



# Guidance for Venue Operators on Restarting Netball Activity During Social Distancing

Version 2

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# 1. Introduction

This document has been produced in support of England Netball's return to play action plan and subsequent announcement for Stage 4 of its return to court roadmap to be unlocked.

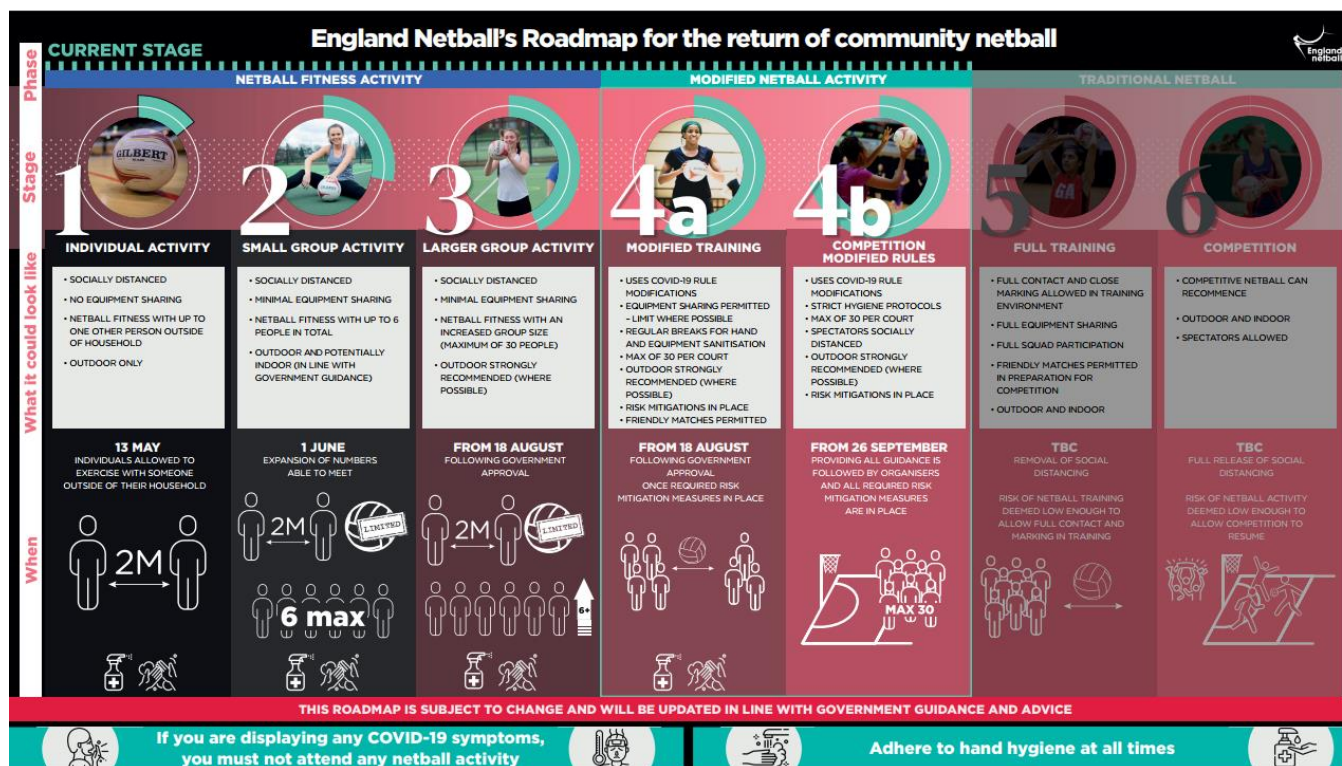
It seeks to provide guidance to the network of indoor and outdoor netball facility owners and operators upon which the game of netball relies. Whilst it has been prepared in line with the Government's guidance on the return to recreational team sports, readers are asked to appreciate that this is regularly changing, so please remember to check the Government's website to obtain the most up-to-date information. This guidance isn't a substitute for taking your own legal advice and you will need to interpret the guidance based on your own set-up, facility offer and capacity levels to ensure you are compliant with Government guidance. Government guidance for team sports can be found [here](#) and guidance for providers of grassroots sports and leisure facilities can be found [here](#). On 22 September, the Government announced a range of new measures to stem the rapid rise of COVID-19 cases which sparked a number of questions relating to team sports. Sport England have worked with the DCMS to respond to these queries [here](#).

