

KENT COUNTY RFU INFORMATION SENDOUT JULY/AUGUST 2020



1. COVID RELIEF FUND

Is your club in danger of closing (going under)? If so, clubs are reminded that the window for applications to the COVID Relief Fund remains open.

Applications will be considered in terms of actual need resulting directly and demonstrably from the lockdown.

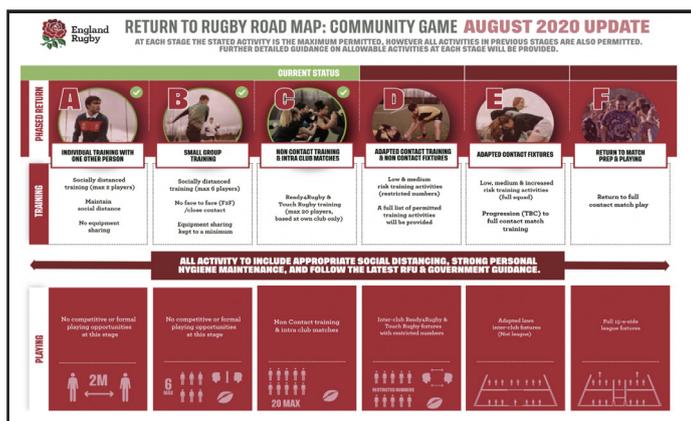
Clubs that have previously applied for and were unsuccessful in receiving funding may reapply, provided that there has been a significant and material detrimental change to their financial position as a direct result of COVID that threatens their viability and medium- to long-term sustainability.

Applicant clubs will be notified as soon as possible, as to whether or not their applications have been successful, consistent with clubs ensuring that they provide all necessary information and financial data at the time of application. (see [HERE](#) for information on how to apply)

To apply please contact the office for an assessment form. office@kent-rugby.org

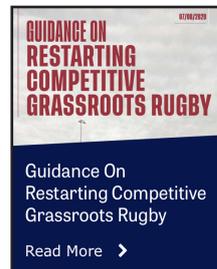
2. RETURN TO RUGBY

We have moved from Stage B to Stage C. This means you can recommence some larger group rugby activity (20 players max.) subject to adherence with RFU guidance.



Any return is a decision for individual clubs to make and they must continue to follow government Coronavirus (Covid-19) guidelines, along with any local government lockdown restrictions that may be introduced.

The return will initially be through NON-Contact rugby focused on Ready4Rugby, a non-contact game, enabling two teams of up to 10 players to engage in training and match activity in their own club environment. Follow the below links for coaching and playing resources and all you need to know about the new game format.



Subject to satisfactory operation through August the RFU may be in a position to signal we can move to inter-club matches in September as we move to Stage D.

It seems clear to us that the prospect of returning any time soon to the 15-a-side contact form of the game is remote. At the same time, we know that kids are longing to get back to rugby and competitive sport. To that end, and subject to all the provisos of Covid-19 management and a move to Stage D, Kent Youth Rugby is proposing to introduce a series of Ready4Rugby competitions from October.

September should be about getting players back into rugby, getting them fit, working on skills and, preparing them for the Ready4Rugby format.

From October we hope to offer three Ready4Rugby competitions:

- Group 1 U12s and U13s
- Group 2 U14s and U15
- Group 3 U16s to U18s

We will be looking to introduce as much flexibility as possible into the format. We know that our youngsters rely heavily on parents to get them to training and matches and we want to ensure that they are confident that players will be as safe as can be. The mixed age-grades, which are in line with Regulation 15, will give small clubs the chance to participate whilst larger clubs could enter multiple teams. We are exploring the possibility of local club bubbles to reduce travelling (and the cost thereof) and maximise pitch availability.

The competition dates will largely be in line with the previously published Kent Structured Season calendar.

Once we have fleshed out how the competitions will work we will publish details on the county website and via Facebook and Twitter so please keep a look-out.

3. 17-YEAR-OLDS PLAYING ADULT RUGBY

Regulation 15.6:



As per last year, if you have 17-year-olds who wish to play rugby with an Adult team you must receive both authorisation in principle as a club (Club Approval) and then authorisation for each player (Player Approval) you would like to play up. Even if you received approval last year, you will need to re-apply this year. You can do this now using the online form [HERE](#).

Please note that for your application to be approved your club will have to satisfy a range of safeguarding criteria and will need to have completed its Safeguarding Audit for the 2020/21 season. You will need to have an up to date safeguarding policy and details of your safeguarding officer(s) on your club website.

For more information on this process, you can visit the Kent rugby website [HERE](#).

