

## COVID-19 BRIEFING – INTERNAL AND FOR AGE UK EMPLOYEES ONLY

**This briefing was last updated 5/01/2021. We will continue to keep this briefing updated on a regular basis and as and when new announcements are made.**

### Coronavirus rates

- A new variant of COVID-19 was identified in December. Since then cases have been increasing across the country. There have over 390,000 new cases in the last 7 days in the UK, a 43% increase on the previous week. Cases have been increasingly particularly rapidly in London, the South East and the East of England.
- In the last 7 days, over 17,000 people have been admitted to hospital across the UK (18% more than in the previous week). There are currently 26,600 patients in hospital with COVID-19 in England.
- Prevalence of COVID-19 remains very high in most communities. In England there are an estimated 546 case per 100,000 of the population. Infections are still rising with the current R rate estimated to be 1.1 and 1.3.
- All COVID -19 data by nation and region is available [here](#). You can view an interactive map of case rates in your area [here](#).

### National lockdown: stay at home

- On Monday 4 January the Prime Minister announced a third national lockdown in England. New restrictions come into force on Wednesday 6 January and expected to remain in place for at least 7 weeks.
- The Government has stated they will next review the rules on w/c 15<sup>th</sup> February with any changes coming into effect w/c 22<sup>nd</sup> February (after the school half term holidays).
- The lockdown measures are summarised below in annex 1 and the full guidance (as currently published can be view [here](#)). The restrictions are largely similar to Tier 4. The main difference being that schools and colleges will no be closed for in person teaching until at least February half term. The children of key workers and vulnerable children can still attend.
- Clinically extremely vulnerable people are advised to shield again. Information for shielders has not yet been updated, however we understand it will follow the advice given in Tier 4 – a summary of the guidance is below in annex 2, the existing Government guidance can be view [here](#) and people can register for more support (including priority shopping services) [here](#). All CEV people should receive a letter from the NHS with new guidance.
- The following activities are **still specifically allowed** within the guidance:
  - It is permitted to leave your home to provide charitable services, to volunteer or go to work if you cannot work from home.
  - It is permitted to meet in larger groups for work or to provide voluntary or charitable services.
  - You can provide services in people's homes where this is necessary – including cleaners, care workers and tradespeople.
  - You provide/ attend a support group of up to 15 people for purposes of mutual aid, therapy or any other form of support. People working or volunteering do not count towards the total.

- Organised sport for disabled people can continue.
- Community venues must close for most purposes; however they can continue to operate for activities that are otherwise permitted (e.g. for permitted charitable or support services).
- All non-essential shops and hospitality venues must close; however they can provide click and collect, delivery and take away services.

## **Vaccine**

- There are now two vaccines that have been approved for use in the UK: Pfizer/BioNTech and Oxford University/ AstraZeneca. Both provide a very significant degree of protection from around 14 days after the first jab. Both vaccines require 2 jabs to deliver longer lasting protection.
- The Government has decided to extend the time between the first and second jab from 3-4 weeks to up to 12 weeks in order to prioritise getting as many people their first dose as quickly as possible. This decision has been taken on the basis of advice from independent experts on the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation and approved by the regulator. We know the changes have generated a great deal of debate and prompted some concern amongst older people and we will put together a more detailed Q&A.
- Both are now being rolled out across the UK. Around 1.3 million vaccines have been given out across the UK primarily to people over the age of 80 and health and social care workers.
- The Government hopes to increase the rate of vaccination to around 2 million jabs a week and aims to vaccinate 13 million people by mid-February. This will mean everyone in priority groups 1 to 4 will have been offered a vaccine.

## Annex 1 – Summary of national lock down guidance

The information is also available on the Age UK website [here](#).

