

Guidance

Staying alert and safe (social distancing)
after 4 July

Updated 24 June 2020

- Contents
1.

Protecting different groups of people
2.

Meeting family and friends
3.

Returning to school
4.

Businesses and venues
5.

Visiting public places
6.

Going to work
7.

Clinically vulnerable people
8.

Communicating with the public

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 continues to protect our communities and 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 explains the measures that will help you to stay alert and stay as safe as possible as we continue to respond to the challenges of coronavirus. It applies from 4 July - until then, the [existing restrictions](#) will remain in place. This guidance covers England only. People in [Scotland](#), [Wales](#) and [Northern Ireland](#) should follow the specific rules in those parts of the UK.

On 19 June, the UK CMOs changed the COVID-19 alert level from level four to level three following a recommendation by the Joint Biosecurity Centre. This means that the virus is considered to be in general circulation but transmission is no longer high or rising exponentially. As a result, the UK Government has decided to continue to ease restrictions in a manner that is safe, cautious and consistent with our plan.

As of 4 July, this will mean:

- you can meet in groups of up to two households (your support bubble counts as one household) in any location - public or private, indoors or outdoors. You do not always have to meet with the same household - you can meet with different households at different times. However, it remains the case - even inside someone's home - that you should socially distance from anyone not in your household or bubble. This change also does not affect the support you receive from your carers
- when you are outside you can continue to meet in groups of up to six people from different households, following social distancing guidelines
- those who have been able to form a support bubble (i.e. those in single adult households) can continue to have close contact as if they live with the other people in the bubble, but you should not change who you have formed a support bubble with
- additional businesses and venues, including restaurants, pubs, cinemas, visitor attractions, hotels, and campsites will be able to open - but we will continue to keep closed certain premises where the risks of transmission may be higher
- other public places, such as libraries, community centres, places of worship, outdoor playgrounds and outdoor gyms will be able to open
- you can stay overnight away from your home with your own household or support bubble, or with members of one other household (where you need to keep social distancing)
- it will be against the law to gather in groups larger than 30 people, except for a limited set of circumstances to be set out in law. Police will have the power to break up groups larger than 30, apart from these exceptions

Moving forward, from 4 July, people will be trusted to continue acting responsibly by following this and related guidance, subject to an upper legal limit on gatherings (as described above). The overwhelming majority of the British public have complied with the regulations, and the wider guidance on how to keep themselves and their friends and family as safe as possible. Taking this into account, we trust people to continue acting responsibly, and to follow the guidance on what they should and should not do.

These changes will reopen much of society and the economy, but it is essential that everyone in the country goes about their lives in a manner which reduces the risk of transmission, whether they are at work, leisure, or using public services. When you leave your home, you should follow the guidelines on [staying safe outside your home](#). You should continue to avoid close contact and remain socially distant from anyone you do not live with or who is not in your support bubble - even inside other people's homes.

You should wash your hands regularly. This will help to protect you and anyone you come into contact with and is critical to keeping everyone safe.

You can 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 certain underlying conditions and pregnant women, are clinically vulnerable, meaning they may be at higher risk of severe illness from coronavirus. As we continue to ease restrictions, this group should continue to take particular care to minimise contact with others outside their household. Never visit a clinically vulnerable person if you think you have coronavirus symptoms, however mild. Never visit a clinically vulnerable person if you have been advised to isolate by NHS Test and Trace because you have been in contact with a case. More detail is set out in section 7 of this guidance, below.

2. Meeting family and friends

We know that it has been difficult for people to be cut off from their family and friends in recent months. That is why we have enabled people to see them more as we start to open up more of society and the economy. Guidance on how to see your friends and family safely can be found [here](#).

To avoid risks of transmission and stay as safe as possible, you should always maintain social distancing with people you do not live with - indoors and outdoors. You should only have close social contact with others if you are in a support bubble with them. You should:

- only gather indoors with members of up to two households (your support bubble counts as one household) - this includes when dining out or going to the pub
- only gather outdoors in a group of more than six people from different households or in larger groups if everyone is from up to two households only
- only gather in slightly larger groups of up to 30 for major life events, such as weddings
- only gather in groups of more than 30 for specific set of circumstances that will be set out in law
- only visit businesses and venues in groups of up to two households (your support bubble counts as one household) or with a group of six people from different households if outdoors
- not interact socially with anyone outside the group you are attending these places with even if you see other people you know, for example, in a restaurant, community centre or place of worship
- try to limit the number of people you see, especially over short periods of time, to keep you and them safe, and save lives - the more people you have interactions with, the more chances we give the virus to spread
- not hold or attend celebrations (such as parties) where it is difficult to maintain social distancing when gathering in the group sizes advised
- only stay overnight away from your home in groups of up to two households (your support bubble counts as one household)
- when asked, provide your contact details to a business so that you can be contacted as needed by the NHS Test and Trace programme

If you or someone in your household or support bubble are showing coronavirus symptoms, everyone in your household or 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 should stay at home. If the individual becomes symptomatic, everyone in the support bubble should then isolate.

