



Frequently Asked Questions in relation to the Protocol for the safe re-introduction of golf in Northern Ireland.

Q. Are the Unions recommending these restrictions?

A. The protocol sets out the basis on which golf has been permitted as an activity can be played in the coming months, as approved by the Northern Ireland Executive. This permits golf to resume in a controlled and phased manner, in line with the advice and guidance of public health officials. The protocol was drafted in consultation with golf club managers, industry professionals and healthcare professionals. We are grateful that golf has been allowed to return and the protocol is in place to ensure that restrictions are not re-imposed.

Q. Are golfers exempt from the national restrictions and public health measures that have been put in place by the Government?

No, golfers are expected to observe the underlying public health guidance set out at: <https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/> and <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/>.

Q. Can I pay a green fee to play at my local course?

A. The basis on which golf has been permitted to restart includes a provision that golf is for members only in phase 1. The inclusion of guests and/or visitors may have resulted in a later return for all golfers. Northern Ireland is still in the serious stages of a public health emergency and golf must ensure it plays its part in limiting the spread of the virus, including making contact tracing easier for the authorities. In Step 2, members will be permitted to bring guests, provided their club permits them to do so, whilst Step 3 will see the return of visitors.

Q. Whose role is it to monitor members coming to our club?

A. Whilst golf clubs must ensure that the game is played safely and in accordance with the protocol, it is not the responsibility of golf clubs to ensure that members adhere to the laws of the land.

Q. Can Golf Club Members Travel, while using Social Distancing, to Play Golf at their club

A. The updated regulations state that a "drive to a safe space or facility is permitted for the purpose of exercise", in this case golf.

Q. I work at a golf club as an administrator/sales assistant/manager. Can I travel to work now that the golf club is open?

A. Yes. Your employer should provide you with a letter stating you are required to attend work at a golf club facility, this will confirm the validity of your journey.

Q. Golf Clubs have no potential for revenue with what is being proposed (no competitions, no green fees) but increased costs by opening. What advice do you have?

A. Golf returning will allow members to enjoy their club facilities in the first instance and membership revenue is an important income stream for clubs. The Step by Step Plan allows for a return to visitors and competitive golf (see Appendix 1 of the ILGU & GUI's Protocol).

Q. Can we advertise membership at this time?

A. Yes. Clubs should be mindful not to undermine their existing membership and be conscious that existing members may want to avail of any discounted package that would be available to new members.

Q. Can a Golf Club issue temporary membership to golfers?

A. A club is entitled to offer memberships to individuals in line with its own constitution/bye-laws. As above clubs need to be mindful of the value of each category of membership and ensure members don't switch to a cheaper membership category that is perceived as better value.

Q. Will there be any grants available to Golf Clubs in the future?

A. The Unions have prepared a high-level paper for government to consider, this outlines the financial hardship many clubs will incur as a result of the pandemic. We will continue to outline the case for supports to the relevant agencies and departments. The Leisure sector was added to the £25,000 grants but only to clubs with an NAV between £15,000 & £51,000.

We continue to press government for additional funding for clubs that not have been able to avail of the current programmes, details of which are available at; <https://www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk>

In addition, the Unions working with CGI will continue to review our supports and programmes that are available to clubs and will continue to assist clubs retain and grow membership.

Q. Do Junior Golfers need to be supervised on the Practice Range?

A. Yes.

Q. Can a Professional Golfer give a lesson to a member?

A. On the face of it, it would appear that it is permissible for individual golf tuition to take place during Step 1. We understand that the PGA will provide guidance to members on this matter.

Q. I am over 70, can I play golf?

A. It is up to each individual to decide for themselves, based on their own circumstances, living arrangements and potential for contact with others at certain times, whether playing golf is compatible with the Northern Ireland Executive's advice on "Shielding" and also for "Vulnerable Persons".

For information on Vulnerable Persons & Shielding see:

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-vulnerable-people>

Q. Can members of the same household share a buggy?

A. Yes, as long as it is sanitized prior to and after use and is not used by any other person during your round.

Q. What should our club do for employees coming to work?

A. The Workplace and Safety Guidelines produced by the Northern Ireland Executive is designed to support employers and workers to put measures in place that will prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace, when the economy begins to slowly open up, following the temporary closure of most businesses during the worst phase of the current pandemic.

The Guidelines should be used by all workplaces to adapt their workplace procedures and practices to comply fully with the COVID-19 related public health protection measures identified as necessary by the PHA. It sets out in very clear terms for employers and workers the steps that they must take before a workplace reopens, and while it continues to operate.

It can be accessed here:

<https://www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/content/coronavirus-workplace-safety-guidelines-and-social-distancing>

Q. Signage

Social Distancing Posters for NI can be found here:

<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/social-distancing-poster>

Q. Are juniors allowed to play on the course?

Yes, as outlined in the protocol document juniors are encouraged to return to golf, for the first two phases juniors should be accompanied by an adult (where possible from the same household).

Q. When can junior training/activity on practice grounds resume?

A. Step Two of the plan outlines that training can take place in small groups where social distancing can be maintained.

Q. Is there a time limit that members can spend on a practice ground during Step 1?

A. It is likely that clubs will have to put measures in place to manage access to practice facilities. This will be a matter for each individual club to manage, based on capacity and demand.

Q. Where can we get the signage mentioned in the protocol document?

Posters, Leaflets and other resources are available from many independent stationery/security companies