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Guidance

Local restriction tiers: what you need to know

Sets out the local restriction tier system that will be in place from Wednesday 2 December, including what you can and cannot do in each tier.

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From: Department of Health and Social Care

Applies to: **England (see guidance for Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland)**

Brexit transition

36 days to go

Check the 10 things for 2021

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Remember, 'Hands, Face, Space'

- Wash / wash your hands regularly and for 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)

The current national restriction rules are still in place until 2 December and must be followed until they expire.

When meeting people you do not live with, it is important to do so outdoors where possible, or to make sure that any indoor venue has good ventilation (for example by opening windows so that fresh air can enter).

Why the government is introducing tiers

It is right to apply tighter restrictions where prevalence is highest. In the coming weeks, we will see a national lockdown lifted across the country. The government suspended with new national restrictions. These have brought transmission back under control.

The government will replace them on 2 December with a regionally-differentiated approach, where different tiers of restrictions apply in different parts of the country.

These tiers will be strengthened compared to the previous tiers in order to prevent a return to growing infections. We know that social contact spreads the virus. We need to improve these restrictions and it is right to target the measures where the virus is most prevalent. We will keep all prevalence or where we are seeing a rapid increase in the rate of infection.

The government is committed to ensuring the right levels of intervention in the right places to manage outbreaks, suppress the virus and keep R below 1.

There are 3 tiers for local restrictions:

- Tier 1: Medium alert
- Tier 2: High alert
- Tier 3: Very High alert

On Thursday 26 November the government will announce which areas are in which tier. You will be able to use the postcode checker to find out the restrictions in your area or an area you plan to visit. The NHS COVID-19 app will be updated on 2 December.

The new rules will come into effect from the beginning of Wednesday 2 December.

What tiers mean

This guidance sets out what you can and cannot do in each tier.

There is separate guidance for households with a possible or confirmed coronavirus infection and additional advice at each tier will be provided shortly for people who are clinically extremely vulnerable to coronavirus.

There is also separate guidance for support and childcare facilities, which apply across all tiers.

Support bubbles have been expanded. From 2 December you can form a support bubble with another household if any of the following apply to you:

- you are the only adult in your household (any other members of the household having been under 18 on 13 June 2020) or are the only adult who does not have a disability that needs continuous care
- you are a lone parent
- you live with a child under 5 with a disability that needs continuous care

The government will announce the arrangements that will be in place over the Christmas period shortly.

All tiers

Across all tiers, everyone:

- must wear a face covering in most indoor public settings, unless they have an exemption
- should follow the rules on meeting others safely
- should attend school or college as normal, unless they are self-isolating. Schools, universities, colleges and early years settings remain open in all tiers
- should work or carry where possible, plan ahead and avoid busy times and places if travelling
- must follow the gathering limits at their live except for in specific settings and circumstances. These exemptions are detailed at the end of this guidance

Visits to care homes can take place with arrangements such as substantial screens, visiting pods, and window visits. Regular testing will be offered to up to 2 family members or friends per resident by Christmas, which – when combined with other measures including PPE and testing – will allow for indoor visits with physical contact. Detailed guidance will be published shortly.

All businesses and venues that are open are expected to follow COVID-19 secure guidelines to protect customers, visitors and workers. In all tiers, the following businesses and venues can remain open:

- essential and non-essential retail, including indoor and outdoor markets and car boot sales
- certain leisure and sporting facilities such as gyms, sports courts and pools, golf courses, driving ranges, tennis courts, bowling alleys, swimming pools, riding centres, outdoor playgrounds – subject to relevant social contact rules in each tier. Indoor group activities and classes should not take place at tier 3
- personal care and close contact services such as hairdressers and barbers, beauty salons and tattoo parlours, spas and beauty services, massage parlours and tanning salons
- public buildings, such as libraries, community centres and halls. They should not host events for private hire, such as birthday parties or most other social activities in tier 3
- allotments, recycling and waste centres, public toilets, car parks
- places of worship – communal worship can now resume, subject to relevant social contact rules in each tier

Everyone who can work from home should do so. Where people cannot do so – including, but not limited to, people who work in critical national infrastructure, construction, or manufacturing – they should continue to travel to their workplace. Public sector employees working in essential services, including education settings, should continue to go into work where necessary.

