

Restrictions on household gatherings to continue in parts of the north west and West Yorkshire

- Current rules on gatherings in Greater Manchester, Leicester, parts of West Yorkshire and East Lancashire remain in place
- Restrictions on household gatherings to be brought in for Preston from midnight tonight, as the city is added to JBC and PHE's watch list as an 'area of intervention'
- Wider restrictions in Leicester, Blackburn and Bradford to continue

The current rules on social gatherings will continue in parts of the North West, West Yorkshire and Leicester, following a review of all local restrictions yesterday by government and local authorities.

The measures were announced last week to urgently tackle an increase in COVID-19 cases in these areas. With the latest data not showing any evidence of a decrease in the number of cases per 100,000 people in the area, the Health Secretary, in close collaboration with local leaders, has agreed that the rules must remain in place. This will help protect local residents, and allow more time for the changes to have an effect, cutting transmission among households.

At the request of the local authority, Preston will now be added to the list of areas included in the ban on households gathering in each other's homes and gardens, effective from midnight tonight. Guidance will make clear that people should not be gathering with other households anywhere indoors.

The restrictions on gatherings will be reviewed again next week with any changes to be announced by Friday 14 August.

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

The past week has been difficult for many people in Greater Manchester, West Yorkshire and East Lancashire, and I thank everyone in these areas for their patience and willingness to follow the rules.

Yesterday I chaired a meeting of the Local Action Gold Committee, and unfortunately, the data does not yet show a decrease in the transmission of this terrible virus. It means we must keep the current restrictions in place to allow more time for the impact of this ban on indoor gatherings to be felt, and make sure local residents and their loved ones are protected. At the request of the local area we are also extending these restrictions to Preston.

We are constantly examining the data on the prevalence of the virus in these areas, and we will review the measures again next week.

As we continue to see rising rates of the virus across Europe, it is vital we take every precaution to protect our country. I urge everyone in these areas to follow the rules, get yourself a free test as soon as you get any symptoms, and isolate if NHS Test and Trace tells you to.

As part of ensuring a proportionate yet robust response to the virus, where possible, the government will remove individual areas from these measures while maintaining or even strengthening measures in others as necessary – just as has been done in other areas where local measures have been brought in, like Leicestershire.

The ban on indoor gatherings will now apply to:

- Greater Manchester:
 - City of Manchester
 - Trafford
 - Stockport
 - Oldham
 - Bury
 - Wigan
 - Bolton
 - Tameside
 - Rochdale
 - Salford
- Lancashire:
 - Blackburn with Darwen
 - Burnley
 - Hyndburn
 - Pendle
 - Rossendale
 - Preston
- West Yorkshire:
 - Bradford
 - Calderdale
 - Kirklees
- Leicester

This means that people in these areas will continue to not be permitted to mix with other households (apart from those in their support bubble) within private homes or gardens. People are still able to meet others in groups up to 6 individuals, or 2 households, in outdoor public places.

The measures for Preston will be kept under careful review with potential for even stronger localised measures from the local authority if the new rules on gatherings are not followed by local residents.

As an area of intervention, the city will also benefit from additional oversight, support and localised testing. Local leaders and government also agreed a number of other changes to local restrictions in other areas which are being announced today.

Pools, indoor gyms and other leisure facilities will continue to remain closed in Leicester, Bradford and Blackburn. Shielding will also continue for individuals in Blackburn with Darwen, and Leicester City.

PHE's weekly [surveillance report](#) includes changes to the watch list of local authority areas with higher than average incidences of COVID-19. The changes are:

- Bedford and Swindon added as 'areas of concern'
- following a decrease in cases, Oadby and Wigston will move down from 'enhanced support' to 'area of concern'
- Rotherham is being removed thanks to a considerable drop in cases

[The full surveillance report which includes this week's watchlist and what the different categorisations mean can be read in full here.](#)

Anyone with any symptoms must isolate immediately and get a test for free by going online or ringing 119.

Everyone must continue to socially distance and regularly wash their hands to help bring this virus down further so all areas can return to normal as soon as possible.

The 3 definitions for JBC and PHE's watchlist are:

- areas of concern
- areas of enhanced support
- 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.

On top of this, 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.

In addition, '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, expanded testing, to restrictions on businesses and gatherings

See the contain framework for more information.