

COVID 19 Guidance

For all announcements in chronological order see

https://www.gov.uk/search/news-and-communications?topical_events%5B%5D=coronavirus-covid-19-uk-government-response

Timeline Highlights

3/3/20 Government action plan published

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/coronavirus-action-plan-launched>

The government has published its official [coronavirus action plan](#). The Prime Minister introduced the plan at Downing Street on Tuesday 3 March.

The document provides the public with information on:

- the government's plans to contain the spread of the virus
- how action will develop as the virus spreads
- what people can do to protect themselves and their families

The plan also includes information on the government's 4-stage strategy to:

- contain
- delay
- research
- mitigate

It sets out advice for how the public should respond in each stage, including what to expect if the outbreak becomes a pandemic.

4/3/20 Govt campaign focuses on handwashing

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/public-information-campaign-focuses-on-handwashing>

This phase of the campaign focuses on the importance of washing your hands more often, especially:

- when you get to work or arrive home
- after you blow your nose, cough or sneeze
- before you eat or handle food

You should wash your hands for 20 seconds, using soap and water or hand sanitiser.

You should also cough or sneeze into tissues before binning them.

12/3/12 Govt moves to next phase: delay. Self-isolation if any symptoms for 7 days

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/covid-19-government-announces-moving-out-of-contain-phase-and-into-delay>

As per the current advice, the most important thing individuals can do to protect themselves remains washing their hands more often, for at least 20 seconds, with soap and water. Make sure you cough or sneeze into a tissue, put it in a bin and wash your hands.

We are asking anyone who shows certain symptoms to self-isolate for 7 days, regardless of whether they have travelled to affected areas. This means we want people to stay at home and avoid all but essential contact with others for 7 days from the point of displaying mild symptoms, to slow the spread of infection.

The symptoms are:

- a high temperature (37.8 degrees and above)
- a new, continuous cough

16/3/20 Social distancing guidance issued:

Matt Hancock announcement to Parliament:

First, based on the updated scientific advice, we are today advising that if you or anyone in your home has a high temperature or a new and continuous cough, then you should stay at home for 14 days.

If at all possible, you should not go out even to buy food and essentials.

Instead you should ask others for assistance with your daily necessities.

The exception to this is for exercise. Even then, you should keep at a safe distance from others.

If it's not possible to receive deliveries at home, then you should do what you can to limit your social contact when you leave the house to get supplies.

Even if you or anyone in your household don't have symptoms, there is more that we have to ask of you.

Today we are advising people against all unnecessary social contact with others and all unnecessary travel.

We need people to start working from home if they possibly can.

We should steer clear of pubs, clubs, cinemas and restaurants.

We should only use the NHS when we really need to.

This advice is directed at everyone, but it's especially important for the over 70s, for pregnant women and for those with some health conditions.

It's especially true of London, which the evidence suggests is several weeks ahead of the rest of the country.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-social-distancing-and-for-vulnerable-people/guidance-on-social-distancing-for-everyone-in-the-uk-and-protecting-older-people-and-vulnerable-adults>

Social Distancing is:

Social distancing measures are steps you can take to reduce social interaction between people. This will help reduce the transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19).

They are to:

1. Avoid contact with someone who is displaying symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19). These symptoms include high temperature and/or new and continuous cough
2. Avoid non-essential use of public transport when possible
3. Work from home, where possible. Your employer should support you to do this. Please refer to [employer guidance](#) for more information
4. Avoid large and small gatherings in public spaces, noting that pubs, restaurants, leisure centres and similar venues are currently shut as infections spread easily in closed spaces where people gather together.
5. Avoid gatherings with friends and family. Keep in touch using remote technology such as phone, internet, and social media
6. Use telephone or online services to contact your GP or other essential services

Everyone should be trying to follow these measures as much as is practicable.

We strongly advise you to follow the above measures as much as you can and to significantly limit your face-to-face interaction with friends and family if possible, particularly if you:

- are over 70
- have an underlying health condition
- are pregnant

This advice is likely to be in place for some weeks.

Guidance included recommendations for those who may be more vulnerable:

We are advising those who are at increased risk of severe illness from coronavirus (COVID-19) to be particularly stringent in following social distancing measures.

