National lockdown: Stay at Home
Coronavirus cases are rising rapidly across the country. Find out what you can and cannot do.

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Summary: what you can and cannot do during the national lockdown

You must stay at home. The single most important action we can all take is to stay at home to protect the NHS and save lives.

You should follow this guidance immediately. The law will be updated to reflect these new rules.

Leaving home

You must not leave, or be outside of your home except where necessary. You may leave the home to:

- shop for basic necessities, for you or a vulnerable person
- go to work, or provide voluntary or charitable services, if you cannot reasonably do so from home
- exercise with your household (or support bubble) or one other person, this should be limited to once per day, and you should not travel outside your local area.
- meet your support bubble or childcare bubble where necessary, but only if you are legally permitted to form one
- seek medical assistance or avoid injury, illness or risk of harm (including domestic abuse)
- attend education or childcare - for those eligible

Colleges, primary and secondary schools will remain open only for vulnerable children and the children of critical workers. All other children will learn remotely until February half term. Early Years settings remain open.

Higher Education provision will remain online until mid February for all except future critical worker courses.

If you do leave home for a permitted reason, you should always stay local in the village, town, or part of the city where you live. You may leave your local area for a legally permitted reason, such as for work.

If you are clinically extremely vulnerable you should only go out for medical appointments, exercise or if it is essential. You should not attend work

Meeting others

You cannot leave your home to meet socially with anyone you do not live with or are not in a support bubble with (if you are legally permitted to form one).

You may exercise on your own, with one other person, or with your household or support bubble.

You should not meet other people you do not live with, or have formed a support bubble with, unless for a permitted reason.

Stay 2 metres apart from anyone not in your household.

Detailed guidance on the national lockdown

Who this guidance is for

This guidance is for people who are fit and well. There is additional advice for people who are clinically extremely vulnerable to coronavirus and households with a possible or confirmed coronavirus infection. If you are clinically extremely vulnerable you should not attend work, school, college or university, and limit the time you spend outside the home. You should only go out for medical appointments, exercise or if it is essential.

Hands. Face. Space.

Approximately 1 in 3 people who have coronavirus have no symptoms and could be spreading it without realising it.

Remember - 'Hands. Face. Space.'

- hands – wash your hands regularly and for at least 20 seconds
- face – wear a face covering in indoor settings where social distancing may be difficult, and where you will come into contact with people you do not normally meet
- space – stay 2 metres apart from people you do not live with where possible, or 1 metre with extra precautions in place (such as wearing face coverings)

In all circumstances, you should follow the guidance on meeting others safely.

When you can leave home

You must not leave or be outside of your home except where you have a 'reasonable excuse'. This will be put in law. The police can take action against you if you leave home without a 'reasonable excuse', and issue you with a fine (Fixed Penalty Notice).

You can be given a Fixed Penalty Notice of £200 for the first offence, doubling for further offences up to a maximum of £6,400.

A 'reasonable excuse' includes:

- Work - you can only leave home for work purposes where it is unreasonable for you to do your job from home, including but not limited to people who work within critical national infrastructure, construction or manufacturing that require in-person attendance

- Volunteering - you can also leave home to provide voluntary or charitable services.
- Essential activities - you can leave home to buy things at shops or obtain services. You may also leave your home to do these things on behalf of a disabled or vulnerable person or someone self-isolating.
- Education and childcare - You can only leave home for education, registered childcare, and supervised activities for children where they are eligible to attend. Access to education and children's activities for school-aged pupils is restricted. People can continue existing arrangements for contact between parents and children where they live apart. This includes childcare bubbles.
- Meeting others and care - You can leave home to visit people in your support bubble (if you are legally permitted to form one), to provide informal childcare for children under 14 as part of a childcare bubble (for example, to enable parents to work, and not to enable social contact between adults), to provide care for disabled or vulnerable people, to provide emergency assistance, to attend a support group (of up to 15 people), or for respite care where that care is being provided to a vulnerable person or a person with a disability, or is a short break in respect of a looked-after child.
- Exercise - You can continue to exercise alone, with one other person or with your household or support bubble. This should be limited to once per day, and you should not travel outside your local area. You should maintain social distancing. See exercising and meeting other people.
- Medical reasons - You can leave home for a medical reason, including to get a COVID-19 test, for medical appointments and emergencies.
- Harm and compassionate visits - you can leave home to be with someone who is giving birth, to avoid injury or illness or to escape risk of harm (such as domestic abuse). You can also leave home to visit someone who is dying or someone in a care home (if permitted under care home guidance), hospice, or hospital, or to accompany them to a medical appointment.
- Animal welfare reasons – you can leave home for animal welfare reasons, such as to attend veterinary services for advice or treatment.
- Communal worship and life events - You can leave home to attend or visit a place of worship for communal worship, a funeral or event related to a death, a burial ground or a remembrance garden, or to attend a wedding ceremony. You should follow the guidance on the safe use of places of worship and must not mingle with anyone outside of your household or support bubble when attending a place of worship. Weddings, funerals and religious, belief-based or commemorative events linked to someone's death are all subject to limits on the numbers that can attend, and weddings and civil ceremonies may only take place in exceptional circumstances.