4. DBS CHECKS

All Adults working within the Children and Young people within our clubs are required to have an RFU DBS check. These checks are valid for three years. During Lockdown, due to the complications in verifying the identity of a person virtually, the RFU temporarily suspended the processing of new DBS Checks and Renewals. However,

the system is now up and running again and clubs need to make sure that they are working through any backlog to ensure that everyone has a current DBS Check.

If a person is applying for a DBS check, they will now need to have completed the RFU's Online Safeguarding Course. This will go-live of the week due to circumstances beyond the RFU's control so you can't process a DBS check before this goes live.

If your login to the RFU's E-DBS system has been suspended due to inactivity over the lockdown period, you can email dbseapp@rfu.com to have your account re-enabled.

5. ANNUAL SAFEGUARDING AUDITS

The Annual Safeguarding Audit will once again be completed on GMS for the 2020-21 Season. This is a Rugby Club's annual opportunity to review its safeguarding arrangements and confirm that everything is in place to make our sport as safe as possible for children and young people. ALL Clubs with a Mini or Youth Section or who have 17-year-olds playing in their Senior Teams, subject to having completed the relevant forms, MUST complete the Audit by 30th November 2020.

The Audit asks you to confirm a number of things, one of which is that you have a Safeguarding Policy available on your Club's Website. Your Policy should be a document that is reviewed and updated regularly. We would also suggest that it's brought to your management committee to review and approve so that they have a clear understanding of the measures that should be in place within the club. If when we review your policy on your website it's dated 2014, this might suggest that your policy hasn't been looked at in a while! The RFU website has a model policy you can use [HERE](#).

If you are having any difficulties with the Audit or any of the questions, please do get in touch.

6. REPORTING A CONCERN

As we start a new season and return to rugby after a fair few months away, it's helpful to remind ourselves and our coaches, managers, and first aiders, etc. Of what we might be looking out for in terms of safeguarding concerns and what to do if we have a concern.



If someone raises a concern about a child or a coach's behaviour towards a child, you must **NOT** investigate the concern yourself. Your first action must be to report the concern to the National RFU Safeguarding Team. You can do this using the Referral Form on the RFU's Website **HERE**.

As the season restarts, it is always worth reminding anyone involved in working with children and young people at your club of their duty to do this.

Any questions please contact Owen Smith, Kent County Safeguarding Manager. safeguarding@kent-rugby.org

7. CLUSTER CLUB FORUMS

Kent RFU has been meeting with clubs throughout the county, using Zoom to Establish six Club Cluster Forums covering; North Kent, East Kent, Mid Kent, West Kent, Metropolitan Kent, and Women & Girls.

111 representatives from 49 clubs registered for first meetings, with 98 attendees finally joining our newly established Cluster Leads and members of the Kent RFU Executive.



This initiative is a new approach to enhancing communications between clubs, our CB, and assigned RFU representatives during these challenging times. The Cluster Forum leads report into the Kent RFU Club Development Chair and provides an opportunity to; establish local club networking, identify good practice, clarify current guidance, and share innovation and ideas.

At each inaugural forum meeting, the RFU Landscape was discussed with an opportunity to feedback club concerns. The results of the recent Kent RFU Club Survey were presented to the clubs by the CB, together with an update on funding support still available to our clubs.

Many clubs shared the same concerns at this difficult time; eagerly awaiting the opportunity to start playing again, the RFU move to Stage C was welcomed and worries regarding the potential reduction in RFU Coaching support were a particular criticism.

Moving forward we will be providing feedback to all clubs attending, together with a copy of the Club Survey results summary.

In addition to these, details relating to a new support initiative that Kent RFU has procured for clubs, the launch of Club Champions. We are hopeful that Club Champions working directly with each club in the county, will help you all maximise your sponsorship income and marketing potential.

We will be organising further Cluster Forums in the future, as we move together towards re-establishing our game, our aim to work together to maintain the many clubs we currently have and grow rugby further within our communities.

8. KENT COUNTY AGM

Due to the COVID pandemic, we postponed our AGM, which was due to be held in June. We had hoped to hold it at a later date, but it has become clear that this will not be possible for the foreseeable future. We have therefore made the difficult decision to hold a 'virtual' AGM, via the Zoom facility on Weds 2nd Sept 2020 at 7 pm.

If you wish to attend this meeting, please send an email to office@kent-rugby.org, and in due course, you will receive joining instructions and a protocols/procedures note, which we hope will ensure the meeting runs as smoothly as possible.

9. OPPORTUNITIES PAGE

If any clubs need help in advertising for new coaches etc Kent County our happy to assist by placing your advert on our opportunities page on our website and social media platforms.

Please send adverts ready for publication to the Kent County office. (office@kent-rugby.org)

