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An open letter to the PM: Golf can safely help in first phase of recovery plan



As government prepares to present its road map out of restrictions on 22 February, England Golf CEO Jeremy Tomlinson has written an open letter to the prime minister to reinforce the scientific view that golf can not only be played

safely during the first phase of recovery, but also help the country bounce back physically and mentally from lockdown.

Dear Prime Minister,

The light at the end of the tunnel is definitely shining a little brighter for us all as we emerge from the dark, winter months of January and February.

For that we should all be truly thankful.

And, very much in line with most people, I genuinely hope we can soon banish the harmful cycle of lockdowns once and for all.

I understand you will announce more details on this front next Monday when you present a road map out of lockdown and back towards some sort of normality.

Now, as you consider easing restrictions, I truly believe our great game of golf is exceptionally well placed to play a positive role in this first phase of recovery and should be given that opportunity by government.

Today's confirmation that over 15 million people have received their first vaccination jab is just the shot in the arm we all needed!

Combined with the rate of transmission slowing to the point where the 'R' number is below one, there are real signs that our sacrifices over recent times have paid off and our continued social distancing efforts will allow more interaction and freedoms in the future.

We all owe a huge debt of gratitude to the NHS staff, army medics and volunteers who have rolled out the vaccination programme to such great effect – heroes one and all.

But now we need to look ahead – to find a way to re-energise the nation through a programme of safe activity and exercise to lift the collective morale of the country.

England Golf has been clear from the start – golf is a sport played safely in the open air with social distancing part and parcel of every round.

With the introduction of our Play Safe, Stay Safe protocols after the first lockdown, we made our sport even more secure.



I'm sure you will be aware that many golfers have already contacted their own MPs to make this point and no doubt many more will reinforce this view by voicing their support for an expedient, safe return to playing golf in the days ahead.

For in excess of two million golfers in England, the mental and physical health benefits of playing our sport can be clearly documented. This isn't anecdotal, this is based on solid scientific data.

The fact that these benefits can be enjoyed without presenting any undue risk to wider public health is hugely significant and this point has been stressed again in recent correspondence with government.

You will recall that last month, the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Golf presented government with an updated scientific paper which once again demonstrated clearly how golf can be played safely during any stage of a pandemic.

In short, golf remains a sport that's safe and good for both body and soul.

Our golfing community has struggled without access to the game they love. For many, the mental hardships have been tougher to endure than the physical ones.

Like all sports, we have clubs navigating through the economic problems of lockdown, the uncertainty of a re-start date, the questions from furloughed staff about jobs, the queries from members about annual subscriptions.

These have been tough times that none of us want to visit again.

We are all trying to keep positive through what we hope is the final stage of lockdown, remaining optimistic that the "follow the science" news remains upbeat.

Importantly, we see no reason why golf can't be one of the first sports to return, to help with the healing process for our country, and to ensure that the sun can once again shine on us all through the 2021 season.

Kind regards

Jeremy Tomlinson

CEO, England Golf