



Summary of coronavirus measures across the UK ('third' lockdown)

1. Introduction

This briefing is not intended to provide full guidance and advice but to highlight the main measures on local authority frontline services. Updated guidance on different services and regulations will be provided as they emerge from UK Government Administrations in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland

A link to the relevant website information for each UK administration is linked to the end of this briefing and APSE member councils are advised to regularly recheck these sites as well as the [APSE Covid-19 support hub](#).

Each part of the UK has similar approaches to the highest alert levels in place, as a result of the pandemic, but there are also differences in approaches which will appear anomalous to those providing local government services, as to the reasons and logic behind some decisions on services. APSE members are encouraged to share and learn from their own experiences using the APSE Covid-19 support networks including the WhatsApp groups which you can sign up to [using this link](#).

2. Public Spaces and Outdoor Activities

Within England the new guidance allows exercise once per day in a public space with a support bubble, childcare bubble or people from the same household or where a person is on their own with one other person.

A public space includes parks, beaches, publicly accessible countryside, forests, public gardens (paid for or not) the grounds of heritage sites and playgrounds.

Outdoor sports areas must close which includes outdoor sports courts, outdoor gyms, golf courses, outdoor swimming pools, archery / driving / shooting ranges and riding arenas must also close. Organised outdoor sport for disabled people is allowed to continue.

In Scotland, the guidance states 'You can travel for local outdoor sport or exercise such as meeting another person, 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'. Outdoor gyms are specifically permitted to remain open.

Northern Ireland regulations allow outdoor parks, play areas, outdoor areas of properties operated by the National Trust and the outdoor areas of stately homes, historic homes and castles to remain open however the regulations will be updated on Friday 8 January.

In Wales, parks remain open but sports courts, bowling greens, golf courses, including pitch and putt etc and tennis courts, skate parks will all close. Playgrounds remain open but users (parents) are encouraged to wipe down equipment, avoid eating / drinking whilst in the park and must encourage social distancing of children.

Clearly much park equipment will be difficult to fence or close off wherever it sits within the UK; much may therefore be down to practical interventions where physical closure allows or signage where it does not. A recurring theme is that 'messaging' is unclear to the public and differences in, for example, messages to 'stay local' whilst in other areas permitting significant travel – which can result in some larger parks and public places being used as destinations rather than as spaces for exercise.

3. Working in other people's homes (for example building maintenance and repairs)

The England guidance states that 'Public sector employees working in essential services, including childcare or education, should continue to go into work.' They go on to state that 'Where it is necessary for you to work in other people's homes - for example, for nannies, cleaners or tradespeople - you can do so. Otherwise, you should avoid meeting for work in a private home or garden, where Covid-19 secure measures may not be in place'.

However, in Scotland the guidance states

- 'Tradespeople should only go into a house to carry out or deliver essential work or services, for example:
- to carry out utility (electricity, gas, water, telephone, broadband) safety checks, repairs, maintenance and installations
- to carry out repairs and maintenance that would otherwise threaten the household's health and safety
- to deliver goods or shopping, where essential
- to deliver, install or repair key household furniture and appliances such as washing machines, fridges and cookers
- to support a home move, for example furniture removal

In Wales, the Welsh Government state that 'Work carried out in people's homes, for example by tradespeople, can continue as long as it is managed in a safe way and both the worker and household members are well and have no symptoms of coronavirus. However, we recommend that people consider whether the work can be safely deferred until they are no longer in Level 4'.

Similarly, in Northern Ireland unless they are specifically required to close under the current regulations, workers, builders, tradespeople and other professionals can 'continue to go into people's houses to carry out work such as repairs, installations and deliveries; though again a word of caution as the NI regulations are due to be updated, from those of the 26 December 2020, to new ones as of the 8 January 2021.

In all of the above cases however Building Maintenance services will have a Duty of Care to employees under the Health and Safety at Work Act and this should inform decisions as to whether or not it is reasonable to carry out repairs – and again much of the guidance makes clear that tradespeople should not be entering homes where the householders are Covid

positive or have Covid symptoms. In cases of extreme emergency measures must be taken to ensure the safety of employees. APSE understands many councils have already considered emergency work only, such as gas safety work, or redeploying staff onto Covid safe work such as void properties with minimal numbers of trades in the property and maintaining safe distancing.

4. Refuse and recycling and HWRCs

Within England, as with the first lockdown, essential public services are expected to continue but unlike the first lockdown when HWRCs were closed the expectation is that they will remain open. The guidance states 'The majority of public services will continue and you will be able to leave home to visit them'. These include (amongst other matters) a specific reference is made to:-

- waste or recycling centres

Similarly, in Scotland a permitted reason to leave home is to access 'waste and recycling services'.

In Wales, the guidance states that household waste and recycling centres are permitted to remain open and in Northern Ireland HWRCs remain open providing it is safe to do so.

