



BRIEFING PAPER

Number 8875, 15 October 2020

Coronavirus: the lockdown laws

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Summary

This is a fast-moving area. This briefing is correct at time of publication. Changes to coronavirus restrictions that have been announced but have not yet come into force are not included in this briefing.

The UK now has hundreds of laws made in response to the coronavirus pandemic.¹ Many of these laws could be described as “lockdown laws” but in this briefing the term “lockdown laws” refers to national and local coronavirus restrictions regulations.

Types of lockdown law

The following ten categories of restrictions and requirements are either currently in use or have been imposed in the past by lockdown laws.

Types of coronavirus restrictions/ requirements used in the UK

Gatherings

“Rule of six”



People are prohibited from gathering socially in groups larger than six unless it is for an exempted purpose.

National gatherings restrictions



Gatherings are regulated to avoid too many people mixing at once. National gatherings rules have changed frequently and often apply differently in public/ private or indoor/ outdoor settings.

Household mixing



People are prohibited from visiting each other inside their homes. More strict versions of this rule prevent people from meeting those they do not live with indoors entirely.

Illegal raves/ large gatherings



Certain types of rave are already prohibited in England and Wales. Coronavirus restrictions have been imposed to further discourage them during the pandemic. People are prohibited from gathering in large groups (typically defined as more than 30 people).

Leaving home

Staying Local



People are prohibited from leaving their local area without a “reasonable excuse”. This restriction also prevents people from entering the specified area without a “reasonable excuse”.

Staying home





People are prohibited from leaving their home without a “reasonable excuse”. During the first wave of the pandemic this requirement was the crux of the lockdown across the UK.

Not staying away



People are prohibited from staying overnight somewhere other than their home without a reasonable excuse.

¹ See: legislation.gov.uk, [coronavirus legislation](#), undated

Businesses		
Closures	Opening hours	Alcohol sales
		
Certain high-street businesses are required to close and (if applicable) move their business to online/ delivery only. The businesses that have been required to close has changed over time.	Hospitality businesses opening hours are restricted.	The sale of alcohol is restricted in some way. At present rules in Scotland prevent pubs, restaurants and bars from selling alcohol for indoor consumption.

What restrictions/ requirements currently apply nationally?

At the time of writing, national coronavirus regulations in all four nations impose the following restrictions/ requirements:

- Gatherings restrictions.** The exact restriction imposed is different in each UK nation. England has the so called “rule of six”. In Wales indoor gatherings are subject to a “rule of six from one extended household” and outdoor gatherings to a “rule of thirty”. Scotland and Northern Ireland have both household mixing rules and rules which regulate other gatherings.
- Requirement to wear a face covering.** Most people in the UK are now required to wear a face covering whilst using public transport, in shops and in other public venues. The exact rules are different in each UK nation.
- Businesses restrictions.** Nightclubs and sexual entertainment venues are currently required to close across the UK. Restaurants, bars and cafes have restricted opening hours. In some parts of the UK, pubs and bars are required to close.

On 12 October, the Prime Minister announced a new Tiered system to apply across England. In England, areas will be under medium (Tier 1), high (Tier 2) or very high Covid alert (Tier 3) level restrictions. Those areas without extra local restrictions in place will be under the medium alert level restrictions.






How the restrictions apply in each UK nation...										
										
England (medium alert level)	✓			✓				✓	✓	
Scotland	✓		✓					✓	✓	✓
Wales		✓						✓	✓	
Northern Ireland		✓	✓					✓	✓	

What rules currently apply locally?

Local coronavirus restrictions apply to specific regions across the UK. These may implement stricter restrictions on social gatherings, leaving home and/or businesses.

Previously, different local areas within England had a range of restrictions applying to them. However, following the introduction of a new Tiered system that applies across England, local areas within England will now be under Tier 1, 2 or 3 restrictions.

The table below provides a summary of the restrictions in the three Tiers in England:

Tier	Gatherings	Businesses
1	 <p>Rule of six People are prohibited from socialising in groups of more than six (unless for an exempt purpose)</p>	 <p>Opening hours. Minimal business closures</p>
2	 <p>Household mixing: indoors People are prohibited from visiting each other's homes or meeting in other indoor settings.</p>	<p>Hospitality businesses must close at 10pm. Nightclubs and sexual entertainment venues must close.</p>
3	 <p>Household mixing: outdoors People are prohibited from mixing with other households both indoors and most outdoor settings.</p>	 <p>Opening hours. Business closures Hospitality businesses must close at 10pm. Pubs and bars must close (unless they operate like a restaurant and serve substantial meals). Nightclubs and sexual entertainment venues must close.</p>

The Library maintains an [interactive map](#) displaying the areas in the UK where local coronavirus restrictions apply. Please note the map is correct as at the date of publication. Official information on local restrictions can be found on the following government webpages:

- England: [Guidance: Local COVID alert levels: what you need to know](#)
- Scotland: [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): local advice and measures](#)
- Wales: [Local lockdown](#)
- Northern Ireland: [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): regulations and localised restrictions](#)

1. What are the lockdown laws?

The UK now has hundreds of laws made in response to the coronavirus pandemic.² Many of these laws could be described as “lockdown laws” but in this briefing the term “lockdown law” refers to ‘national coronavirus restrictions regulations’ and ‘local coronavirus restrictions’.

The lockdown laws impose restrictions and requirements on individuals and businesses designed to help slow the spread of coronavirus.

Public health is a devolved policy area in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The Scottish and Welsh governments and the Northern Ireland Executive are therefore responsible for responding to coronavirus in their respective nations. This means there are separate lockdown laws in each UK nation.

1.1 National coronavirus restrictions regulations

The most significant lockdown laws are in ‘national coronavirus restriction regulations’.

On 12 October, the Prime Minister, Boris Johnson announced the introduction of a Tiered system for coronavirus restrictions. Areas within England will be under different Covid alert levels. By default, Tier 1 restrictions will apply to any part of England that is not subject to Tier 2 or 3 restrictions.”