Before 16 March 2000, netball was enjoying a Golden decade, with participation levels rising to an estimated 263,300 adults participating in netball per week. Together, with the support of Leisure Centres, Schools, Universities and community sports facilities, we hope to return the sport to these levels and galvanise the collective efforts of the entire netball community to minimise the risks of COVID-19 transmission.

It is England Netball's intention to provide regular updated versions of this document based on feedback and experience from netball organisations and venue operators. Should you wish to feedback your comments, please email [facility.development@englandnetball.co.uk](mailto:facility.development@englandnetball.co.uk)

## 2. Netball's Roadmap and Risk Assessment

Netball organisations are able to move to Stage 4b of their updated Return to Court roadmap as illustrated below, subject to following both England Netball's and the Government's guidance on return to recreational team sports. There are however some new measures that came into effect on 24 September that placed some restrictions on team sports in indoor facilities for adults. These are explained [here](#).

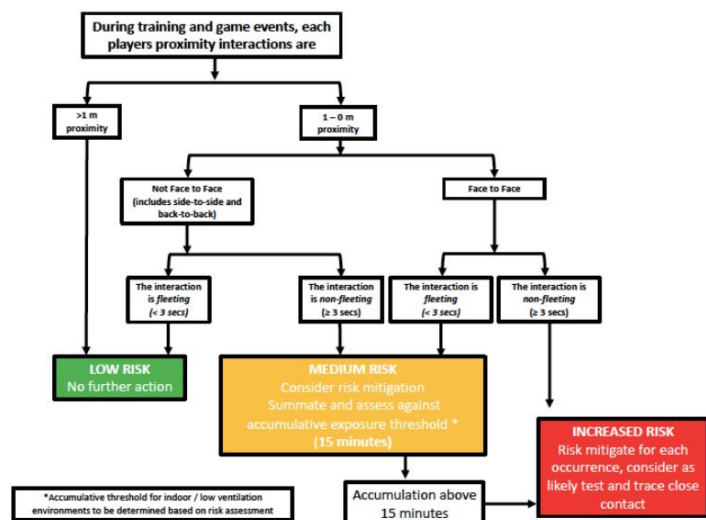


For netball organisations to begin Stage 4 modified netball activity, it is important to prepare facilities for returning to play and understand England Netball's risk assessment relating to how playing the game of netball is impacted by the transmission of COVID-19. COVID-19 considered risk assessments require an understanding of the following domains:-

- Droplet transmission – where respiratory droplets carrying infectious pathogens can transmit infection when they travel directly from the respiratory tract of an infectious individual to susceptible mucosal surfaces of a recipient, generally over short distances. This can be in the form of sneezing, coughing or speaking;
- Fomite transmission - a fomite is defined as an object that becomes contaminated with infected organisms and which subsequently transmits those organisms to another person. Examples of potential fomites in a netball context are netball posts, bibs and netballs;
- Airborne transmission and indoor vs outdoor participation - while airborne transmission is not thought to be a primary route of transmission, there is an emerging and growing body of evidence that COVID-19 can also be spread through the air, particularly in poorly ventilated indoor spaces, and that ventilation provision in buildings should be reviewed in the light of this.

## **Droplet transmission**

Due to the key rules of the game and amount of time players interact within 1m of each other during competition, using the Government's 'Team Sports Exposure Framework' illustrated below, the risk of exposure in netball has been determined as 'increased risk'.



This determination was based on actual game footage using video analysis software (HUDL Sportscode), with analysts coding each instance and duration of fleeting and non-fleeting contacts where players were within 1m distance of each other.

A sample of 60 minutes was taken from over 105 minutes of game play across 6 different levels of competition, looking at each of the 7 playing positions, GK, GD, WD, C, WA, GA, GS.

In all playing positions, there was an accumulation of more than 15 minutes of non-fleeting contacts, within 1m distance of another player.

## Fomite Transmission

In the game of netball, there are several instances where fomite transmission of the COVID-19 virus could occur. Items include:-

- Balls
- Posts
- Bibs
- General apparel
- Whistles
- Post match paperwork
- Refreshment items

## Airborne Transmission and Indoor vs Outdoor

Netball training and competition are played on courts at both outdoor and indoor venues. The Government has recognised there is an increased risk of COVID-19 transmission in indoor settings over outdoors, and has published guidance on for grassroots indoor sports and leisure centres on capacity levels and ventilation to mitigate these risks. This, together with the associated increase in respiratory droplets that result from taking part in sport and physical activity may also have an impact on the risk of transmission.

