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Guidance

# Closing certain businesses and venues in England

Updated 5 November 2020

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COVID-19 case numbers are rising rapidly across the whole of the UK and in other countries. We must act now to control the spread of the virus. The single most important action we can all take to fight coronavirus is to stay at home, to protect the NHS and save lives.

When we reduce our day-to-day contact with other people, we reduce the spread of the infection. That is why, until Wednesday 2 December, you must:

1. Stay at home, except for specific purposes.
2. Avoid meeting people you do not live with, except for specific purposes.
3. Close certain businesses and venues.

These new measures will reduce the growth rate of the virus, which will:

1. prevent the NHS from being overwhelmed
2. ensure schools, colleges and universities can stay open
3. ensure that as many people as possible can continue to work

This guidance sets out the restrictions that certain businesses and venues in England are required to follow.

## 1. Businesses permitted to remain open

### Essential businesses

The following businesses and venues that provide goods for sale or hire are permitted to remain open, including if they operate from an outdoor market stall, or at a defined concession within a shopping centre:

- Food retailers, including food markets, supermarkets, convenience stores and corner shops. This also includes fresh food retailers (such as butchers, bakers, greengrocers, fishmongers, and delicatessens)
- Off licenses and licensed shops selling alcohol
- Pharmacies (including non-dispensing pharmacies) and chemists
- Newsagents
- Hardware stores (such as tools, timber, paint, plumbing and glass). Where these stores contain showrooms in distinct sections, these should close
- Building merchants and building services
- Petrol stations, car repair shops, bicycle shops and MOT services. Other vehicle repair can also go ahead at these venues.
- Car parks and motorway service areas
- Taxi or vehicle hire businesses
- Banks, building societies, credit unions, short term loan providers (such as pawn brokers), savings clubs, cash points and undertakings which by way of business operate currency exchange offices, transmit money (or any representation of money) by any means or cash cheques which are made payable to customers
- Post offices
- Funeral directors
- Laundrettes and dry cleaners
- Dental services, opticians, audiology services, chiropody, chiropractors, osteopaths and other medical or health services, including services relating to mental health. This includes stores providing mobility/disabled support goods and services.
- Veterinary surgeons, animal rescue centres, boarding facilities and pet shops. Animal grooming facilities may also stay open but must only be used for the purposes of the animal's welfare (and not for aesthetic purposes).

- Garden centres, agricultural supplies shops, and Christmas tree businesses, including Christmas tree farms. This does not include florists, nurseries, or foresters who can continue operating through click-and-collect and delivery services.
- Storage and distribution facilities, including delivery drop off or collection points, where the facilities are in the premises of a business allowed to remain open. For example, you can return an order to a drop box in a supermarket or drop it off for collection in a newsagents. Deliveries of supplies can also go ahead for premises that are otherwise required to close by law.

Businesses that provide services (rather than goods) - such as accountants, solicitors, and estate agents - are not required to close, unless listed in section 2 below (Businesses subject to restrictions). This includes businesses which have as their main activity repair services, such as electronics repair services. This does not include shops that are not otherwise permitted to open, such as a mobile phone store that offers some repairs.

Businesses providing services that are permitted to remain open should take steps to ensure they are COVID-19 Secure including, where possible, providing services remotely or virtually.

Tradespersons and construction workers who need to visit other people's homes for their work can continue to do so and should follow the [safer working guidance](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/homes) (<https://web.archive.org/web/20201128053347/https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/homes>). This includes routine repairs and safety checks, as well as home improvements. Door-to-door sales should not be taking place, and sales activities should be conducted remotely (such as by phone, online, or mail).

## Guidance on mixed retail

- A business selling a significant amount of essential retail may also continue to sell goods typically sold at non-essential retail. For example, a supermarket that sells food is not required to close off or cordon off aisles selling homeware.
- Where a business selling essential retail has another, separate business embedded within it that is required to close, the embedded business must close. For example, an electronics business operating a concession within a supermarket must close, as would a bookshop business inside a garden centre.
- Where a business has sufficiently distinct parts, and one section provides essential retail and one section provides non-essential retail, the non-essential sections should close to limit interactions between customers and the opportunity for the disease to spread. Sufficiently distinct sections might involve operating in separate buildings, across separate floors, a door between sections, using separate cashiers, or another clear demarcation between sections. For example, a food shop may stay open, but a homeware section on a separate floor or separate building should close.

## 2. Businesses subject to restrictions

The government cannot provide comments on individual cases of whether or not a business is permitted to open. It is for each business to assess whether they are a business required to close having considered the guidance and Regulations.

