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Coronavirus (COVID-19) Guidance and Support TCR/016(01)

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<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

Symptoms

The most common symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are recent onset of any of the following:

- a new continuous cough
- a high temperature
- a loss of, or change in, your normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia)

For most people, coronavirus (COVID-19) will be a mild illness. However, if you have any of the symptoms above you should self-isolate at home.

Main messages

- if you live alone and you have symptoms of coronavirus illness (COVID-19), however mild, stay at home for at least **7 days** from when your symptoms started. (The [ending isolation](#) section below has more information)
- after 7 days, if you do not have a high temperature, you do not need to continue to self-isolate. If you still have a high temperature, keep self-isolating until your temperature returns to normal. You do not need to self-isolate if you only have a cough or [anosmia](#) after 7 days, as these symptoms can last for several weeks after the infection has gone
- if you live with others and you are the first in the household to have [symptoms](#) of coronavirus (COVID-19), then you must stay at home for at least 7 days, but all other household members who remain well must stay at home and not leave the house for **14 days**. The 14-day period starts from the day when the first person in the house became ill. See the [explanatory diagram](#)
- for anyone else in the household who starts displaying [symptoms](#), they need to stay at home for at least 7 days from when the symptoms appeared, regardless of what day they are on in the original 14 day isolation period. The [ending isolation](#) section below has more information, and see the [explanatory diagram](#)

- staying at home for 14 days will greatly reduce the overall amount of infection the household could pass on to others in the community
- if you can, move any vulnerable individuals (such as the elderly and those with underlying health conditions) out of your home, to stay with friends or family for the duration of the home isolation period
- if you cannot move vulnerable people out of your home, stay away from them as much as possible
- reduce the spread of infection in your home: wash your hands regularly for 20 seconds, each time using soap and water, or use hand sanitiser; cover coughs and sneezes
- if you have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms:
 - do **not** go to a GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital
 - you do not need to contact 111 to tell them you're staying at home
 - testing for coronavirus (COVID-19) is not needed if you're staying at home
- if you feel you cannot cope with your symptoms at home, or your condition gets worse, or your symptoms do not get better after 7 days, then use the [NHS 111 online](#) coronavirus (COVID-19) service. If you do not have internet access, call NHS 111. For a medical emergency dial 999
- if you develop new coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms at any point after ending your first period of isolation (self or household) then you need to follow the same guidance on self-isolation again

Stay at home: guidance for households with possible coronavirus (COVID-19) infection

Who this guidance is for

This advice is intended for:

- people with [symptoms](#) that may be caused by coronavirus (COVID-19), and do not require hospital treatment, who must remain at home until they are well
- those living in households with someone who shows symptoms that may be caused by coronavirus (COVID-19)

Will my household be tested if we think we have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms?

Testing for coronavirus (COVID-19) is not needed if you're staying at home.

Why staying at home is very important

It is very important that individuals with [symptoms](#) that may be due to coronavirus (COVID-19) and their household members stay at home. Staying at home will help control the spread of the virus to friends, the wider community, and particularly the most vulnerable.

Those with symptoms and living alone should remain at home for at least 7 days after the onset of their symptoms (see [ending self-isolation](#) below). This will reduce the risk of you infecting others. If you live with others and you or one of them have symptoms that may be caused by coronavirus (COVID-19), then household members must stay at home and not leave your house for 14 days (more information in the [ending self-isolation](#) section below). If possible, you should not go out even to buy food or other essentials, and any exercise should be taken within your home. The 14-day period starts from the day when the first person in your house became ill.

If not possible, then you should do what you can to limit your social contact when you leave the house to get supplies.

Staying at home for 14 days will greatly reduce the overall amount of infection the household could pass on to others in the community.

Staying at home may be difficult and frustrating, but there are things that you can do to help make it easier. These include:

- plan ahead and think about what you will need in order to be able to stay at home for the full 7 or 14 days
- talk to your employer, friends and family to ask for their help to access the things you will need to make your stay at home a success
- think about and plan how you can get access to food and other supplies such as medications that you will need during this period
- ask friends or family to drop off anything you need or order supplies online, but make sure these are left outside your home for you to collect
- make sure that you keep in touch with friends and family over the phone or through social media
- think about things you can do during your time at home. People who have successfully completed a period of staying at home have kept themselves busy with activities such as cooking, reading, online learning and watching films
- many people find it helpful to plan out the full 14 days, such as on a make-shift calendar. You may also find it helpful to plan in advance what you will do if, for example, someone in the household were to feel much worse, such as have difficulties breathing
- when you are feeling better, remember that physical exercise can be good for your wellbeing. Look for online classes or courses that can help you take light exercise in your home

While you are staying at home, make sure you do the following things

Stay at home

You and all household members should remain at home. Do **not** go to work, school, or public areas, and do **not** use public transport or taxis.

If possible, you should not go out even to buy food or other essentials, and any exercise should be taken within your home. The 14-day period starts from the day the first person in your house became ill.

If you require help with buying groceries, other shopping or picking up medication, or walking a dog, you will need to ask friends or relatives. Alternatively, you can order medication by phone or online. You can also order your shopping online. Make sure you tell delivery drivers to leave items outside for collection if you order online. The delivery driver should not come into your home.

If you are an employee and unable to work due to coronavirus (COVID-19), please refer to this [guidance from the Department for Work and Pensions](#) to find out about the support that is available to you.

If you are living with children

Keep following this advice to the best of your ability, however, we are aware that not all these measures will be possible.

What we have seen so far is that children with coronavirus (COVID-19) appear to be less severely affected. It is nevertheless important to do your best to follow this guidance.

If you have a vulnerable person living with you

Minimise as much as possible the time any vulnerable family members spend in shared spaces such as kitchens, bathrooms and sitting areas, and keep shared spaces well ventilated.