At the time of writing, these national regulations include:

- **Gatherings restrictions.** The exact restriction imposed is different in each UK nation. England has the so called “rule of six”. In Wales indoor gatherings are subject to a “rule of six from one extended household” and outdoor gatherings to a “rule of thirty”. Scotland and Northern Ireland have both household mixing rules and rules which regulate other gatherings in force.
- **Requirement to wear a face covering.** Most people in the UK are now required to wear a face covering whilst using public transport, in shops and in other public venues. The exact rules are different in each UK nation.
- **Businesses restrictions.** Nightclubs and sexual entertainment venues are currently required to remain closed across the UK. Restaurants, bars and cafes have restricted opening hours in England, Scotland and Wales.
- **Alcohol sales restrictions.** In Scotland, measures have been introduced to restrict the sale and consumption of alcohol indoors by restaurants, pubs and other licenced premises.

As the UK’s response to coronavirus has evolved so have the types of restrictions and requirements national coronavirus restrictions regulation imposed. *Between late March and June 2020* national coronavirus restriction regulations included:

² See: legislation.gov.uk, [coronavirus legislation](#), undated

- **Restrictions on leaving home.** Initially individuals were prevented from leaving their home without a “reasonable excuse”. This “stay at home” order was the crux of lockdown during the first wave of the pandemic.
- **High-street business closures.** Initially all non-essential high street businesses were required to close their premises and move their operations to delivery only.

The national coronavirus restrictions regulations

England

- [*The Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Local COVID-19 Alert Level\) \(Medium\) \(England\) Regulations 2020*](#)
- [*The Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Wearing of Face Coverings on Public Transport\) \(England\) Regulations 2020*](#)
- [*The Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Wearing of Face Coverings in a Relevant Place\) \(England\) Regulations 2020*](#)

Scotland

- [*The Health Protection \(Coronavirus\) \(Restrictions and Requirements\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2020*](#) (suspended until 26 October)
- [*The Health Protection \(Coronavirus\) \(Restrictions and Requirements\) \(Additional Temporary Measures\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2020*](#) (in force until 26 October)

Wales

- [*The Health Protection \(Coronavirus Restrictions\) \(No. 2\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2020*](#)

Northern Ireland

- [*The Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Restrictions\) \(No. 2\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2020*](#)
- [*The Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Wearing of Face Coverings\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2020*](#)

1.2 Local coronavirus restrictions

The Library maintains an [interactive map](#) displaying the restrictions that apply across the UK. Please note the map is correct as at the date of publication. Official information on local restrictions can be found on the following government webpages:

- England: [Local restrictions: areas with an outbreak of coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- Scotland: [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): local advice and measures](#)
- Wales: [Local lockdown](#)
- Northern Ireland: [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): regulations and localised restrictions](#)

There are three types of law used to impose local coronavirus restrictions: Local coronavirus restriction regulations, local authority directions and government directions.

A Tiered system in England

From 14 October 2020, a new system of coronavirus restrictions will apply across England. Parts of England will be subject to different restrictions depending on whether they are within the medium (Tier1), high (Tier 2) or very high (Tier 3) Covid alert level areas. Those areas

without extra local restrictions in place will be under the medium alert level restrictions. In areas with further restrictions, they are now either within a high (Tier 2) or very high (Tier 3) Covid alert level area.

Local coronavirus restriction regulations

Most local coronavirus restrictions in England and Wales are imposed via regulations similar to the national coronavirus restriction regulations. These laws are made by national governments, but only apply in a specified “protected area”. In England these have been ‘standalone’ regulations for certain areas.³ However, under the Tiered system, regulations implementing Tier 2 restrictions, for example, apply to a range of areas listed in Schedule 2 to the Regulations.⁴

In Wales (so far) they have been amendment regulations which amend the national coronavirus restrictions regulations.⁵

The “protected area” to which local coronavirus restrictions regulations apply in is usually defined by way of local authority boundaries.⁶ However, the UK Government did use postcodes to construct the first “protected area” in Leicester between 4 July and 18 July.⁷ An unusual “local lockdown” was used to require certain employees of Greencore Group Plc (a food production company in Northampton) to self-isolate.⁸

Local authority directions

Local authorities in Scotland have new powers to issue “directions” imposing prohibitions, requirements or restrictions on individuals, premises, events and public spaces.⁹ Local authorities can use the powers to make local coronavirus restrictions. The Scottish Government has powers to compel local authorities to use their local lockdown powers.¹⁰ These powers were used, for example, to impose rules on gatherings and care homes in the Greater Glasgow area. By contrast, the local lockdown that is currently in force in the Central Belt area is imposed by secondary legislation.

Local authorities in England have similar powers to close businesses, restrict events and restrict access to certain outdoor places by order.¹¹ The UK Government has issued [guidance on these powers](#).

³ See for example: [The Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Restrictions\) \(North East and North West of England\) Regulations 2020](#)

⁴ [Schedule 2, The Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Local COVID-19 Alert Level\) \(High\) \(England\) Regulations 2020](#)

⁵ See for example: [The Health Protection \(Coronavirus Restrictions\) \(No. 2\) \(Wales\) \(Amendment\) \(No. 14\) \(Cardiff and Swansea\) Regulations 2020](#)

⁶ See for example: [r1\(4\), The Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Restrictions\) \(North East and North West of England\) Regulations 2020](#)

⁷ Schedule 1, [Part 1, The Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Restrictions\) \(Leicester\) Regulations 2020 \(revoked\)](#) [as made]

⁸ See: Department of Health and Social Care, [Northampton: Greencore restrictions](#), 31 August; [The Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Restrictions\) \(Greencore\) Regulations 2020](#)

⁹ [The Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Restrictions\) \(Directions by Local Authorities\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2020](#)

¹⁰ [r4, The Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Restrictions\) \(Directions by Local Authorities\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2020](#)

¹¹ [The Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Restrictions\) \(England\) \(No. 3\) Regulations 2020](#)

Local coronavirus restrictions

England

Coronavirus restrictions within England are now introduced through three sets of Regulations. Local areas that are subject to measures on top of the Tier 1 restrictions will be within a high Covid alert level area (Tier 2), or a very high Covid alert level area (Tier 3). Two regulations implement these measures:

- [The Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Local COVID-19 Alert Level\) \(Very High\) \(England\) Regulations 2020](#); and
- [The Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Local COVID-19 Alert Level\) \(High\) \(England\) Regulations 2020](#)

Prior to this, the UK Government made several local coronavirus restrictions regulations covering different parts of England. They can be found on a list of [UK delegated legislation with coronavirus in the title](#). Note that this list includes all UK delegated legislation with coronavirus in the title, not just the English local coronavirus restrictions regulations.

