Cabinet Office

Guidance

Coronavirus outbreak FAQs: what you can and can't do

Updated 12 June 2020

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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 government has published guidance on staying safe outside your home and guidance on social distancing rules. This page sets out key FAQs to help you prepare for these changes.

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

1. Gatherings, public spaces, and outdoor activities

1.1 What can I do that I couldn't do before?

From 13 June, you will 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. All those in a support bubble will be able to act as if they live in the same household - meaning they can spend time together inside each other's homes and do not need to stay 2 metres apart. Support bubbles should be exclusive - meaning you should not switch the household you are in a bubble with or connect with multiple households
- Attend your place of worship for the purposes of individual prayer

From 15 June:

- You will be able to visit any type of shop and some 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

You will still be able to meet outdoors with groups of up to six people from different households, provided social distancing is observed and you stay 2 metres away from anyone outside your household or support bubble.

As before, you cannot:

- visit friends and family inside their homes (unless you are in a support bubble from 13 June) or for other limited circumstances set out in law
- 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
- exercise in an indoor sports court, gym or leisure centre, or go swimming in a public pool
- use an outdoor gym or playground
- gather outdoors in a group of more than six (unless exclusively with members of your own household or support bubble or for one of the limited set of circumstances set out in the law)

1.2 I don't have to stay at home anymore?

You should continue to stay alert and limit your contact with others. Staying at home is the easiest way to do this.

From 13 June, if you are in a support bubble, you may spend time outdoors or inside either home within the bubble.

Everyone may spend time outdoors with groups of up to six people from outside your household or support bubble. You should stay alert and always practise social distancing with people from outside of your household or support bubble, keeping 2 metres apart.

The more people you have interactions with, the more chance the virus has to spread. Therefore, try to limit the number of people you see - especially over short periods of time.

If you or someone in your household or, from 13 June, your support bubble (if applicable) is 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

You can find more information on meeting people you don't live with here.

1.3 How many people am I allowed to meet with outdoors?

You are allowed to meet in groups of up to six people who you do not live with or who are not in your support bubble.

You are only allowed to meet in groups of more than six people if everyone is a member of the same household or, from 13 June, support bubble.

There is more information about the rules you should follow when meeting people you do not live with here.

1.4 So, can I visit people indoors now and invite them into my own home?

Only if you are in a support bubble with them.

Generally, visiting people in the home or inviting people into your home is not permitted. However, from 13 June, if you are a single adult household – either you live alone or only with dependent children - you can form a support bubble with one other household. This means you can see other members of your support bubble indoors and outside. You will also be able to be less than 2 metres apart and stay overnight as if you were members of the same household. Individuals who form a bubble with one household may not form a bubble with anyone else.

It is not yet possible for people who are not in support bubbles to meet inside other people's homes - that remains against the law unless covered by one of the limited exceptions. This is critical to helping us control the virus and keep people safe.

1.5 What is a criminal offence?

It is a criminal offence to:

- meet indoors with anyone who is not a member of your household or, from 13 June, your support bubble, except for specific exceptions set out in law
- meet outdoors in a group of more than six with people who are not in your household or support bubble, except for specific exceptions set out in law
- incite others to break the rules by e.g. inviting people to a party
- threaten others with infection by coronavirus, for example by coughing or spitting in their direction

1.6 Can I visit a clinically vulnerable person?

We know that people 70 and over, those with certain underlying conditions and pregnant women may be more clinically vulnerable, so we have advised them to take particular care to avoid contact with others.

That means such individuals can meet people outdoors but should be especially careful. Similarly, clinically vulnerable people can form a support bubble with another household, if one of the households is an adult living alone or with children, but extra care should be taken. For example all members of the support bubble should be especially careful to socially distance from people outside of the household or bubble.

You can also visit a clinically vulnerable person inside if you are providing care or assistance to them, following the advice set out here. You should not do so if you have coronavirus symptoms, however mild.

Wherever possible, you should stay at least 2 metres away from others, use a tissue when sneezing and dispose of it safely, cough into the crook of your elbow and wash your hands for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser if washing facilities are not easily available.

If someone is defined as clinically extremely vulnerable and being asked to shield, you should follow the guidance for a shielded person as this is different to the wider clinically vulnerable group. Shielded people are advised not to form a support bubble due to the heightened risks for this group.

