

Guidance

Staying alert and safe (social distancing)

Updated 12 June 2020

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Everyone's actions have helped to reduce the transmission of coronavirus in our communities. Fatalities and infection rates continue to fall.

The government has set out [its plan](#) to return life to as near normal as we can, for as many people as we can, as quickly and fairly as possible in order to safeguard livelihoods, but in a way that is safe and continues to protect our NHS. The most important thing we can continue to do is to stay alert, control the virus, and, in doing so, save lives.

This guidance applies in England – people in [Scotland](#), [Wales](#) and [Northern Ireland](#) should follow the specific rules in those parts of the UK.

At this stage of our recovery strategy:

- You can spend time outdoors, including private gardens and other outdoor spaces, in groups of up to six people from different households, following social distancing guidelines
- You should go to work if you cannot work from home and your business has not been required to close by law
- Children in early years (age 0-5), reception, year 1 and year 6 can return to childcare or school in line with the arrangements made by their school
- You can be tested as part of the [test and trace programme](#), which will enable us to return to normal life as soon as possible, by helping to control transmission risks

From 13 June, you will now also be able to:

- Form a 'support bubble' with one other household if you live alone or are a single parent with dependent children - in other words, you are in a household where there is only one adult
- Attend a place of worship for individual prayer

From 15 June:

- You will be able to visit more shops and additional outdoor attractions - drive-in cinemas and animal attractions like zoos, farms and safari parks
- Year 10 and 12 pupils in secondary schools and further education colleges will begin to receive some face to face support.
- You will have to [wear a face covering](#) on public transport

If, after lifting restrictions, the government sees a concerning rise in the infection rate, then it may have to re-impose some restrictions in as targeted a way as possible.

That is why you should [stay alert](#) and follow social distancing guidelines. You must not:

- gather outdoors in groups of more than six people with people you do not live with (except for limited circumstances) or, from 13 June, people that are not in your support bubble (if applicable)
- visit friends or family inside their home or any other indoor place, except for the limited set of circumstances set out in law or from 13 June if they are in your support bubble
- stay away from your home or your support bubble household overnight - including holidays - except for in a limited set of circumstances, such as for work purposes

This guidance explains the measures that will help you to stay alert and safe as we continue to respond to the challenges of coronavirus – that is, people with specific serious health conditions. They are advised to continue [shielding](#) to keep themselves safe by staying at home and avoiding gatherings or, if individuals wish to spend time outdoors, to take extra care to minimise contact with others by keeping two metres apart at all times.

Find answers to the most frequently asked questions about what you should and should not do during the coronavirus outbreak on our [FAQs page](#).

1. Protecting different groups of people

This guidance is for the general public who are fit and well. There is separate, specific guidance on isolation for households with a possible coronavirus infection.

Some people, including those aged 70 and over, those with specific chronic pre-existing conditions and pregnant women, are clinically vulnerable, meaning they are at higher risk of severe illness from coronavirus. As we begin to ease restrictions, this group who are clinically vulnerable – see section 9 – should continue to take particular care to minimise contact with others outside their household.

There is a further group of people who are defined, also on medical grounds, as clinically extremely vulnerable to coronavirus – that is, people with specific serious health conditions. They are advised to continue [shielding](#) to keep themselves safe by staying at home and avoiding gatherings or, if individuals wish to spend time outdoors, to take extra care to minimise contact with others by keeping two metres apart at all times.

2. Meeting family and friends

You should continue to stay alert and limit your contact with others. Staying at home is the easiest way to do this. However, we know that it has been difficult for people to be cut off from their family and friends in recent months.

