

# Coronavirus – new 2/2 rule on outdoor meetings

The main changes which come into effect from midnight are that everyone must observe the Stay At Home message, not visit anyone else's home and there are also changes to meeting anyone from another household outdoors.

Replacing the previous 6 people from 2 households rule, there is now a new 2 people from 2 households rule. This is now legally enforceable.

Most of Scotland apart from the islands will go into lockdown from midnight on Monday and the new legal requirement forbids anyone from leaving their home except for essential purposes. (read these below)

There are provisions for caring, outdoor exercise and to go to work, but only if that work cannot be done from home.

In a statement to Parliament this afternoon, the First Minister said a steep increase in coronavirus infections and the intensity of pressure on the NHS have created a race between the virus and the vaccines now coming online.

As a result, Ms Sturgeon said it was now imperative that everyone should comply with the message to "Stay at Home" for the whole of January.

The First Minister said: "We are now seeing a steeply rising trend of infections. Indeed, it is no exaggeration to say that I am more concerned about the situation we face now than I have been at any time since March last year.

"As a government our clear duty right now is to act quickly and decisively to safeguard health, save lives and protect the NHS.

"The advice of our clinical advisers is very clear that the increased transmissibility of the new variant means that the current level 4 measures may not be sufficient to bring the R number back below 1.

"It is essential that we further limit interaction between different households to stem the spread and bring the situation back under control, while we vaccinate more people.

"In short, we must return for a period to a situation much closer to the lockdown of last March."

In the week from 23 to 30 December the seven day incidence of cases per 100,000 of the population increased by 65% – from 136 to 225.

The new measures will make it a legal requirement to stay at home unless there is a reasonable excuse for leaving such as essential shopping, education, childcare or to support the vulnerable. Everyone must now work from home where they can.

Other key changes include:

- **changing the 6/2 rule to a 2/2 rule. From tomorrow, a maximum of two people from up to two households will be able to meet outdoors. Children aged 11 and under will not be counted in that limit**
- **for everyone else – including 12 to 17 year olds – outdoor exercise or recreation should only take place in a way which is consistent with the 2/2 rule**

- under 12s will not count towards the 2/2 rule and will continue to be able to participate in organised activities outdoors
- all schools to continue to use remote learning until the end of January, except in the case of vulnerable children and those of key workers
- stronger guidance on working from home is reflected in new guidance for people who are shielding. Those who are shielding and who cannot work from home are now advised not to work. The Chief Medical Officer is writing to everyone who falls into this category

The First Minister also told parliament that from Friday, 8 January 2021 a number of other measures will be taken including the closure of churches and other places of worship:

- closing places of worship. Since stay-at-home rules do not allow leaving the home to attend a place of worship for a service or for private prayer, these would be closed for all purposes other than broadcasting a service, or conducting a funeral, marriage or civil partnership ceremony
- reducing numbers allowed at a wedding ceremony or civil partnership registration to the legal minimum, i.e. 5 plus the possibility of an interpreter
- prohibiting wakes and post-funeral gatherings, so that only funerals and any associated ceremonies (stone settings, ash scatterings, etc.) can take place
- closing some additional premises, service providers and retailers. This would include showroom elements of larger retailers and ski centres
- ending the 1m physical distancing exemption for workplace canteens

The restrictions are expected to be in place for at least four weeks, but the government will keep them under review.

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## Stay at Home

To minimise the risk of spreading the virus, you must stay at home as much as possible. By law, in a level 4 area, you can only leave your home (or garden) for an essential purpose.

There is a list of examples of reasonable excuses below. Although you can leave home for these purposes, you should stay as close to home as possible. Shop on-line or use local shops and services wherever you can. Travel no further than you need to reach to a safe, non-crowded place to exercise in a socially distanced way. To minimise the risk of spread of Coronavirus it is crucial that we all avoid unnecessary travel.

Examples of reasonable excuses to go out:

for work or an activity associated with seeking employment, or to provide voluntary or charitable services, but only where that cannot be done from your home.

for education including, school, college, university or other essential purposes connected with a course of study.

for essential shopping, including essential shopping for a vulnerable person. You should use online shopping or shops and other services in your immediate area wherever you can.

to obtain or deposit money, where it is not possible to do so from home.

for healthcare, including COVID-19 testing and vaccination.

for childcare or support services for parents or expectant parents.

for essential services, including services of a charitable or voluntary nature such as food banks, alcohol or drug support services.

to access public services where it is not possible to do so, including from home:

services provided to victims (such as victims of crime),  
social-care services,

accessing day care centres,  
services provided by the Department for Work and Pensions,  
services provided to victims (including victims of crime),  
asylum and immigration services and interviews,  
waste or recycling services,  
to provide care, assistance, support to or respite for a  
vulnerable person  
to provide or receive emergency assistance.  
to participate in or facilitate shared parenting.  
to visit a person in an extended household.  
to meet a legal obligation including satisfying bail  
conditions, to participate in legal proceedings, to comply  
with a court mandate in terms of sentence imposed or to  
register a birth.  
for attendance at court including a remote jury centre, an  
inquiry, a children's hearing, tribunal proceedings or to  
resolve a dispute via Alternative Dispute Resolution.  
for essential animal welfare reasons, such as exercising or  
feeding a horse or going to a vet.  
local outdoor recreation, sport or exercise, walking, cycling,  
golf, or running that starts and finishes at the same place  
(which can be up to 5 miles from the boundary of your local  
authority area) as long as you abide by the rules on meeting  
other households  
to attend a marriage ceremony or registration of a civil  
partnership.  
to attend a funeral or for compassionate reasons which relate  
to the end of a person's life. This includes gatherings  
related to the scattering or interring of ashes, a stone  
setting ceremony and other similar commemorative events.  
if you are a minister of religion or worship leader, for the  
purposes of leading an act of worship (broadcast or online),  
conducting a marriage or civil partnership ceremony or a  
funeral.  
to donate blood.  
for activities in connection with moving home (including  
viewing a property), or for activities in connection with the

maintenance, purchase, sale, letting, or rental of residential property that the person owns or is otherwise responsible for. Travelling for the purposes of undertaking essential work on a property other than your main residence should not be used as a pretext for a holiday. You should not stay longer than for the length of time required to undertake the necessary work.

to avoid injury, illness or to escape a risk of harm.

for those involved in professional sports, for training, coaching or competing in an event.

to visit a person receiving treatment in a hospital, staying in a hospice or care home, or to accompany a person to a medical appointment.

to register or vote in a Scottish or UK Parliament, Local Government or overseas election or by-election, including on behalf of someone else by proxy

to visit a person detained in prison, young offenders institute, remand centre, secure accommodation or other place of detention.

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