Tier 1: Medium alert

In tier 1:

- you must not socialise in groups larger than 6 people, indoors or outdoors, other than where a legal exemption applies. This is called the 'rule of 6'
- businesses and venues can remain open, in a COVID-secure manner, other than those which remain closed by law, such as nightclubs
- hospitality businesses selling food or drink for consumption on their premises are required to:
  - provide table service only, for premises that serve alcohol
  - close between 11pm and 5am (hospitality venues in airports, ports, on transport services and motorway service areas are exempt)
  - stop taking orders after 10pm
- hospitality businesses and venues selling food and drink for consumption off the premises can continue to do so after 10pm as long as this is through delivery service, click-and-collect or drive-through
- early cinemas (10pm) applies to casinos, cinemas, theatres, concert halls, museums, bowling alleys, amusement arcades, funfairs, theme parks, skating rinks, and bingo halls. Cinemas, theatres and concert halls can stay open beyond 10pm in order to conclude performances that start before 10pm
- public attendance at outdoor and indoor events (performances and shows) is permitted. Unlike in wider tier 1, there is no 10pm curfew, but there is a larger journey
- places of worship remain open but you must not attend or socialise in groups of more than 6 people there, unless a legal exemption applies
- weddings and funerals can go ahead with restrictions on numbers of attendees – 15 people can attend wedding ceremonies and 30 people can attend funeral ceremonies, and 15 people can attend linked commemorative events
- organised outdoor sport, physical activity and exercise classes can continue
- organised indoor sport, physical activity and exercise classes will continue to take place, if the rule of 6 is followed. There are exceptions for indoor disability sport, sport for educational purposes and supervised sport and physical activity for under-18s, which can take place with larger groups mixing
- if you live in a tier 1 area and travel to an area in a higher tier you should follow the rules for that area while you are there. Avoid travel to or from areas in tier 3 areas other than where necessary, such as for work, education, youth services, to receive medical treatment, or because of other exceptional circumstances. You can travel through a tier 3 area as part of a longer journey
- for international travel see the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office travel advice for your destination and the travel corridors list

Tier 2: High alert

This is for areas with a higher or rapidly rising level of infections, where some additional restrictions need to be in place.

In tier 2:

- you must not socialise with anyone you do not live with or who is not in your household or a very limited extra bubble, whether at home or in a public place – the rule of 6 applies in groups of more than 6 people outside, including in a garden, and the rule of 6 applies indoors in tier 2
- businesses and venues can continue to operate, in a COVID-Secure manner, other than those which remain closed by law, such as nightclubs
- pubs and bars must close, unless operating as restaurants. Hospitality venues can only serve alcohol with substantial meals
- hospitality businesses and venues selling food and drink for consumption on their premises are required to:
  - provide table service only, in premises which sell alcohol
  - close between 11pm and 5am (hospitality venues in airports, ports, transport services and motorway service areas are exempt)
  - stop taking orders after 10pm
- hospitality businesses and venues selling food and drink for consumption off the premises can continue to do so after 10pm as long as this is through delivery service, click-and-collect or drive-through
- early cinema (10pm) applies to casinos, cinemas, theatres, museums, bowling alleys, amusement arcades, funfairs, theme parks, skating rinks, and bingo halls. Cinemas, theatres and concert halls can stay open beyond 10pm in order to conclude performances that start before 10pm
- public attendance at outdoor and indoor events (performances and shows) is permitted. Unlike in wider tier 1, there is no 10pm curfew, but there is a larger journey. Outdoor events in tier 2 are subject to a maximum of 4,000 people outdoors in 1,000 people indoors
- places of worship remain open but you must not attend or socialise in groups of more than 6 people there, unless a legal exemption applies
- weddings and funerals can go ahead with restrictions on numbers of attendees – 15 people can attend wedding ceremonies and 30 people can attend funeral ceremonies, and 15 people can attend linked commemorative events
- organised outdoor sport, physical activity and exercise classes can continue
- organised indoor sport, physical activity and exercise classes will only be permitted if it is possible for people to avoid mixing with people they do not live with or who are not in their bubble. There are exceptions for indoor disability sport, sport for educational purposes and supervised sport and physical activity for under-18s, which can take place with larger groups mixing
- you can continue to travel to venues or attractions which are open, but should avoid travel to or from areas in tier 3 other where necessary
- if you live in a tier 2 area, you must continue to follow tier 2 rules when you travel to a tier 1 area. Avoid travel to or overnight stays in tier 3 areas other than where necessary, such as for work, education, youth services, to receive medical treatment, or because of other exceptional circumstances. You can travel through a tier 3 area as part of a longer journey
- for international travel see the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office travel advice for your destination and the travel corridors list

Tier 3: Very High alert

This is for areas with a very high or very rapidly rising level of infections, where tighter restrictions are in place.