Aim to keep 2 metres (3 steps) away from vulnerable people you live with and encourage them to sleep in a different bed where possible. If they can, they should use a separate bathroom from the rest of the household. Make sure they use separate towels from the other people in your house, both for drying themselves after bathing or showering and for hand-hygiene purposes.

If you do share a toilet and bathroom with a vulnerable person, it is important that you clean them every time you use them (for example, wiping surfaces you have come into contact with). Another tip is to consider drawing up a rota for bathing, with the vulnerable person using the facilities first.

If you share a kitchen with a vulnerable person, avoid using it while they are present. If they can, they should take their meals back to their room to eat. If you have one, use a dishwasher to clean and dry the family's used crockery and cutlery. If this is not possible, wash them using your usual washing up liquid and warm water and dry them thoroughly. If the vulnerable person is using their own utensils, remember to use a separate tea towel for drying these.

We understand that it will be difficult for some people to separate themselves from others at home. You should do your very best to follow this guidance and everyone in your household should regularly wash their hands, avoid touching their face, and clean frequently touched surfaces.

If you are breastfeeding while infected

There is currently no evidence to suggest that the virus can be transmitted through breast milk. Infection can be spread to the baby in the same way as to anyone in close contact with you. The current evidence is that children with coronavirus (COVID-19) get much less severe symptoms than adults. The benefits of breastfeeding outweigh any potential risks of transmission of the virus through breast milk or by being in close contact; however, this will be an individual decision and can be discussed with your midwife, health visitor or GP by telephone.

If you or a family member are feeding with formula or expressed milk, you should sterilise the equipment carefully before each use. You should not share bottles or a breast pump with someone else.

You can find more information at the [Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists website](#).

Reduce the spread of infection in your home

Wash your hands often

Clean your hands frequently each day by washing with soap and water for 20 seconds or using hand sanitiser. This will help protect you and the people you live with. This step is one of the most effective ways of reducing the risk of passing infection to others.

Cover your coughs and sneezes

Cover your mouth and nose with disposable tissues when you cough or sneeze. If you do not have one to hand, sneeze into the crook of your elbow, not into your hand.

If you have a carer they should use disposable tissues to wipe away any mucus or phlegm after you have sneezed or coughed. Then they should wash their hands with soap and water.

Dispose of tissues into a disposable rubbish bag and immediately wash your hands with soap and water or use a hand sanitiser.

Cleaning and disposal of waste

When cleaning you should use your usual household products, like detergents and bleach, as these will be very effective at getting rid of the virus on surfaces. Clean frequently touched surfaces such as door handles, handrails, remote controls and table tops. This is particularly important if you have an older or vulnerable person in the house.

Clean a shared bathroom each time you use it, for example by wiping the surfaces you have touched.

Personal waste (such as used tissues) and disposable cleaning cloths can be stored securely within disposable rubbish bags. These bags should be placed into another bag, tied securely and kept separate from other waste. This should be put aside for at least 72 hours before being put in your usual external household waste bin.

Other household waste can be disposed of as normal.

Laundry

To minimise the possibility of dispersing virus through the air, do not shake dirty laundry.

Wash items as appropriate in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. All dirty laundry can be washed in the same load.

If you do not have a washing machine, wait a further 72 hours after your 7-day (for individual isolation) or 14-day isolation period (for households) has ended when you can then take the laundry to a public launderette.

Do not share towels, including hand towels and tea towels

Facemasks

The Government do not recommend the use of facemasks as an effective means of preventing the spread of infection **but at our Centre facemask have to be worn at all times.**

Do not have visitors in your home

Do not invite or allow social visitors, such as other friends and family, to enter your home. If you want to speak to someone who is not a member of your household, use the phone or social media.

If you or a family member receive essential care in your home, then carers should continue to visit. Carers will be provided with facemasks and gloves to reduce the risk of you passing on the infection.

If you have pets in the household

At present, there is very limited evidence that companion animals/pets such as dogs and cats can be infected with coronavirus (COVID-19).

What you can do to help yourself get better

Drink water to keep yourself hydrated; you should drink enough during the day so your urine (pee) is a pale clear colour. You can use over-the-counter medications, such as paracetamol, to help with some of your symptoms. Use these according to the instructions on the packet or label and do not exceed the recommended dose.

If you or your family need to seek medical advice

Seek prompt medical attention if your illness or the illness in any household members is worsening. If it's not an emergency, contact [NHS 111 online](#). If you have no internet access, you should call NHS 111. If it is an emergency and you need to call an ambulance, dial 999 and inform the call handler or operator that you or your relative have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms.

All routine medical and dental appointments should usually be cancelled while you and the family are staying at home. If you are concerned or have been asked to attend in person within the period you are home isolating, discuss this with your medical contact first (for example, your GP, local hospital or outpatient service), using the number they have provided. If your concerns are related to your coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms contact [NHS 111 online](#). If you have no internet access, you should call NHS 111.

Looking after your wellbeing while staying at home

We know that staying at home for a prolonged period can be difficult, frustrating and lonely for some people and that you or other household members may feel low. It can be particularly challenging if you don't have much space or access to a garden.

It's important to remember to take care of your mind as well as your body and to get support if you need it. Stay in touch with family and friends over the phone or on social media. There are also sources of support and information that can help, such as the Every Mind Matters website.

Think about things you can do during your time at home. People who have not minded staying at home for a week have kept themselves busy with activities such as cooking, reading, online learning and watching films. If you feel well enough you can take part in light exercise within your home.

Many people find it helpful to remind themselves why what they are doing is so important. Hopefully, none of your family will suffer more than flu-like symptoms. But some people are badly affected by coronavirus (COVID-19), and particularly the elderly and those with certain medical conditions. By staying home, you are protecting the lives of others, as well as making sure the NHS does not get overwhelmed.

