



**PITCH UP  
FOR RUGBY**

# 2021 ACTIVATION GUIDE



England  
Rugby



THE NATIONAL  
LOTTERY

OFFICIAL PARTNER TO THE RFU

# PITCH UP FOR RUGBY RETURNS FOR 2021

**WELCOME TO PITCH UP FOR RUGBY 2021. WE'RE DELIGHTED THAT THE PROGRAMME IS BACK AGAIN THIS YEAR TO HELP YOU ATTRACT EVEN MORE RETURNING PLAYERS, COACHES, MATCH OFFICIALS AND VOLUNTEERS TO YOUR CLUB FOR THE UPCOMING SEASON.**

It's been a tough 18 months for all of us, but as with all things rugby, we're all in it together and we need your help. We see Pitch Up for Rugby as the perfect platform for bringing rugby back to our communities, with exposure across national and local communications. So, Pitch Up for Rugby 2021 will take place nationally over the weekends of **4th and 11th September**, with around 600 clubs participating, giving rugby a great presence in local communities throughout the period.

Plus, building upon the success of 2020 – which saw over 35,000 players and 30,000 spectators across one weekend – we're expanding the Pitch Up for Rugby programme for 2021 with a national PR campaign, supported by The National Lottery. Full details of this programme and how you can use the assets we've created through your club channels, are detailed in the guide. We hope you're as excited by this activity as we are!

We want all clubs to get involved and this guide will also take you through our top tips for creating a successful event at your club, including how you can promote your weekend and create an engaging programme of activities.

We look forward to hearing about your event.

**Bill Sweeney**  
Chief Executive



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# WHAT IS PITCH UP FOR RUGBY?

PITCH UP FOR RUGBY IS A NATIONAL CELEBRATION TO GET YOUR CLUB BACK TOGETHER AND HELPING YOU TO MAXIMISE MEMBERSHIP FOR THE FORTHCOMING SEASON. THE FOCUS FOR 2021 IS ON ENCOURAGING ALL PREVIOUS MEMBERS TO RETURN – PLAYERS, VOLUNTEERS AND COACHES.

Running the programme over two weekends at a national level means that national communications will support your club and increase awareness of the event. Pitch Up for Rugby also gives you the opportunity to showcase your club to the local community, businesses and potential sponsors. All of this combined, will put your club in a great place as we enter the new season.

We're fortunate that the programme is being supported by The National Lottery, so you'll see their logo across many of the assets we're giving you.



