

Formal tiering review update: 30 December 2020

- The Midlands, North East, parts of the North West and parts of the South West among those escalated to Tier 4, with almost all remaining areas escalated to Tier 3
- Spread of the new strain of COVID-19 is increasing in the South West, Midlands and parts of the North West

After careful consideration of the latest data, the following local authority areas will move to [Tier 4: Stay at Home](#) from the beginning of Thursday 31 December 2020:

- Leicester City
- Leicestershire (Oadby and Wigston, Harborough, Hinckley and Bosworth, Blaby, Charnwood, North West Leicestershire, Melton)
- Lincolnshire (City of Lincoln, Boston, South Kesteven, West Lindsey, North Kesteven, South Holland, East Lindsey)
- Northamptonshire (Corby, Daventry, East Northamptonshire, Kettering, Northampton, South Northamptonshire, Wellingborough)
- Derby and Derbyshire (Derby, Amber Valley, South Derbyshire, Bolsover, North East Derbyshire, Chesterfield, Erewash, Derbyshire Dales, High Peak)
- Nottingham and Nottinghamshire (Gedling, Ashfield, Mansfield, Rushcliffe, Bassetlaw, Newark and Sherwood, Nottinghamshire, Broxtowe)
- Birmingham and Black Country (Dudley, Birmingham, Sandwell, Walsall, Wolverhampton)
- Coventry
- Solihull
- Warwickshire (Rugby, Nuneaton and Bedworth, Warwick, North Warwickshire, Stratford-upon-Avon)
- Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent (East Staffordshire, Stafford, South Staffordshire, Cannock Chase, Lichfield, Staffordshire Moorlands, Newcastle under Lyme, Tamworth, Stoke-on-Trent)
- Lancashire (Burnley, Pendle, Blackburn with Darwen, Ribble Valley, Blackpool, Preston, Hyndburn, Chorley, Fylde, Lancaster, Rossendale, South Ribble, West Lancashire, Wyre)
- Cheshire and Warrington (Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Warrington)
- Cumbria (Eden, Carlisle, South Lakeland, Barrow-in-Furness, Copeland, Allerdale)
- Greater Manchester (Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford, Wigan)
- Tees Valley (Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland, Stockton-on-Tees)
- North East (County Durham, Gateshead, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, North Tyneside, Northumberland, South Tyneside, Sunderland)
- Gloucestershire (Gloucester, Forest of Dean, Cotswolds, Tewkesbury, Stroud, Cheltenham)

- Somerset Council (Mendip, Sedgemoor, Somerset West and Taunton, South Somerset)
- Swindon
- Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole
- Isle of Wight
- New Forest

The following local authority areas will move to [Tier 3: Very High](#) from the beginning of Thursday 31 December 2020:

- Rutland
- Shropshire, and Telford and Wrekin
- Worcestershire (Bromsgrove, Malvern Hills, Redditch, Worcester, Wychavon, Wyre Forest)
- Herefordshire
- Liverpool City Region (Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, Wirral, St Helens)
- York and North Yorkshire (Scarborough, Hambleton, Richmondshire, Selby, Craven, Ryedale, Harrogate, City of York)
- Bath and North East Somerset
- Devon, Plymouth, Torbay (East Devon, Exeter, Mid Devon, North Devon, South Hams, Teignbridge, Torridge, West Devon, Plymouth, Torbay)
- Cornwall
- Dorset
- Wiltshire

Between 18 and 24 December the weekly case rate in England rose to 402.6 per 100,000, a 32% increase on the previous week. The NHS reports 14,915 patients have been admitted to hospital with COVID-19 in the past week, a 18% increase on the week before.

Evidence shows the new strain of COVID-19 is increasing in the South West, Midlands and parts of the North West. The majority of the cases identified in London, the South East and the East of England are of the new variant. Infection rates have increased faster than expected in these areas where the new strain has been circulating and stronger measures are required to get the virus under control.

Rates in the East Midlands have increased to 256.1 per 100,000, a 17% increase on the previous week. Rates in the West Midlands have increased to 273.5 per 100,000, a 23% increase on the previous week. In the North West, rates have increased by 31% to 223.9 per 100,000. In the South West, there has been a 37% increase in cases to 175.1 cases per 100,000. While rates in the South West may be lower than other areas, the data shows a sharp upwards trajectory.

