

From 19th July 2021 England moves to Step 4 of the Government Roadmap. This sees a lifting of most of the legal restrictions to control COVID-19. These include:

- You will not need to stay 2 metres apart from people you do not live with.
- There will also be no limits on the number of people you can meet.
- All capacity limits at sporting, entertainment, or business events will be lifted.
- The requirement to wear face coverings in law will be lifted
- There will no longer be restrictions on group sizes

However, the pandemic is not over and the risks from COVID-19 remain high, even for those who have been fully vaccinated. This means that no situation is completely risk free and the Government are encouraging us all to use personal judgement to manage the risks. To this end, clubs will need to revisit their risk assessments and, although not legally required, may choose to keep in place some of the measures we have become used to over the previous months as part of their duty of care.

When assessing the risk and producing procedures to mitigate it, the NSRA recommends that the following points are taken into consideration:

- Although 2m spacing is no longer mandatory, we still need to avoid close contact with others where possible. Are the rooms and other area used by the club big enough to allow adequate spacing? How does this affect the numbers of people who can attend the club and how will it be managed?
- Is it safe to use all firing points? Or is it sensible to maintain greater spacing to avoid transmission?
- What overall numbers of people do you think will be safe in your environment? Do you need to maintain a booking system? Can you spread shooting over more hours/days to avoid big groups?
- If space is tight, consider movement pathways (with signage) around the club to minimise contact between shooters.
- Although no longer a legal requirement, are there situations where you will continue to enforce the wearing of masks? In some cases it may still be considered appropriate to wear masks in club rooms, target sheds and other enclosed spaces.
- Continue to sanitise surfaces often, particularly cleaning surfaces that people touch regularly.
- Continue to provide hand sanitiser for members and encourage them to use it and/or wash their hands frequently.
- Provide appropriate PPE to be used at the club by members if required.
- Manage the opening of gates, locks, target sheds etc. and ensure touch points are sanitised.
- Take steps to improve ventilation where possible – this may simply be opening doors or windows to improve airflow. Obviously, shooting outdoors is to be encouraged if possible.
- A log needs to be kept of people present at the range, not only for the normal completing of firearms and attendance logs, but also for “track and trace” purposes.
- Reinforce the fact that people shouldn’t attend the club if they have symptoms or have been told to self isolate. Continue to display and encourage the use of QR codes.
- When introducing new people to shooting or running courses, further steps may be necessary as it is likely that trainers and coaches will need to step inside the recommended safe distances. The use of PPE (masks and/or visors) in these situations should be considered.
- If club equipment is used, make sure it is sanitised before being used by another shooter.
- If refreshments are prepared and/or consumed at the club offer guidance about doing this safely.
- If payment for use of the facilities is necessary and required use contactless payment methods or ask members to make a bank transfer for the money involved.
- When shooting is complete members often want to chat to friends. Try to encourage this to take place in a safe manner by keeping adequate spacing, wearing masks etc. as appropriate.
- Be aware that different Home Countries may have different requirements

The Return to Shooting

These considerations are all about protecting club members and the rest of the community from the risks associated with Covid 19. However, it's also important for us all to get participants back into target shooting whilst maintaining a safe environment. To facilitate this, clubs will need to be aware of the feelings and attitudes of the members.

Some shooters will be returning to shooting for the first time since the start of the pandemic and some clubs may just be reopening. There are likely to be a lot of people too wary to start to resume activity in a completely normal way. It may be that clubs decide to continue to enforce the use of masks in crowded club room and sanitise more regularly to give confidence to those who are unsure of a completely open environment. Others may be hesitant to return to shooting as they are unsure what the new procedures will be like.

We need to create a situation that gives confidence and provide a comfortable environment for people to restart or continue their sport. It is well worth communicating with members to see how they feel about returning and advise them of what to expect when they return to the club. It will also be worthwhile asking those that are more reluctant, what would make them more likely to come back to shooting.

It is likely to be a gradual return to the "new normal" and will doubtless need more communication with members, telling them what's happening at the club and some general encouragement to get them back into shooting. Quite a number will wait to see what their friends do before restarting. It may be we have to generate some social activity to kick start the process e.g. a reopening fun shoot and social evening – so long as it can be done safely. Alternatively, it may be that some clubs have to open more often with smaller groups to give confidence for some. The other issue is that many have found other things to do during the lockdown periods. As a sport, we will have to "sell" target shooting again to get them back. Alongside this, attracting new members will play a part in returning club membership levels to normal.

It will no doubt require some thought and a little extra work to get things going. However, if left to chance it will take considerably longer with the added consequence of a potential negative impact on clubs and the sport as a whole.