## Extended Closure - Preparing to Reopen Your Netball Venue

If courts haven't been used for a long time for netball, it is important that venue operators take the time to put in place any required actions that are needed to make sure that the courts are both fit for purpose generally and are compliant with Government Guidance for reopening of grassroots sports and leisure facilities. Recommended actions to check that netball venues are fit for purpose generally following a long period of closure include:-

- Deep cleaning your facility
- Removing any moss, weeds or debris from outdoor surface
- Checking that the surface has adequate slip resistance levels ( $\geq 75$  SRV)
- Undertaking an inspection of the netball posts to make sure they are safe to use
- Undertaking an inspection of any buildings that may be accessed by netball organisations, and checking that water systems, lighting, heating and mechanical ventilation systems are safe to use
- Checking that any alarms or security systems are in good working order

If you are concerned about the quality of your outdoor netball courts, we recommend that you seek advice from a SAPCA registered contractor [here](#).

### 3. Managing and Mitigating COVID-19 Transmission Risks in Netball

General Considerations for Netball Venues

#### **Mandatory COVID-19 Officers**

England Netball's action plan for returning to play included a commitment to recruiting and training a network of COVID-19 Officers, who will act the key point of contact for each individual netball Club, League, organisation, team or programme. These will act as the liaison points for venues and prior to accelerated return to netball commencing will be required to:-

- Determine whether netball activity will resume at an outdoor or indoor venue using England Netball's decision making matrix, available to view [here](#). Given the increased risk of indoor environments, outdoors is preferred.
- Undertake a facility specific risk assessment (enhanced for indoor)
- A COVID-19 considered risk assessment for the specific netball activity being undertaken at the venue
- Ensure that participants understand the personal risks of taking part in netball activity
- The behavioural expectations prior to and during taking part (i.e. pre-symptom checking and game modifications required), and
- Clarify the behavioural expectations on site (i.e. hygiene protocols and movement around the site)

All risk assessments and protocols must be kept as live documents for ongoing sharing and review with the venue.



## **Mandatory Risk Mitigation Measures for Netball Venues**

COVID-19 Officers are required to work with venue operators to adopt the following risk mitigation procedures on a site specific basis. As a minimum, they must ensure that:-

### **Hygiene Protocols**

The environment in which netball takes place has:-

- Rigorous cleaning procedures for high contact touch points throughout the venue
- Rigorous cleaning procedures for any toilet facilities and other indoor communal spaces used
- Procedures for the movement of and cleaning of any equipment such as netball posts (and any other large equipment items that require moving away from netball courts at the beginning of a session such as tennis post and football goals)
- Hand sanitisers / wipes on offer to assist with personal and equipment hygiene
- Bins available for the disposal of any wipes / cleaning materials
- If there is a COVID-19 case in the facility, the operator will follow the PHE Guidance – [COVID-19 Cleaning in non-healthcare settings](#) while cleaning all areas of the facility

### **Movement on Site**

Protocols are in place for arrival and movement on site. Including:-

- One way systems to manage the flow of entry and exit in the court / facility being used for netball, and any other facilities that are used such as toilets and administration areas
- Gaps between user groups to avoid players congregating at the start and finish of their session, and allow for cleaning to be undertaken
- Signage and floor markings to ensure that participants have a clear understanding of how to move around the space being used while social distancing

## **Capacity Levels and Spectators**

Protocols are in place to ensure that on any single full size netball court, there are no more than 30 participants involved. This includes players, coaches and officials. At venues where there are multiple courts, netball activity can still occur on adjacent courts – provided that social distancing can be achieved, and due consideration is given to venue specific considerations and risks. Those not actively involved in training or match play (e.g. umpires and table officials) must be situated a minimum of 2m distance from the side line of the court and must be socially distanced from each other. Where this cannot be achieved due to venue limitations, a 1m+ distance will be required, with the use of PPE (face coverings) to further mitigate risks.

Spectators are not permitted in or around the area of play. Parents or carers at junior activities must be restricted to discrete six person gatherings limits and be far enough away so as to not be considered part of the 30.