Winter is always the most difficult time of year for the NHS and an increase in COVID-19 infections is followed closely by a rise in hospitalisations and, after a lag, an increase in deaths. It is vital everyone plays their part by following the regional tiered restrictions in their area to bring down infections, save lives and reduce pressures on the NHS this winter.

All clinically extremely vulnerable individuals will be asked to shield if they live in Tier 4 areas. People will be sent a letter or email with advice and details of support. In the meantime they should follow the [shielding advice set out on GOV.UK](#).

Tier 3 and 4 areas will continue to be prioritised for community testing, with more than 100 local authorities now having signed up to the enhanced testing support programme.

All available data has been assessed by the government, including the Health and Social Care Secretary, NHS Test and Trace including the Joint Biosecurity Centre (JBC), Public Health England (PHE), the Chief Medical Officer and the Cabinet Office. Data assessed includes how quickly case rates are going up or down, cases in the over-60s, pressure on the NHS and local circumstances.

See a [list of all areas in England and tiers](#)

Tier 1 restrictions mean:

- people must not socialise in groups larger than 6 people, indoors or outdoors, other than where a legal exemption applies. This is called the 'rule of 6'
- businesses and venues can remain open, in a [COVID-secure](#) manner, other than those which remain closed by law, such as nightclubs
- hospitality businesses selling food or drink for consumption on their premises are required to:
 - provide table service only, for premises that serve alcohol
 - close between 11pm and 5am (hospitality venues in airports, ports, on transport services and in motorway service areas are exempt)
 - stop taking orders after 10pm
- hospitality businesses and venues selling food and drink for consumption off the premises can continue to do so after 10pm as long as this is through delivery service, click-and-collect or drive-through
- early closure (11pm) applies to casinos, cinemas, theatres, concert halls, sports stadia, bowling alleys, amusement arcades, funfairs, theme parks, adventure parks and activities and bingo halls. Cinemas, theatres, concert halls and sports stadia can stay open beyond 11pm in order to conclude performances or events that start before 10pm
- public attendance at outdoor and indoor events (performances and shows) is permitted, limited to whichever is lower: 50% capacity, or either 4,000 people outdoors or 1,000 people indoors
- public attendance at spectator sport and business events can resume inside and outside, [subject to social contact rules](#) and limited to whichever is lower: 50% capacity, or either 4,000 people outdoors or 1,000 people indoors
- places of worship remain open, but you must not attend or socialise in groups of more than 6 people while there, unless a legal exemption applies
- weddings and funerals can go ahead with restrictions on numbers of attendees – 15 people can attend wedding ceremonies and receptions, 30 people can attend funeral ceremonies, and 15 people can attend linked commemorative events

- organised outdoor sport, physical activity and exercise classes can continue in any number
- organised indoor sport, physical activity and exercise classes can continue to take place, if the rule of 6 is followed. There are exceptions for indoor disability sport, sport for educational purposes, and supervised sport and physical activity for under-18s, which can take place with larger groups mixing

See [further details on Tier 1](#).

Tier 2 restrictions mean:

- people must not socialise with anyone they do not live with or who is not in their support bubble in any indoor setting, whether at home or in a public place
- people must not socialise in a group of more than 6 people outside, including in a garden or a public space – this is called the ‘rule of 6’
- businesses and venues can continue to operate, in a [COVID-secure](#) manner, other than those which remain closed by law, such as nightclubs
- pubs and bars must close, unless operating as restaurants. Hospitality venues can only serve alcohol with substantial meals
- hospitality businesses selling food or drink for consumption on their premises are required to:
 - provide table service only, in premises which sell alcohol
 - close between 11pm and 5am (hospitality venues in airports, ports, transport services and motorway service areas are exempt)
 - stop taking orders after 10pm
- hospitality businesses and venues selling food and drink for consumption off the premises can continue to do so after 10pm as long as this is through delivery service, click-and-collect or drive-through
- early closure (11pm) applies to casinos, cinemas, theatres, sports stadia, bowling alleys, amusement arcades, funfairs, theme parks, adventure parks and activities, and bingo halls. Cinemas, theatres, concert halls and sports stadia can stay open beyond 11pm in order to conclude performances or events that start before 10pm
- public attendance at outdoor and indoor events (performances and shows) is permitted, limited to whichever is lower: 50% capacity, or either 2,000 people outdoors or 1,000 people indoors
- public attendance at spectator sport and business events can resume inside and outside, subject to [social contact rules](#) and limited to whichever is lower: 50% capacity, or either 2,000 people outdoors or 1,000 people indoors
- weddings and funerals can go ahead with restrictions on numbers of attendees – 15 people can attend wedding ceremonies and receptions, 30 people can attend funeral ceremonies, and 15 people can attend linked commemorative events such as wakes or stonesettings
- organised outdoor sport, and physical activity and exercise classes can continue in any number
- organised indoor sport, physical activity and exercise classes will only be permitted if it is possible for people to avoid mixing with people they do not live with (or share a support bubble with). There are

