Club Matters Return to Sport/Activity Surveys

Headline Findings

Club and Group Participants/Members
Introduction

The impact of Covid-19 and the subsequent national lockdown on sport clubs and community organisations, was significant, with many facing major financial challenges, concerns about retaining members and volunteers and the changes they will have to make to be able to support them when they re-open.

In July and August 2020, Continuum Leisure undertook a survey, on behalf of Club Matters, with volunteers and participants from clubs and community groups to explore their feelings around returning to activity.

This headline report explores how habits have changed, how they are feeling about returning to their club/group, how soon they are likely to return and what they need to support their return.

This report is one of a series which also includes the full reports, 6 category reports and a number of sport specific reports.

For further insights and recommendations, please click here.

Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic Club Matters has developed resources to assist clubs/organisations to manage their emergency response, planning and reopening phases. For more details, please visit the Club Matters website.
Participants/Members Responded

2,521

Location of Participant/Member Respondents
Participation Dropped Dramatically During Lockdown...

82% did less or nothing during lockdown

More likely to have done less/nothing:
- Women.
- People with a disability or LTHC.
- Under 35s.

54% of individual outdoor sports participants did the same or more

Sports least impacted:
- Golf (68% same / more)
- Running (57% same / more)
The Pandemic has Changed How People Feel About Taking Part in a Club/Group Environment

What’s affecting people’s feelings?

- **Health Risks**
  - To themselves and their family
- **Social Distancing**
  - Can they trust others to stick to the rules?
- **Missing Friendships**
  - Appreciating friendships and shared experiences

- **All respondents**: 42%
- **Undecided / Not Returning**: 78%
Anxiety Levels have a Strong Influence on Return

- ‘Not at All’ anxious: 44%
- Low to moderate anxiety: 44%
- Significant levels of anxiety: 12%

- Anxiety is linked to personal circumstances and media messages, not demographics.
- The exception is people with a disability or LTHC (20% compared to 10%).
- Anxiety is higher amongst those ‘at risk’ of not returning.
- Anxiety doesn’t disappear on return and needs ongoing monitoring.
Participants/Members are Most Concerned About…. Staying Safe and if the Experience is still Worthwhile

- **Hygiene**
  - Keeping equipment clean
  - Keeping facilities clean

- **Restricted experience**
  - Is it still worth it?

- **Collective compliance**
  - People not sticking to the rules
  - Rules not being consistently enforced

- "Making sure everyone obeys the rules of cleanliness and that equipment is cleaned as required…"

- "We have started socially distanced training which is not the same at all as full training and matches. We still really miss this part…"

- "Social distancing [is] almost non existent now we are back…"
Most Participants are Likely to Return but... 8% are ‘At Risk’

- **77% Returned or Eager**
  - 41% Already returned
  - 36% As soon as it opens

- **‘At Risk’**
  - 15% Awaiting reassurance/opportunity
  - 7% Undecided
  - 1% Not returning

There is still an opportunity to re-engage those who are at risk...
Characteristics of ‘At Risk’ Participants/Members

8% of participants/members are at risk of not returning.

More likely to be At Risk of not returning:
• Females.
• People with a disability or LTHC.
• People who did less/stopped during lockdown.
• People with higher levels of anxiety.
• Those dissatisfied with club/group comms.
Three Main Barriers to Returning

“On-going Covid–19 restrictions that have to be put in place for protection that really limit the enjoyment of being at the club.”

“Golf is very safe sport and unlikely Covid–19 will affect us due to ease of social distancing.”

“We want to return to playing but ...5-a-side is a high-risk pastime.”

“Some people may not take social distancing seriously.”
Characteristics of Returned Participants/Members

41% had returned to their clubs/groups in August.

Most likely to have returned:
- People aged 65+.
- Males.
- People without a disability or LTHC.
- Those who have participated for 10+ years.
- Those who are less anxious.
What do Participants/Members Need to Encourage their Return?

“Make better use of the outside space to support social distancing.”

“Ensure distancing and adherence to the rules in place at any time with sanctions for those who do not comply.”

“Keeping us all up to date with current guidance and club complying with this.”

“They are doing a great job, keeping things clean, and making the best of the restrictions they’re in.”
Participants/Members are Most Looking Forward to.... Seeing Friends and Playing Again.

- Seeing friends
  - Socialising with friends
- Playing again
  - Competing
  - Training

“Actually meeting up with friends (not on a screen).”

“Forgetting everything and just doing what I love with my friends.”

“Partner [based] training which cannot be replaced by weights and individual exercise.”

“Getting back on court and competitions.”
Satisfaction with Communications from their Club/Group?

- **10%** Dissatisfied
- **19%** Moderately Satisfied
- **71%** Very / Extremely Satisfied

- Those ‘at risk’ of not returning were less likely to be satisfied with comms from their club/group.

- Good communications can aid return and retention by:
  - Helping to alleviate anxiety.
  - Keeping people connected.
How Clubs/Groups Can Improve Communication

- **Multi-Channel**
  - (social, web, email, phone, messages, video calls)

- **Regular & Timely**
  - (at least weekly with fast responses to queries)

- **Social & Interactive**
  - (help people keep in touch)

- **Informative**
  - (reflective of the current status & help reduce anxiety)

- **Positive**
  - (upbeat about benefits of returning)
Views and Behaviours of Under 16s

• 93% did less or stopped during lockdown.
• 91% have already or will return to their club/group as soon as it opens.
• 29% said Covid-19 has changed how they feel about taking part at their club/group.
• More likely to consider themselves ‘not at all anxious’ (51%) compared to all respondents.
Recommendations

• **BAME.** Understand and address the needs and concerns of BAME groups to provide inclusive participation opportunities.

• **Digital Engagement.** Maintain virtual activities to support the ongoing engagement of participants/members and reduce the risk of dropout.

• **Ongoing Communications.** Put plans in place to drive effective ongoing communications across a range of different channels that aid re-engagement, retention and reduce anxiety.

• **Additional Volunteers.** Ask participants/members for help to boost volunteer numbers.

• **New rules.** Be clear about the rules and determine whether some groups would benefit from a re-induction.

• **Monitor Anxiety.** Develop ways to monitor the anxiety levels of participants/members on an ongoing basis.