1.7 Are there restrictions on how far I can travel for my exercise or outdoor activity?

No. You can travel to outdoor open space irrespective of distance, as long as you can return the same night and do not put others at risk because of services you may need in the time you are away. You should continue to avoid using public transport and should cycle, walk or drive wherever possible.

If visiting other parts of the UK – Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland – you must adhere to the laws and guidance of the devolved administrations at all times.

You shouldn't travel with someone from outside your household or, from 13 June, your support bubble unless you can practise social distancing - for example by cycling.

1.8 Can I use public transport if I'm seeing friends in a park or going to my parents' garden?

You should avoid using public transport if you can. You should cycle, walk or drive wherever possible. Consider all other forms of transport before using public transport. If you need to use public transport, you should follow the safer travel guidance for passengers.

1.9 Can I share a private vehicle with someone from another household?

You should avoid sharing a private vehicle with anyone outside of your household or, from 13 June, support bubble as you will not be able to keep to strict social distancing guidelines. The Department for Transport has provided specific guidance on using private vehicles. Please see their guidance on Private cars and other vehicles for more information on car sharing and traveling with people outside your household group.

1.10 Are day trips and holidays ok? Can people stay in second homes?

Day trips to outdoor open space are permitted as long as you can return the same night. You should make sure you do not put others at risk because of services you may need in the time you are away. You should practise social distancing from other people outside your household or support bubble (if applicable). You should continue to avoid using public transport if you can. Consider all other forms of transport before using public transport. If you need to use public transport, you should follow the safer travel guidance for passengers.

You are not permitted to stay overnight away from the place where you or your support bubble are living - for a holiday or similar purpose - in the UK or overseas. This includes staying overnight in a second home. If your work requires you to stay away from home you can do so but should continue to practise social distancing. You can also stay overnight in an emergency, to escape harm or under other limited circumstances.

Premises such as hotels and bed and breakfasts will remain closed, except where providing accommodation for specific reasons set out in law, such as for critical workers where required for a reason relating to their work. Hotels are also available to host those self-isolating after arriving in the UK (where no other accommodation is available).

1.11 I am a critical worker. Can I stay overnight in a hotel or second home?

Yes, if you need to for work reasons. You should not stay with family, friends, or colleagues even for work reasons.

However, if you have a pre-existing arrangement where you share a second home with another person that you both use for work purposes and where you both need to work away from home, you could both stay at that place at the same time. You should only do this if both of you are critical workers and work together, you need to stay there for work reasons, and there is no reasonable alternative.

1.12 Can students return to their family home if they've been in halls all this time?

The general rule is that staying overnight somewhere that is not your home - the place you live - is not allowed.

If a student is opting to change their primary residence for the purpose of the emergency period to live back at their family home, this is permitted.

1.13 Will public toilets reopen?

Councils are responsible for public toilets and this decision is up to them. If you need to use any of these facilities, you should practise social distancing and good hygiene (i.e. washing your hands thoroughly).

1.14 Can I visit outdoor tourist sites? What about indoor ones?

Yes, you can still travel to outdoor areas, such as National Parks or beaches. Some venues are not allowed to be open so it is advisable to check ahead to ensure the venue is open to visitors.

Indoor sites and some outdoor attractions are still not allowed to re-open.

1.15 Is there a limit on the number of people attending funerals?

The guidance on people attending funerals has not changed, except that members of a support bubble would also count as household members from 13 June.

1.16 Can weddings go ahead?

No, there's no change at this time - you cannot gather in sufficient numbers indoors to enable a wedding ceremony. We understand the frustration couples planning a wedding must be feeling at this time. We are keeping these restrictions under review and will ease them as soon as it is safe to do so. We will continue to work closely with faith leaders and local government over the coming weeks to go through the practicalities of doing so.

Marriages and civil partnerships under the special procedure for those who are seriously ill and not expected to recover, are taking place in some cases where it is safe to do so in line with PHE guidance.

1.17 Can I pray in a place of worship?

Yes, from 13 June, you will be able to independently pray in a church, mosque, synagogue, temple or other place of worship. We will continue to review when it might be safe to ease other restrictions on places of worship, including for communal prayer.

1.18 Can I register the birth of my child?

You are permitted to register the birth of your child. You should check whether your local register office is open. The office will also be able to advise you on appointment availability.

2. Vulnerable groups, shielding, 70 year olds and over, and care homes

2.1 Does easing restrictions apply to healthy 70 year olds and over?

Yes. However, the advice for those aged 70 and over continues to be that they should take particular care to minimise contact with others outside their household.