In England, from 13 June, there will be two ways that you can see people outside of your household. In doing so, it's important to continue to take the necessary precautions to minimise the risk of spreading infection:

- You are already able to meet outdoors in a group of up to six people (including people you don't live with), whilst observing social distancing guidelines and keeping at least 2 metres apart
- From 13 June, single adult households - in other words adults who live alone or with dependent children only - can form a 'support bubble' with one other household. All those in a support bubble will be able to spend time together inside each other's homes, including overnight, without needing to stay 2 metres apart. Individuals may only form a support bubble with one other household. We are making this targeted change to support those who might be feeling lonely or isolated, while ensuring we continue to keep the rate of transmission down

You must not:

- Meet other people indoors - including in their home or your home - unless you are in a support bubble (from 13 June), or for other limited circumstances set out in law
- If you are part of a support bubble, visit anyone else in another household outside of your support bubble
- Meet outdoors in a group of more than six, with people who are not in your household or (where applicable) support bubble
- Form a support bubble (from 13 June) with another household if neither you nor they are in a single adult household
- Stay overnight in another household that is not in your support bubble (from 13 June and where applicable), unless it is for the limited set of circumstances already outlined in law

The more people you have interactions with, the more chances we give the virus to spread. Therefore, try to limit the number of people you see - especially over short periods of time. Those who are eligible to form a support bubble, should only do so exclusively with one other household.

Further guidance on how to see your friends and family safely can be found [here](#).

When you leave your home, you should follow the guidelines on [staying safe outside your home](#). Most importantly, this includes the key advice that you should stay two metres apart from anyone outside of your household or support bubble (where applicable). [Face coverings](#) can help us protect each other and reduce the spread of the disease if you are in an enclosed space where social distancing is difficult and where you will come into contact with people you do not normally meet. From 15 June face coverings must be worn on public transport, as set out in law.

If you or someone in your household or, from 13 June, your support bubble (if applicable) are showing coronavirus symptoms, everyone in your support bubble should stay home. If you or a member of your support bubble is contacted as part of the [test and trace programme](#), the individual contacted must [stay at home](#). If the individual becomes symptomatic, everyone in the support bubble must then isolate. This is critical to staying safe and saving lives.

By following this guidance, you are helping to protect yourself, your family, the NHS and your community.

Further guidance on the [mental health and wellbeing aspects of coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) has been issued.

3. Returning to school

The Government has announced the intention to implement a phased return for early years settings and schools, and has provided guidance on the return of children to schools and childcare. Schools are now open for early years (aged 0-5), Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 groups, subject to local arrangements. From 15 June, secondary schools and further education colleges will also begin some face to face support with Year 10 and 12 pupils.

You can find out [more](#) about the Government's approach to education and how schools are preparing.

School places of all age groups remain available to the children of [critical workers](#).

4. Going to the shops

The Government has announced that non-essential retail stores will be able to reopen from 15 June. They are expected to follow [COVID-19 Secure guidelines](#) to protect shoppers and workers.

This means that all shops on the high street can now open.

You must only visit shops with people you live with or, if applicable, people in your support bubble and you should practise social distancing from other people at all times.

5. Other businesses and venues

For the time being, certain other businesses and venues will still be required by [law](#) to stay closed to the public, subject to the limited exceptions. From 15 June, these include:

- Restaurants, cafes and pubs, other than for takeaway
- Cinemas (other than drive-in cinemas), theatres and nightclubs
- Hair, beauty and nail salons
- Libraries (apart from click and collect services), community centres, and youth centres
- indoor and outdoor leisure facilities such as bowling alleys, gyms, arcades and soft play facilities
- outdoor attractions such as funfairs and theme parks
- some communal places within parks, such as playgrounds and outdoor gyms
- places of worship (except for funerals and for the purposes of individual prayer)
- hotels, hostels, bed and breakfasts, campsites, caravan parks, and boarding houses for commercial/leisure use, excluding use by those who live in them permanently, those who are unable to return home, critical workers where their need is for a work purpose, elite athletes and those needing to self-isolate after arriving in the UK

[See a list of businesses that remain closed \(from 15 June\)](#). Other businesses can remain open and their employees can travel to work, where they cannot work from home.

6. Visiting public places

You can spend time outdoors, including exercise, as often as you wish. This must be with people you live with or, if applicable, from 13 June, your support bubble, or in a gathering of up to six, which can include people from outside your household. You should keep two metres apart from people not in your household or support bubble at all times.

You should continue to avoid public transport other than for essential journeys so should make journeys by cycling, walking or driving in a private vehicle where possible.

