

## NHSC Guidelines on Return of Spectators to GAA Club Games

**Purpose** - the NHSC have issued guidelines to county boards and clubs on key Covid-19 control measures required to operate safe events for spectators in line with Government Public Health advice. In the absence of specific Government advice on spectators and mass gatherings clubs are advised to take a practical, responsible, and common-sense approach to managing risk while observing existing regulations. It is recommended these guidelines are adopted by all Donegal GAA clubs. The guidelines cover: communications; capacity; social distancing; contact tracing; ticketing; sanitation and toilets; ground staff; medical protocols; and, ancillary activity.

**Communications** - clear and concise information making spectators aware of risks - and that risks cannot be eliminated completely - before consider attending any club games. Spectators are asked to help by staying away if displaying Covid-19 symptoms, managing risk via social distancing etc and bringing their own hand sanitiser, not entering the field of play and keeping a record of their contacts at the match for potential tracing purposes – all spectators are encouraged to download the HSE tracing app ([click here](#));

**Capacity** – based on guidance in place in early July, the original NHSC guidelines foresaw a maximum gathering of 500 being permitted within GAA grounds from July 20<sup>th</sup>. This deadline has now been pushed out to August 10<sup>th</sup> at the earliest. Hence, the guideline capacity remains at 200 and this number includes staff, volunteers, players, backroom staff, media, contractors, and spectators of all ages. Prior to August 10<sup>th</sup> every ground should be risk assessed to ensure it is capable of hosting a gathering of up to 500 people. In line with social distancing measures, clubs should designate someone to record the number attending and the use of a manual clicker is highly recommended.

**Social Distancing** - where small groups of people are attending games, members should wherever possible be from the same household. Individuals and small groups should remain insofar as possible in the same area for the duration of the game, remain 2m apart and avoid intermingling with other individuals or groups. Signage should be in place to remind spectators to practice and maintain social distancing and consideration should be given to the ingress and egress of patrons. Before, between and after games it is essential spectators do not congregate in groups in the vicinity of the grounds as social distancing and contact tracing measures will be compromised and the potential risk of transmission higher.

**Contact Tracing** - all practical measures should be taken to inform spectators attending to restrict contacts through public announcements, signage and stewards. Ground management are responsible for the contact tracing records of staff, volunteers, players and officials but not for the contact tracing records of spectators. All third-party contractors and media must have their own contact tracing measures in place and avoid any close contact with spectators where possible.

**Ticketing** - for games with an expected attendance of 200 or more it is recommended that entry should be by pre-paid ticket only (to include spectators and non-spectators and complementary). Tickets must be purchased in advance of the game online or at a location away from the ground entry point

if on the day sales are necessary. The ticket allocation for spectators must be determined from the maximum capacity of 500 minus the expected number of players, support staff, ground staff and volunteers, officials and all others present in a non-spectating capacity. Key information should be available to prospective spectators before they purchase a ticket to ensure they understand the specific Covid-19 risks involved in match attendance.

**Sanitation and Toilets** - Grounds must ensure that there are adequate male and female toilet facilities available for the expected attendance. Toilets should be well ventilated with a robust documented cleaning regime in place. Hand sanitiser stations should be located at entry points and at other key touchpoint areas where handwashing facilities are not available.

**Ground Staff** - All players, officials, staff and volunteers must have completed GAA questionnaire and online training. Clubs should designate a competent individual to ensure there is compliance with all relevant Covid-19 guidance (someone who can dedicate sufficient time to the role) and have appropriate stewarding in place.

**Medical Protocols** - Should any patron present to staff or stewards with any symptoms of Covid-19 either before entering or whilst in the ground they should be advised to go home immediately and contact their GP. In the unlikely event that a patron presenting with symptoms is not in a position to go home, grounds should ensure there is a room available for that person to isolate whilst waiting on the HSE/Department of Health and Social Services to respond.

**Ancillary Activity** - Consideration should only be given to the operation of catering, merchandising and programme concessions if suitable controls are in place to minimise the risk to staff and spectators as per Covid-19 specific risk assessment. For matches that are broadcast on TV or online ensure that TV crews complete their own site specific Covid-19 risk assessment.