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 is committed to doing everything possible to allow all children to go back to school safely, to support their wellbeing and education and help working parents. The government's plan is for all students to return to school in September and we will publish further guidance for education settings on this.

Primary schools should now be open for Reception, Year 1, and Year 6 pupils and if schools have capacity they can welcome more children back, in group sizes of no more than 15, before the summer holidays. Schools and colleges should provide some face-to-face support for Year 10 and Year 12 pupils. Early years (aged 0-5) childcare should also be open to children. 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 and for vulnerable children and young people](#).

4. Businesses and venues

As of 4 July, many of the businesses and venues that were previously required to stay closed to the public will be able to reopen. All businesses and venues should follow COVID-19 Secure guidelines to protect customers, visitors and workers.

For the time being, [certain businesses and venues](#) will still be required by law to stay closed to the public. From 4 July, these closed businesses and venues will include:

- nightclubs
- casinos
- bowling alleys and indoor skating rinks
- indoor play areas including soft-play
- spas
- nail bars, beauty salons and tanning salons
- massage, tattoo and piercing parlours
- indoor fitness and dance studios, and indoor gyms and sports venues/facilities
- swimming pools and water parks
- exhibition or conference centres - where they are to be used for exhibitions or conferences

Other businesses will be able to open and their employees should travel to work, where they cannot work from home.

5. Visiting public places

You can spend time outdoors, including for exercise, as often as you wish. At all times, you should follow the guidance on group sizes and the [guidance on staying safe outside your home](#).

If you can, you should avoid using public transport, and aim to walk, cycle, or drive instead. It is not possible to social distance during car journeys and transmission of coronavirus can definitely occur in this context. So avoid travelling with someone from outside your household or, your support bubble unless you can practise social distancing. If you need to use public transport to complete your journey you should follow the guidelines in place, and must wear a face covering.

You should plan ahead to ensure that, where you are visiting places like National Parks, beaches or other visitor attractions, you have checked that they are open and appropriately prepared for visitors. It is important to avoid large crowds where it may not be possible to socially distance.

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.

6. 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.

People who can work from home should continue to do so. Employers should decide, in consultation with their employees, whether it is viable for them to continue working from home. Where it is decided that workers should come into their place of work then this will need to be reflected in the risk assessment and actions taken to manage the risks of transmission in line with this guidance.

All workers who cannot work from home should [travel to work](#) if their workplace is open. Workplaces should be set up to meet the new [COVID-19 Secure guidelines](#) before operating. These will keep you as safe as possible, while allowing as many people as possible to resume their livelihoods. In particular, workplaces should ensure employees can socially distance from each other, or have implemented robust mitigation measures where distancing is not possible, and wash their hands regularly. Businesses should maintain 2m distancing wherever possible.

At all times, workers should follow [the guidance on self-isolation](#) if they or anyone in their household (or 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 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.

7. 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. Although you can meet people outdoors and, from 4 July, indoors, you should be especially careful and be diligent about social distancing and hand hygiene.

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, 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

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 - and who have been advised to 'shield'. We are relaxing advice to those shielding in two stages - as long as the shielding rate in the community remains low:

From 6 July:

- those shielding can spend time outdoors in a group of up to 6 people (including those outside of their household). Extra care should be taken to minimise contact with others by maintaining social distancing. This can be in a public outdoor space, or in a private garden or uncovered yard or terrace
- those shielding no longer need to observe social distancing with other members of their household
- those who are shielding will be able to create a 'support bubble' with one other household, as long as one of the household in the bubble is a single adult household (either an adult living alone or with dependent children under 18). All those in a support bubble can spend time together inside each others' homes, including overnight, without needing to maintain social distancing. This follows the same rules on support bubbles that apply to the wider population now

From 1 August advice for clinically extremely vulnerable people will move in line with advice to those who are clinically vulnerable. In practice, this means staying at home as much as possible, and if people do go out, taking particular care to minimise contact with others outside their household (unless you are in a support bubble) and robustly practising good, frequent hand washing.

The relaxation of the shielding guidance will mean people who are clinically extremely vulnerable will be advised they can go to work or to the shops, as long as they are able to maintain social distancing as much as possible and their workplace is COVID-19 Secure.

Support for those shielding will continue to the end of July so that people can plan for these changes.

8. Communicating with the public

The government will continue to keep the public informed of the impacts of coronavirus on 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 we will seek to open additional businesses once we can be assured these will be able to meet COVID-19 Secure guidelines. 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.

Is this page useful?

Yes

No

Is there anything wrong with this page?

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Births, deaths, marriages and care	Employment and countryside	Healthcare
Business and self-employed	Environment and living abroad	Worldwide
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Citizenship and living in the UK	Money and tax	Guidance and regulation
Crime, justice and the law	Passports, travel and living abroad	News and communications
Disabled people	Visas and immigration	Research and statistics
Driving and transport	Working, jobs and pensions	Policy papers and consultations
		Transparency and freedom of information releases