**THE NATIONAL  
LOTTERY**



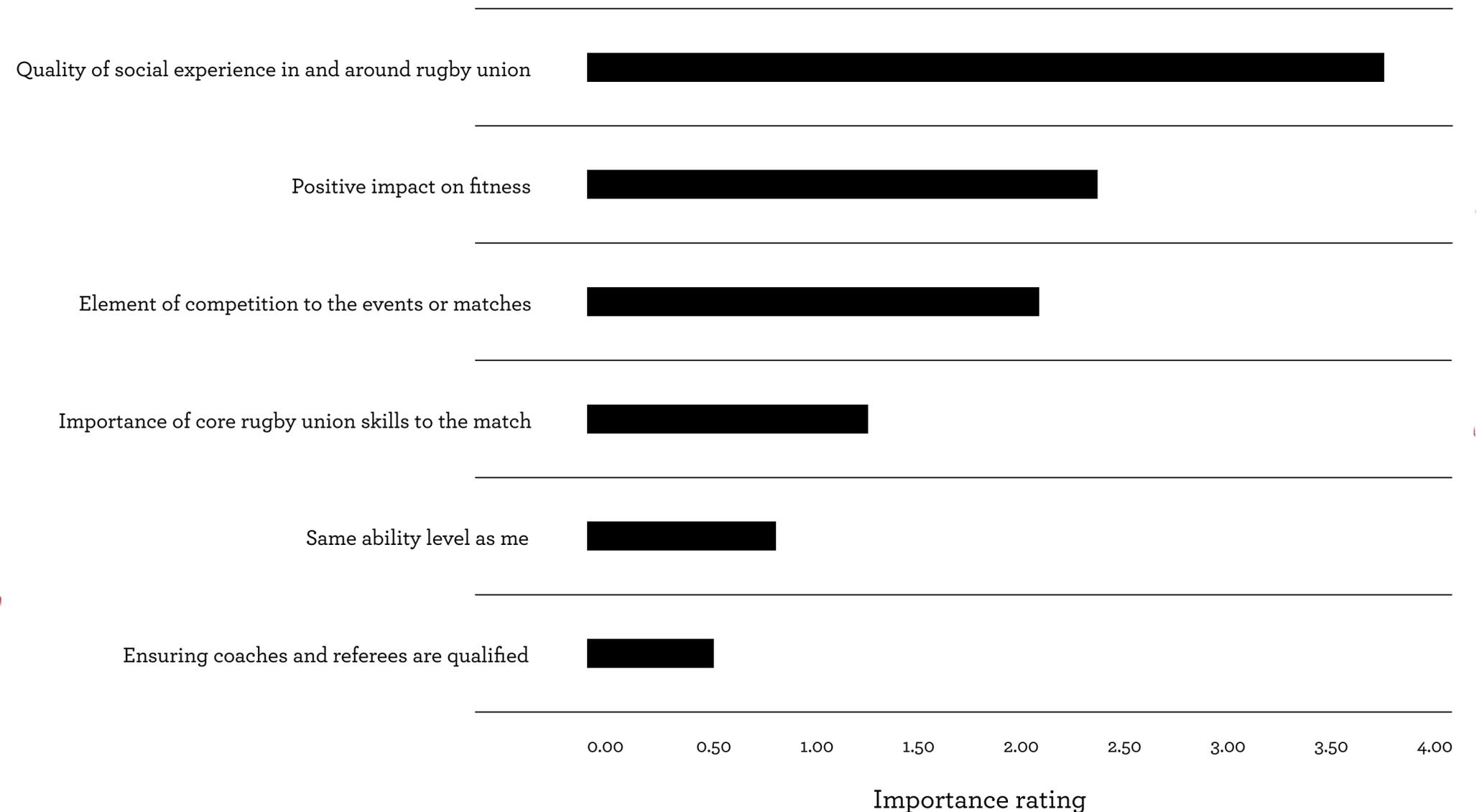
# WHY RUN A PITCH UP FOR RUGBY EVENT?

Our research has shown that 93% of players are keen to return to rugby as restrictions are eased, but there are a number of barriers to their return. Their biggest motivation to return is the social element, so it's vital that you bring this element of your club across in your communications and at your Pitch Up for Rugby event.

'Whilst it's likely most of your players will be keen to return, we do know there may be others within your club that still may be unsure. For some this down to their lifestyle, but for many it is concern around injury, particularly amongst the front five. Within this guide you will find guidance in how you communicate with these players and a Return to Rugby programme to support their return to fitness.

## MOTIVATING THOSE AT RISK OF LAPSING

We have our best chance of retaining players where we communicate and deliver a compelling **social experience**:



# CREATING YOUR PITCH UP FOR RUGBY EVENT

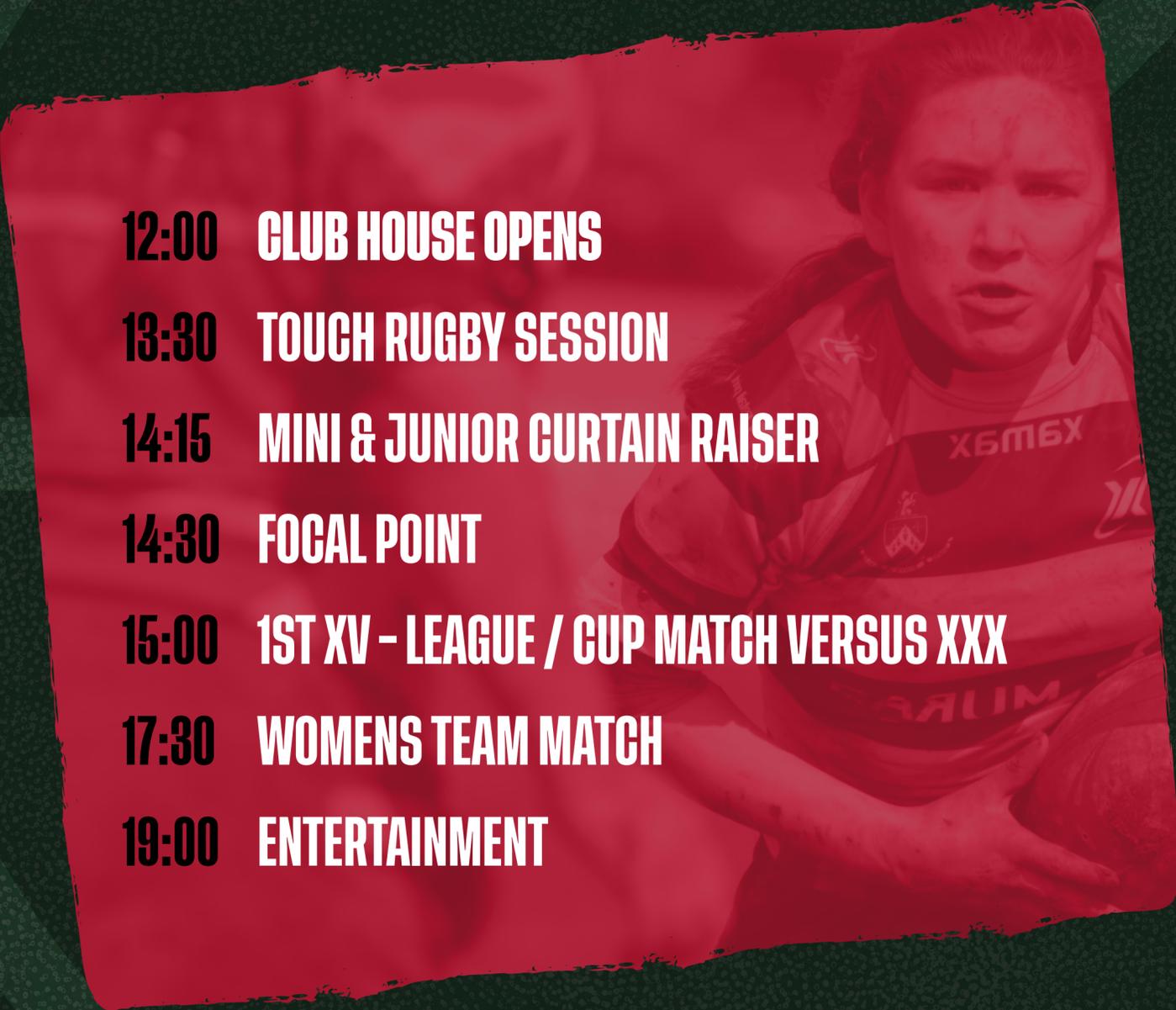
Your Pitch Up for Rugby event should be inclusive of all areas of your club. So, you'll need to create a schedule that encourages all members to attend, by providing both on-field and off-field entertainment.

A schedule example is shown here, but you should adapt this to the size of your club and the variety of teams you have playing, using all the playing space that you have.

Holding a combination of events across the day will ensure there is something for all your members and their families. It's also a great way to showcase your facility to the local community and show the range of activities that you host.