**The following businesses are subject to restrictions or closure:**

### Retail

Any business or venue that provides goods for sale or hire and is not listed above must close (other than where there is an explicit exemption for a specific purpose, as set out below). They may continue offering delivery and click-and-collect services (where items are pre-ordered and collected without entering the premises). People can also leave home to collect or return orders from these businesses.

These closures include, but are not limited to, the following premises:

- clothing stores and tailors
- homeware stores (such as furniture and carpet retailers)
- showrooms open to the public for products used in homes, including bathrooms, kitchens and glazing
- tobacco and vape shops
- electronic goods and mobile phone shops
- charity shops
- antique stores and photography studios
- markets (except livestock markets or stalls which fall under the list of essential businesses above, for example those selling food or hardware)
- car and other vehicle showrooms and other premises, including outdoor areas, used for the sale or hire of caravans, boats or any vehicle which can be propelled by mechanical means. However taxi or vehicle hire businesses can continue. For example a customer could order a rental vehicle online and collect it in person.
- car washes.
- auction houses (except for auctions of livestock or agricultural equipment)
- homeopathic and naturopathic medicine, traditional chinese medicine, and ayurveda

All premises, whether or not required to close, can be accessed by the site owners or managers, staff or people authorised by them for the purpose of maintenance, repairs or other work to ensure readiness to reopen at a point where this is permitted, such as receiving deliveries of supplies.

The premises required to close above can be opened for the purposes of making a film, television programme, audio programme or audio-visual advertisement.

## Hospitality

The following hospitality venues are required to close for consumption on the premises.

- Restaurants; pubs; bars, including those in hotels or members' clubs, and shisha bars; social clubs
- Cafes and canteens, excluding workplace canteens where there is no reasonable alternative

These businesses can continue to provide:

- Food and non-alcoholic drinks on a takeaway basis between 5am and 10pm. This means that customers can enter the premises to place and collect their order. Food and non-alcoholic drinks can also be sold for delivery where orders are made online, by telephone or by post, and via click and collect; and drive through;
- Food and drinks for delivery, via click and collect and drive through only between 10pm and 5am. Click-and-collect and delivery services can only operate where goods are pre-ordered (by phone, online, via a mobile app or by post) and collected without entering the premises.
- Alcohol for consumption off the premises through delivery, click and collect and drive through. As above, this means alcohol must be pre-ordered (by phone, online, via a mobile app or by post) and must be collected without entering the premises. Venues offering click-and-collect or delivery services must not include alcoholic beverages if their license does not already permit.

Planning regulation has been changed to enable restaurants, cafes and pubs which have not previously offered delivery and hot food takeaway to be able to do so.

Hospitality venues providing food and drink for consumption off the premises are not permitted to allow customers to consume from any adjacent seating to the premises (with the exception of motorway service areas, airports, seaports, and the international terminal at Folkestone).

Room service in hotels and other guest accommodation continues to be permitted as long as it is ordered by phone or online.

Cafes or canteens may remain open in:

- a hospital, care home or school, or provider of post-16 education or training (this includes canteens in university accommodation, but not refectories and other venues on university campuses)
- criminal justice accommodation
- naval/military/air force or MoD facilities

Services providing food and/or drink to people experiencing homelessness can also remain open.

## Accommodation

Holiday accommodation must close. This includes hotels, hostels, bed and breakfast accommodation, holiday apartments, home, cottages or bungalows, campsites, caravan parks or boarding houses, canal boats or any other vessel unless the exemptions set out in law apply.

You can only carry on your business and keep your premises open in order to provide accommodation for people who:

- Are unable to return home, or use the accommodation as their main residence;
- Need accommodation to move to a new house, attend a funeral, or self-isolate as required by law
- Need accommodation for the purposes of their work or to provide voluntary services, or children who need accommodation for school or care
- Are elite athletes, their coach or (in the case of an elite athlete who is a child), the parent of an elite athlete, and need accommodation for the purposes of training or competition
- Are currently in that accommodation at the time when national restrictions come into force. At the time that restrictions are brought in, if people are currently on holiday and it is not reasonable for them to curtail their stay, they should finish their holiday as planned. People should return home as soon as practical and comply with the 'stay at home' requirements whilst in holiday accommodation in the meantime.
- Are visiting from abroad on holiday or for work purposes
- Are being provided accommodation to relieve or support those who are experiencing homelessness, or as a women's or vulnerable person's refuge.
- Accommodation providers may keep their business open to host blood donation sessions, or for any purpose requested by a Secretary of State, or local authority.
- Accommodation facilities required to close can be opened for the purposes of making a film, television programme, audio programme, or audio-visual advertisement.