Scotland

Some local lockdowns in Scotland have been instituted via directions issued by the relevant local authority. In such cases, there is no separate legislation but rather a legal direction. Local authorities are required to post the direction on their website.¹² However, local lockdown rules that came into force for the Central Belt on 9 October were imposed by secondary legislation. The Scottish Government maintains information on [local advice and measures](#) which details the places where local rules apply.

Wales

Welsh local coronavirus restrictions regulations are set out in [Schedule 4A](#) of the Welsh national coronavirus restriction regulations.

Northern Ireland

Northern Irish local coronavirus restrictions regulations are set out in [Schedule 2](#) and Schedule 3 (not yet available online) of the Northern Irish national coronavirus restrictions regulations.

UK Government directions

The UK Government can issue directions restricting access to public outdoor places (like a beach or park) using a power in England's national coronavirus restriction regulations.¹³ The directions must be in response to a "serious and imminent threat to public health" and to prevent, protect against or control the spread of coronavirus.¹⁴ Directions must be proportionate and the Government must consult public health officials before issuing them.¹⁵ Once a space is closed via direction the public cannot enter or remain there without a "reasonable excuse".¹⁶ Those who live, work or own parts of the land have a reasonable excuse to be there. It is also reasonable to travel through restricted land to get to your home.¹⁷

¹² [r4](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Directions by Local Authorities) (Scotland) Regulations 2020*

¹³ **Note:** Directions cannot be issued for the Crown Estate, see [r6\(3\)](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2020*

¹⁴ [r6\(1\)](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2020*

¹⁵ *Ibid*, [r6\(4\)](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2020*

¹⁶ [r6\(11\)](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2020*

¹⁷ [r6\(12\)](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2020*

1.3 Coronavirus guidance and lockdown laws

There is now huge range of government guidance relating to coronavirus. Most coronavirus guidance is a mixture of information on the law and public health advice.

Government guidance should indicate something is public health *advice* instead of law by the way it is written. The use of 'should' and 'should not' tend to be used when describing advice whereas words like 'must' and 'can't' are typically used when describing law. Coronavirus guidance is not always written in this way. Concerns have been expressed that discerning which instructions are required under law and which are public health advice can be difficult.¹⁸

Some of the laws described in coronavirus guidance are not the 'lockdown laws'. There have been hundreds of pieces of legislation made to respond to coronavirus. In addition to new law, many existing laws are relevant to the coronavirus pandemic (for example health and safety legislation and employment law). It can sometimes be difficult to attribute the legal basis of an instruction given in coronavirus guidance.¹⁹

Key coronavirus guidance documents

England

- [Guidance: Local COVID alert levels: what you need to know](#) provides an overview of the different alert levels and the restrictions that apply in these areas.
- [Guidance: Local COVID alert level: medium](#) provides more detailed information on the restrictions in place in medium Covid alert (Tier 1) areas. This covered most of England at the time of writing.
- [Guidance: Local COVID alert level: high](#) provides more detailed information on the restrictions in place in high Covid alert (Tier 2) areas.
- [Guidance: Local COVID alert level: very high](#) provides more detailed information on the restrictions in place in very high Covid alert (Tier 3) areas.

Scotland

- [Staying safe and protecting others](#) provides a mixture of public health advice to individuals and guidance on the English national coronavirus restrictions regulations.
- [Local advice and measures](#) provides a mixture of public health advice to those living in areas with high coronavirus transmission rates and information on local coronavirus restrictions regulations in Scotland.

Wales

- [Coronavirus regulations: frequently asked questions](#) provides guidance on Welsh national coronavirus restrictions regulations.
- [Local lockdown](#) provides information on the areas with local coronavirus restrictions.

Northern Ireland

- [Coronavirus regulations guidance: what the restrictions mean for you](#) provides guidance on Northern Irish national coronavirus restrictions regulations.

¹⁸ Institute for Government, [The government must draw a clear line between law and guidance during the coronavirus crisis](#), 1 April 2020

¹⁹ Ibid

1.4 Making and amending lockdown laws

The UK and Welsh governments are making and amending coronavirus restrictions regulations using an “urgent” power in the [Health Protection \(Control of Diseases\) Act 1984](#).²⁰ The Scottish and Northern Irish Governments are using equivalent powers.²¹ This power allows the Government to make and bring into force coronavirus regulations without *prior* parliamentary scrutiny.²² However, Parliament must approve the regulations within 28 sitting days of them being made.²³

An informal process developed which provided MPs with limited opportunities to scrutinise and question changes to the law.

The process is usually followed when major changes to the national coronavirus restriction regulations are introduced in England.

First, the Government would announce an upcoming change in the law.

The Government has normally announced major changes a few days in advance. Often, though not always, this announcement has been accompanied by a Ministerial Statement to Parliament which allowed MPs to question the Government on the upcoming change.

Then, the Government would publish guidance on the prospective law.

The Government would then update its online guidance pages [staying alert and safe](#) and [coronavirus outbreak FAQs: what you can and can't do](#). This normally happened within twenty-four hours of an announcement. More specific and detailed guidance was then amended in the days and weeks that followed. There were generally no other sources of advice on changes in coronavirus restrictions until Government advice was updated.

The Government would then make regulations bringing the changes into force.

Up until this point the Government typically would not have published any legislative text for the announced changes. Legislation has mostly been published very shortly before the changes were due to come into force (sometimes a few hours, or even minutes, before).

The legislation has taken the form of regulations. These have been made using an urgency procedure under the *Health Protection (Control of Diseases) Act 1984*.

The regulations have then been published on www.legislation.gov.uk and are most easily found on the page displaying [secondary legislation with the word “coronavirus” in the title](#). If the regulations are amendment regulations, the online version of the existing regulations they change will be updated within a few days, showing tracked changes over time.