<b>How long will the restrictions be in place?</b>	The restrictions are expected to remain in place for at least 6 weeks. The Government has said they will next review the rules in mid-February.
<b>Leaving the house</b>	<p>You should stay at home as much as possible. You should only leave the house for essential reasons, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To shop for supplies or access an essential service (e.g. to go to the bank or post office). You can also do these things on behalf of a vulnerable person or someone self-isolating.</li><li>• To exercise outdoors on your own, with people you live with (or in your support bubble) or with one person from another household.</li><li>• To go to work (but only if you can't reasonably work from home).</li><li>• To volunteer or provide charitable services.</li><li>• For medical reasons (such as regular appointments, urgent help or to get a COVID test or vaccine). You can also accompany someone else.</li><li>• To provide care or support to a vulnerable or disabled person.</li><li>• To attend a support group (or up to 15 people) or access care services (e.g. respite care).</li><li>• For formally provided education and childcare (this includes childcare bubbles).</li><li>• To avoid harm, illness or injury.</li><li>• To visit people for compassionate reasons (e.g. to visit someone due to give birth or who is dying).</li><li>• To fulfil any legal obligations, including activities relating to buying, selling or renting a property.</li><li>• To visit places of worship or to attend a wedding or funeral (however restrictions do apply).</li></ul>
<b>If you are extremely clinically vulnerable or have been previously advised to shield</b>	<p>The Government has advised anyone who is clinically extremely vulnerable to resume shielding.</p> <p>This means you should not attend work, school or childcare, and limit the time you spend outside of your home. You should only go out for medical appointments, outdoor exercise or if it is essential.</p> <p>You can find more guidance and information on how access to support here.</p>
<b>Meeting with others</b>	<p>You can only spend time indoors with those in your household or support bubble.</p> <p>You can meet <b>one to one</b> with someone from another household outdoors, but this must be in a public place such as a park or beach. It can't be in a private garden. (Children under 5 and disabled dependent people who require round the clock care are not counted towards limit of 2 people meeting).</p> <p>You can also continue providing care for a vulnerable person or for someone under 14 years old as part of a childcare bubble.</p>

	<p>Rules apply on who can form a support or childcare bubble. Check whether you are eligible.</p> <p>You can also visit people for compassionate reasons, such as visiting someone in hospital, in a care home or if they are dying.</p>
<b>Staying away from home</b>	<p>You should not stay away from home unless you have a reasonable excuse, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To visit your support bubble</li> <li>• To attend a funeral or commemorative event</li> <li>• To work or volunteer</li> <li>• To move house or if you cannot return home</li> </ul> <p>You cannot go on holiday either in the UK or abroad, this includes staying in a second home or caravan. If you are away from home you should return to your main residence as soon as reasonably possible.</p>
<b>Travel and transport</b>	<p>You should only travel for essential reasons, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To get to work (if you can't work from home)</li> <li>• To shop for supplies or access essential services</li> <li>• For education or caring responsibilities</li> <li>• To visit people in your support or childcare bubble</li> <li>• To get to medical appointments</li> <li>• To exercise</li> </ul> <p>You should stay local wherever possible and avoid traveling out of your area (e.g. your town or part of the city where you live).</p> <p>You should also try to reduce the number of journeys, walk or cycle where possible and plan ahead to avoid busy times on public transport.</p>
<b>School and education</b>	<p>Schools and colleges will remain closed until at least February half term. Only vulnerable children or children of key workers will attend in person, other children will learn online.</p> <p>Universities will only open for in person teaching for key course such as medicine and health care.</p>
<b>Going to work</b>	<p>You should work from home wherever possible.</p> <p>You can go to work if you cannot reasonably do your job from home – e.g. if you work in childcare, construction or manufacturing.</p> <p>You can also provide services in people’s homes where necessary – e.g. cleaners, nannies or tradespeople.</p>