## Personal Care facilities and close contact services

- Facilities including hair, beauty and nail salons, tattoo parlours, spas, massage centres, body and skin piercing services, and tanning salons must all close, but can continue to sell retail goods (such as shampoo or beauty products) online or via click-and-collect.
- Those who provide personal care services from a mobile setting including their own home, in other people's homes, and in retail environments (such as a concession in a larger, separate business) must also stop operating.
- Non medical acupuncture and other cosmetic services should not go ahead, but personal care services where required for medical reasons or prescribed by a qualified practitioner may continue. For example, massage prescribed for pain relief or for sports injuries, or cosmetic services for burn victims or those associated with cancer treatment. The [guidance on safer working in close contact services](https://web.archive.org/web/20201128053347/https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus) (<https://web.archive.org/web/20201128053347/https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus>

[covid-19/close-contact-services](#)) should be followed). Where applicable, practitioners should also take into account any guidance issued by the healthcare regulators or a relevant professional body.

- Studying hair and beauty in vocational training environments may continue. This can include the use of other students from the cohort as models.
- Those providing their services in a professional capacity as part of those sectors that remain open can continue to operate. For example, make-up artists in film and TV production, and on fashion shoots. However, these services cannot be carried out in premises [required to close](#). (<https://web.archive.org/web/20201128053347/https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/performing-arts>).
- The premises required to close above can be opened for the purposes of making a film, television programme, audio programme or audio-visual advertisement.

## Entertainment and tourism

The following businesses and venues must close:

- Nightclubs, dance halls, and discotheques
- Bingo halls, casinos, betting shops, amusement arcades and adult gaming centres.
- Bowling alleys
- indoor games, recreation and entertainment venues (such as escape rooms and laser quest), go-karting
- Sexual entertainment venues and hostess bars
- Cinemas, theatres, concert halls, and other music venues (whether outdoors or indoors). Theatres and concert halls can continue to be used for training, rehearsals, and performances without an audience for broadcast or recording purposes.
- Museums and galleries
- Model villages and visitor attractions at film studios,
- Circuses, funfairs and fairgrounds (whether outdoors or indoors), theme parks and adventure playgrounds, parks and activities.
- Aquariums, zoos, safari parks, farms, wildlife centres and any place where animals are exhibited to the public as an attraction.
- Indoor attractions at visitor attractions such as botanical or other gardens, biomes or greenhouses; stately or historic homes, castles or other heritage sites; landmarks, including observation wheels or viewing platforms; sculpture parks. The outdoor elements of these attractions can remain open, such as the gardens at a stately home.
- Conference centres and exhibition halls for the purposes of private dining and banquets, conference, exhibitions or trade shows must also close. Events that are only attended by employees of the business are able to continue.
- The premises required to close above can be opened for the purposes of making a film, television programme, audio programme or audio-visual advertisement.

## Leisure

The following businesses and venues must close:

- Skating rinks
- Leisure and sports facilities including:
  - dance studios and fitness studios,
  - gyms,
  - sports courts,
  - swimming pools, water sports venues, water parks and aqua parks,
  - golf courses and driving ranges, shooting and archery venues
  - indoor playgrounds or play areas, including soft play centres and areas, trampolining centres

Schools and colleges can continue to use gyms, fitness studios, swimming pools, sports courts and other indoor leisure centres. Indoor gyms, fitness studios, indoor sports facilities and leisure centres can be used for supervised activities for children.

Elite sportspersons can use facilities such as stables, indoor gyms, fitness studios and other indoor or outdoor sports facilities for training or competition.

Professional dancers and choreographers can use indoor fitness and dance studios.

However, general classes and training, including one-to-one lessons, in the venues listed above must not go ahead.

Personal trainers can conduct lessons but these should take place in an outdoor public space, such as a park, rather than in private homes or gardens.

The premises required to close above can be opened for the purposes of making a film, television programme, audio programme or audio-visual advertisement.

