

Further restrictions eased for Greater Manchester, Lancashire and West Yorkshire

- Pools, gyms and sports facilities allowed to open across the country from Tuesday (8 September) as national easements implemented from 25 July applied to the rest of Blackburn with Darwen, Bradford and Leicester
- National easements on additional business reopenings and leisure activities from 15 August will be applied to the majority of Greater Manchester, Lancashire and West Yorkshire from Tuesday (8 September)
- Newark and Sherwood, Slough and Wakefield will be removed from 'areas of concern'

Following discussions with local leaders, the Health and Social Care Secretary, NHS Test and Trace, the Joint Biosecurity Centre (JBC) and the Chief Medical Officer for England have agreed this week's changes to local restrictions in some parts of England.

National easements dated 25 July

Every pool, gym and sports facility will now be able to open across the country.

Indoor swimming pools, including water parks, indoor fitness and dance studios, indoor gyms and sports courts and facilities, will be able to lawfully reopen from Tuesday 8 September at 12.01am throughout:

- Leicester
- remaining parts of Blackburn with Darwen
- remaining parts of Bradford

These easements will bring Leicester and the remaining parts of Bradford and Blackburn with Darwen in line with the national easements implemented on 25 July. The easements already in place in some parts will now apply to the whole area. We will formally review restrictions on other businesses in Leicester in line with the 15 August easements by 11 September.

National easements dated 15 August

Casinos, skating rinks, bowling alleys, exhibition halls, conference centres and indoor play areas (including soft play areas) will be able to lawfully reopen from Tuesday 8 September at 12.01am throughout:

- Greater Manchester, apart from Bolton, where these restrictions will remain in place
- Lancashire
- West Yorkshire

Socially distanced indoor performances will also be able to resume, and remaining restrictions on certain close contact services (treatments on the face, such as eyebrow threading or make-up application) will be lifted.

These easements will bring Greater Manchester, apart from Bolton, Lancashire, and West Yorkshire, in line with the changes made in the rest of the country on 15 August. The rates of infection remain too high in Bolton for these easements to be applied and further work is now underway with local leaders.

Today's announcement is a testament to the hard work of residents, local communities and local authorities who have all worked to bring down the rates of infection. To maintain this good progress, it is important local residents continue to wear face coverings where necessary, practise good hygiene and adhere to national social distancing rules.

The rate of infection is still too high in Greater Manchester, parts of Lancashire and West Yorkshire to allow lifting restrictions on gatherings.

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

I'm very glad we've been able to make this change, working with local councils, because local lockdowns are working to control the virus. We are seeing improvements in the rates of infection thanks to the huge efforts made by local communities and authorities working alongside our effective Test and Trace system.

We must stay alert and I continue to encourage everyone to play their part by following local rules, self-isolating and requesting a free test as soon as they get any symptoms.

Changes to watchlist: 4 September

Based on the latest data, Newark and Sherwood, Slough and Wakefield will be removed from the watchlist.

Leeds, South Tyneside, Corby, Middlesbrough and Kettering have been added to the watchlist as areas of concern.

Norfolk, Rossendale and Northampton will be added as 'areas of enhanced support', meaning government will work with local authorities to provide additional resources – such as testing or contact tracing – to help bring the numbers of infections down.

The Leicester Regulations, North of England Regulations, and Blackburn with Darwen and Bradford Regulations will be reviewed by 11 September.

Local areas are encouraged to take a collaborative approach to advise on the geographical boundaries of local restrictions, with councils, public health leaders and MPs making proposals to the Gold Local Action committee based on the latest data available.

It means restrictions in some areas will only apply to certain wards, rather than the entire local authority area. This is a key part of the government's enhanced Contain Strategy, and will deliver more targeted action to drive down rates of COVID-19 at a hyper-local level, including support such as increased testing or contact tracing and intervention where needed.

Public Health England (PHE), the JBC and NHS Test and Trace are constantly monitoring the levels of infection and other data on prevalence of the virus across the country. As has always been the case, measures are kept under constant review and we will bring in national measures to save lives.

The weekly Local Action Gold Committee, chaired by the Health and Social Care Secretary, agreed local restrictions will continue or be introduced in the following areas.

Greater Manchester

- A ban on 2 households mixing indoors will continue in City of Manchester, Salford, Rochdale, Trafford, Oldham, Bury, Bolton and Tameside
- In Oldham, in addition to a household mixing ban indoors, residents will continue to be advised to avoid mixing with anyone from another household anywhere
- In Bolton, casinos, skating rinks, bowling alleys, exhibition halls, conference centres and indoor play areas (including soft play areas) will remain closed. Socially distanced indoor performances will remain closed, and restrictions on certain close contact services will remain. We are working closely with local leaders

Lancashire

- A ban on 2 households mixing indoors will continue in Preston, Pendle and parts of Blackburn
- In parts of Blackburn and parts of Pendle residents will continue to be advised to avoid mixing with anyone from another household anywhere

Leicester

- Indoor gatherings restrictions remain – the next review of these measures will take place by 11 September
- Indoor swimming pools, including water parks, indoor fitness and dance studios, indoor gyms and sports courts and facilities, will be able to lawfully reopen from Tuesday 8 September at 12.01am, but casinos, skating rinks, bowling alleys, exhibition halls, conference centres and indoor play areas (including soft play areas) will remain closed. This will be reviewed next week
- Socially distanced indoor performances will remain closed, and restrictions on certain close contact services will remain

West Yorkshire

- The ban on indoor household gatherings will continue in urban areas of Bradford where the ban is in place
- In Kirklees, the ban on indoor household gatherings will continue in Dewsbury and Batley
- The ban on indoor household gatherings will also continue in parts of Calderdale

Background information

PHE's weekly surveillance report includes changes to the watchlist of local authority areas with higher-than-average incidences of COVID-19. The changes are:

- Newark and Sherwood, Slough and Wakefield removed from the watchlist
- South Tyneside, Leeds, Corby, Middlesbrough and Kettering added to 'areas of concern'
- Norfolk, Rossendale and Northampton will now be classed as 'areas of enhanced support'
- Bolton and Trafford added to 'areas of intervention'

Read the [full surveillance report](#), which includes this week's watchlist and what the different categorisations mean.

The 3 definitions for JBC and PHE's watchlist are: 'areas of concern', 'areas of enhanced support', and 'areas of intervention':

- For 'areas of concern', upper tier local authorities will work with partners, supported by regional PHE and NHS Test and Trace resource, to take additional actions to manage outbreaks and reduce community spread of the virus to more normal levels. Actions taken may include additional targeted testing at high-risk areas or groups – for example care homes – enhanced communications around the importance of social distancing, hand hygiene and other preventative measures, and more detailed epidemiological work to understand where clusters of the virus are occurring so that appropriate action can be taken
- areas deemed for 'enhanced support' will be provided with increased national support, capacity and oversight, including additional resources deployed to augment the local teams where this is necessary. Actions taken may include significant additional widespread testing deployed to the upper tier local authorities, national support for local recommendations put in place to manage outbreaks, and detailed engagement with high-risk groups and sectors to help increase the effectiveness of testing and tracing in these areas
- 'areas of intervention' are defined where there is divergence from the lockdown measures in place in the rest of England because of the

significance of the spread of COVID-19. There are a range of non-pharmaceutical interventions available to local and national leaders, from extensive communications and expanded testing, to restrictions on businesses and gatherings

See the [Contain Framework](#) for more information.