Parliament then approves the regulations retrospectively.

Both Houses of Parliament must approve the regulations within 28 days of them coming into force, otherwise they cease to have legal effect. The Government has normally scheduled time to put the regulations before the House of Commons within a fortnight of them being made. This period of time can be longer if Parliament is in recess.

However, the Government have now made a commitment that where a Statutory Instrument would implement significant national coronavirus restrictions, Parliament will have the opportunity to vote on these (where possible) before they come into force. The process for approving legislation of this kind is explained on [Parliament's website](#).

Thus far most coronavirus restrictions regulations have passed without a vote because no MP has objected to them. Some MPs tried to force a vote on regulations which made face coverings compulsory in many cultural venues (museums, cinemas, libraries etc). However,

²⁰ See for example: [Introductory text](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2020*

²¹ See for example: [Introductory text](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions and Requirements) (Scotland) Regulations 2020*; [Introductory text](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (No. 2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020*

²² [s45R](#), *Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984*

²³ [s45R\(6\)](#), *Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984*

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the Deputy Speaker determined the regulations could pass without a vote because she could hear “a great many more Ayes than Noes” when she put the question to the House.²⁴

A number of coronavirus restriction regulations were debated in the House of Commons on 13 October 2020. These included the new regulations imposing Tiers 1-3 restrictions in different areas of England. One set of Regulations, *the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (No. 2) (England) (Amendment) (No. 5) Regulations 2020* (which introduced a number of measures, including the 10pm curfew on hospitality) was subject to a vote, and agreed.²⁵

There have been some concerns raised about the UK Government’s approach to the making of Statutory Instruments to implement local and national coronavirus restrictions.²⁶ On [Wednesday 30 September](#), Matt Hancock (the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care) promised the Commons that “for significant national measures with effect in the whole of England or UK-wide” the Government would (a) consult parliament and (b) hold votes (wherever possible) before regulations come into force. He also promised that there would be regular statements and debates in parliament, and more opportunity for parliament to question government scientific advisors. For more information on the Parliamentary scrutiny of these measures, and the legal framework, see the Commons Library Insight, [Coronavirus: Parliamentary scrutiny and lockdown regulations](#).

²⁴ HC Deb, [Business without Debate](#), 15 September 2020, cc280

²⁵ [HC Deb, 13 October 2020 c255](#)

²⁶ BBC News, [Coronavirus: Support grows for rebel MPs over law](#), 27 September 2020

2. Types of coronavirus restrictions

National and local coronavirus restrictions/ requirements will usually fall into one of the following three categories: gathering restrictions, leaving home restrictions and business restrictions. Within each category there are multiple possible restrictions.

Support bubbles and extended households

Support bubbles and extended households are similar terms sometimes used interchangeably, but they describe two different legal arrangements used in lockdown laws.

The phrase “**support bubble**” is used to describe an arrangement between an adult who lives alone or in a single parent household and the adult(s) in one other household. Once joined in a support bubble the two households are considered as one under lockdown laws. Presently support bubbles have a legal status in England.²⁷

The phrase “**childcare bubble**” is used to describe a situation where two households are linked for the purposes of providing informal childcare. This arrangement is defined in legislation in England and can only apply where one household includes at least one child under the age of 13.²⁸

An “**extended household**” is an arrangement between any two or more households. Extended households are effectively treated as one household in the lockdown laws. At present, up to four households can form an extended household in Wales.²⁹ Two households can form an extended household in Scotland and Northern Ireland.³⁰

Individuals can only be a member of one support bubble/ extended household. You *cannot* change the membership of support bubble or extended household.³¹

2.1 Gatherings

At present there are three types of gatherings restrictions imposed by coronavirus restrictions regulations in the UK:

- Differing **national gatherings restrictions** are in place across the UK. They are described in section three of this paper.

²⁷ See, for example, Schedule 1 *The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Local COVID-19 Alert Level) (Medium) (England) Regulations 2020*

²⁸ [Schedule 1 \(para 6\) The Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Local COVID-19 Alert Level\) \(High\) \(England\) Regulations 2020](#)

²⁹ [r2A, The Health Protection \(Coronavirus Restrictions\) \(No. 2\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2020](#)

³⁰ [r2, The Health Protection \(Coronavirus\) \(Restrictions and Requirements\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2020](#) (**note:** suspended and replaced until 26 Oct. – see [SSI 2020/318](#)); Schedule 2, [para 3, The Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Restrictions\) \(No. 2\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2020](#)

³¹ *The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Local COVID-19 Alert Level) (Medium) (England) Regulations 2020, The Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (No. 2) (Wales) Regulations 2020*; [r2, The Health Protection \(Coronavirus\) \(Restrictions and Requirements\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2020](#) (**note:** suspended and replaced until 26 Oct. – see [SSI 2020/318](#)); Schedule 2, [para 3, The Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Restrictions\) \(No. 2\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2020](#)

- Versions of a ban on **household mixing** are in place in parts of England under Tiers 2 and 3 restrictions, Scotland and Northern Ireland.
- A specific prohibition on **illegal raves/ large gatherings** is in place in England.

Household mixing

Across Scotland and Northern Ireland people who do not live together are banned from visiting each other inside their homes.³² In Tier 2 and 3 areas in England and in Derry and Strabane people have been banned from mixing with people from another household in their homes or any indoor setting.³³

There are exemptions to these rules which allow home visits necessary for work, education, childcare, to care for a vulnerable person, to move home and in the case of emergencies.³⁴

In Tier 2 and 3 areas in England and in most of Northern Ireland people who have formed a support bubble/ extended household are still permitted to visit each other.³⁵

In England, there are also compassionate exemptions which allow people to visit those giving birth (if requested) or someone they believe is dying.³⁶

Outdoor and public gatherings in England and across Scotland and Northern Ireland are subject to national gathering restrictions. Local restrictions in Derry and Strabane ban outdoor gatherings involving more than 15 people.³⁷ In areas subject to Tier 3 restrictions in England people cannot meet in most outdoor settings. There are exceptions for certain outdoor public spaces, such as beaches, parks, outdoor sports facilities and playgrounds.³⁸