Ending self-isolation and household-isolation

Self-isolation

If you have been symptomatic, then you may end your self-isolation after 7 days and return to your normal routine if you feel better and no longer have a high temperature. If you still have a high temperature, keep self-isolating until your temperature returns to normal. After 7 days you do not need to self-isolate if you only have a cough or anosmia as these symptoms can last for several weeks once the infection has gone. The 7-day period starts from the day when you first became ill.

If you continue to feel unwell and have not already sought medical advice, you should contact [NHS 111 online](#). If your home has no internet access, you should call NHS 111.

Household isolation

If living with others, then all household members who remain well may end household-isolation after 14 days. The 14-day period starts from the day illness began in the first person to become ill. Fourteen days is the incubation period for coronavirus (COVID-19); people who remain well after 14 days are unlikely to be infectious.

After 7 days, if the first person to become ill feels better and no longer has a high temperature, they can return to their normal routine. If any other family members become unwell during the 14-day household-isolation period, they should follow the same advice – that is, after 7 days of their symptoms starting, if they feel better and no longer have a high temperature, they can also return to their normal routine.

Should a household member develop coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms late in the 14-day household-isolation period (for example, on day 13 or day 14) **the isolation period does not need to be extended, but the person with the new symptoms has to stay at home for 7 days.** The 14-day household-isolation period will have greatly reduced the overall amount of infection the rest of the household could pass on, and it is not necessary to restart 14 days of isolation for the whole household. This will have provided a high level of community protection. Further isolation of members of this household will provide very little additional community protection.

At the end of the 14-day period, any family member who has not become unwell can leave household isolation.

If any ill person in the household has not had any signs of improvement and have not already sought medical advice, they should contact [NHS 111 online](#). If your home has no internet access, you should call NHS 111.

A cough or anosmia may persist for several weeks in some people, despite the coronavirus (COVID-19) infection having cleared. A persistent cough or anosmia does not mean someone must continue to self-isolate for more than 7 days.

After ending self-isolation and/or household-isolation

What to do if you have another episode of coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms after the end of your first period of self- or household-isolation

If you develop new coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms at any point after ending your first period of isolation (self or household) then you need to follow the same guidance on [self-isolation](#) again. This means you need to stay at home for 7 days from when your symptoms started if you live alone. If you live in a household, you need to stay at home for 7 days from when your symptoms started and all other household members will need to stay at home for 14 days. This will help to ensure that you are continuing to protect others in the community by minimising the amount of infection that is passed on.

If you previously tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) and have another episode of symptoms, do you need to self-isolate again?

If your first illness was so severe you were prioritised for a coronavirus (COVID-19) test and the result was positive, you will probably have developed immunity to coronavirus (COVID-19). Your new symptoms are very unlikely to be due to coronavirus (COVID-19) and therefore you and your household do not need to isolate.

However, if another person in your household develops symptoms and they have not previously tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19), then they need to isolate along with all other members of the household except for you (as you have already tested positive).

If you are concerned about your new possible coronavirus (COVID-19) [symptoms](#), use the [111 coronavirus service](#) or call NHS 111.

Guidance for households with grandparents, parents and children living together where someone is at increased risk or has symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) infection

Who this guidance is for

This guidance is intended for:

- households with grandparents, parents and children living together where a member of the household is aged 70 or over, meaning they are at increased risk of severe illness from coronavirus. Clinically vulnerable people include anyone aged 70 or over, as well as those under 70 with an underlying health condition listed below (that is, anyone instructed to get a flu jab as an adult each year on medical grounds):
 - chronic (long-term) 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](#)
 - problems with your spleen – for example, [sickle cell](#) disease or if you have had your spleen removed
 - a weakened immune system as the result of conditions such as [HIV and AIDS](#), or medicines such as [steroid tablets](#) or [chemotherapy](#)
 - being seriously overweight (a body mass index (BMI) of 40 or above)
 - pregnant women
 - households with grandparents, parents and children living together where one or more persons have symptoms that may be caused by coronavirus that do not require hospital treatment
- 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. They, their family and carers should follow the [guidance on shielding](#).

Will my household be tested if we think we have coronavirus symptoms?

No, testing for coronavirus is not needed if you're staying at home and remain well enough to stay at home.

Why staying at home is very important

It is very important that individuals with [symptoms](#) that may be due to coronavirus and their household members stay at home. Staying at home will help control the spread of the virus to friends, the wider community, and particularly the most vulnerable.

Those with [symptoms](#) should remain at home for at least 7 days after the onset of their symptoms as set out in the [stay-at-home guidance](#). This will reduce the risk of you infecting others.

If one of you has symptoms that may be caused by coronavirus, then household members must also stay at home and not leave the house for 14 days as set out in the [stay-at-home guidance](#) and the [ending household isolation](#) section below. You should not go out even to buy food or other

essentials unless you have no other means to secure them, and any exercise should be taken within your home. The 14-day period starts from the day when the first person in your house became ill.

If you are having food or other essentials delivered to your house, the person who is delivering the items should not come into your home. Staying at home for 14 days will greatly reduce the overall amount of infection the household could pass on to others in the community.

Staying at home may be difficult and frustrating, but there are things that you can do to help make it easier. These include:

- plan ahead and think about what you will need in order to be able to stay at home for the full 7 or 14 days
- talk to your employer, friends and family to ask for their help to access the things you will need to make your stay at home a success
- think about and plan how you can get access to food and other supplies such as medications that you will need during this period
- ask friends or family to drop off anything you need or order supplies online, but make sure these are left outside your home for you to collect
- make sure that you keep in touch with friends and family over the phone or through social media
- think about things you can do during your time at home. People who have successfully completed a period of staying at home have kept themselves busy with activities such as cooking, reading, online learning and watching films
- many people find it helpful to plan out the full 14 days, such as on a make-shift calendar. You may also find it helpful to plan in advance what you will do if, for example, someone in the household were to feel much worse, such as have difficulties breathing
- when you are feeling better, remember that physical exercise can be good for your wellbeing. Look for online classes or courses that can help you take light exercise in your home

If you have a person aged 70 or over living with you

You should take the following actions:

Minimise as much as possible the time they spend in shared spaces such as kitchens, bathrooms and sitting areas, and keep shared spaces well ventilated.