## **Ventilation in Indoor Facilities**

Where the use of indoor venues is permitted, netball organisations and venue operators must conduct an enhanced risk assessment that confirms that the Government's guidance for ventilation levels can be achieved:-

- A target ventilation rate of 20l/s/p is achieved. This can either be attained through adjustments to ventilation systems themselves or by controlling numbers (based on 100ft<sup>2</sup> per person net usable floor space) and using natural ventilation.
- Ventilation systems are providing 100% fresh air and not recirculating air from one space to another.
- Existing ventilation rates are increased by fully opening dampers and running fans on full speed.
- Ventilation systems are operating 24 hours a day.
- The frequency of any filter changes are increased.
- In the absence of known ventilation rates, a carbon dioxide sensor shall be used as a surrogate indicator to switch on additional mechanical ventilation or open windows.
- Further guidance is provided in CIBSE [COVID-19 Ventilation Guidance](#)

## **New Government Measures – What do they mean for netball?**

Due to the measures introduced by the Government that took effect on 24 September, the following rules apply to netball:-

- Adults over the age of 18 can progress to Stage 4b **outdoors only**.
- Adults over 18 must adhere to the 'rule of 6' when using indoor facilities, unless they are competing or training for educational purposes, i.e. representing their School, College or University.
- There can be multiple groups of 6 in a single sports hall; Coaches and officials are outside the group of 6 but must be socially distanced at all times. The max capacity of 30 per netball court still applies. The groups of 6 must not interact with each other during the session.

Please note that these rules do not apply to children and young people under the age of 18 or disabled participants, where the activity is formally organised and following Government approved NGB guidance.

### ***NHS Test and Trace***

An NHS QR code is on display at your venue that visitors, customers and staff can scan for the purposes of NHS Test and Trace. Further details of how your venue can obtain a QR Code for NHS Test and Trace purposes can be found [here](#). England Netball also requires netball organisers to register their participants using England [Netball's Test and Trace procedures](#). All data must be held for 21 days in accordance with GDPR legislation for the purposes of NHS Test and Trace only.

### ***Pre-attendance Official Symptom Check***

A protocol is in place to require all attendees to undergo self-assessment prior to travelling to netball activity and ask anyone showing symptoms or has been asked to self-isolate not to attend. A copy of England Netball's health declaration form is included within our Care package for member Clubs and Leagues.

### ***Shielded and High Risk Populations***

A protocol is in place to help those in vulnerable and extremely vulnerable groups to understand the increased risk of returning to sport and provide information that informs their decision on whether to take part. A copy of England Netball's personal risk assessment is included within our Care package for member Clubs and Leagues.

### ***Social Distancing During Play – On Court Rules***

Netball organisers and players are required to adopt a 'Modified 7s' version of netball, with key rule changes listed below:-

- The traditional defending distance of 3ft / 0.9m is increased to 4ft / 1.2m
- Players positioning for the start of play will be required to be 4ft / 1.2m away from other players with additional requirements in place for the Goal Keeper and Goal Defence from both teams
- All players not directly involved in play are required to be 4ft / 1.2m away from other players at all times
- Toss ups are removed from the game

### ***Social Distancing during breaks and post-game***

The following common behaviours and social norms in netball are not permitted until social distancing is relaxed:-

- Nail checks must be taken from 1m+
- No team huddles, 'hands in' or handshakes
- No shouting or cheering others on
- No high fives
- No written post-match paperwork
- No hospitality or refreshments

### ***Social Distancing for Subs, Team Coaches and Officials – Off Court Rules***

Those not actively involved in training or match play (e.g. umpires and table officials) must be situated a minimum of 2m distance from the court and must be socially distanced from each other. Where this cannot be achieved due to venue limitations, a 1m+ distance will be required, with the use of PPE (face coverings) to further mitigate risks.