## TOP TIP

Create a mini working group to plan your event, sharing out responsibilities to create an effective event. Regular Zoom calls are a great way of updating each other

- 
- 12:00 CLUB HOUSE OPENS**
  - 13:30 TOUCH RUGBY SESSION**
  - 14:15 MINI & JUNIOR CURTAIN RAISER**
  - 14:30 FOCAL POINT**
  - 15:00 1ST XV - LEAGUE / CUP MATCH VERSUS XXX**
  - 17:30 WOMENS TEAM MATCH**
  - 19:00 ENTERTAINMENT**

# CREATING YOUR PITCH UP FOR RUGBY EVENT

Use local businesses and contacts within your club to add additional elements to your Pitch Up for Rugby event, this will encourage players, spectators and the local community to attend and stay for longer.

## TOP TIP

Have a membership stall where potential new players, coaches and volunteers can talk to a club member and sign up

BBQS



MINI COMPETITIONS



INFLATABLE ACTIVITIES



FACE PAINTING



# CREATING YOUR PITCH UP FOR RUGBY EVENT

It's a good idea to have a focal point for your event, so that a large crowd can form and help create a great atmosphere. Here are some ideas for your focal point:

- Ceremonial re-opening of the clubhouse
- Speech from club chairperson
- Attendance or speech from your local MP
- Attendance or speech from a former player who turned professional



# PROMOTING YOUR EVENT

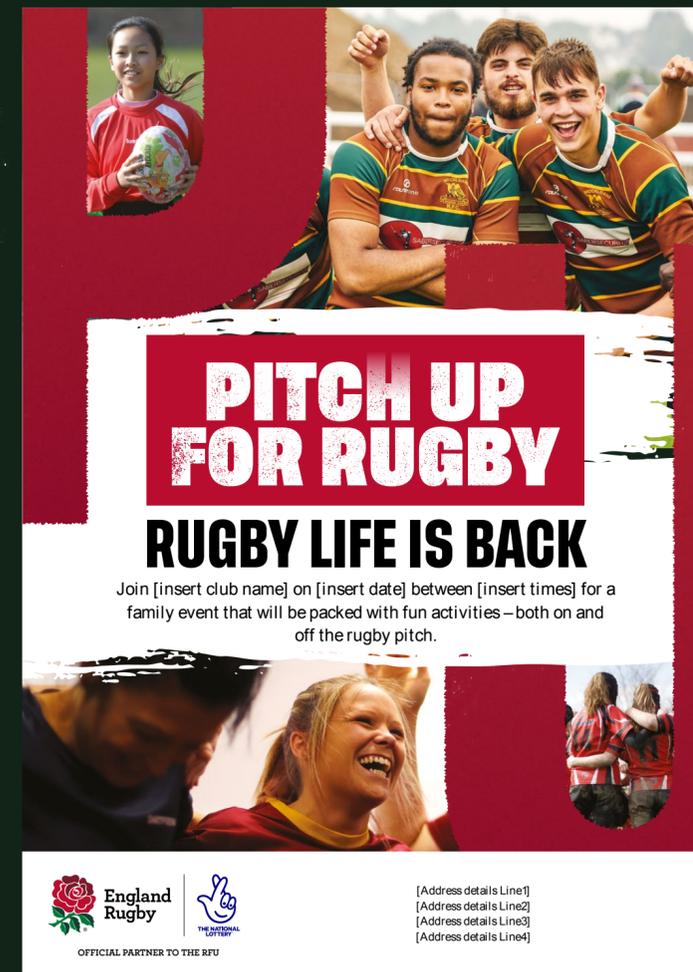
To support you in promoting your event, we've also created a suite of assets that are available via the resources page - [www.englandrugby.com/resources](http://www.englandrugby.com/resources). Each of these assets can be downloaded and used as provided, or they have editable fields allowing you to add your club logo, or your own imagery. The assets available to you include:

- Social media posts
- Email
- Press release for initial promotion
- Press release to support the nostalgia film and national campaign
- Posters
- Press ad

## TOP TIP

The press releases could also be used as news stories on your website

To ensure consistency in the campaign and to help us promote The National Lottery, we ask that you only use official assets for your Pitch Up for Rugby weekend. A range of physical assets to help you activate your day can be accessed via the club hub: <https://englandrugbyclubhub.com/>



**PITCH UP FOR RUGBY**

**RUGBY LIFE IS BACK**

Join [insert club name] on [insert date] between [insert times] for a family event that will be packed with fun activities – both on and off the rugby pitch.