You may travel to outdoor publicly accessible open spaces irrespective of distance with people in your household, and from 13 June, your support bubble, but should follow social distancing guidance while you are there. You should plan ahead to ensure that, where you are visiting places like National Parks, beaches or zoos, you have checked that they are open and appropriately prepared for visitors. Many other outdoor venues where there is a higher risk of close contact and touching surfaces will remain closed as set out in the law. Campsites will remain closed and you are not allowed to stay away overnight, so should allow enough time to return home.

When travelling to outdoor spaces, it is important that people respect the rules in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and do not travel to different parts of the UK where their intended activities there would be prohibited by legislation passed by the relevant devolved administration.

7. Going to work

With the exception of the organisations listed in this [guidance on closing businesses and venues](#), the government has not required any other businesses to close to the public – it is important for business to carry on.

All workers who cannot work from home should [travel to work](#) if their workplace is open. Sectors of the economy that are allowed to be open should be open – such as food production, construction, manufacturing, logistics, distribution and scientific research. As soon as practicable, workplaces should be set up to meet the new [COVID-19 Secure guidelines](#). These will keep you as safe as possible, while allowing as many people as possible to resume their livelihoods. In particular, workplaces should, where possible, ensure employees can maintain a two metre distance from others, and wash their hands regularly.

At all times, workers should follow [the guidance on self-isolation](#) if they or anyone in their household or or, from 13 June, support bubble, shows coronavirus symptoms. You should not go into work if you are showing symptoms, or if you or any of your household or, from 13 June, support bubble, are self-isolating. This is consistent with advice from the Chief Medical Officer.

There is [specific guidance in relation to work carried out in people's homes](#) – for example by tradespeople carrying out repairs and maintenance, cleaners, or those providing paid-for childcare in a child's home.

8. Enforcing the law

The police and local authorities have the powers to enforce the requirements set out in [law](#) if people do not comply with them. The police will act with discretion and common sense in applying these measures, but if you breach the regulations, they may instruct you to disperse, leave an area, issue you with a fixed penalty notice or arrest you where they believe it necessary. They may also instruct you to take steps to stop your children breaking these legal requirements again if they have already done so.

The government has introduced higher penalties for those who do not comply, to reflect the increased risk to others of breaking the rules as we begin to ease the restrictions. If the police believe that you have broken the law – or if you refuse to follow their instructions enforcing the law – a police officer may issue you with a fixed penalty notice for £100 (reduced to £50 if paid within 14 days). If you have already received a fixed penalty notice, the amount will increase to £200 and double on each further repeat offence, up to a maximum of £3200.

9. Clinically vulnerable people

If you have any of the following health conditions, you may be clinically vulnerable, meaning you could be at higher risk of severe illness from coronavirus. You are advised to stay at home as much as possible and, if you do go out, take particular care to minimise contact with others outside your household or support bubble.

Clinically vulnerable people are those who are:

- aged 70 or older (regardless of medical conditions)
- under 70 with an underlying health condition listed below (that is, anyone instructed to get a flu jab each year on medical grounds):
- chronic (long-term) mild to moderate respiratory diseases, such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), emphysema or bronchitis
- chronic heart disease, such as heart failure
- chronic kidney disease
- chronic liver disease, such as hepatitis
- chronic neurological conditions, such as Parkinson's disease, motor neurone disease, multiple sclerosis (MS), or cerebral palsy
- diabetes
- a weakened immune system as the result of certain conditions or medicines they are taking (such as steroid tablets)
- being seriously overweight (a body mass index (BMI) of 40 or above)
- pregnant women

As above, there is a further category of people with serious underlying health conditions who are clinically extremely vulnerable, meaning they are at very high risk of severe illness from coronavirus. You, your family and carers should be aware of the guidance on [shielding](#) which provides information on how to protect yourself still further should you wish. Updated advice is available [here](#).

10. Communicating with the public

The government will continue to keep the public informed of the impacts of coronavirus in the UK, and the law and guidance that is in place to protect the public.

The measures set out will be kept under constant review, and formally revisited at the end of June. They will be relaxed if the scientific evidence shows that this is possible. If people begin to act recklessly, which could impact on the transmission of coronavirus in our communities, further restrictions will have to be implemented again.

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