There are further reasonable excuses. For example, you may leave home to fulfil legal obligations or to carry out activities related to buying, selling, letting or renting a

residential property, or where it is reasonably necessary for voting in an election or referendum.

Exercising and meeting other people

You should minimise time spent outside your home.

It is against the law to meet socially with family or friends unless they are part of your household or support bubble. You can only leave your home to exercise, and not for the purpose of recreation or leisure (e.g. a picnic or a social meeting). This should be limited to once per day, and you should not travel outside your local area.

You can exercise in a public outdoor place:

- by yourself
- with the people you live with
- with your support bubble (if you are legally permitted to form one)
- in a childcare bubble where providing childcare
- or, when on your own, with 1 person from another household

Public outdoor places include:

- parks, beaches, countryside accessible to the public, forests
- public gardens (whether or not you pay to enter them)
- the grounds of a heritage site
- playgrounds

Outdoor sports venues, including tennis courts, golf courses and swimming pools, must close.

When around other people, stay 2 metres apart from anyone not in your household - meaning the people you live with - or your support bubble. Where this is not possible, stay 1 metre apart with extra precautions (e.g. wearing a face covering). You must wear a face covering in many indoor settings, such as shops or places of worship where these remain open, and on public transport, unless you are exempt.

Support and childcare bubbles

You have to meet certain eligibility rules to form a support or childcare bubble. This means not everyone will be able to form a bubble.

A support bubble is a support network which links two households. You can form a support bubble with another household of any size only if you meet the eligibility rules.

It is against the law to form a support bubble if you do not follow these rules.

You are permitted to leave your home to visit your support bubble (and to stay overnight with them). However, if you form a support bubble, it is best if this is with a household who live locally. This will help prevent the virus spreading from an area where more people are infected.

If you live in a household with anyone aged under 14, you can form a childcare bubble. This allows friends or family from one other household to provide informal childcare.

You must not meet socially with your childcare bubble, and must avoid seeing members of your childcare and support bubbles at the same time.

There is separate guidance for support bubbles and childcare bubbles.

Where and when you can meet in larger groups

There are still circumstances in which you are allowed to meet others from outside your household, childcare or support bubble in larger groups, but this should not be for socialising and only for permitted purposes. A full list of these circumstances will be included in the regulations, and includes:

- for work, or providing voluntary or charitable services, where it is unreasonable to do so from home. This can include work in other people's homes where necessary - for example, for nannies, cleaners, social care workers providing support to children and families, or tradespeople. See guidance on working safely in other people's homes). Where a work meeting does not need to take place in a private home or garden, it should not - for example, although you can meet a personal trainer, you should do so in a public outdoor place.
- in a childcare bubble (for the purposes of childcare only)
- Where eligible to use these services, for education, registered childcare, and supervised activities for children. Access to education and childcare facilities is restricted. See further information on education and childcare.
- for arrangements where children do not live in the same household as both their parents or guardians
- to allow contact between birth parents and children in care, as well as between siblings in care

- for prospective adopting parents to meet a child or children who may be placed with them
- to place or facilitate the placing of a child or children in the care of another by social services
- for birth partners
- to provide emergency assistance, and to avoid injury or illness, or to escape a risk of harm (including domestic abuse)
- to see someone who is dying
- to fulfil a legal obligation, such as attending court or jury service
- for gatherings within criminal justice accommodation or immigration detention centres
- to provide care or assistance to someone vulnerable, or to provide respite for a carer
- for a wedding or equivalent ceremony in exceptional circumstances and only for up to 6 people
- for funerals - up to a maximum of 30 people. Wakes and other linked ceremonial events can continue in a group of up to 6 people.
- to visit someone at home who is dying, or to visit someone receiving treatment in a hospital, hospice or care home, or to accompany a family member or friend to a medical appointment
- for elite sportspeople (and their coaches if necessary, or parents/guardians if they are under 18) - or those on an official elite sports pathway - to compete and train
- to facilitate a house move

Support groups that have to be delivered in person can continue with up to 15 participants where formally organised to provide mutual aid, therapy or any other form of support - but they must take place at a premises other than a private home.