### **3. Other venues subject to restrictions**

#### **Libraries**

Libraries may open their premises for:

- Delivery and click-and-collect services, for example to borrow books or DVDs, so long as customers do not enter the premises.
- Providing essential voluntary or public services (for example food banks or other support for the homeless or vulnerable, blood donation sessions or support in an emergency).
- Providing digital access to public services. This includes allowing someone to complete a job application.
- The purposes of education or training
- Support groups
- Registered childcare

#### **Community facilities**

Community facilities such as centres and halls must close except for:

- Providing essential voluntary or public services (for example food banks or other support for the homeless or vulnerable, blood donation sessions or support in an emergency)
- The purposes of education or training
- Support groups
- Registered childcare or supervised activities for children

Public toilets do not need to close.

#### **Places of worship**

Places of worship must close except for:

- Individual prayer
- Funerals or commemorative events
- Broadcasting an act of worship



- Providing essential voluntary or public services (for example food banks or other support for the homeless or vulnerable, blood donation sessions or support in an emergency)
- Providing registered childcare
- Support groups

## Crematoriums and burial grounds

Crematoriums or burial grounds must close to members of the public except for:

- Funerals or commemorative events
- Allowing a person to pay their respects to a member of their household, a family member or friend

## 4. Operating in a COVID-Secure manner

Businesses and venues are required under health and safety legislation to follow the appropriate COVID-19 Secure guidance for their sector.

Please see links to sector-specific guidance on ensuring businesses and venues permitted to open can operate safely, and so that businesses and venues that are closed can prepare to reopen safely when legally permitted to do so.

This guidance will help you operate a safe workplace for those who are not able to work from home, and help you plan for reopening in the future.

- People who work in or run shops, branches, stores, or similar environments.  
(<https://web.archive.org/web/20201128053347/https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/shops-and-branches>)
- Restaurants, pubs, bars, and takeaway services  
(<https://web.archive.org/web/20201128053347/https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/restaurants-offering-takeaway-or-delivery>)
- Accommodation (<https://web.archive.org/web/20201128053347/https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/hotels-and-other-guest-accommodation>)
- The visitor economy (<https://web.archive.org/web/20201128053347/https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/the-visitor-economy>) and heritage locations  
(<https://web.archive.org/web/20201128053347/https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/heritage-locations>)
- Exhibition halls and conference centres  
(<https://web.archive.org/web/20201128053347/https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/the-visitor-economy>)
- Casinos (<https://web.archive.org/web/20201128053347/https://bettingandgamingcouncil.com/news/green-light-for-casinos-to-reopen-england/>), bowling alleys  
(<https://web.archive.org/web/20201128053347/https://www.ukhospitality.org.uk/page/coronavirus>), and indoor play  
(<https://web.archive.org/web/20201128053347/https://www.balppa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Indoor-Play-Areas-for-Children-Operational-Guidance-for-Soft-Play-Equipment.pdf>)
- Close contact services (<https://web.archive.org/web/20201128053347/https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/close-contact-services>)
- Performing arts (<https://web.archive.org/web/20201128053347/https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/performing-arts>)
- Sports and leisure providers  
(<https://web.archive.org/web/20201128053347/https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/providers-of-grassroots-sport-and-gym-leisure-facilities>), playgrounds and outdoor gyms  
(<https://web.archive.org/web/20201128053347/https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-managing-playgrounds-and-outdoor-gyms/covid-19-guidance-for-managing-playgrounds-and-outdoor-gyms>)

- Places of worship  
(<https://web.archive.org/web/20201128053347/https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-during-the-pandemic-from-4-july>)
- Community centres, village halls, and other community facilities  
(<https://web.archive.org/web/20201128053347/https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-multi-purpose-community-facilities>)

All businesses should demonstrate to their workers and attendees that they have properly assessed their risk and taken appropriate measures to mitigate it, for example by publishing their risk assessment online or making it available at the premises/event.

Businesses and venues must also take reasonable steps to ensure that social contact rules are followed within their venues. (<https://web.archive.org/web/20201128053347/https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2020/1008/contents>)

In particular, those operating venues or running events following COVID-19 Secure guidelines should take additional steps to ensure the safety of the public. This includes taking reasonable steps to prevent large gatherings of people which risk a breakdown of social distancing rules.

Individual businesses or venues should also consider the cumulative impact of many venues reopening in a small area. This means working with local authorities, neighbouring businesses and travel operators to assess this risk and applying additional mitigations.

These could include:

- staggering entry times with other venues and taking steps to avoid queues building up in surrounding areas
- arranging one-way travel routes between transport hubs and venues
- advising patrons to avoid particular forms of transport or routes and to avoid crowded areas when in transit to the venue

Local authorities are responsible for permitting or prohibiting large organised outdoor events from taking place in their local area. See further guidance on large outdoor events.