### ***Fomite Transmission Risks and Mitigation Protocols***

Ball	<p>In netball, the ball carries the highest risk of fomite transmission as it is passed between participants hand to hand throughout any netball activity. Netball organisers must therefore implement protocols that require:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Players to sanitise their hands prior to travelling and on arrival at the venue</li> <li>• Players use their own ball which is sanitised before activity.</li> <li>• Passing between multiple players with multiple balls during training drills is kept to a minimum</li> <li>• Hand hygiene and ball sanitising breaks are scheduled at 15 minute intervals during match play and training sessions.</li> </ul>
Netball Posts	<p>Depending on the management arrangements for the venue, either venue staff or netball organisers must arrange for the netball posts to be sanitised before and after a netball session and in between different groups. When there is direct contact between a player and the post, it should be sanitised before play resumes by the player who touched it.</p>
Bibs	<p>The sharing of netball bibs is not permitted during social distancing so netball organisers must adopt protocols for bibs to be allocated to individuals and taken home and washed prior to using it again.</p>
General apparel	<p>Netball organisers are required to communicate a protocol of 'Get in, Play Safe, Get Out' where players, coaches and officials turn up ready for training or matches and shower on their return</p>

	home. We are recommending that changing rooms are not used in venues, even if they are open.
Whistles	Whilst it is common amongst the netball community to share whistles, this is not permitted during social distancing.
Refreshment items	Netball organisers will communicate a protocol amongst players where hand sanitiser and water bottles will be clearly marked with personal identification and never shared. Additional scrutiny will be required to ensure that all personal possessions are retrieved and removed from the courts after use.
Post-match paperwork	Post matches, it would usually be the case that players and umpires sign results paperwork however this is not permitted during social distancing and electronic / alternative measures will be required.

A series of England Netball branded templates for display at venues, reminding players of the hygiene and social distancing protocols is available to download [here](#).

## 4. Guidance on the Relationship between Operators and Hirers

### ***Booking flexibility***

In order to progress along the Return to Court roadmap for netball, both venue operators and netball organisations must bear in mind that participation and cooperation with NHS Test and Trace protocols, and local lockdowns may result in sudden and unexpected cancellations or closures.

It is therefore important for any terms and conditions of hire to be flexible. We recommend that in the event of a required cancellation (by either party), a credit note is offered to cover the costs of a future booking.

### ***Differences in Venue Management and Staffing Provision***

Although England Netball's Return to Play Action Plan was very clear in specifying **what** mitigation measures must be in place at venues, it did not specify **who is responsible for** putting the measures in place to comply with EN's and Government guidance.

We appreciate that at large venues with trained staff on Duty, many of the COVID-19 compliance procedures will be carried out by venue staff.

However, for smaller venues or where a Club owns or leases their own netball courts, netball personnel may be asked to undertake some of the measures themselves e.g. cleaning high contact touch points, or setting up and cleaning netball posts, creating one way systems and displaying signage. Where this is the case, it must be pointed out that the actions taken by netball personnel must be reasonable and not put individuals at risk of further harm (for example, expecting individuals to lift something that is too heavy or operating complex machinery).

All netball personnel who are responsible for their own venue or have been asked by a venue to carry out COVID-19 mitigation protocols are advised to undertake CIMPSA's Reactivate training [here](#).

### ***Shared liability and duty of care***

Both venue operators and netball organisations have a shared duty of care to take reasonable precautions in line with England Netball's Return to Play Action as submitted to and approved by the Government.

This document forms the overarching framework for mitigating and managing risk of COVID-19 transmission in netball environments.

Furthermore, venue operators and netball organisation must ensure that:-

- Risk assessments are seen as living documents that are regularly reviewed and updated.
- Risk assessments are shared with all those involved in the use of facilities, venues and sports complexes. It may be that a number of risk assessment are in place at any one given time, information should be shared and discussed. Some risk assessments may need to be amended when you have seen the risk assessments from other parties.
- Although organisation have no legal obligation to publish risk assessments, England Netball believes it is good practice to do so.
- Although no legal obligation to have qualifications or expertise in drafting risk assessments, England Netball recommends that those involved in drafting risk assessments undertake the online training available on the CIMSPA Reactivate platform [here](#).



### ***Insurance considerations***

All venue operators and netball organisations undertaking netball activity during social distancing are advised to ensure that they have adequate insurance in place before resuming netball activity at a specific venue.

Please note that England Netball and Additional Insureds are insured under a “Sport recreation and leisure liability insurance portfolio” for various risks.

Additional Insureds fall into 4 separate categories:-

- 1) Affiliated Clubs, Groups and Universities of England Netball
- 2) Affiliated Regions, Counties and Leagues
- 3) Affiliated Umpires and Coaches
- 4) Members of England Netball

England Netball and all four categories of Additional Insureds have Public Liability insurance cover under this policy with Hiscox Insurance Company Limited.