Aim to keep 2 metres (3 steps) away from the person(s) aged 70 or over and encourage them to sleep in a different bed where possible. If they can, they should use a separate bathroom from the rest of the household. Make sure they use separate towels from the other people in your house, both for drying themselves after bathing or showering and for hand-hygiene purposes.

If you do share a toilet and bathroom with a person aged 70 or over, it is important that you clean the facilities every time you use them (for example, wiping surfaces you have come into contact with). Another tip is to consider drawing up a rota for bathing, with the older person using the facilities first.

If you share a kitchen with a person aged 70 or over, avoid using it while they are present. If they can, they should take their meals back to their room to eat. If you have one, use a dishwasher to clean and dry the family's used crockery and cutlery. If this is not possible, wash them using your usual washing up liquid and warm water and dry them thoroughly. If the person aged 70 or over is using their own crockery and cutlery, remember to use a separate tea towel for drying these.

We understand that it will be difficult for some people to separate themselves from others at home. You should do your very best to follow this guidance and everyone in your household should:

- wash their hands more frequently, for 20 seconds, with soap and water; and avoid touching their face
- regularly clean frequently touched surfaces

Advice for the children in the household

This guidance applies to children of all ages.

Keep following the [Stay at home guidance for households with possible coronavirus](#) to the best of your ability, however, we are aware that not all these measures will be possible.

What we have seen so far is that children with coronavirus appear to be less severely affected. It is nevertheless important to do your best to follow this guidance.

Children who are part of a household that is following guidance on staying at home due to possible coronavirus should take exercise within their home. Children who are part of a household that is following guidance on staying at home due to possible coronavirus should not be attending school or any childcare settings even if they are children of key workers.

Children should also be encouraged to follow good hygiene – frequent handwashing with soap and water and avoid touching their eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.

Other advice on staying at home

The [Stay at home guidance for households with possible coronavirus](#) contains more detailed guidance on what to do about cleaning, disposal of waste, laundry and other useful information.

If you or your family need to seek medical advice

Seek prompt medical attention if your illness or the illness in any household members is worsening. If it's not an emergency, contact [NHS 111 online](#). If you have no internet access, you should call NHS 111. For any emergency conditions, if you need to call an ambulance, dial 999 and inform the call handler or operator if you or your relative have coronavirus symptoms as well as any emergency conditions.

All routine medical and dental appointments should usually be cancelled whilst you and the family are staying at home. If you are concerned or have been asked to attend in person within the period you are home isolating, discuss this with your medical contact first (for example, your GP, local hospital or outpatient service), using the number they have provided. If your concerns are related to your coronavirus symptoms contact [NHS 111 online](#). If you have no internet access, you should call NHS 111.

Looking after your wellbeing while staying at home

We know that staying at home for a prolonged period can be difficult, frustrating and lonely for some people and that you or other household members may feel low. It can be particularly challenging if you don't have much space or access to a garden.

It's important to remember to take care of your mind as well as your body and to get support if you need it. Stay in touch with family and friends over the phone or on social media. There are also sources of support and information that can help, such as the [Every Mind Matters website](#).

Think about things you can do during your time at home. People who have not minded staying at home for a week have kept themselves busy with activities such as cooking, reading, online learning and watching films.

Daily physical activity is important for health and wellbeing, including managing stress, positive feelings and sleep. You can look for ideas of exercises you can do at home on the [NHS website](#). If you feel well enough you can take part in light exercise within your home. For family members who are 70 or over and are not symptomatic, it is important to avoid contact with other family members as much as possible (see guidance above on [persons age 70 or over](#)).

Many people find it helpful to remind themselves why what they are doing is so important. Hopefully, none of your family will suffer more than flu-like symptoms. But some people are badly affected by coronavirus, and particularly the elderly and those with certain medical conditions. By staying home, you are protecting the lives of others, as well as making sure the NHS does not get overwhelmed.

Remember it is OK to share your concerns with others you trust and in doing so you may end up providing support to them too. Or you can use a [NHS recommended helpline](#). See more [Guidance for the public on the mental health and wellbeing aspects of coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#).

Ending household isolation

If living with others, then all household members who remain well may end household-isolation after 14 days. The 14-day period starts from the day illness began in the first person to become ill. Fourteen days is the incubation period for coronavirus; people who remain well after 14 days are unlikely to be infectious.

After 7 days, if the first person to become ill feels better and no longer has a high temperature, they can return to their normal routine. If any other family members become unwell during the 14-day household-isolation period, they should follow the same advice - that is, after 7 days of their symptoms starting, if they feel better and no longer have a high temperature, they can also return to their normal routine.

A COVID-19 cough or [anosmia](#) may persist for several weeks in some people, despite the coronavirus infection having cleared. A persistent cough or anosmia does not mean someone must continue to self-isolate for more than 7 days

Should a household member develop coronavirus [symptoms](#) late in the 14-day household-isolation period (for example, on day 13 or day 14) the isolation period does not need to be extended, but the person with the new symptoms has to stay at home for at least 7 days. The 14-day household-isolation period will have greatly reduced the overall amount of infection the rest of the household could pass on, and it is not necessary to restart 14 days of isolation for the whole household. This will have provided a high level of community protection. Further isolation of members of this household will provide very little additional community protection.

At the end of the 14-day period, any family member who has not become unwell can leave household isolation. See the [explanatory diagram](#).