If they do go out more frequently, they should be careful to maintain distance from others. They and everyone should continue to comply with any general social distancing restrictions.

We know that those aged 70 and over can be absolutely fit and healthy and it's not the case that everybody over 70 has a chronic health condition or an underlying disease.

But unfortunately, we also know that as you get older, there is a higher risk of coronavirus having a more serious impact with infection. Complications and deaths are more common in the elderly, even those without pre-existing conditions.

2.2 How long will shielding be in place?

We've advised individuals with very specific medical conditions to shield until the end of June and to do everything they can to stay at home. Those shielding may wish to consider spending time outdoors once a day. This can be with members of their own household or, for those shielding alone, with one person from another household. We can safely give this advice because the risk of transmission is much lower outdoors. However, we do not advise shielding individuals to form a support bubble.

If individuals wish to spend time outdoors, they should take extra care to minimise contact with others by keeping 2 metres apart at all times. This is because we believe they are likely to be at the greatest risk of serious complications from coronavirus.

We know this is challenging guidance to follow, which is why we have a support scheme in place to provide help with access to food and basic supplies, care, medicines and social support.

We are keeping the guidance to shielded people under review.

2.3 What safety standards will need to be put in place in care homes?

We have issued detailed guidance about infection control and staff safety in care homes to help admit and care for residents safely and protect care home staff.

This includes isolation procedures, PPE and infection control training for all staff, cleaning and how to provide personal care safely.

As with all of our advice, this guidance is kept under constant review and updated frequently, in line with the latest scientific evidence.

3. Going to work / Safer spaces

3.1 Who is allowed to go to work?

In the first instance, employers should make every effort to support working from home, including by providing suitable IT and equipment as they have been already. This will apply to many different types of businesses, particularly those who typically would have worked in offices or online.

Where work can only be done in the workplace, we have set out tailored guidelines for employers to help protect their workforce and customers from coronavirus while still continuing to trade or getting their business back up and running. We have published detailed COVID-19 secure guidelines, which has been developed in consultation with businesses and trades unions.

These COVID-19 Secure guidelines apply to those in essential retail like:

- supermarkets and other retail, like clothing and electronic stores
- those in construction and manufacturing
- those working in labs and research facilities
- those administering takeaways and deliveries at restaurants and cafes
- tradesmen, cleaners and others who work in people's homes
- those who are facilitating trade or transport goods

Restaurants, pubs, bars, gyms and leisure centres will remain closed (except for takeaway services where relevant). They will reopen in a phased manner provided it is safe for everyone for them to do so and they are able to meet the COVID-19 Secure guidelines to protect consumers and workers.

There are specific guidelines for those who are vulnerable, shielding, or showing symptoms that should be observed when considering whether to go back to work.

3.2 What does it mean to be a critical worker?

Critical workers are those working in health and care and other essential services, who can take their children to school or childcare, regardless of year group, and can use hotels and other accommodation services for work related purposes - for example if they can't get home after a shift or need to isolate from their families. This critical worker definition does not affect whether or not you can travel to work - if you are not a critical worker, you may still travel to work if you cannot reasonably work from home.

3.3 Will you open pubs / restaurants / hairdressers in July?

The roadmap sets out that some businesses (like pubs, restaurants, hairdressers and indoor cinemas) will not open until Step 3 is reached.

The government's current planning assumption is that this step will be no earlier than 4 July and subject to further detailed scientific advice, provided closer to the time, on how far we can go. When they do reopen, they should also meet the COVID-19 Secure guidelines.

3.4 What are the 'COVID-19 Secure' safety guidelines workplaces have to put in place?

We have set out clear, practical steps that businesses should take to ensure their workplaces are COVID-19 Secure and give their staff the confidence to return back to work.

These include how to keep as many people as possible safely apart from those they do not live with in various workplace settings.

4. Workers' rights

4.1 My employer is asking me to come to work but I'm scared.

Employers and staff should discuss and agree working arrangements.

Employers should make all efforts to help people to work from home where they can. But where work cannot be done at home, employers should take clear, practical steps to help protect workers and create safe places to work, such as by shifting working or staggering processes and by following the "COVID-19 Secure" guidelines. To identify the precautions needed to manage risk, your employer should discuss the COVID-19 risk assessment with you to identify the practical ways of managing those risks.

If you remain concerned that your employer is not taking all practical steps to promote social distancing then you can report this to your local authority or the Health and Safety Executive who can take a range of action, including where appropriate requiring your employer to take additional steps.

