



HM Government

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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Applies to: [England](#) (see guidance for [Wales](#), [Scotland](#), and [Northern Ireland](#))

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Remember, 'Hands. Face. Space':

- hands – 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 September and October, the virus spread rapidly in all parts of the country. The government responded 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 impose these restrictions and it is right to target the toughest measures only in the areas where the virus is most prevalent or where we are seeing sharper increases 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 bubbles](#), 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 12 June 2020) or are the only adult who does not have a disability that needs continuous care
- you have a child under 1
- 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 walk or cycle where possible, plan ahead and avoid busy times and routes when travelling
- must follow the gathering limits at their tier 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 infection-control measures such as PPE – will support 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 facilities, leisure centres, fitness and dance studios, golf courses, 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, tattoo parlours, nail salons, 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

- essential public services such as the NHS and medical services, courts, and jobcentre plus sites
- 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 in 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 closure (11pm) applies to casinos, cinemas, theatres, concert halls, museums, bowling alleys, amusement arcades, funfairs, theme parks, adventure parks and activities and bingo halls. Cinemas, theatres and concert halls can stay open beyond 11pm in order to conclude performances that start before 10pm
- public attendance at outdoor and indoor events (performances and shows) is permitted, limited to whichever is lower: 50% capacity, or either 4,000 people outdoors or 1,000 people indoors
- public attendance at spectator sport and business events can resume inside and outside, subject to social contact rules and limited to whichever is lower: 50% capacity, or either 4,000 people outdoors or 1,000 people indoors
- places of worship remain open, but you must not attend or socialise in groups of more than 6 people while 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 receptions, 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 can 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 overnight stays in tier 3 areas other than where necessary, such as for work, education, youth services, to receive medical treatment, or because of caring responsibilities. 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 support bubble in any indoor setting, whether at home or in a public place
- you must not socialise in a group of more than 6 people outside, including in a garden or a public space – this is called the ‘rule of 6’
- 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 selling food or 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 closure (11pm) 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 11pm in order to conclude performances that start before 10pm
- public attendance at outdoor and indoor events (performances and shows) is permitted, limited to whichever is lower: 50% capacity, or either 2,000 people outdoors or 1,000 people indoors
- public attendance at spectator sport and business events can resume inside and outside, subject to [social contact rules](#) and limited to whichever is lower: 50% capacity, or either 2,000 people outdoors or 1,000 people indoors

- places of worship remain open but you must not socialise with people from outside of your 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 receptions, 30 people can attend funeral ceremonies, and 15 people can attend linked commemorative events such as wakes or stonesettings.
- organised outdoor sport, and 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 share a support bubble with). 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 amenities which are open, but should aim to reduce the number of journeys you make where possible

- 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 caring responsibilities. You can travel through a tier 3 area as a 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 socially 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 public spaces, including parks, beaches, countryside accessible to the public, a public garden, grounds of a heritage site or castle, or a sports facility – this is called the ‘rule of 6’
- hospitality settings, such as bars (including shisha venues), pubs, cafes and restaurants are closed – they are permitted to continue sales by takeaway, click-and-collect, drive-through or delivery services.
- accommodation such as hotels, B&Bs, campsites, and guest houses must close. There are several exemptions, such as for those who use these venues as their main residence, and those requiring the venues where it is reasonably necessary for work or education and training

- indoor entertainment and tourist venues must close. This includes:
 - indoor play centres and areas, including trampolining parks and soft play
 - casinos
 - bingo halls
 - bowling alleys
 - skating rinks
 - amusement arcades and adult gaming centres
 - laser quests and escape rooms
 - cinemas, theatres and concert halls
 - snooker halls
- indoor attractions at mostly outdoor entertainment venues must also close (indoor shops, through-ways and public toilets at such attractions can remain open). This includes indoor attractions within:
 - zoos, safari parks, and wildlife reserves
 - aquariums, visitor attractions at farms, and other animal attractions
 - model villages

- museums, galleries and sculpture parks
- botanical gardens, biomes or greenhouses
- theme parks, circuses, fairgrounds and funfairs
- visitor attractions at film studios, heritage sites such as castles and stately homes
- landmarks including observation decks and viewing platforms
- leisure and sports facilities may continue to stay open, but group exercise classes (including fitness and dance) should not go ahead. Saunas and steam rooms should close
- there should be no public attendance at spectator sport or indoor performances and large business events should not be taking place. Elite sport events may continue to take place without spectators
- large outdoor events (performances and shows) should not take place, with the exception of drive-in events
- places of worship remain open, but you must not attend with or socialise with anyone outside of your household or support bubble while you are there, unless a legal exemption applies

- [weddings](#) and [funerals](#) can go ahead with restrictions on the number of attendees – 15 people can attend wedding ceremonies, wedding receptions are not allowed, 30 people can attend funeral ceremonies, 15 people can attend linked commemorative events
- organised outdoor sport, and physical activity and exercise classes can continue, however higher-risk contact activity should not take place
- organised indoor sport, physical activity and exercise classes cannot take place indoors. There are exceptions for indoor disability sport, sport for educational purposes and supervised sport and physical activity for under-18s
- you can continue to travel to venues or amenities which are open, but should aim to reduce the number of journeys you make where possible
- avoid travelling to other parts of the UK, including for overnight stays other than where necessary, such as for work, education, youth services, to receive medical treatment, or because of caring responsibilities. You can travel through other areas 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](#)

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 in 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 childcare), 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
- for arrangements where 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 partners
- to attend a funeral – with no more than 30 people present – or a commemorative event such as a wake for someone who has died – 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 fulfil 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