**Golf Clubs & Golfers (COVID-19) Updates**

Last guidance update: Thursday 19 March, 10:00

**Golf clubs and golfers must take appropriate steps to make sure they minimise the risk of infection from the COVID-19 virus.**

In general, golf is a healthy pursuit played in the open air.

The risk to players, who are of good health and not classed in a vulnerable age category, is smaller than most other sports provided the expert advice is followed.

The vast majority of golfers can continue to play at your facility.

However, golf facilities must be mindful of the older age profile of their membership and understand that it is only prudent to implement sensible policies to limit the potential spread of any outbreak.

England Golf has taken the decision to postpone its championship events until 7 June.

Our championships involve large numbers of people travelling and working together to run a successful event, and we consider it impossible to ensure the safety and welfare of all concerned. Golf clubs should consider if it is appropriate to take a similar stance for Open competitions on the basis of government advice on travel and other social restrictions.

Clubs should also carefully consider if it is possible and appropriate for them to run club competitions and matches in line with current government guidance on social gathering and social distancing.

These are unprecedented and extremely tough times for golf, but we would ask all our clubs and golfers to adopt a common-sense approach.

**General advice:**

* Indoor, social aspects of golf club life should be curtailed based on expert advice on social gatherings
* Golfers suffering from or showing symptoms of the COVID-19 infection must self-isolate and stay away from their golf club. The length of time spent in self-isolation should be in line with government recommendations
* Vulnerable groups or those with underlying health issues should heed government advice to self-isolate
* Golf clubs should prominently display public health posters available via the NHS England website in all washrooms and at entrances to the course and clubhouse. These posters should act as a reminder to follow the 20-second handwashing techniques recommended by Public Health England.
* Golf clubs should consider installing extra hand sanitizers around their facility, on or near teeing areas and practice areas
* To minimise social contact in locker rooms golfers should be allowed to change shoes in the car park
* Golf club staff and volunteers – while taking precautions for their own health such as wearing protective gloves – should carry out regular cleaning of surfaces and door handles used by patrons. Where possible doors should be left ajar
* Cash transactions should be avoided and card payments encouraged
* Clubs may wish to offer a takeaway service for food to minimise the need for social contact
* On the course, golfers should try to maintain a minimum distance of two metres between themselves and playing partners. Take care to adhere to this on teeing grounds and greens
* Golfers should consider playing in smaller groupings – ie two balls – to adhere with social distancing
* Clubs should consider increased spacing between tee times to prevent the bunching of groups
* Golfers should leave the flagstick in the hole at all times and clubs should remove rakes from the course to limit the risk of infection spreading from hand to hand.
* Buggies should be for solo use only and cleaned after every outing. Golfers should only use their own trolley and clean it after every round
* Common courtesies – handshakes and embraces in accordance with the accepted etiquette of the game – are to be avoided. Offering a thumbs up or some other form of friendly greeting should be used as an alternative
* Golf clubs should desist from holding group coaching sessions. Careful consideration should be given to individual coaching based on expert advice on social distancing
* Greenkeepers should remove pins from practice putting greens
* A review of how practice balls are dispensed and cleaned is also recommended