exceptions for indoor disability sport, sport for educational purposes and supervised sport and physical activity for under-18s, which can take place with larger groups mixing

See [further details on Tier 2](#).

Tier 3 restrictions mean:

- people must not meet socially indoors, in a private garden or most outdoor public venues with anybody they do not live with or have a support bubble with. Everyone who can work from home should do so
- people can see friends and family they do not live with (or do not have a support bubble with) in some public outdoor places – such as parks or public gardens in a group of up to 6
- weddings and funerals can go ahead with restrictions on the number of attendees – 15 people can attend wedding ceremonies, wedding receptions are not allowed, 30 people can attend funeral ceremonies, 15 people can attend linked commemorative events
- accommodation such as hotels, B&Bs, campsites, holiday lets and guest houses must close, other than where very limited exceptions apply
- hospitality settings, such as bars (including shisha bars), pubs, cafes, restaurants, and social clubs must close except for takeaway, delivery, drive-through and click and collect services. Takeaway must cease between 11pm and 5am, but delivery, drive-through and click-and-collect may continue during this period. This includes restaurants and bars within hotels or members' clubs
- indoor entertainment venues, such as casinos, bowling alleys, and bingo halls must close. Outdoor entertainment venues, such as botanical gardens and heritage sites, may stay open, although indoor elements at these attractions must also close. Cinemas, theatres, and concert venues must close; except for drive-in events
- leisure and sports facilities may continue to stay open, but indoor group exercise classes (including fitness and dance) should not go ahead

See [further details on Tier 3](#)

Tier 4 restrictions mean:

- people must not leave their home or garden unless they have a 'reasonable excuse' including where reasonably necessary for work, education, exercise or open air recreation and essential activities such as medical appointments and to buy food
- people must not meet socially indoors, in a private garden or most outdoor public venues with anybody they do not live with or have a support bubble with. Everyone who can work from home should do so
- people can see only one other person that they do not live with (or do not have a support bubble with) in certain public outdoor places – such as parks, public gardens, or outdoor sports facilities
- weddings and funerals can go ahead with restrictions on the number of attendees – 6 people can attend wedding ceremonies, wedding receptions are not allowed, 30 people can attend funeral ceremonies, 6 people can attend linked commemorative events

- accommodation such as hotels, B&Bs, campsites, holiday lets and guest houses must close, other than where very limited exceptions apply
- hospitality settings, such as bars (including shisha bars), pubs, cafes, restaurants, and social clubs must close except for takeaway, delivery, drive-through and click and collect services. Takeaway must cease between 11pm and 5am, but delivery, drive-through and click-and-collect may continue during this period. This includes restaurants and bars within hotels or members' clubs
- indoor entertainment venues, such as casinos, bowling alleys, and bingo halls must close. Cinemas, theatres, and concert venues must also close
- certain outdoor venues, such as botanical gardens, heritage sites, and zoos and other animal attractions may stay open, although indoor elements at these attractions must also close
- all indoor leisure and sports facilities must close except where a legal exemption exists, such as for the training of elite sportspeople

See [further details on Tier 4](#).

The government decides which tier applies in each area based on a range of indicators, including:

- analysis of cases across all age groups
- analysis of cases in the over-60s
- the rate by which cases are rising or falling
- the percentage of those tested in local populations with COVID-19
- pressures on the NHS