All members of the household should continue to follow government guidelines on [Staying at home and away from others \(social distancing\)](#) and [Social distancing for everyone in the UK](#).

What can you do to reduce the risk of becoming unwell with coronavirus (COVID-19)?

If you are aged 70 or over, or are otherwise clinically vulnerable, you should refer to our guidance on [social distancing for everyone in the UK](#).

If you live with someone who is aged 70 or over, or is otherwise clinically vulnerable, you should refer to our [household guidance](#) and guidance on [Staying at home and away from others](#).

If you are clinically extremely vulnerable, you should follow the guidance on [shielding](#).

Members of a household, living with someone who is extremely vulnerable should be very strict in following guidance on [social distancing](#).

Make a plan for your household or family

Make a plan for how you can adapt your daily routine, and that of others in your household, in case a member of your household develops symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) and you are required to undertake household isolation. Some of the ways in which you could prepare include:

- talk to your neighbours and family and exchange phone numbers
- consider and plan for those in your home who are aged 70 or over, or otherwise clinically vulnerable.
- create a contact list with phone numbers of neighbours, schools, employer, chemist, NHS 111
- set up online shopping accounts if possible

Staying alert and safe (social distancing)

Everyone's actions have helped to reduce the transmission of coronavirus in our communities. As the UK moves to the next phase in our fight against coronavirus, the most important thing we can 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.

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.

As part of this plan:

- People and employers should stay safe in public spaces and workplaces by following “COVID-19 secure” guidelines. This should enable more people to go back to work, where they cannot work from home, and encourage more vulnerable children and the children of critical workers to go to school or childcare as already permitted
- You should [stay alert when you leave home](#): washing your hands regularly, maintaining social distancing, and ensuring you do not gather in groups of more than two, except with members of your household or for other specific exceptions set out in law
- You must continue to stay home except for a limited set of reasons but - in line with scientific advice - can take part in more outdoor activities

The government has set out a roadmap for lifting further restrictions and opening more businesses and venues, but this plan is dependent on successfully controlling the spread of the virus. If the evidence shows sufficient progress is not being made in controlling the virus, then the lifting of restrictions may have to be delayed. 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.

This guidance explains the measures that will help you to stay alert and safe as we continue to respond to the challenges of coronavirus. Key parts of these measures are underpinned by [law](#), which sets out clearly what you must and must not do – every person in the country must continue to comply with this. The relevant authorities, including the police, have the powers to enforce the law – including through fines and dispersing gatherings.

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 8 – 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](#) measures to keep themselves safe by staying at home and avoiding all contact with others, except for essential medical treatment or support.

2. Staying at home

It is still very important that people stay home unless necessary to go out for specific reasons set out in [law](#). These include:

- for work, where you cannot work from home
- going to shops that are permitted to be open – to get things like food and medicine, and to collect goods ordered online or on the phone
- to exercise or spend time outdoors for recreation
- any medical need, to donate blood, avoid injury or illness, escape risk of harm, or to provide care or to help a vulnerable person

Where parents or someone with parental responsibility do not live in the same household, children under 18 can be moved between their parents' homes to continue existing arrangements for access and contact.

The government has also identified a number of [critical workers](#) whose children can still go to school or their childcare provider. 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 work from home. However, if you, or a member of your household are unwell with symptoms of coronavirus, you should isolate and should not travel to or attend the workplace.

Critical workers and parents or guardians of vulnerable children may leave their home to take children to and from school or their childcare provider.

You can also attend the funeral of a close family member or member of your household (or, of a friend, if no one from their close family or household is attending). Religious ministers or leaders can leave their homes to go to their place of worship, but these should remain closed to the public

You may also leave or be outside of your home in order to access other critical public services, such as social services, support provided to victims, services provided by the Department for Work and Pensions, to fulfil a legal obligation, or to move home in line with the government's [guidance](#).

A fuller list of the reasons you can leave home is set out in the [regulations](#).

When you do need to go out, 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. [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 isn't possible and where you will come into contact with people you do not normally meet. This is most relevant for short periods indoors in crowded areas, for example on public transport or in some shops.

It is still not permitted to leave your house to visit friends and family in their home. The government is looking at how to facilitate greater contact with close family or friends, and will explain how this can be done safely in the coming weeks.

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. Businesses and venues

For the time being, certain businesses and venues are required by [law](#) to stay closed to the public. These include:

- restaurants and cafes, other than for takeaway
- pubs, cinemas, theatres and nightclubs
- clothing and electronics stores; hair, beauty and nail salons; and outdoor and indoor markets (not selling food)
- libraries, community centres, and youth centres
- indoor and outdoor leisure facilities such as bowling alleys, gyms, arcades and soft play facilities
- some communal places within parks, such as playgrounds and outdoor gyms
- places of worship (except for funerals)
- 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 and critical workers where they need to for work

Food retailers and food markets, hardware stores, garden centres and certain other retailers can remain open. Other businesses can remain open and their employees can travel to work, where they cannot work from home. The government has also allowed outdoor sports facilities – such as tennis and basketball courts, golf courses and bowling greens – to open, but you should only use these alone, with members of your household, or with one other person from outside your household, while keeping two metres apart at all times.

4. Visiting public places

You can exercise outside as often as you wish and you can also sit and rest outside – exercise or recreation can be alone, with members of your household, or with one other person from outside your household, while keeping two metres apart at all times.

You may drive to outdoor publicly accessible open spaces irrespective of distance, but should follow social distancing guidance whilst you are there. You should plan ahead to ensure that, where you are visiting places like National Parks, you have checked that they are open and appropriately prepared for visitors. You should not go to ticketed outdoor leisure venues, where there is a higher risk of close contact and touching surfaces.

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.