4.2 What if they try to fire me because I won't go to work but cannot work at home?

We urge employers to take socially responsible decisions and listen to the concerns of their staff. Employers and employees should come to a pragmatic agreement about their working arrangements.

If individuals need advice, they should approach ACAS where they can get impartial advice about work disputes.

5. Public Transport

5.1 Who is allowed to travel on public transport?

If you need to travel to work or make an essential journey, you should cycle or walk if you can, but you can use public transport if this is not possible. Before you travel on public transport, consider if your journey is necessary and if you can, stay local. Try to reduce your travel. This will help keep the transport network running and allows people who need to make essential journeys to travel safely.

We have set out further advice on how to stay safe during your journey.

5.2 Should people wear face coverings on public transport?

Yes. From 15 June it will be a legal requirement to wear a face covering on public transport. This will help to ensure that transport is as safe as possible as more people begin to return to work and go shopping. Transport operators will enforce this requirement, and the police will also be able to do so. This will mean you can be refused travel if you don't comply and could be fined. You should also be prepared to remove your face covering if asked to do so by police officers and staff for the purposes of identification.

More generally, if you can, you are advised to wear face coverings in enclosed public space where social distancing is not possible and where you are more likely to come into contact with people you do not normally meet. For example, in some shops.

We have published guidance for those making face coverings at home, to help illustrate the process.

A face covering is not the same as the surgical masks or respirators used as part of personal protective equipment by healthcare and other workers; these should continue to be reserved for those who need them to protect against risks in their workplace such as health and care workers and those in industrial settings like those exposed to dust hazards.

5.3 Will a face covering stop me getting COVID-19?

The evidence suggests that face coverings can help us protect each other and reduce the spread of the disease if someone is suffering from coronavirus, but not showing symptoms. That is why it is important to wear a face covering on public transport and this will be required by law from the 15 June.

To protect yourself, you should also continue to follow social distancing measures and isolation guidance and wash your hands regularly.

5.4 Can I use public transport to get to green spaces?

You should still avoid using public transport wherever possible. Consider all other forms of transport before using public transport. If you need to use public transport, you must wear a face covering and you should follow the safer travel guidance for passengers.

6. Schools and Childcare

6.1 Can children go back to early years settings and schools or university?

Early years settings are open for all children.

Primary schools are open for children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 in smaller class sizes, as well as all children of critical workers and vulnerable children.

From Monday 15 June, secondary schools and further education colleges will also begin some face to face support with Year 10 and 12 pupils who have key exams next year. Only around a quarter of these pupils will be in school at any one time.

6.2 How will you make sure it is safe?

Keeping children and staff safe is our utmost priority. As more children return to school, we require new safety standards to set out how schools and early years settings can be adapted to operate safely.

We have published guidance advising schools and early years on reopening to ensure schools can adequately prepare new safety measures to operate safely and minimise the spread of the virus.

Protective measures to reduce transmission include regular hand cleaning, hygiene and cleaning measures, and small consistent group and class sizes of no more than 15 pupils. We have asked schools to consider staggering drop-off and arrival times, break times and assemblies, and make use of outdoor space.

7. Borders / international visitors

7.1 Are you isolating people at the border now?

The scientific advice shows that when domestic transmission is high, cases from abroad represent a small amount of the overall total and make no significant difference to the epidemic. Now that domestic transmission within the UK is coming under control, and other countries begin to lift lockdown measures, it is the right time to prepare new measures at the border. You can find out more about self-isolation when you travel to the UK here.

8. Enforcement

8.1 How will police enforce the new rules?

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.

If the police believe that you have broken these laws – or if you refuse to follow their instructions enforcing the law – a police officer may issue you with a fixed penalty notice of £100 (reduced to £50 if paid within 14 days). If you have already received a fixed penalty notice, the amount for further offences will increase in line with the table below.

First offence	£100
Second offence	£200
Third offence	£400
Fourth offence	£800
Fifth offence	£1600
Maximum penalty	£3200

For both individuals and companies, if you do not pay your fine you could be taken to court, with magistrates able to impose unlimited fines.

9. Devolved administrations

9.1 Does this guidance apply across the UK?

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

If you live in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland additional guidance is available:

- Scotland
- Wales
- Northern Ireland

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Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance and support

The UK has left the EU

Transition period: get ready for 2021

Services and information

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Business and self-employed
Childcare and parenting
Citizenship and living in the UK
Crime, justice and the law
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