Where a group includes someone covered by an exception (for example, someone who is working or volunteering), they are not generally counted as part of the gatherings limit. This means, for example, a tradesperson can go into a household without breaching the limit, if they are there for work, and the officiant at a wedding would not count towards the limit.

If you break the rules

The police can take action against you if you meet in larger groups. This includes breaking up illegal gatherings and issuing fines (fixed penalty notices).

You can be given a Fixed Penalty Notice of £200 for the first offence, doubling for further offences up to a maximum of £6,400. If you hold, or are involved in holding, an illegal gathering of over 30 people, the police can issue fines of £10,000.

Protecting people more at risk from coronavirus

If you are clinically vulnerable, you could be at higher risk of severe illness from coronavirus. There is additional advice for people who are clinically extremely vulnerable to coronavirus. Those who are clinically extremely vulnerable should not attend work, school, college or university, and limit the time you spend outside the home. You should only go out for medical appointments, exercise or if it is essential.

Travel

You must not leave your home unless you have a reasonable excuse (for example, for work or education purposes). If you need to travel you should stay local – meaning avoiding travelling outside of your village, town or the part of a city where you live – and look to reduce the number of journeys you make overall. The list of reasons you can leave your home and area include, but are not limited to:

- work, where you cannot reasonably work from home
- accessing education and for caring responsibilities
- visiting those in your support bubble – or your childcare bubble for childcare
- visiting hospital, GP and other medical appointments or visits where you have had an accident or are concerned about your health
- buying goods or services that you need, but this should be within your local area wherever possible
- outdoor exercise. This should be done locally wherever possible, but you can travel a short distance within your area to do so if necessary (for example, to access an open space)
- attending the care and exercise of an animal, or veterinary services

If you need to travel, walk or cycle where possible, and plan ahead and avoid busy times and routes on public transport. This will allow you to practice social distancing while you travel.

Avoid car sharing with anyone from outside your household or your support bubble. See the guidance on car sharing.
If you need to use public transport, you should follow the safer travel guidance.

International travel

You can only travel internationally – or within the UK – where you first have a legally permitted reason to leave home. In addition, you should consider the public health advice in the country you are visiting.

If you do need to travel overseas (and are legally permitted to do so, for example, because it is for work), even if you are returning to a place you've visited before, you should look at the rules in place at your destination and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) travel advice.

UK residents currently abroad do not need to return home immediately. However, you should check with your airline or travel operator on arrangements for returning.

Foreign nationals are subject to the 'Stay at Home' regulations. You should not travel abroad unless it is permitted. This means you must not go on holiday.

If you are visiting the UK, you may return home. You should check whether there are any restrictions in place at your destination.

Staying away from home overnight

You cannot leave your home or the place where you are living for holidays or overnight stays unless you have a reasonable excuse for doing so. This means that holidays in the UK and abroad are not allowed.

This includes staying in a second home or caravan, if that is not your primary residence. This also includes staying with anyone who you don't live with unless they're in your support bubble.

You are allowed to stay overnight away from your home if you:

- are visiting your support bubble
- are unable to return to your main residence
- need accommodation while moving house
- need accommodation to attend a funeral or related commemorative event
- require accommodation for work purposes or to provide voluntary services
- are a child requiring accommodation for school or care
- are homeless, seeking asylum, a vulnerable person seeking refuge, or if escaping harm (including domestic abuse)
- are an elite athlete or their support staff or parent, if the athlete is under 18 and it is necessary to be outside of the home for training or competition

If you are already on holiday, you should return to your home as soon as practical.

Guest accommodation providers such as hotels, B&Bs and caravan parks may remain open for the specific reasons set out in law, including where guests are unable to return to their main residence, use that guest accommodation as their main residence, need accommodation while moving house, are self-isolating as required by law, or would otherwise be made homeless as a result of the accommodation closing. A full list of reasons can be found in the guidance on closing certain businesses and venues in England.

Accommodation providers are also encouraged to work cooperatively with local authorities to provide accommodation to vulnerable groups, including the homeless.

Going to work

You may only leave your home for work if you cannot reasonably work from home.