In tier 3:

- you must not meet social indoors or in most outdoor places with anybody you do not live with, or who is not in your support bubble; this includes in any private garden or at most outdoor venues
- you must not socialise in a group of more than 6 in some other outdoor venues, such as in a pub or café, or in a public place – the rule of 6 applies in groups of more than 6 people outside, including in a garden, and the rule of 6 applies indoors in tier 3
- businesses and venues can continue to operate, in a COVID-Secure manner, other than those which remain closed by law, such as nightclubs
- pubs and bars must close, unless operating as restaurants. Hospitality venues can only serve alcohol with substantial meals
- hospitality businesses and venues selling food and drink for consumption on their premises are required to:
  - provide table service only, in premises which sell alcohol
  - close between 11pm and 5am (hospitality venues in airports, ports, transport services and motorway service areas are exempt)
  - stop taking orders after 10pm
- hospitality businesses and venues selling food and drink for consumption off the premises can continue to do so after 10pm as long as this is through delivery service, click-and-collect or drive-through
- early cinema (10pm) applies to casinos, cinemas, theatres, museums, bowling alleys, amusement arcades, funfairs, theme parks, adventure parks and activities, and bingo halls. Cinemas, theatres and concert halls can stay open beyond 10pm in order to conclude performances that start before 10pm
- public attendance at outdoor and indoor events (performances and shows) is permitted. Unlike in wider tier 1, there is no 10pm curfew, but there is a larger journey. Outdoor events in tier 3 are subject to a maximum of 2,000 people outdoors in 1,000 people indoors
- places of worship remain open but you must not socialise with people from more than one household or support bubble while you are indoors there, unless a legal exemption applies
- weddings and funerals can go ahead with restrictions on numbers of attendees – 15 people can attend wedding ceremonies and 30 people can attend funeral ceremonies, and 15 people can attend linked commemorative events
- organised outdoor sport, physical activity and exercise classes can continue
- organised indoor sport, physical activity and exercise classes will only be permitted if it is possible for people to avoid mixing with people they do not live with or who are not in their bubble. There are exceptions for indoor disability sport, sport for educational purposes and supervised sport and physical activity for under-18s, which can take place with larger groups mixing
- you can continue to travel to venues or attractions which are open, but should avoid travel to or from areas in tier 3 other where necessary
- if you live in a tier 3 area, you must continue to follow tier 3 rules when you travel to a tier 1 area. Avoid travel to or overnight stays in tier 3 areas other than where necessary, such as for work, education, youth services, to receive medical treatment, or because of other exceptional circumstances. You can travel through a tier 3 area as part of a longer journey
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Exemptions from gatherings limits in all tiers

- as part of a single household, or a support bubble
- for work or providing voluntary or charitable services, including to other people's homes
- for childcare, education or training – meaning education and training provided as part of a formal curriculum
- for supervised activities provided for children, including wraparound care before and after school, holiday clubs, groups and activities for under-18s, and children's playgroups
- for formal support groups, and parent and child groups – up to 15 people aged 5 and older
- to allow contact between birth parents and children in care, as well as between siblings in care
- to allow contact between children do not live in the same household as both their parents or guardians
- for prospective adopting parents to meet a child or children who may be placed with them
- for birth parents
- to attend a funeral – with no more than 30 people present – or a religious or civil ceremony – such as a baby first cuddle (bid) – with no more than 15 people present
- to see someone who is terminally ill or at the end of life
- to attend a wedding or civil partnership – with no more than 15 people present
- to provide emergency assistance
- to avoid injury or illness, or to escape a risk of harm
- to fulfill a legal obligation, such as attending court or jury service
- to provide care or assistance to someone vulnerable or to provide respite for a carer
- to facilitate moving home

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