This group includes those who are:

- aged 70 or older (regardless of medical conditions)
- under 70 with an underlying health condition listed below (i.e. 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 \(MS\)](#), a learning disability 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)
- those who are pregnant

Note: there are *some clinical conditions which put people at even higher risk of severe illness* from COVID-19. If you are in this category, next week the NHS in England will directly contact you with advice about the more stringent measures you should take in order to keep yourself and others safe. For now, you should rigorously follow the social distancing advice in full, outlined below.

People falling into this group are those who may be at particular risk due to complex health problems such as:

- people who have received an organ transplant and remain on ongoing immunosuppression medication
- people with cancer who are undergoing active chemotherapy or radiotherapy
- people with cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukaemia who are at any stage of treatment
- people with severe chest conditions such as cystic fibrosis or severe asthma (requiring hospital admissions or courses of steroid tablets)
- people with severe diseases of body systems, such as severe kidney disease (dialysis)

Summary of Advice

| Group/ Action | Wash hands more often | Household isolation for 14 days* | Self - isolation for 7 days** | Social mixing in the community*** | Having friends and family to the house | Use remote access to NHS and essential services**** | Vary daily commute and use less public transport | Home working |
|---|--|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|---|--|------------------|
| 0 – 69 | Yes | Yes | Yes | Advised against | Advised against | Advised | Advised | Advised |
| 70+ | Yes | Yes | Yes | Strongly advised against | Strongly advised against | Strongly advised | Strongly advised | Strongly advised |
| Any age Member of vulnerable group with an underlying health condition ¹ | Yes | Yes | Yes | Strongly advised against | Strongly advised against | Strongly advised | Strongly advised | Strongly advised |
| Pregnant women | Yes | Yes | Yes | Strongly advised against | Strongly advised against | Strongly advised | Strongly advised | Strongly advised |
| Those with serious underlying health conditions | As above, but further bespoke guidance will be provided by the NHS next week | | | | | | | |

* If one member of your family or household has a new continuous cough or high temperature

** If you live alone and you have a new continuous cough or high temperature

*** Noting cinemas, theatres, pubs, bars, restaurants and clubs are now all required to close. If you meet others when you are outdoors (for example, on a walk) ensure that you stay at least 2 metres away

**** for example via telephone or internet

¹ such as anyone instructed to get a flu jab each year

19/3/20 Schools told to close apart for essential workers/ vulnerable children

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>

Vulnerable child is:

Schools, and all childcare providers, are therefore being asked to continue to provide care for a limited number of children - children who are vulnerable, and children whose parents are critical to the Covid-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home.

Vulnerable children include children who are supported by social care, those with safeguarding and welfare needs, including child in need plans, on child protection

plans, 'looked after' children, young carers, disabled children and those with [education, health and care \(EHC\) plans](#).

Key workers are (per Gavin Williamson)

Please, therefore, follow these key principles:

1. If it is at all possible for children to be at home, then they must be.
2. If a child needs specialist support, is vulnerable or has a parent who is a critical worker, then educational provision will be available for them.
3. Parents should not rely for childcare upon those who are advised to be in the stringent social distancing category such as grandparents, friends, or family members with underlying conditions.
4. Parents must also do everything they can to ensure children are not mixing socially in a way which can continue to spread the virus. They must observe the same social distancing principles as adults.
5. Residential special schools, boarding schools and special settings continue to care for children wherever possible.

If your work is critical to the COVID-19 response, or you work in one of the critical sectors listed below, and you cannot keep your child safe at home then your children will be prioritised for education provision:

Health and social care

This includes but is not limited to doctors, nurses, midwives, paramedics, social workers, care workers, and other frontline health and social care staff including volunteers; the support and specialist staff required to maintain the UK's health and social care sector; those working as part of the health and social care supply chain, including producers and distributors of medicines and medical and personal protective equipment.

Education and childcare

This includes childcare, support and teaching staff, social workers and those specialist education professionals who must remain active during the COVID-19 response to deliver this approach.

Key public services

This includes those essential to the running of the justice system, religious staff, charities and workers delivering key frontline services, those responsible for the management of the deceased, and journalists and broadcasters who are providing public service broadcasting.

Local and national government

This only includes those administrative occupations essential to the effective delivery of the COVID-19 response, or delivering essential public services, such as the payment of benefits, including in government agencies and arm's length bodies.

Food and other necessary goods

This includes those involved in food production, processing, distribution, sale and delivery, as well as those essential to the provision of other key goods (for example hygienic and veterinary medicines)

Public safety and national security

This includes police and support staff, Ministry of Defence civilians, contractor and armed forces personnel (those critical to the delivery of key defence and national security outputs and essential to the response to the COVID-19 pandemic), fire and rescue service employees (including support staff), National Crime Agency staff, those maintaining border security, prison and probation staff and other national security roles, including those overseas.