Where people cannot work from home - including, but not limited to, people who work in critical national infrastructure, construction, or manufacturing - they should continue to travel to their workplace. This is essential to keeping the country operating and supporting sectors and employers.

Public sector employees working in essential services, including childcare or education, should continue to go into work.

Where it is necessary for you to work in other people's homes - for example, for nannies, cleaners or tradespeople - you can do so. Otherwise, you should avoid meeting for work in a private home or garden, where COVID-19 Secure measures may not be in place.

Employers and employees should discuss their working arrangements, and employers should take every possible step to facilitate their employees working from home, including providing suitable IT and equipment to enable remote working.

The risk of transmission can be substantially reduced if COVID-19 secure guidelines are followed closely. Extra consideration should be given to those people at higher risk.

Going to school, college and university

Colleges, primary (reception onwards) and secondary schools will remain open for vulnerable children and the children of critical workers. All other children will learn remotely until February half term.

In the circumstances, we do not think it is possible for all exams in the summer to go ahead as planned. We will accordingly be working with Ofqual to consult rapidly to put in place alternative arrangements that will allow students to progress fairly.

Public exams and vocational assessments scheduled to take place in January will go ahead as planned.

Universities

Those students who are undertaking training and study for the following courses should return to face to face learning as planned and be tested twice, upon arrival or self-isolate for ten days:

- Medicine & dentistry
- Subjects allied to medicine/health
- Veterinary science
- Education (initial teacher training)
- Social work
- Courses which require Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) assessments and or mandatory activity which is scheduled for January and which cannot be rescheduled (your university will notify you if this applies to you).

Students who do not study these courses should remain where they are wherever possible, and start their term online, as facilitated by their university until at least Mid-February. This includes students on other practical courses not on the list above.

We have previously published guidance to universities and students on how students can return safely to higher education in the spring term. This guidance sets out how we will support higher education providers to enable students that need to return to do so as safely as possible following the winter break.

If you live at university, you should not move back and forward between your permanent home and student home during term time.

For those students who are eligible for face to face teaching, you can meet in groups of more than your household as part of your formal education or training, where necessary. Students should expect to follow the guidance and restrictions. You should socially distance from anyone you do not live with wherever possible.

Childcare

There are several ways that parents and carers can continue to access childcare:

- Early Years settings (including nurseries and childminders) remain open
- Vulnerable children and children of critical workers can continue to use registered childcare, childminders and other childcare activities (including wraparound care)
- parents are able to form a childcare bubble with one other household for the purposes of informal childcare, where the child is under 14. This is mainly to enable parents to work, and must not be used to enable social contact between adults
- some households will also be able to benefit from being in a support bubble
- nannies will be able to continue to provide services, including in the home

Care home visits

Visits to care homes can take place with arrangements such as substantial screens, visiting pods, or behind windows. Close-contact indoor visits are not allowed. No visits will be permitted in the event of an outbreak.

You should check the guidance on visiting care homes during COVID-19 to find out how visits should be conducted. Residents cannot meet people indoors on a visit out (for example, to visit their relatives in the family home). There is separate guidance for those in supported living.

Weddings, civil partnerships, religious services and funerals

Weddings, civil partnership ceremonies and funerals are allowed with strict limits on attendance, and must only take place in COVID-19 secure venues or in public outdoor spaces unless in exceptional circumstances.

Funerals can be attended by a maximum of 30 people. Linked religious, belief-based or commemorative events, such as stone settings and ash scatterings can also continue with up to 6 people in attendance. Anyone working is not counted in these limits. Social distancing should be maintained between people who do not live together or share a support bubble.

Weddings and civil partnership ceremonies must only take place with up to 6 people. Anyone working is not included. These should only take place in exceptional circumstances, for example, an urgent marriage where one of those getting married is seriously ill and not expected to recover, or is to undergo debilitating treatment or life-changing surgery.

Places of worship

You can attend places of worship for a service. However, you must not mingle with anyone outside of your household or support bubble. You should maintain strict social distancing at all times.

You should follow the national guidance on the safe use of places of worship.

Sports and physical activity

Indoor gyms and sports facilities will remain closed. Outdoor sports courts, outdoor gyms, golf courses, outdoor swimming pools, archery/driving/shooting ranges and riding arenas must also close. Organised outdoor sport for disabled people is allowed to continue.

Moving home

You can still move home. People outside your household or support bubble should not help with moving house unless absolutely necessary.

Estate and letting agents and removals firms can continue to work. If you are looking to move, you can go to property viewings.