England Rugby logo and The National Lottery logo. Text: OFFICIAL PARTNER TO THE RFU. [Address details Line1], [Address details Line2], [Address details Line3], [Address details Line4]



**PITCH UP FOR RUGBY**

**RUGBY LIFE IS BACK**

**EMBRACE IT AT PITCH UP 2021**

Join [insert club name] on [insert date] between [insert times] for a family event that will be packed with fun activities – both on and off the rugby pitch.

England Rugby logo and The National Lottery logo. Text: OFFICIAL PARTNER TO THE RFU.



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# PROMOTING YOUR EVENT

## SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is a vital communication tool for reaching your audience. The assets we're providing can be used within your club pages to advertise the event to your followers and if you wish to raise additional awareness, you could consider a paid campaign to reach a new audience.

## WE RECOMMEND POSTING ABOUT YOUR EVENT AS SOON AS YOU HAVE CONFIRMED DATES.

Consider following this up with a minimum of one post a week, with teaser information about what will be happening at your event, to encourage engagement. Where possible create interaction with your followers in the build up by asking questions e.g. What are you most looking forward to about returning to club rugby?



Set Pitch Up for Rugby up as an event on Facebook and invite all your followers to attend

## #PitchUpForRugby

Use the #PitchUp hashtag across all communications and encourage your members to use it as well

## @EnglandRugby

Tag @EnglandRugby in your communications to help show this is a national campaign

# NATIONAL CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW

We're going to tap into the nostalgia of former players, coaches the rugby community on what rugby has given them, from their grassroots days through to their professional days. The content will be centred around the unique experiences and emotions that take place at their club, and the togetherness players feel as part of a team and a club as a whole.

Our nostalgia film will feature stars of the game, including Lawrence Dallaglio, Sam Warburton, Maggie Alphonsi and Gavin Hastings. We'll be interviewing each player about their fondest grassroots club rugby memories – covering their funniest memory, the most embarrassing thing that happened to them while playing club rugby and the things they miss the most about not playing.



# NATIONAL CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW

Our nostalgia video will be supported by a bespoke research programme, which highlights the mental health benefits of being involved in team sports and the social connectivity being a member of a club brings.

This research will help attract media titles to cover the Pitch Up for Rugby programme, raising awareness of the campaign and helping direct more players to your clubs.

Once the campaign has gone live, we'll provide you with a press release and a copy of the video to use in your local press and across your social channels as part of your promotion of the event.

In the meantime please keep an eye out on England Rugby channels as well as the #PitchUpForRugby on all social media channels.



# CAMPAIGN GOES LIVE

**The  
Telegraph**

**B | B | C**

**Daily  
Mail**

**TheRUGBYPaper**  
THE BEST COVERAGE FROM ALL THE WEEKEND'S RUGBY

# LOCAL PR

Getting your local newspapers, radio and TV stations and local news websites interested in your local Pitch Up for Rugby event can be a great way of promoting what you have happening and getting the local community interested in coming down.

Here are 5 hints and tips of how best to capture the attention of your local media.

## TOP TIP

Make local media aware of your event as early as possible, then contact them again a week before to check if they can attend.



## THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU HAVE TO OFFER AT YOUR PITCH UP FOR RUGBY WEEKEND EVENT THAT MIGHT GRAB THEIR INTEREST, FOR EXAMPLE:

Do you have any notable local figures attending; local MPs, mayors, famous local faces.