³² *The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Local COVID-19 Alert Level) (High) (England) Regulations 2020 and The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Local COVID-19 Alert Level) (Very High) (England) Regulations 2020*

³³ *The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Local COVID-19 Alert Level) (Very High) (England) Regulations 2020, The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Local COVID-19 Alert Level) (High) (England) Regulations 2020 The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (No. 2) (Amendment No. 8) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020.*

³⁴ See for example: Schedule 1 *The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Local COVID-19 Alert Level) (Very High) (England) Regulations 2020* [r2\(4\)](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions and Requirements) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2020* (**note:** suspended and replaced until 26 Oct. – see [SSI 2020/318](#)); Schedule 2, [para 2](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (No. 2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020*

³⁵ See for example: *The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Local COVID-19 Alert Level) (High) (England) Regulations 2020*

³⁶ See for example: *The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Local COVID-19 Alert Level) (Very High) (England) Regulations 2020*

³⁷ *The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (No. 2) (Amendment No. 8) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020.*

³⁸ Para 2(4) [Schedule 1](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Local COVID-19 Alert Level) (Very High) (England) Regulations 2020*

Illegal raves/ large gatherings

There are two additional gatherings restrictions currently in force in England. Both carry higher penalties for breaches than other lockdown laws³⁹:

- *organising* a gathering of over thirty people.⁴⁰ Gatherings organised on land operated by businesses, charities or public bodies are exempt from this rule. Gatherings involving people from the same support bubble only are also exempt.⁴¹
- Organising *and participating* in an illegal rave involving more than six people.⁴² There are no exemptions to this rule.



Revoked gatherings restrictions

There have been many gatherings restrictions imposed in the UK during the coronavirus pandemic. These restrictions have been subject to the most change and have been quite different in the four nations.

Near total ban on gatherings

As made, the lockdown regulations in all four nations made it an offence to gather in public groups of *more than two*.⁴³ There were originally four listed exemptions to this rule that were very similar in each nation:

- Gatherings involving members of the same household.
- Gathering essential for work purposes.
- Funerals.
- Gatherings necessary to move to a new house, provide care or assistance to a vulnerable person, provide emergency assistance, participate in legal proceedings or fulfil a legal obligation.

Revoked household mixing restrictions

Once people were permitted to leave home to relax outdoors (in late April 2020) the restrictions on gatherings began to be amended to allow people to meet each other outdoors. In each of the four nations this was done by amending the list of exceptions to the original gatherings restriction to permit outdoor gatherings involving members of multiple households.

³⁹ r6(9) *The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Local COVID-19 Alert Level) (Medium) (England) Regulations 2020*

⁴⁰ [Schedule 1](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Local COVID-19 Alert Level) (Medium) (England) Regulations 2020*

⁴¹ *The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Local COVID-19 Alert Level) (Medium) (England) Regulations 2020*, *The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Local COVID-19 Alert Level) (High) (England) Regulations 2020* and *The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Local COVID-19 Alert Level) (Very High) (England) Regulations 2020*

⁴² [Schedule 1](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Local COVID-19 Alert Level) (Medium) (England) Regulations 2020*

⁴³ [r7](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) Regulations 2020* [as made]; [r6](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions) (Scotland) Regulations 2020* [as made]; [r8\(5\)](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (Wales) Regulations 2020* [as made]; [r6](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020* [as made]

In June 2020 restrictions on gatherings were relaxed to allow small indoor gatherings. Laws were made which regulated indoor gatherings and gatherings taking place in private premises.⁴⁴

Revoked large gathering prohibition in England

Between 4 July and 14 September gatherings of more than thirty people were banned in England.⁴⁵ The rule did not apply to some outdoor gatherings organised by businesses, charities, public bodies or political parties.⁴⁶ Organisers of these gatherings were required to take reasonable steps to prevent the transmission of coronavirus.⁴⁷

2.2 Leaving home

At present there is only one staying home restriction in force: people living in specific parts of Wales are required to **stay local**. They cannot leave their local area without a “reasonable excuse”.⁴⁸

In the past there has been other “staying home” restrictions in place in different parts of the UK. Legally the original lockdown in each nation was built on a requirement to **stay home**. People were prohibited from leaving home without a “reasonable excuse”. There was also a requirement **not to stay away** from home overnight in force in England over June.

Staying local

Welsh national coronavirus restrictions regulations included a restriction on leaving your local area without a “reasonable excuse” between 1 June and 6 July.⁴⁹ A similar restriction is now in place across parts of Wales under local lockdown.

There are now individual exhaustive lists of “reasonable excuses” to both leave and enter a protected area in Wales. The list for leaving a protected area includes things like obtaining medical and “essential” supplies, emergency assistance, attend a marriage, civil partnership ceremony or funeral and move home.⁵⁰ The list to enter a protected area is the same but also includes “travel to reach a place outside the area”.⁵¹



⁴⁴ See for example, [r7](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) Regulations 2020* [as at 13/06/2020]

⁴⁵ [r5\(1\) & \(4\)](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2020* [as made]

⁴⁶ [r5\(2\)](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2020* [as made]

⁴⁷ [r5\(3\)](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2020* [as made]

⁴⁸ Schedule 4A, Part 2, [para 3](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (No. 2) (Wales) Regulations 2020*

⁴⁹ [r8\(1\)\(a\)](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (Wales) Regulations 2020 (revoked)* [as at 1/06/2020]

⁵⁰ Schedule 4A, Part 2, [para 3](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (No. 2) (Wales) Regulations 2020*

⁵¹ Schedule 4A, Part 2, [para 4](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (No. 2) (Wales) Regulations 2020*

The staying local offence is complemented by:

- a requirement to work from home “where practicable”. Those who would normally work somewhere in their local area are therefore still required to work from home if they can.⁵²
- a prohibition on forming an extended household. This means people in Welsh protected areas cannot meet people from outside their household inside.⁵³

Staying home

As made, coronavirus restrictions regulations in all four nations made it an offence to be leave home without a “reasonable excuse”.⁵⁴ In England and Wales it was an offence be ‘outside of’ home without a reasonable excuse between 21 April and 1 June.⁵⁵



The regulations did not limit the number of times a person could leave their home per day, how far they could travel or the length of time they could spend outside. Individuals were permitted to leave home multiple times and for any period provided they had a “reasonable excuse”.

