

[COVID-19 infection rises: letter to care providers from Director of Adult Social Care Delivery](#)

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[Restrictions on household mixing in Birmingham, Sandwell and Solihull](#)

- Nationwide rule of 6 for social gatherings to be implemented from Monday as cases rise across England, alongside call to the public to remain vigilant
- Additional restrictions on businesses in Leicester lifted, to be in line with the rest of the country

Following further 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 across England.

After seeing cases continue to rise, Birmingham, Sandwell and Solihull have been escalated to areas of national intervention. From Tuesday residents must not socialise with other people outside of their own households from today to control the spread of the virus. Easements in Leicester will continue, with more businesses being able to reopen in the city from Tuesday next week.

These changes are in addition to the nationwide, [6-person limit on social gatherings](#) that will come into place on Monday. This rule is in place across the country and will sit alongside additional restrictions in some local areas, such as banning mixing between different households.

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

The reinforcement of the nationwide rule of 6 for social gatherings sends a clear signal to us all – the whole country must continue to

stay vigilant and practise social distancing to beat this virus.

After seeing cases in the West Midlands continue to rise, the decision has been taken in collaboration with local leaders to ban households mixing in Birmingham, Sandwell and Solihull. We never take these decisions lightly but social gatherings can spread the virus quickly, and we need residents to abide by the new rules to break the chains of transmission.

Where targeted action has been taken, we are seeing signs of progress, and today's easements in Leicester are proof that the measures we are putting in place in collaboration with local councils have a positive effect.

We will not hesitate to take further action if needed, and my appeal to you all is to get a test if you are symptomatic, stay at home if you are required to self-isolate, and to constantly think: hands, face, space. Only then can we avoid further restrictions, and return to a sense of normality.

New restrictions in West Midlands

The following locations will now be escalated to areas of national intervention. From Tuesday, residents must not socialise with people outside of their own households, unless they're in your support bubble. This does not apply to places of work, schools or childcare.

- Birmingham
- Sandwell
- Solihull

This decision has been made in collaboration with local leaders, who are considering additional local measures to tackle an increase in the number of cases.

Stoke on Trent remains on the watchlist as an area of concern.

Easing of business restrictions in Leicester

Some business will be able to reopen in Leicester from Tuesday 15 September, which will now be subject to the same business restrictions as the majority of England.

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 next week.

Guidance will be updated and socially distanced indoor performances will 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.

The ban on inter-household gatherings in private homes and gardens remains. The next review of these measures will take place by 24 September.

Removals from the watchlist

Kettering, Oadby and Wigston and Luton have been removed from the watchlist.

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 to reduce the spread of the virus and save lives.

The changes announced today are a testament to the hard work of everyone in these areas, with members of the public and local leaders working together to reduce the spread of the virus. 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.

East Midlands and East of England Areas

- Corby and Peterborough remain as areas of concern
- Northampton has been de-escalated from an area of enhanced support to an area of concern
- Kettering and Oadby and Wigston were removed from the watchlist

Lancashire, Merseyside and Yorkshire and Humberside

The following decisions have been made in regards to watchlist categories for the north of England, with no additional restrictions put in place or changes to protected areas:

- Leeds has been escalated to an area of enhanced support
- Merseyside and Sheffield have been added as areas of concern
- designated areas in Bradford, Kirklees, Calderdale, Blackburn with Darwen, Pendle and Greater Manchester where restrictions are already in place remain as areas of national intervention
- Rossendale, Hyndburn and Burnley remain as areas of enhanced support

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 mixing will continue in Dewsbury and Batley
- The ban on indoor household mixing will also continue in parts of Calderdale

Greater Manchester (excluding Bolton)

- A ban on 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
- Stockport will remain an area of enhanced support

Bolton

The regulations outlining restrictions announced in Bolton earlier this week came into effect yesterday evening:

- 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
- all hospitality for food and drink is restricted to takeaway only
- there is a late-night restriction of operating hours in place, meaning venues will be required to close between 10pm and 5am

Lancashire

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

North East

For the North East region:

- South Tyneside, Sunderland, Gateshead and Newcastle upon Tyne have been added to the watchlist as areas of enhanced support
- Hartlepool has been added to the watchlist as an area of concern
- Middlesbrough remains on the watchlist an area of concern

Other changes to the watchlist

- Hertsmere is added to the watchlist as an area of concern
- North Norfolk, South Norfolk, West Norfolk, Kings Lynn, Great Yarmouth, Breckland, Norwich and Broadland are de-escalated from areas of enhanced support to an area of concern
- Swindon is de-escalated from an area of enhanced support to an area of concern