<b>Shops</b>	<p>Only essential shops will remain open, such as supermarkets or pharmacies. You should wear a face covering in shops unless you're exempt from doing so.</p> <p>Non-essential shops can continue to provide a 'click and collect' and delivery services.</p>
<b>Other essential businesses</b>	<p>Some of the other essential businesses which can remain open: Garden centres, hardware stores, petrol stations, car repair and MOT services, bike shops, banks, post offices, laundrettes and dry cleaners.</p>
<b>NHS and care services</b>	<p>All NHS services remain open including GPs and dentists. If you need urgent help or advice call 111 or 999 in an emergency.</p> <p>You can access social care services including home care, respite care and support groups (of up to 15 people).</p>
<b>Public services</b>	<p>The majority of public services will remain open, including job centres, waste or recycling centres, passport and visa services, registration offices, courts and services for victims.</p> <p>Public libraries will remain open to provide access to IT and digital services for people who can't access them from home. They can also provide 'click and collect' services.</p> <p>Community centres and halls will close for most purposes but can continue to provide charitable services (e.g. foodbanks) or other permitted activities (e.g. childcare).</p>
<b>Hospitality</b>	<p>Restaurants, pubs, cafés and other hospitality venues will be closed. Though delivery (at all times) and takeaway (until 11pm) will still be available.</p> <p>Personal care facilities such as hairdressers and nail salons will be closed.</p> <p>Indoor and outdoor entertainment venues such as theatres, cinemas, theme parks and zoos will be closed.</p> <p>Hotels and similar accommodation can only open for specific guests such as people traveling for work.</p>
<b>Exercise and leisure activity</b>	<p>You can exercise outdoors on your own, with people you live with (or in your support or childcare bubble) or with one person from another household.</p> <p>The guidance asks people to limit outdoor exercise to one session per day and to remain with their local area. People should not take part in other leisure activities in public places (e.g. picnics).</p> <p>Indoor and outdoor leisure facilities will be closed, such as gyms, swimming pools, dance studios and golf courses.</p> <p>Outside public spaces including beaches, parks, public gardens, and playgrounds will remain open.</p> <p>Organised sport for disabled people is also allowed to continue.</p>

<b>Places of worship</b>	You can attend places of worship for services or individual prayer. However you can't mix with anyone outside of your household or support bubble.
<b>Weddings and civil partnerships</b>	Weddings and civil partnerships can only take place in exceptional circumstances, for example, if one partner is seriously ill. These are limited to 6 people.
<b>Funerals</b>	Up to 30 people can attend someone's funeral and those in attendance must maintain social distancing measures with those not in their household or support bubble.  Linked ceremonies or events can take place with up to 6 people (excluding anyone working at a venue).
<b>Care home visits</b>	You can still visit someone in a care home if that visit takes place outdoors, at a window or in a specially-designated secure visiting room or pod.  Indoors visits can't take place, even with a negative coronavirus test.  No visits will be able to take place in the event of an outbreak.

## Annex 2 – Summary of guidance for people who are shielding

This information is also available on the Age UK website [here](#).

<b>Meeting up with others</b>	<p>You're able to still go outside to exercise if you're able to do so. However, other than this, it's best to try and stay at home as much as possible.</p> <p>You should avoid contact with anyone outside of your household or support bubble and maintain strict social distancing.</p>
<b>Travel</b>	<p>You should avoid travelling unless it's essential.</p> <p>If you need to travel you should walk or cycle if you can. For longer journeys you should plan your route to minimise the number of people you come into contact with.</p>
<b>Going to shops and pharmacies</b>	<p>You're strongly advised to avoid going to shops or the pharmacy wherever possible.</p> <p>Instead, use online shops or ask those in your household or support bubble to pick things up for you. If you're finding it difficult to get what you need, <a href="#">NHS volunteers can help</a>. You can also register for priority online delivery slots <a href="#">here</a>.</p> <p>You may also be eligible for free delivery for your prescriptions.</p>
<b>Accessing care and support</b>	<p>Everyone should continue to access the care and support you need.</p> <p>The NHS is still open. You should still attend medical appointments and it's important to seek help if you need it. You can still have carers and visitors who help you with everyday tasks come into your home.</p>
<b>Going to work</b>	<p>Work from home if you can. If this isn't possible, you shouldn't go to work.</p> <p>If you can't work from home, your employer may be able to furlough you. Alternatively, you may be eligible for Statutory Sick Pay or Employment Support Allowance.</p>