5. Public gatherings

To ensure people are social distancing, the government has prohibited by law all public gatherings of more than two people, except for reasons set out in the [regulations](#). These include:

- where the gathering is of a group of people who live together in the same household – this means that a parent can, for example, take their children to the shops, although you are advised to do so only if there is no option to leave them at home
- where the gathering is essential for work purposes – but workers should try to minimise all meetings and other gatherings in the workplace

It is important that everyone continues to act responsibly in public places, as the large majority have done to date. The infection rate will increase if people begin to break the rules.

6. Going to work

You should [travel to work](#), including to provide voluntary or charitable services, where you cannot work from home and your workplace is open.

With the exception of the organisations covered above in the section 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, whilst 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 shows coronavirus symptoms. You should not go into work if you are showing symptoms, or if you or any of your household 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. 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 law, they may instruct you to go home or leave an area, or arrest you where they believe it necessary. They may also instruct you to take steps to stop your children breaking these legal requirements if they have already done so.

The government has introduced higher fines for those who do not comply, to reflect the increased risk to others of breaking the rules as we begin to ease the restrictions, and people return to work. 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.

Similarly, a business or venue operating in contravention of the law will be committing an offence. Local authorities (for example, Environmental Health and Trading Standards officers) will monitor compliance, with support from the police if appropriate. Businesses and venues that breach the law will be subject to prohibition notices and fixed penalty notices. Businesses that continue to contravene the law will be forced to close down.

For both individuals and companies, if you do not pay, you may also be taken to court, with magistrates able to impose potentially unlimited fines.

8. Clinically vulnerable people

If you have any of the following health conditions, you are clinically vulnerable, meaning you are 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.

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, treatments like chemotherapy, or medicines 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 to.

9. 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 formally revisited at the end of May. 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.

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

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 [staying safe outside your home](#) for guidance on what the new rules will mean. This page sets out key FAQ to inform the public and 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. Public spaces / outdoor activities / exercise

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

There are a limited number of things you can now do that you could not do before:

- spend time outdoors – for example sitting and enjoying the fresh air, picnicking, or sunbathing
- meet one other person from a different household outdoors - following social distancing guidelines
- exercise outdoors as often as you wish - following social distancing guidelines
- use outdoor sports courts or facilities, such as a tennis or basketball court, or golf course – with members of your household, or one other person while staying 2 metres apart
- go to a garden centre

At all times, you should continue to observe social distancing guidelines when you are outside your home, including ensuring you are 2 metres away from anyone outside your household. As with before, you cannot:

- visit friends and family in their homes
- exercise in an indoor sports court, gym or leisure centre, or go swimming in a public pool
- use an outdoor gym or playground
- visit a private or ticketed attraction
- gather in a group of more than two (excluding members of your own household), except for a few specific exceptions set out in law (for work, funerals, house moves, supporting the vulnerable, in emergencies and to fulfil legal obligations)

If you are showing coronavirus symptoms, or if you or any of your household are self-isolating, you should stay at home - this is critical to staying safe and saving lives.

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

You should stay at home as much as possible. The reasons you may leave home include:

- for work, where you cannot work from home
- going to shops that are permitted to be open - to get things like food and medicine
- to exercise or spend time outdoors
- any medical need, including to donate blood, avoid injury or illness, escape risk of harm, or to provide care or to help a vulnerable person

These reasons are exceptions and a fuller list is set out in the [regulations](#). Even when doing these activities, you should be minimising time spent away from the home and ensuring that you are two metres apart from anyone outside of your household.

1.3 Are you reopening tennis courts / golf courses / basketball courts etc?

Yes. Sports courts can re-open, but you should only partake in such activities alone, with members of your household, or with one other person from outside your household, while practising social distancing. You should take particular care if you need to use any indoor facilities next to these outdoor courts, such as toilets.

You should not use these facilities if you are showing coronavirus symptoms, or if you or any of your household are self-isolating.

1.4 Can I meet my friends and family in the park?

You can meet one other person from outside your household if you are outdoors. Public gatherings of more than 2 people from different households are prohibited in law. There are no limits on gatherings in the park with members of your household.

1.5 On what date can I expand my household group?

The government has asked the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) to advise on the concept of “bubbles”, which would mean allowing people to expand their household group to include one other household. For the time being, you cannot visit friends or family, except to spend time outdoors with up to one person from a different household.

1.6 Can I go out to help a vulnerable person?

You can go out to care for or help a vulnerable person, or to provide other voluntary or charitable services, 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 two metres away from others, and wash your hands for at least 20 seconds (or use hand sanitiser if soap and water are not available).

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. You shouldn't travel with someone from outside your household unless you can practise social distancing - for example by cycling. Leaving your home - the place you live - to stay at another home is not allowed.

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

Please refer to the Department for Transport's guidance on [Private cars and other vehicles](#)

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

Day trips to outdoor open space, in a private vehicle, are permitted. You should practise social distancing from other people outside your household.

Leaving your home - the place you live - to stay at another home for a holiday or other purpose is not allowed. This includes visiting second homes.

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.

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

In general, leaving your home - the place you live - to stay at another home is not allowed.

If a student is moving permanently to live back at their family home, this is permitted.

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

There is no change to [the guidance on attending funerals](#) at present.

1.12 Can weddings go ahead?

There's no change at this time, but we have set out our intention to enable small wedding ceremonies from 1 June. We understand the frustration couples planning a wedding must be feeling at this time. As with all the necessary coronavirus restrictions on register offices, places of worship and other venues, we will look to ease them as soon as it is safe to do so. We will work closely with faith leaders and local government over the coming weeks to go through the practicalities.

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?

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.

Anyone who has been advised to shield by the NHS or their GP, including those 70 and over, should continue to do this until at least the end of June.

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. 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 'back to work' guidelines apply to those in essential retail like:

- supermarkets
- 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
- and so on

Non-essential retail, restaurants, pubs, bars, gyms and leisure centres will remain closed. They will reopen in a phased manner provided it is safe to do so.

