **'TRAIN SMART, PLAY SMART, BE COVID SMART'**.

We know a number of cluster outbreaks have been associated with sporting settings so to ensure that we continue to be able to train and to operate our games and competitions we all need to play our part. We have been made aware of clubs not adhering to social distancing guidelines, not adhering to travel advice, etc. and I am asking you to support us in ensuring that sporting organisations and club communities are aware of, understand and most importantly follow factual government advice and support, including downloading the StopCOVIDNI app.

The links below set out the most up-to-date advice and guidance from the Public Health Agency, Sport NI and the Department:

<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/covid-19-coronavirus>

[Return To Sport | Sport NI](#)

[Covid-19: Guidance on the safe return of sport | Department for Communities](#)

We have a collective responsibility to overcome the challenge that is affecting us all. IF WE DON'T ADHERE TO PUBLIC HEALTH GUIDANCE OUR SPORT WILL STOP. We want to address and provide reassurance to sporting communities that they can continue to participate in sport – providing they adhere to the up to date public health guidance.

To support this I have two asks.

Firstly please share this note and the linked guidance with your clubs, reinforcing the importance of adhering to the guidance including:

- Maintain social distancing (2m wherever possible);
- Maintain good hygiene;
- Recognise the importance of ensuring safe travel;
- Wear a face covering where social distancing is difficult to maintain;
- Adhere to all aspects of your Club's Covid safety plan;
- Ensure that your club activities comply with the regulations set by the NI Executive regarding numbers of participants;
- Raise any issues or concerns regarding the above with your Governing Body;
- Download the StopCOVIDNI app; and
- DO NOT LEAVE HOME IF YOU OR ANYONE IN YOUR HOUSE HAS SYMPTOMS.

Secondly I am asking you to use our local athletes to share these messages on social media – we need to get these messages communicated by those with influence in our communities, by those who people connect with participation in their chosen sport. We would ask that you use our local sporting heroes to communicate these messages on social media (please tag @CommunitenI and @publichealthni, logos attached) and to emphasise the importance of adherence to guidance as we continue our efforts to suppress the spread of the virus.

Covid-19 restrictions have impacted on every thread of society here and we need to work together to ensure we do not undo the immense effort made by everyone to date.

Thank you for your continuing support and please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathryn Hill". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'H'.

Kathryn Hill

Director of Active Communities

Department for Communities