Background information

- PHE's weekly surveillance report includes changes to the watchlist of local authority areas with higher-than-average incidences of COVID-19. 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
 - on Tuesday 15 September, regulations will lawfully ban residents in Birmingham, Sandwell and Solihull from socialising with people outside their households in private homes and gardens. If you live in one of the affected areas, in order to help prevent the spread of coronavirus, from Tuesday you must not:
 - host people you do not live with in your home or garden, unless they're in your support bubble
 - meet people you do not live with in their home or garden, whether inside or outside of the affected area, unless they're in your support bubble
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[Joint Statement on Myanmar](#)

1. Belgium, the Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Tunisia, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America welcome the briefings on the situation in Myanmar provided by UN Special Envoy for Myanmar Christine Schraner Burgener, UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi, and Assistant Secretary-General and Regional

Director of the UN Development Programme Kanni Wignaraja today.

2. As committed supporters of Myanmar's democratic transition, we recognise the efforts made by Myanmar's government in the country's democratisation. The elections on 8 November are an important milestone in Myanmar's transition, which the international community has supported with funding and technical expertise. We underline the importance of ensuring individuals of all communities, including Rohingya, are able to participate safely, fully, and equally in credible and inclusive elections.
3. In this regard, we are concerned by the continued clashes between the Myanmar military and the Arakan Army in Rakhine and Chin States and by the heavy toll this continues to take on local communities. Recalling the UN Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire as supported by Security Council Resolution 2532, we call for an immediate cessation of hostilities and a halt to all activities that risk fuelling or escalating the situation. We also call for safe, full, and unhindered humanitarian access to all vulnerable populations and the full restoration of internet access in the affected areas.
4. These steps are even more urgent in light of the increased number of Covid-19 cases in Rakhine State. We reiterate our support to Myanmar in combating the global pandemic and support the positive steps taken so far, including Myanmar's public awareness campaign, the Covid-19 Economic Relief Plan, and the joint commission to coordinate the efforts of the government and ethnic armed organisations.
5. On the situation in Rakhine more broadly, it is now more than three years since over 700,000 Rohingya refugees were forcibly displaced from their homes to Bangladesh because of violence perpetrated by the Myanmar military. In line with Security Council Presidential Statement 2017/22, we call on Myanmar to accelerate its efforts to address the long-term causes of the crisis in Rakhine and create conditions conducive to the safe, voluntary, sustainable, and dignified return of refugees.
6. In particular, we encourage Myanmar to set out a transparent and credible plan to implement the recommendations of the Rakhine Advisory Commission and the Independent Commission of Enquiry. Furthermore, we recall that Myanmar is under the obligation to comply with the provisional measures order of the International Court of Justice. We also encourage Myanmar to take immediate confidence-building steps that include lifting restrictions on access to health, education and basic services, lifting restrictions on freedom of movement, and implementing the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camp closure strategy in Rakhine in line with international standards. Moreover, we encourage Myanmar to intensify its bilateral dialogue with Bangladesh to agree a durable solution that enables the safe, voluntary, sustainable, and dignified return of refugees. We stand ready to support Myanmar in these efforts and commend the work of the United Nations system, ASEAN and its Ad

Hoc Support Team and other regional partners in doing so too.

7. We underscore that accountability is an essential part of addressing the long-term challenges in Myanmar and in creating conditions for the return of refugees and IDPs. We stress the importance of fighting impunity and holding accountable all those responsible for violations of international law and abuses, and call on Myanmar to cooperate with all international justice mechanisms, including the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar.
8. Finally, we reiterate our appreciation and support to the government and people of Bangladesh for continuing to provide protection and assistance to the refugees forcibly displaced from Myanmar. We call on the international community to increase its support, including through the UN Joint Humanitarian Response Plan. We also urge all states in the region to cooperate and provide protection and assistance to refugees in line with international obligations, including as applicable international refugee law and the principle of non-refoulement.

New UK Internal Market Bill – announcement

Background

BEIS announced the introduction of a new Bill related to the internal UK market on Wednesday 9 September.

The [UK Internal Market Bill](#) will guarantee companies can trade unhindered in every part of the UK as they have done for centuries, ensuring the continued prosperity of people and business across four parts of the UK, while maintaining our world-leading high standards for consumers, workers, food, animal welfare and the environment.

Detail

From 1 January 2021, powers in a range of policy areas previously exercised at an EU level will flow directly to the devolved administrations in Holyrood, Cardiff Bay and Stormont for the first time. This will give the devolved legislatures power over more issues than they have ever had before, including over air quality, energy efficiency of buildings and elements of employment law, without removing any of their current powers.