There are specific guidelines for those who are vulnerable, shielding, or showing symptoms.

3.2 What is a critical worker?

[Critical workers](#) are those working in health and care and other essential services, who can still take their children to school or childcare 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 provided if you cannot reasonably work from home.

3.3 What is meant by the phased approach?

Not all forms of work will return to normal at once. People will have to prepare for a new type of normal. We need to make sure that any changes we do make are carefully monitored and that we aren't doing anything to increase the risk of infection and push the Reproductive value 'R' above 1. 'R' describes how many people on average will be infected for every one person who has COVID-19.

We will ensure that businesses have time to prepare their premises to operate as safely as possible.

We will set out more detail about the phasing in due course.

3.4 Will you open pubs / cinemas / hairdressers in July?

The [roadmap](#) sets out that some businesses (like pubs, cinemas or hairdressers) 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.

3.5 What are the 'Covid-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.

3.6 Do people need to wear face coverings at work?

Face coverings are not compulsory. However, if you can, people are advised to wear face coverings in enclosed public spaces where social distancing is not possible or where you are more likely to come into contact with people you do not normally meet. For example, on public transport or in some shops. Face coverings can help us protect each other and reduce the spread of the disease if you are suffering from coronavirus, but not showing symptoms.

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.

3.7 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 you are suffering from coronavirus, but not showing symptoms.

To protect yourself, you should continue to follow [social distancing measures and isolation guidance](#) and wash your hands regularly.

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 shift working or staggering processes. To identify the precautions needed to manage risk, your employer should discuss the workplace 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.

We have published further specific "COVID-19 Secure" [guidelines](#) on how to make workplaces safe, which have been developed in consultation with over 200 business leaders and trades union organisations.

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 cannot work from home and have to travel to work, or if you must make an essential journey, you should cycle or walk wherever 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.

We'll be setting out further guidance for passengers with more advice on how to stay safe during your journeys later this week.

5.2 Should people wear face coverings on public transport?

If you can, wear a face covering in an enclosed space where social distancing isn't possible and where you will come into contact with people you do not normally meet. This is most relevant for short periods indoors in crowded areas, for example on public transport or in some shops. The evidence suggests that face coverings can help us protect each other and reduce the spread of the disease if you are suffering from coronavirus, but not showing symptoms.

If people choose to wear them, we are asking people to make their own face coverings at home, using scarves or other textile items. We are publishing guidance [to help illustrate the process](#).

We urge the public not to purchase medical or surgical masks as these should be reserved for health and social care workers.

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

You should avoid using public transport wherever possible.

6. Schools and Childcare

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

We initially urge those who are currently eligible to use school provision (children of critical workers and vulnerable children) to attend. As soon as it is safe to do so we will bring more year groups back to school in a phased way when it is safe to have larger numbers of children within schools, but not before. Keeping children and staff safe is our utmost priority.

Schools should prepare to begin opening for more children from 1 June. The government expects children to be able to return to early years settings, and for Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 to be back in school in smaller class sizes from this point.

Secondary schools and further education colleges should also prepare to begin some face to face contact with Year 10 and 12 pupils who have key exams next year, in support of their continued remote, home learning.

The government's ambition is for all primary school children to return to school before the summer for a month if feasible.

6.2 How will you make sure it is safe?

Schools can now operate if they are organised in a way that is compatible with minimising the spread of the virus. The next phase of measures will require the development of new safety standards to set out how physical spaces, including schools, can be adapted to operate safely.

We have published [guidance advising schools](#) on reopening to ensure schools can adequately prepare for the next phase. One of the main protective measures we can take to reduce transmission is to have small consistent group and class sizes.

6.3 Will children be compelled to wear face coverings at school?

No this will not be required. We [have published further advice](#) on protective measures in schools.

7. Borders / international visitors

Please note - these measures are NOT yet in force. We will set out further detail, including from when these will be in force, in due course.

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.

7.2 What is self-isolation and which countries will it apply to?

We will be asking people travelling to the UK to make some sacrifices to stop coronavirus cases from being imported. In the same way as people in the UK have made large sacrifices to control the spread of coronavirus.

So what we will be asking people to do on entering the UK is supply their contact details and details of their accommodation, and to self-isolate in their accommodation for 14 days, other than those on a short list of exemptions.

We will set out further details shortly.

7.3 Is this for foreign travellers only or British people returning home from holiday or living overseas?

All arrivals including British nationals will be required to provide their contact information and self-isolate upon arrival, other than those on a short list of exemptions.

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 law, the police may instruct you to go home, leave an area or disperse, and they may instruct you to take steps to stop your children breaking these rules if they have already done so. The police can also take you home or arrest you where they believe it is necessary.

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 of £100 (reduced to

£50 if paid within 14 days), an increase of £40 from the previous £60 fixed penalty amount. 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.

Staying safe outside your home

It is your responsibility to adopt these principles wherever possible. The government is also using these principles as the basis of discussions with businesses, unions, local government and many other stakeholders, to agree how the principles should apply in different settings to make them safer.

All of us, as customers, visitors, employees or employers need to make changes to lower the risk of transmission of the virus. The government has consulted with its scientific advisers to establish the principles that will determine these changes.

1. Keep your distance from people outside your household

Whilst recognising this will not always be possible, it is important to be aware that the risk of infection increases the closer you are to another person with the virus, and the amount of time you spend in close contact with them. Therefore, you are unlikely to be infected if you walk past another person in the street.

Public Health England recommends trying to keep two metres away from people as a precaution. However, this is not a rule and the science is complex. The key thing is to not be too close to people for more than a short period of time, as much as you can.

2. Keep your hands and face as clean as possible

Wash your hands often using soap and water, and dry them thoroughly.