Follow the national guidance on moving home safely, which includes advice on social distancing, letting fresh air in, and wearing a face covering.

Businesses and venues

Businesses and venues which must close

To reduce social contact, the regulations require some businesses to close and impose restrictions on how some businesses provide goods and services. The full list of businesses required to close can be found in the guidance on closing certain businesses and venues in England, but includes:

- non-essential retail, such as clothing and homeware stores, vehicle showrooms (other than for rental), betting shops, tailors, tobacco and vape shops, electronic goods and mobile phone shops, auction houses (except for auctions of livestock or agricultural equipment) and market stalls selling non-essential goods. These venues can continue to be able to operate click-and-collect (where goods are pre-ordered and collected off the premises) and delivery services.

- hospitality venues such as cafes, restaurants, pubs, bars and social clubs; with the exception of providing food and non-alcoholic drinks for takeaway (until 11pm), click-and-collect and drive-through. All food and drink (including alcohol) can continue to be provided by delivery.
- accommodation such as hotels, hostels, guest houses and campsites, except for specific circumstances, such as where these act as someone's main residence, where the person cannot return home, for providing accommodation or support to the homeless, or where it is essential to stay there for work purposes
- leisure and sports facilities such as leisure centres and gyms, swimming pools, sports courts,fitness and dance studios, riding arenas at riding centres, climbing walls, and golf courses.
- entertainment venues such as theatres, concert halls, cinemas, museums and galleries, casinos, amusement arcades, bingo halls, bowling alleys, skating rinks, go-karting venues, indoor play and soft play centres and areas (including inflatable parks and trampolining centres), circuses, fairgrounds, funfairs, water parks and theme parks
- animal attractions (such as zoos, safari parks, aquariums, and wildlife reserves)
- indoor attractions at venues such as botanical gardens, heritage homes and landmarks must also close, though outdoor grounds of these premises can stay open for outdoor exercise.
- personal care facilities such as hair, beauty, tanning and nail salons. Tattoo parlours, spas, massage parlours, body and skin piercing services must also close. These services should not be provided in other people's homes
- community centres and halls must close except for a limited number of exempt activities, as set out below. Libraries can also remain open to provide access to IT and digital services – for example for people who do not have it at home – and for click-and-collect services

Some of these businesses and places will also be permitted to be open for a small number of exempt activities. A full list of exemptions can be found in the guidance on closing certain businesses and venues in England, but includes:

- education and training – for schools to use sports, leisure and community facilities where that is part of their normal provision
- childcare purposes and supervised activities for those children eligible to attend
- hosting blood donation sessions and food banks
- to provide medical treatment
- for elite sports persons to train and compete (in indoor and outdoor sports facilities), and professional dancers and choreographers to work (in fitness and dance studios)
- for training and rehearsal without an audience (in theatres and concert halls)
- for the purposes of film and TV filming

Businesses and venues which can remain open

Other businesses and venues are permitted to stay open, following COVID-19 secure guidelines. Businesses providing essential goods and services can stay open. The full list of these businesses can be found in the guidance on closing certain businesses and venues in England, but includes:

- essential retail such as food shops, supermarkets, pharmacies, garden centres, building merchants and suppliers of building products and off-licences
- market stalls selling essential retail may also stay open
- businesses providing repair services may also stay open, where they primarily offer repair services
- petrol stations, automatic (but not manual) car washes, vehicle repair and MOT services, bicycle shops, and taxi and vehicle hire businesses
- banks, building societies, post offices, short-term loan providers and money transfer businesses
- funeral directors
- laundrettes and dry cleaners
- medical and dental services
- vets and retailers of products and food for the upkeep and welfare of animals
- animal rescue centres, boarding facilities and animal groomers (may continue to be used for animal welfare, rather than aesthetic purposes)
- agricultural supplies shops
- mobility and disability support shops
- storage and distribution facilities
- car parks, public toilets and motorway service areas
- outdoor playgrounds
- outdoor parts of botanical gardens and heritage sites for exercise
- places of worship
- crematoriums and burial grounds

Public services

The majority of public services will continue and you will be able to leave home to visit them. These include:

- the NHS and medical services like GPs and dentists. We are supporting the NHS to carry out urgent and non-urgent services safely, and it is vital anyone who thinks they need any kind of medical care comes forward and seeks help
- Jobcentre Plus sites
- courts and probation services
- civil registrations offices
- passport and visa services

- services provided to victims
- waste or recycling centres
- getting an MOT, if you need to drive when lawfully leaving home