Will you be rewarding any players or volunteers that have an interesting back story; such as a volunteer who has been with the club for a long period of time, someone who has overcome huge adversity to be where they are today or someone who has raised a lot for the local community during the pandemic.

Are you celebrating a particular anniversary (e.g. the age of the club) or other milestone moments.

# LOCAL PR



**LOCAL PRESS WANT TO COVER STORIES THAT SHOW POSITIVE COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTIONS SO MAKE CLEAR THE ROLE YOU PLAY IN THE COMMUNITY, DON'T BE AFRAID TO TELL THEM ALL THE GOOD YOU DO! EXAMPLES INCLUDE:**

Talking about how you have supported your members during COVID-19. If you have helped isolating or infirm people or if the club has been a hub of local charitable activity that is a positive story to tell.

Talk about any other voluntary or charitable initiatives you have.



**USE THE TEMPLATE PRESS MATERIALS WE PROVIDE TO TELL YOUR LOCAL MEDIA ABOUT THE EVENT. YOU WILL HAVE THE FOLLOWING YOU CAN SHARE:**

A press release to send to media about the event before it takes place for them to use to encourage people to come down to the event beforehand.

A broadcast notice, this is a specific note you can send to your local TV and radio stations to invite them to come down and record or film your event.

A press release to use after the event to update them on what happened.

# LOCAL PR

**WHEN IT COMES TO WHO TO INVITE, IT'S WORTH CONTACTING THE FOLLOWING TYPES OF MEDIA (NOT EXCLUSIVE)**

- Local sport reporters
- Local newspaper picture editors
- Writers who focus on community initiatives
- Local 'what's on' and diary writers



**FOLLOW YOUR LOCAL NEWSPAPERS AND BROADCASTERS ON SOCIAL MEDIA FROM YOUR CLUB ACCOUNTS.**

You can then 'tag' them in any posts or comment on posts they have.



# INVITING LOCAL VIP'S

To increase the profile of the event, you should consider inviting some big names from your local community, such as:

- YOUR LOCAL MP – A LETTER HAS BEEN PROVIDED ON THE RESOURCES HUB TO SUPPORT IN THIS
- FORMER PLAYERS WHO HAVE TURNED PROFESSIONAL
- ANY LOCAL CELEBRITIES THAT A MEMBER OF YOUR CLUB MAY KNOW

Attracting well-known people will increase the PR story for your event and help encourage local press to attend. And, if you're able to promote their attendance in advance on your social pages, this should motivate more people from the local community to come too.



# SPONSORS

Pitch Up for Rugby provides the ideal opportunity to engage local businesses and attract new sponsors to the club. With a high number of attendees, Pitch Up for Rugby gives you a platform to showcase how your club can support in promoting the business to the local community, while the business can also be seen to be giving something back.

Consider who your existing sponsors are and identify businesses that wouldn't conflict with them. Invite those businesses to be part of the day – you could consider allowing them to promote their businesses at Pitch Up for Rugby if appropriate.

## TOP TIP

*Our experience suggests you're likely to gain better traction with local businesses that can make sponsorship decisions at a local level*