The regulations did not define the term “reasonable excuse” but they did provide non-exhaustive lists of reasonable excuses to be outside.⁵⁶ As the lists were non-exhaustive, individuals were permitted be outside for a reason not listed provided it could be considered reasonable.

The list of reasonable excuses was different in all four nations and the governments of each nation made differing amendments to the lists during the first three months of the lockdown. Originally these lists were quite restrictive but did include things like shopping for necessities, exercising, escaping harm and conducting work that it is not “reasonably possible” to do from home. Following the second review of the lockdown laws (in early May) the four nations began to relax this restriction by adding “outdoor recreation” to these lists. In doing so the focus of lockdown enforcement in the UK began to shift away from the prohibition on leaving home onto restrictions on gatherings.

⁵² Schedule 4A, Part 2, [para 5](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (No. 2) (Wales) Regulations 2020*

⁵³ Schedule 4A, Part 2, [para 2](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (No. 2) (Wales) Regulations 2020*

⁵⁴ [r6](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) Regulations 2020* [as made]; [r5](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions) (Scotland) Regulations 2020*, [r8](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (Wales) Regulations 2020* [as made]; [r5](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020*

⁵⁵ [r2\(4\)\(a\)](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2020*; [r4\(2\)](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (Wales) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2020*, see also: House of Commons Library, [Coronavirus: Parliamentary consent for the lockdown in England](#), 4 May 2020

⁵⁶ [r6](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) Regulations 2020* [as at 31 May 2020]; [r8\(5\)](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (Scotland) Regulations 2020*; [r8](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (Wales) Regulations 2020*; [r5](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020*

Not staying away

People in England were prohibited from staying “overnight” away from home without a reasonable excuse between 1 June and 7 July.⁵⁷ There was a non-exhaustive list of reasonable excuses for staying overnight somewhere away from home. It included things like when it is “reasonably necessary” for work, to provide care or emergency assistance and when it is not safe or lawful to stay at home.⁵⁸



2.3 Business restrictions

The UK Government and the devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have each passed legislation placing restrictions on the operation of businesses. Broadly speaking, there have been two types of restrictions:

- Closure of business premises; and
- Restrictions on opening times.

Businesses that are open are also subject to health and safety law as well as a number of additional restrictions, such as the requirement to collect staff and customer data for NHS Test & Trace. This is covered in a separate Library Briefing, [Coronavirus: Business re-opening \(CBP-8945\)](#).

Business closures

National lockdown

The lockdown regulations in all four nations initially required businesses in a wide range of sectors to close their premises. There were four broad types of restrictions:

- Some businesses (e.g. restaurants; cafes) were required to close their premises except for processing takeaways / deliveries;
- Some businesses (e.g. cinemas; hairdressers) were required to close their premises entirely;
- Some businesses (e.g. non-essential retailers) were required to close except for processing online orders; and
- Some businesses (e.g. hotels) were required to close except for carrying out certain permitted activities.⁵⁹

The vast majority of restrictions relating to business closure have now been lifted. The national lockdown regulations in all four nations now only require a small number of businesses to close their premises entirely, including nightclubs and sexual entertainment venues.⁶⁰



⁵⁷ [r6](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) Regulations 2020* [as at 13 June 2020]

⁵⁸ [r6\(2\)](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) Regulations 2020* [as at 13 June 2020]

⁵⁹ See generally [Coronavirus: Business re-opening](#), Commons Library Briefing Paper CBP-8945, 5 August 2020

⁶⁰ [r4](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2020*; [r4](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions and Requirements) (Scotland) Regulations 2020* (**note**: suspended and replaced until 26 Oct. – see [SSI 2020/318](#)); [r7](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (No. 2) (Wales)*

The list of businesses still required to close differs slightly between the four nations. Up-to-date lists of business closures can be found on the relevant [UK](#), [Scottish](#), [Welsh](#) and [Northern Irish](#) government websites.

Local lockdowns

All four governments have previously imposed stricter business closure rules in areas subject to local lockdowns. They have done this by either retaining certain business closure rules that were being lifted at the national level or by re-imposing restrictions.

In Wales there are no additional business closure rules in force in areas subject to local restrictions.⁶¹

In England, pubs and bars must close in Tier 3 areas. However, they can remain open where they operate like a restaurant and serve substantial meals. They also may only serve alcohol as part of that meal.⁶²

In Northern Ireland, the Executive has introduced a range of business closure rules as part of the local lockdown in Derry City and Strabane. Some businesses must close entirely (e.g. museums, bowling alleys) while hospitality businesses (restaurants, cafes, bars etc.) can only open to provide deliveries, takeaways or outdoor service.⁶³ Further information can be found on the [Northern Irish Government website](#).

In Scotland, business closures have been introduced in the Central Belt region (Ayrshire & Arran; Forth Valley; Greater Glasgow & Clyde; Lanarkshire; Lothian). All licensed premises are required to close but can continue to offer takeaway services. Snooker/pool halls, indoor bowling, casinos and bingo halls are also required to close.⁶⁴ Further information can be found on the [Scottish Government website](#).

Restrictions on opening hours

In September, the UK, Scottish and Welsh governments each adopted new rules restricting the opening hours of certain businesses. These rules are often referred to as “curfews”.

In England, a person operating a “restricted service” must not carry on that business between 22:00 and 5:00.⁶⁵ The restrictions apply to a range of businesses listed in the legislation. These include restaurants, pubs, cafes, cinemas, theatres, arcades and more.⁶⁶ The UK



Regulations 2020, r4, The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (No. 2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020

⁶¹ Scottish Government, [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): local advice and measures](#), 22 September 2020; [Schedule 4A, The Health Protection \(Coronavirus Restrictions\) \(No. 2\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2020](#)

⁶² [Schedule 1, The Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Local COVID-19 Alert Level\) \(Very High\) \(England\) Regulations 2020](#)

⁶³ [r4, The Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Restrictions\) \(No. 2\) \(Amendment No. 8\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2020](#)

⁶⁴ [r7 and r8, The Health Protection \(Coronavirus\) \(Restrictions and Requirements\) \(Additional Temporary Measures\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2020](#)

⁶⁵ [Schedule 1, The Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Local COVID-19 Alert Level\) \(Medium\) \(England\) Regulations 2020](#)

⁶⁶ [Schedule 1, The Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Local COVID-19 Alert Level\) \(Medium\) \(England\) Regulations 2020](#)

Government maintains a [list of businesses subject to restrictions on opening hours](#).