(<https://web.archive.org/web/20201128053347/https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/the-visitor-economy>)

Please see the latest face covering guidance.

(<https://web.archive.org/web/20201128053347/https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own#when-to-wear-a-face-covering>)

## 5. Employer duties for self-isolation

Employers must not knowingly require or encourage someone who is being required to self-isolate to leave their designated area of self-isolation. See working safely guidance.

(<https://web.archive.org/web/20201128053347/https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/restaurants-offering-takeaway-or-delivery>)

In the case of agency workers, agents must notify the employer, and the employer must notify an organisation to which the agency worker has been supplied.

In order to support businesses in meeting these obligations, a self-isolating worker or agency worker must notify their employer (or agency worker where applicable) as soon as is reasonably practical, as well as the start and end dates of their isolation period. Any failure by an employee to notify their employer is an offence.

## 6. Compliance and enforcement

An owner, proprietor or manager carrying out a business (or a person responsible for other premises) who fails to fulfill the obligations placed on them in law, without reasonable excuse, commits an offence.

In England, Environmental Health and Trading Standards officers will monitor compliance with these regulations, with police support provided if appropriate. Businesses and venues that breach restrictions will potentially be subject to prohibition notices, and a person who is 18 or over, who carries on a business in contravention of the Regulations may be issued with a fixed penalty (fine).

With the support of the police, prohibition notices can be used to require compliance with the Regulations including requiring that an activity ceases. It is also an offence, without reasonable excuse, to fail to comply with a prohibition notice.

If prohibition notices are not complied with, or a fixed penalty notice not paid, you may also be taken to court, with magistrates able to impose potentially unlimited fines.

Businesses can be fined by local authorities or the police if they fail to fulfil the obligations placed on them in law, fines will be issued:

- £1,000 for the first offence
- £2,000 for the second offence
- £4,000 for the third offence
- and then £10,000 for the fourth and all subsequent offences

Individuals can also be issued with a fixed penalty notice, starting at £200 for those who participate in illegal gatherings. The police also have the power to take action against those holding or being involved in the holding of an illegal gathering of more than 30 people. This includes issuing a fixed penalty notice of £10,000.

Local authorities and the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care also have the power to place restrictions on or close premises where they assess that they pose a serious and imminent threat to public health where this is necessary and proportionate to manage the spread of COVID-19 in the local authority's area. See [more information on these powers](#).

(<https://web.archive.org/web/20201128053347/https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-authority-powers-to-impose-restrictions-under-coronavirus-regulations>)

## 7. Business support

Businesses which are forced to close due will receive up to £3,000 per month, depending on their rateable value. This is worth over £1bn a month across England, and will benefit over 600,000 businesses.

Businesses in the retail, hospitality, and leisure sectors which suffered from reduced demand due to restrictions on socialising introduced between 1 August and 5 November, will receive up to £2,100 per month to cover the period during which they were subject to these restrictions.

Local Authorities in England will also receive a one-off £1.1 billion total payment which they can use to help a wide range of businesses that may be affected by the local and national restrictions, but that will not be covered by the other two grant amounts.

For more information please visit the government's [business support page](#).

(<https://web.archive.org/web/20201128053347/https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus/business-support>)

The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) has been extended and is available for all eligible firms across the UK. So far, the CJRS has helped 1.2 million employers across the UK furlough 9.6 million jobs,

protecting people's livelihoods (as at midnight 18 October 2020).

Full guidance can be found [here](#)

(<https://web.archive.org/web/20201128053347/https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-job-retention-scheme>).

## 8. Business rates

In England, as announced on 16 March 2020, the government will provide a business rates holiday for businesses and venues in the retail, hospitality and/or leisure sector. This includes the businesses and venues in scope for closure listed above. The relief will apply to business rates bills for the 2020 to 2021 tax year.

## 9. Scope of restrictions

The Devolved Administrations have issued their own guidance and regulations on these matters. The guidance can be found below:

- [Wales](https://web.archive.org/web/20201128053347/https://gov.wales/coronavirus) (<https://web.archive.org/web/20201128053347/https://gov.wales/coronavirus>)
- [Scotland](https://web.archive.org/web/20201128053347/https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-individuals-and-businesses-in-scotland) (<https://web.archive.org/web/20201128053347/https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-individuals-and-businesses-in-scotland>)
- [Northern Ireland](https://web.archive.org/web/20201128053347/https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/coronavirus-covid-19) (<https://web.archive.org/web/20201128053347/https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/coronavirus-covid-19>)

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