Additional Insureds will be able to provide venue operators with their membership number for the relevant season, which runs from 1 September – 30 August in any given year.

If venues are approached by organisations / individuals who are not registered with England Netball, our advice is to ensure that they provide evidence of adequate alternative Public Liability cover for the activity they are looking to organise. Venues should also be aware that under the recent measures that came into effect on 24 September, informal sport or physical activity must follow the ‘rule of 6’ indoors and outdoors.

## 5. Guidance on programmes delivered in partnership with England Netball

Many venue operators work in partnership with England Netball to deliver recreational programmes such as Back to Netball and Walking Netball activity. England Netball also work with the Women's Institute (WI) to deliver a Walking Netball programme, which may take place in your venue. There is a dedicated team of [local netball development officers](#) that can support you with planning a programme in your venue.

Whilst some England Netball programmes will be able to restart in the coming weeks, this will be subject to guidance being followed and completion of required actions. Other programmes will follow at later stages. For more information and specific programme guidance, please refer to England Netball's guidance for netball organisers on restarting netball activity available [here](#)

To ensure the safe return of England Netball programmes, all deliverers will be required to have a Partnership Agreement in place with England Netball. Please be assured that there is no cost to this agreement, it is a control measure to ensure that everyone is delivering our programmes to the required standard. If you employ a member of staff to deliver the session, your venue will need to hold the agreement. If you hire your venue to a third party who delivers the England Netball programme, they would be required to hold the agreement. Partnership Agreements will include the following expectations:-

- Venue operator / or third party organisation has a named COVID-19 lead contact for netball activity
- Venue operator / or third party organisation understands the risks associated with netball and COVID-19
- The COVID-19 lead contact for netball has a full awareness of COVID-19 rule modifications

For further enquiries on Partnership Agreements with England Netball, please email [operations@englandnetball.co.uk](mailto:operations@englandnetball.co.uk)

## 6. Guidance on England Netball's Courses and Qualifications

During lockdown, England Netball were unable to deliver coaching and officiating courses on a face to face basis. However, we have accelerated plans to deliver a greater number of learning and development opportunities virtually.

Planning has begun to reorganise those coaching qualifications (levels 1 & 2) that were due to begin during the lockdown period on a blended basis, which combines both face to face and virtual learning from October 2020. Officiating courses are organised locally by either Regional Boards or County Netball Associations.

Face to face learning environments are required to be undertaken in indoor environments, subject to the physical space being used complying with the COVID-19 considered risk mitigation protocols below:-

	Practical Area
Hygiene	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All surface areas, including netball posts and benches / seats must be cleaned prior to use</li> <li>• No other large equipment items to be stored within the space (e.g. football goals, gym mats)</li> <li>• Hand sanitisers available on entry and participants regularly encouraged to apply.</li> </ul>
Social Distancing – movement on site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One way systems in place and clear routes waymarked for participants to understand where to enter and exit without congestion with other users</li> <li>• All practical sessions must follow the 'modified 7s' rules, where participants must stay a minimum of 4ft (1.2m) away from each other throughout the</li> </ul>

Social Distancing – during learning	<p>game / learning activity. All those not involved in the practical activities must maintain a distance of 2m from the game and each other wherever possible and a minimum of 1m while avoiding face to face interactions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>During practical sessions, participants and tutors to wear face coverings only when not involved in playing or officiating and social distancing cannot be achieved.</li> </ul>
Capacity levels	Restricted to a maximum of 30 in any one netball court. If a smaller space is used, capacity levels should be determined against the Government's required maximum of one person per 100ft² net usable floor space.
Ventilation	Levels of ventilation must achieve the Government's requirements for indoor facilities as described <a href="#">here</a>
Use of learning materials / equipment / desks	During practical sessions, mitigation protocols for reducing the risk of fomite transmission to be followed as described <a href="#">here</a>

## 7. Support Tools

England Netball's Guidance on [Restarting Netball](#) – for netball organisers (updated on 30/9/20)

[Reactivate Training](#) for Venue Partners and Netball Club Volunteers

Submit a [form](#) to tell us that your venue is open for netball bookings

Case Study – [Ripley Netball Club](#)