There are a number of exceptions to these rules. First, businesses can continue to provide food or drink for delivery or drive-thru but not for takeaway. Second, the rules do not apply to motorway service stations. Third, cinemas, concert halls and theatres can stay open to conclude a performance that began before 22:00. Fourth, workplace canteens can remain open if there is no practical alternative for staff to obtain food.

In Scotland, “relevant hospitality premises” are required to close any indoor premises between 18:00 and 6:00 and any outdoor premises between 22:00 and 6:00.⁶⁷ This includes restaurants, pubs, cafes and bars. Businesses can provide food or drink for consumption off the premises. Workplace canteens are exempt. There are also exemptions for cafes and canteens in a number of places, including hospitals, care homes, student accommodation, prisons, airports, military institutions and premises providing food for homeless people.

In areas subject to local lockdown in Scotland, hospitality businesses that are not required to close entirely (i.e. unlicensed premises) must close the whole of their premises between 18:00 and 6:00.⁶⁸ There are similar exemptions to those that apply under the national rules.

In Wales, restrictions on opening hours only apply to premises authorised to sell or supply alcohol.⁶⁹ This includes premises which permit customers to bring their own alcohol.⁷⁰ Such premises must not sell alcohol after 22:00 and must close between 22:20 and 6:00. The only exception is for premises located in seaports or airports.

In Northern Ireland, any premises on which alcohol can be consumed must close between 23:00 and 5:00. Such premises must also not sell food or drink between 22:30 and 5:00 and must not sell alcohol between 22:30 and 11:30.⁷¹

Restrictions on alcohol sales

In Scotland, hospitality businesses like restaurants, bars and cafes are prohibited from selling or allowing alcohol to be consumed indoors.⁷² This does not include room service in hotels. Businesses can continue to sell alcohol for consumption outdoors (subject to the rules on premises closure between 22:00 and 6:00). There are also exceptions for specific life events such as weddings and funerals.⁷³



⁶⁷ [r13](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions and Requirements) (Additional Temporary Measures) (Scotland) Regulations 2020*

⁶⁸ [r9](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions and Requirements) (Additional Temporary Measures) (Scotland) Regulations 2020*

⁶⁹ [r12ZA](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (No. 2) (Wales) Regulations 2020*

⁷⁰ [r2](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (No. 2) (Wales) (Amendment) (No. 13) (Llanelli etc.) Regulations 2020*

⁷¹ [r5](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (No. 2) (Amendment No. 7) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020*

⁷² [r14](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions and Requirements) (Additional Temporary Measures) (Scotland) Regulations 2020*

⁷³ [r15](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions and Requirements) (Additional Temporary Measures) (Scotland) Regulations 2020*

In areas of Scotland subject to a local lockdown, hospitality businesses that are not required to close their premises (i.e. unlicensed premises) must not allow alcohol to be consumed on any part of its premises.⁷⁴ Hotels can sell alcohol through room service but not for consumption on other parts of the hotel premises. The exemptions around significant life events also applies in areas subject to local lockdowns.⁷⁵

Further information is provided on the [Scottish Government website](#).

No other part of the UK has restrictions on alcohol sales.

⁷⁴ [r9](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions and Requirements) (Additional Temporary Measures) (Scotland) Regulations 2020*

⁷⁵ [r10](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions and Requirements) (Additional Temporary Measures) (Scotland) Regulations 2020*

3. National gatherings restrictions

The “rule of six” gatherings restriction prevents people from socialising in groups larger than six in most circumstances. At present versions of the “rule of six” are in force across the UK. The exact rule is different in each nation.

3.1 England (rule of six)

In **England** gatherings of more than six people are banned.⁷⁶ The UK Government has coined the term “rule of six” to describe this prohibition.⁷⁷ In areas where Tier 2 restrictions apply, people can only meet those outside of their household outdoors where the rule of six applies. In areas subject to Tier 3 restrictions, people from different households can only meet in certain outdoor settings, where the rule of six applies.

There are many exemptions to the English “rule of six” (summarised in the table below). Government guidance provides more information on the nature of these exemptions. There is a range of online guidance to support [individuals](#), [businesses](#) and [charities](#) organise legal and safe gatherings.



Gatherings exempt from the “rule of six” in England.

Gatherings only involving people who live in the same household or support bubble.⁷⁸

Gatherings organised by businesses, charities or public bodies (not inside private dwellings) which involve multiple separate groups of people who do not “mingle”. The separate groups must not involve more than six people unless they comprise of people from the same household or support bubble.⁷⁹

Elite sport.⁸⁰

Gatherings “reasonably necessary” for⁸¹:

- Work purposes, or the provision of voluntary or charitable services.
- Education or training.
- To allow registered childcare providers to provide childcare.
- Emergency assistance.
- To avoid injury or illness or to escape a risk of harm.
- To provide assistance to vulnerable people.

⁷⁶ *The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Local COVID-19 Alert Level) (Medium) (England) Regulations 2020*

⁷⁷ Home Office, [Rule of six comes into effect to tackle coronavirus](#), 14 September 2020

⁷⁸ [Para 1 Schedule 1](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Local COVID-19 Alert Level) (Medium) (England) Regulations 2020*

⁷⁹ [Para 5\(4\) Schedule 1](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Local COVID-19 Alert Level) (Medium) (England) Regulations 2020*

⁸⁰ [Para 3\(14\) Schedule 1](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Local COVID-19 Alert Level) (Medium) (England) Regulations 2020*

⁸¹ [Para 3\(4\) Schedule 1](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Local COVID-19 Alert Level) (Medium) (England) Regulations 2020*

- To continue childcare arrangements between parents who do not live together.