Once the Transition Period ends, rules that have regulated how each home nation trades with each other over the past 45 years will fall away. Without

urgent legislation to preserve the status quo of seamless internal trade, rules and regulations set in Scotland, England, Wales and Northern Ireland could create new barriers to trade between different parts of the UK, unnecessary red tape for business and additional costs for consumers. Data shows that the combined total sales from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to the rest of the United Kingdom were worth over £90 billion in 2018.

The Bill will avoid this uncertainty for business by creating an open, fair, and competitive market across the United Kingdom, ensuring regulations from one part of the country will be recognised in another. Each devolved administration will still be able to set their own standards as they do now, while also being able to benefit from the trade of businesses based anywhere in the UK. The rules in this bill will also bind the UK Government when acting on behalf of England in areas of devolved competence.

The UK's existing high standards across areas including environmental standards, workers' rights, animal welfare and food standards will underpin the functioning of the Internal Market to protect consumers and workers across the economy. The UK Government is committed to maintaining high standards in these areas, including in all free trade agreement negotiations.

More information about this Bill can be found on the [BEIS webpages](#).

For information about food testing or labelling or about the work of the Government Chemist contact

Farming Minister visits innovative Yorkshire agri-environment schemes

Two innovative projects by farmers to create a better natural environment in Richmond, Yorkshire, were the highlight of a visit today (Friday 11 September) by Farming Minister Victoria Prentis alongside local MP and Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak.

The visit provided an opportunity to see two tests and trials in action for the upcoming Environmental Land Management (ELM) scheme, which will reward farmers with public money for public goods,

Farmers in Wensleydale are looking at whether they can deliver better outcomes for our environment when given greater flexibility and autonomy to manage their land. While the farmers and land managers of Barningham Estate Farmers Group are exploring ways to encourage farmers to work together across diverse landscapes to achieve their environmental goals.

By testing and trialling elements of the new scheme, Defra is looking to work together with farmers and land managers to harness their ideas, gain their

feedback and build something that works for the diverse needs of the agriculture sector, whilst also improving our environment.

This comes ahead of the landmark Agriculture Bill returning to Parliament next week. The Bill sets out our ambitions to transform British farming by delivering the new ELM scheme, which will reward farmers for public goods they produce, such as providing habitats for wildlife and improving air and water quality. Importantly, the Bill will also help farmers take full advantage of the opportunities available to them as we leave the outdated Common Agricultural Policy.

Farming Minister Victoria Prentis said:

Yorkshire has a fantastic community of farmers, who are not only highly resilient but also working hard to test out how our upcoming Environmental Land Management scheme can be as effective as possible in rewarding our farmers for enhancing the natural environment.

I look forward to working closely with more farmers, land managers and environmentalists like those I have met today from all over the country to design a scheme that will benefit the wide variety of farming systems we have in England today.

Minister Prentis and the Chancellor were able to meet with farmers in Wensleydale involved in a Payment by Results pilot, which was launched in early 2016 across two areas in Wensleydale, North Yorkshire and in Norfolk and Suffolk in the east of England with clear environmental objectives to match the needs of each area.

The 18 farmers participating in Wensleydale have total freedom to choose how they manage their land to enhance the environment and have benefitted from the advice and training sessions provided by Natural England and the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority. This has been very successful, with the first major assessment of this pilot, published last year, demonstrating that the project is boosting local wildlife and motivating farmers to develop nature-friendly practices.

The Minister also heard first hand how farmers on the Barningham Estate are testing a new, collaborative system for planning and delivering environmental management on land that encompasses a variety of farming systems and a tapestry of nationally and internationally important habitats, including blanket bog, wetlands and SSSI ancient woodland.

During the visit, the group discussed with the Minister how farmers can work together to create a shared plan of how to manage their land in a way that meets their environmental objects and protects wildlife in their local area, as well as how to incentivise collaboration between groups of farmers and landowners.

Rishi Sunak, local MP for Richmond (Yorks) and Chancellor of the Exchequer,

said:

Farming is vital to our rural economy and communities. From the Upper Dales to Great Ayton, from sheep to dairy to arable, through Auction Marts at Hawes, Leyburn and Northallerton, farming touches every part of my constituency.

Visiting the Payment by Results pilot in Wensleydale today gave me the chance to see first-hand that giving farmers freedom over how they manage their land, can lead to better environmental results.

I am confident that the future of farming is a bright one and I will do everything I can to help our farmers capitalise on the great opportunities ahead.

While in Yorkshire, Minister Prentis also met with Stephen Walker and Bob Dixon the owner and chairman of Leyburn Auction Mart to discuss the priorities of the livestock sector and thank them for their efforts during these challenging times.

The Agriculture Bill completed its Committee Stage in the House of Lords in July, with Report Stage in the House of Lords scheduled to begin on 15 September 2020.