Transport

This includes those who will keep the air, water, road and rail passenger and freight transport modes operating during the COVID-19 response, including those working on transport systems through which supply chains pass.

Utilities, communication and financial services

This includes staff needed for essential financial services provision (including but not limited to workers in banks, building societies and financial market infrastructure), the oil, gas, electricity and water sectors (including sewerage), information technology and data infrastructure sector and primary industry supplies to continue during the COVID-19 response, as well as key staff working in the civil nuclear, chemicals, telecommunications (including but not limited to network operations, field engineering, call centre staff, IT and data infrastructure, 999 and 111 critical services), postal services and delivery, payments providers and waste disposal sectors.

If workers think they fall within the critical categories above, they should confirm with their employer that, based on their business continuity arrangements, their specific role is necessary for the continuation of this essential public service.

If your school is closed, then please [contact your local authority](#), who will seek to redirect you to a local school in your area that your child, or children, can attend.

We are grateful for the work of teachers and workers in educational settings for continuing to provide for the children of the other critical workers of our country. It is an essential part of our national effort to combat this disease.

20/3/20 Further measures: pubs etc to close; public “urged” to take further steps

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-announces-further-measures-on-social-distancing>

The government has also urged the public to take further steps to protect themselves and the wider population from the coronavirus, including:

- Everyone to stay at home unless they need to get essential supplies such as food and medicines.
- All those able to work from home to do so, unless their work is essential.

- Only traveling if absolutely necessary - while public transport won't stop, this should only be used for essential travel - for example by key workers to travel to and from work.

21/3/20 Shielding of vulnerable “Strong advice” to stay at home for 12 weeks. Promised a letter in the following week**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/major-new-measures-to-protect-people-at-highest-risk-from-coronavirus>

Up to 1.5 million people in England currently live with conditions, or are taking medication or receiving treatment, which health experts have identified puts them at a much greater risk of developing serious complications if they get the virus, which may mean they need hospital treatment.

This includes, for example, those who have received organ transplants, are living with severe respiratory conditions such as cystic fibrosis and severe chronic bronchitis (COPD) or specific cancers like of the blood or bone marrow.

And some – though not all – of those receiving certain types of drug treatments including ones which suppress the immune system – leaving the body less able to fight off the virus.

People identified as belonging to one or more of the at-risk groups will be contacted by their GP practice, specialist or both strongly advising them **to stay at home for a period of at least 12 weeks.**

In the first instance **they will receive a letter this week and**, where mobile number is known, the NHS will also send frequent text messages shortly to those in this group, to reach the most at risk as quickly as possible with advice.

Website set up so those in this category can register:

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus-extremely-vulnerable>

23/3/20 PM announces lockdown

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-address-to-the-nation-on-coronavirus-23-march-2020>

That is why people will only be allowed to leave their home for the following very limited purposes:

- shopping for basic necessities, as infrequently as possible
- one form of exercise a day - for example a run, walk, or cycle - alone or with members of your household;
- any medical need, to provide care or to help a vulnerable person; and
- travelling to and from work, but only where this is absolutely necessary and cannot be done from home.

That's all - these are the only reasons you should leave your home.

You should not be meeting friends. If your friends ask you to meet, you should say No.

You should not be meeting family members who do not live in your home.

You should not be going shopping except for essentials like food and medicine - and you should do this as little as you can. And use food delivery services where you can.

9/4/20 NHS England gives GP's until Easter Monday (13/4/20) to identify vulnerable patients

11/4/20 Steps taken to identify further vulnerable patients – second wave of letters sent

<https://digital.nhs.uk/coronavirus/shielded-patient-list#latest-news>

Additional

Guidance if there is infection in household:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

**The at risk NHS letter:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2020/03/at-risk-patient-letter-march-2020.pdf>

FJYPB info for young people:

<https://www.cafcass.gov.uk/family-justice-young-peoples-board/>

Family Court Guidance

<https://www.judiciary.uk/announcements/coronavirus-crisis-guidance-on-compliance-with-family-court-child-arrangement-orders/>

CAFCASS Guidance

<https://www.cafcass.gov.uk/grown-ups/parents-and-carers/covid-19-guidance-for-children-and-families/>

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