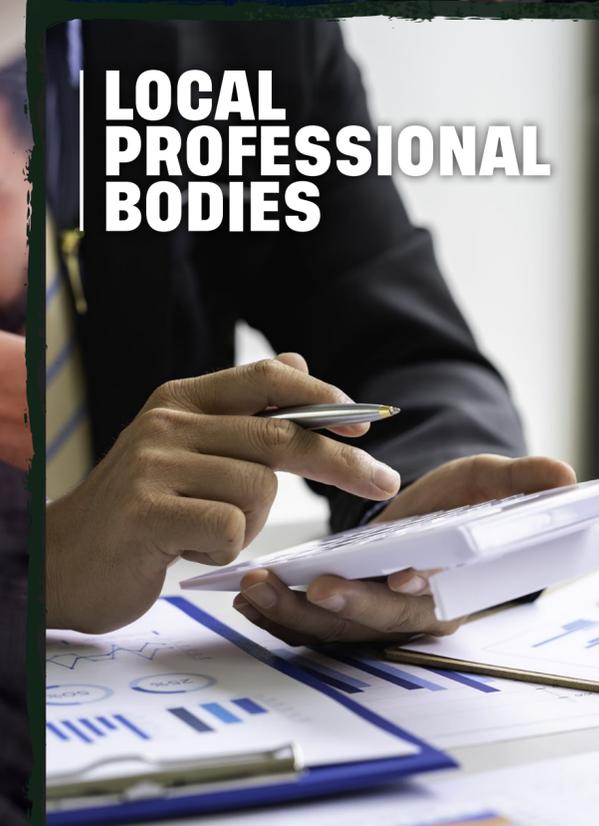
**CAR DEALERSHIPS**



**HOSPITALITY**



**TRADESMEN**



**LOCAL PROFESSIONAL BODIES**



**ESTATE AGENTS**

# COVID-19 GUIDANCE

While clubs are now open and rugby is back on the pitch in all its forms, guidance remains in place on how best to operate your facility safely while reducing the risk of spreading COVID-19, and includes the following measures;

- **Completing a health and safety risk assessment that includes risks from COVID-19**
- **Turning people with COVID-19 symptoms away from your event**
- **Providing good ventilation and encouraging face coverings in crowded indoor settings**
- **Cleaning more regularly and avoiding sharing equipment where practical**
- **Enabling people to check in at your venue to support NHS Track and Trace**

It is important to ensure that all safety measures are communicated clearly and consistently to all participants. Communication prior to your event is key and all involved should be aware of;



**Self-assessment:** Before attending, all participants should self-assess for COVID-19 symptoms. If they, or anyone they live with, have one or more symptoms (even if they are mild), they should not attend.



**Informed decisions:** Advise participants to consider their own health and circumstances so they can make an informed choice about whether they wish to participate. You should set out the safety measures you have put in place, and how you will mitigate any specific risks associated with your event.



**Self-isolation:** Clearly communicate to participants that they should not take part in your activity if they need to self-isolate

**It is important to remember that some people may not yet feel comfortable to return to full contact rugby. You may wish to consider including alternative ways to participate both on and off the pitch.**

More information about measures that can be taken to reduce the risk of transmission at your club can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-grassroots-sports-guidance-for-the-public-and-sport-providers>

# SUPPORTING YOUR PLAYERS RETURN TO RUGBY

To support your players in their return and help overcome their concerns around fitness, we have created a Restart Programme that your coaches and players can utilise.

## The player programme

provides links to RFU programmes led by experts such as England Rugby Strength & Conditioning coach Robin Eager or The Food for Rugby programme. The document can be sent to all of your members with links to the full programmes on [Englandrugby.com](http://Englandrugby.com)

## The coach programme

provides three session plans that can be utilised with your players to help get them ready to play. The document also provides links to videos with examples of running the exercises.



# EVENT DAY CHECKLIST

## BEFORE



Complete and update risk assessments, plus health and safety measures



Ensure you have checked the latest RFU guidelines on playing protocols



Plan activities within current government guidelines



Identify skills required and delegate responsibilities



Email existing members and invite local MP/VIPs



Promote your event via social media press releases, website, leaflets/posters for local businesses

## DURING



Take photographs



Collect short quotes from attendees



Be the best host



Update social media throughout the day

# AFTER THE EVENT

AFTER YOUR (NO DOUBT SUCCESSFUL) EVENT, MAKE SURE YOU FOLLOW UP BY:

Sending an email to all attendees and membership

Publishing a story about the event on your website

Thanking sponsors by email or over the phone

Sharing photos and videos on social media

Issuing a press release, with photos, for local press