Legal obligations.⁸²

Support groups.⁸³

Weddings, civil partnerships, funerals and gatherings marking a “significant milestone in someone’s life (other than a birthday)” limited to 15 people.⁸⁴ These gatherings must take place at premises managed by people who have conducted a risk assessment.⁸⁵

Protests organised by businesses, charities, political groups or public bodies who have carried out a risk assessment.⁸⁶

Organised outdoor amateur sports and indoor sports for individuals with a disability (organisers must carry out a risk assessment).⁸⁷

Gatherings in prisons and other criminal justice accommodation.⁸⁸

Licensed outdoor activities (organisers must carry out a risk assessment).⁸⁹

To be present at the birth of a child when requested by the person giving birth.⁹⁰

3.2 Scotland

In Scotland *outdoor and public* gatherings involving more than six people aged twelve and over, from more than two extended households are banned.⁹¹ There are some exemptions to this rule (summarised in the table below). Gatherings inside private dwellings are subject to a household mixing rule.⁹²

Exemptions to the Scottish “rule of six”⁹³

Work purposes, or the provision of voluntary or charitable services.

Childcare, education and training.

⁸² [Para 3\(5\) Schedule 1](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Local COVID-19 Alert Level) (Medium) (England) Regulations 2020*

⁸³ [Para 3\(7\) Schedule 1](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Local COVID-19 Alert Level) (Medium) (England) Regulations 2020*

⁸⁴ [Para 3\(9\) Schedule 1](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Local COVID-19 Alert Level) (Medium) (England) Regulations 2020*

⁸⁵ [Para 3\(9\) Schedule 1](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Local COVID-19 Alert Level) (Medium) (England) Regulations 2020*

⁸⁶ [Para 3\(13\) Schedule 1](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Local COVID-19 Alert Level) (Medium) (England) Regulations 2020*

⁸⁷ [Para 3\(15\) and para 7\(6\) Schedule 1](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Local COVID-19 Alert Level) (Medium) (England) Regulations 2020*

⁸⁸ [Para 3\(6\) Schedule 1](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Local COVID-19 Alert Level) (Medium) (England) Regulations 2020*

⁸⁹ [Para 3\(16\) Schedule 1](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Local COVID-19 Alert Level) (Medium) (England) Regulations 2020*

⁹⁰ [Para 3\(8\) Schedule 1](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Local COVID-19 Alert Level) (Medium) (England) Regulations 2020*

⁹¹ [r8 & r9](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions and Requirements) (Scotland) Regulations 2020* (**note:** suspended and replaced until 26 Oct. – see [SSI 2020/318](#))

⁹² See section 2.1 of this paper for details.

⁹³ [r8\(1\)\(b\) & r9\(1\)\(b\)](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions and Requirements) (Scotland) Regulations 2020* (**note:** suspended and replaced until 26 Oct. – see [SSI 2020/318](#))

Attend a place of worship.
Moving home.
Outdoor organised adult activities. Any organised children's club
Any organised sports/ exercise.
Funerals, weddings and civil partnerships.
Student accommodation.

3.3 Wales

In Wales *indoor* gatherings involving more than six people aged 11 and over, from more than one extended household are banned.⁹⁴ There are several exemptions to the rule (summarised in the table below).



In Wales outdoor gatherings involving more than thirty people are also banned.⁹⁵ There are limited exemptions to this rule. Perhaps the most significant of which are accessing childcare, supervised activities for children and educational services.⁹⁶

Welsh Ministers have powers to authorise outdoor gatherings involving up to 100 people organised by businesses, charitable and public bodies, clubs, political parties and sports bodies who have carried out a risk assessment.⁹⁷

Exemptions to the Welsh restriction on indoor gatherings.⁹⁸

Medical/ emergency assistance and to care for a vulnerable person.
Donate blood
Work purposes, or the provision of voluntary or charitable services.
Elite sport.
Weddings, civil partnerships and funerals.⁹⁹ Wedding/ civil partnership receptions and wakes cannot exceed more than thirty people.
Attend a place of worship.
Legal obligation
To access public services
Children's clubs/ activities
Education
To continue childcare arrangements between parents who do not live together.
Move home (including search for a home to move into)

⁹⁴ [r14\(1\)](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (No. 2) (Wales) Regulations 2020*

⁹⁵ [r14A\(1\)](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (No. 2) (Wales) Regulations 2020*

⁹⁶ [r14A\(2\)\(e-f\)](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (No. 2) (Wales) Regulations 2020*

⁹⁷ [r14A\(3\)](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (No. 2) (Wales) Regulations 2020*

⁹⁸ [r14\(2\)](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (No. 2) (Wales) Regulations 2020*

⁹⁹ [r14A\(3\)](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (No. 2) (Wales) Regulations 2020*

To avoid injury or escape a risk of harm.
Amateur sport involving a maximum of thirty people.
Visit a care home

3.4 Northern Ireland

In Northern Ireland it is an offence to participate in *any gathering* of more than thirty people.¹⁰⁰ It is also an offence to participate in an *outdoor private gathering* involving more than six people (aged twelve or over) from more than two households (subject to the exemptions summarised below).¹⁰¹ Indoor private gatherings are subject to a household mixing rule.¹⁰²

Certain *public* gatherings of over thirty people are permissible if those organising them carry out a risk assessment and take all reasonable measures to limit the risk of coronavirus restrictions.¹⁰³

Exemptions to the Northern Irish private gathering's restrictions.¹⁰⁴

For registered childcare providers to provide childcare.
For building or maintained work to be carried out.
To provide care or assistance to a vulnerable person.
To receive legal advice.
Emergency and medical assistance
Marriage or civil partnership involving someone who is seriously ill
A funeral or an event associated with a funeral
To move home.

¹⁰⁰ [r5](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (No. 2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020*

¹⁰¹ Schedule 2, [para 2](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (No. 2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020*

¹⁰² See section 2.1 of this paper for details.

¹⁰³ [r5\(3-4\)](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (No. 2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020*

¹⁰⁴ [r14\(2\)](#), *The Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (No. 2) (Wales) Regulations 2020*

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