Where available, use sanitiser outside your home, especially as you enter a building and after you have had contact with surfaces.

Avoid touching your face.

3. Work from home if you can

With the proper equipment and adjustments, many people can do most or all of their work from home. Your employer should support you to find reasonable adjustments to do this. However, not all jobs can be done from home. If your workplace is open and you cannot work from home, you can travel to work.

4. Avoid being face-to-face with people if they are outside your household

You are at higher risk of being directly exposed to respiratory droplets (released by talking or coughing) when you are within two metres of someone and have face-to-face contact with them. You can lower the risk of infection if you stay side-to-side rather than facing someone.

5. Reduce the number of people you spend time with in a work setting

You can lower the risks of transmission in the workplace by reducing the number of people you come into contact with regularly, where you can. Your employer can support with this (where practical) by:

- changing shift patterns and rotas to match you with the same team each time
- splitting people into smaller, contained teams

6. Avoid crowds

You can lower the risks of transmission by reducing the number of people you come into close contact with. For example, avoid peak travel times on public transport, where possible.

Businesses should also take reasonable steps to avoid people being gathered together. For example, by allowing the use of more entrances and exits, and staggering entrance and exit, where possible.

7. If you have to travel (for example, to work or school), think about how and when you travel

To reduce demand on the public transport network, you should walk or cycle wherever possible. If you have to use public transport, you should try to avoid peak times.

Employers should consider staggering working hours, expanding bicycle storage facilities, providing changing facilities and providing car parking.

8. Wash your clothes regularly

There is some evidence that the virus can stay on fabrics for a few days, although usually it is shorter. Therefore, if you are working with people outside your household, wash your clothes regularly.

Changing clothes in workplaces should only be considered where there is a high risk of infection or there are highly vulnerable people, such as in a care home. If you need to change your clothes, avoid crowding into a changing room.

9. Keep indoor places well ventilated

Evidence suggests that the virus is less likely to be passed on in well-ventilated buildings and outdoors.

In good weather, try to leave windows and doors open in areas where people from different households come into contact, or move activity outdoors if you can.

Use external extractor fans to keep spaces well ventilated and make sure that ventilation systems are set to maximise the air flow rate.

Heating and cooling systems can be used at their normal temperature settings.

10. Face coverings

If you can, wear a face covering in an enclosed space where social distancing isn't possible and where you will come into contact with people you do not normally meet. This is most relevant for short periods indoors in crowded areas, for example, on public transport or in some shops.

Evidence suggests that wearing a face covering does not protect you. However, if you are infected but have not yet developed symptoms, it may provide some protection for others you come into close contact with.

Face coverings do not replace social distancing. If you have symptoms of COVID-19 (cough, and/or high temperature, and/or loss of, or change in, your normal sense of smell or taste - anosmia), you and your household must isolate at home: wearing a face covering does not change this.

A face covering is not the same as the surgical masks or respirators used by healthcare and other workers as part of personal protective equipment. 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.

Face coverings should not be used by children under the age of 2 or those who may find it difficult to manage them correctly. For example, primary age children unassisted, or those with respiratory conditions.

It is important to use face coverings properly and wash your hands before putting them on and taking them off.

You can [make face-coverings at home](#). The key thing is it should cover the mouth and nose.

11. When at work, follow the advice given to you by your employer

Employers have a duty to assess and manage risks to your safety in the workplace. The government has issued [guidance for employers and businesses on coronavirus](#). This includes guidance on how to make adjustments to your workplace to help you maintain social distancing.

It also includes guidance on hygiene, as evidence suggests that the virus can exist for up to 72 hours on surfaces. Therefore, frequent cleaning is particularly important for communal surfaces like:

- door handles
- lift buttons
- communal areas like bathrooms
- kitchens
- tea points

Working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19)

Guidance to help employers, employees and the self-employed understand how to work safely during the coronavirus pandemic.

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

5 steps to working safely

Practical actions for businesses to take based on 5 main steps.

Make sure you read all the guides relevant to your workplace. Each guide has specific actions for businesses to take based on these steps. Further guidance will be published as more businesses are able to reopen.

1. Carry out a COVID-19 risk assessment

Before restarting work you should ensure the safety of the workplace by:

- carrying out a risk assessment in line with the [HSE guidance](#)
- consulting with your workers or trade unions
- sharing the results of the risk assessment with your workforce and on your website

2. Develop cleaning, handwashing and hygiene procedures

You should increase the frequency of handwashing and surface cleaning by:

- encouraging people to follow the [guidance on hand washing and hygiene](#)
- providing hand sanitiser around the workplace, in addition to washrooms
- frequently cleaning and disinfecting objects and surfaces that are touched regularly
- enhancing cleaning for busy areas
- setting clear use and cleaning guidance for toilets
- providing hand drying facilities – either paper towels or electrical dryers

3. Help people to work from home

You should take all reasonable steps to help people work from home by:

- discussing home working arrangements
- ensuring they have the right equipment, for example remote access to work systems
- including them in all necessary communications
- looking after their physical and mental wellbeing

4. Maintain 2m social distancing, where possible

Where possible, you should maintain 2m between people by:

- putting up signs to remind workers and visitors of social distancing guidance
- avoiding sharing workstations

- using floor tape or paint to mark areas to help people keep to a 2m distance
- arranging one-way traffic through the workplace if possible
- switching to seeing visitors by appointment only if possible

5. Where people cannot be 2m apart, manage transmission risk

Where it's not possible for people to be 2m apart, you should do everything practical to manage the transmission risk by:

- considering whether an activity needs to continue for the business to operate
- keeping the activity time involved as short as possible
- using screens or barriers to separate people from each other
- using back-to-back or side-to-side working whenever possible
- staggering arrival and departure times
- reducing the number of people each person has contact with by using 'fixed teams or partnering'

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