Across the UK refuse collection services continued during the first wave of the pandemic albeit various social distancing measures were applied in line with industry standards and WISH guidance. The current WISH guidance note [is here](#) (this update was received on the 6 January and is version 9. The APSE website has been updated with the latest edition). A separate but related matter on waste to arise is the treatment of waste from rapid flow testing centres which has now been rolled out across universities, schools and community sites. [APSE Briefing 20-87](#) covers those issues and can be downloaded on the link. As with the first lockdown it is anticipated that household waste, including recycling streams, will increase as more people remain at home, and are not eating away from the home in workplaces or schools and colleges. However, with HWRCs remaining open this should alleviate some of the earlier issues identified back in March with rapid increases in household collection tonnages being initially reported.

5. Places of Worship, Marriages, Crematoria and Burial Grounds

Within Scotland, wedding ceremonies and civil partnership registrations can take place with a maximum capacity of 5 people (including the couple, the witnesses and the person conducting the ceremony, 6 if an interpreter is required), provided the venue's capacity allows for 2 metre physical distancing.

Funerals can take place with a maximum capacity of 20, provided the venue's capacity allows for 2 metre physical distancing.

Wedding or civil partnership receptions and post funeral gatherings such as wakes cannot take place.

In Wales, whilst weddings, civil partnership ceremonies and funerals are allowed to take place this should be within the strict limits on attendance, set out in guidance which reflects the 2-metre rule between households (not individuals) and calculation of venue capacities and must only take place in Covid-19 secure venues or in public outdoor spaces unless in exceptional circumstances. Again, post event wakes etc should not take place.

Within England, the guidance states that 'Funerals can be attended by a maximum of 30 people. Linked religious, belief-based or commemorative events, such as stone settings and ash scatterings can also continue with up to 6 people in attendance. Anyone working is not counted in these limits. Social distancing should be maintained between people who do not live together or share a support bubble'.

Weddings and civil partnership ceremonies must only take place with up to 6 people. Anyone working is not included. These should only take place in exceptional circumstances, for example, an urgent marriage where one of those getting married is seriously ill and not expected to recover, or is to undergo debilitating treatment or life-changing surgery.

In Northern Ireland, funerals are limited to 25 people. Pre-and post-funeral gatherings are not permitted. The remains of the deceased may be taken back to private homes, but wakes are not to be held and funeral services in private homes are not to take place and existing restrictions on households apply. Cemetery grounds are open for families to visit graves but ensuring social distancing. Wedding receptions are not permitted. Please note however potential changes as of new regulations on Friday 8 January.

6. Leisure, Sports, Recreation and Attractions

In England the following must close: -

- leisure and sports facilities such as leisure centres and gyms, swimming pools, sports courts, fitness and dance studios, riding arenas at riding centres, climbing walls, and golf courses.
- entertainment venues such as theatres, concert halls, cinemas, museums and galleries, casinos, amusement arcades, bingo halls, bowling alleys, skating rinks, go-karting venues, indoor play and soft play centres and areas (including inflatable parks and trampolining centres), circuses, fairgrounds, funfairs, water parks and theme parks
- animal attractions (such as zoos, safari parks, aquariums, and wildlife reserves)

In addition to this outdoor sports courts, outdoor gyms, golf courses, outdoor swimming pools, archery / driving / shooting ranges and riding arenas must also close. Organised outdoor sport for disabled people is allowed to continue.

The position on closure of outdoor gyms is arguably anomalous with allowing playgrounds to remain open in England.

Conversely in Scotland outdoor gyms are permitted to remain open. Also, in Scotland a maximum of 2 people from 2 separate households can meet outdoors for sport or exercise (children under 12 do not count) and the members of an individual household or extended household can meet outdoors for sport or exercise. Also permitted in Scotland is travel for outdoor sport or exercise including walking, cycling, and golf or running that starts and finishes at the same place (which can be up to 5 miles from the boundary of the local authority area).

All indoor sports facilities are closed in Scotland.

In Wales, leisure centres, gyms and swimming pools are closed and the public are also being asked to refrain from activity which may put a strain on the NHS such as exercise at sea, lakes or other waterways. Unlike Scotland, within Wales, the guidance states that there is no limit on the

distance the public can travel during exercise, but staying near to home is better and should start and finish from there. Golf courses and tennis courts must close. However, as described above under the public spaces section, although parks remain open sports courts, skate parks, bowling greens and golf courses (including putting, pitch and putt or miniature golf) are closed.

In Northern Ireland, indoor and outdoor sports and leisure facilities are closed as are indoor and outdoor attractions. Again, parks and playgrounds remain open but outdoor exercise is limited to the same household (or one other person for support purposes)– although outdoor gatherings are permitted up to 15 people currently this is expected to reduce to 6, and to a maximum of 2 households as of Friday 8 January . There are no indoor or outdoor sports events permitted at any time.

7. School catering and cleaning

School closures will once again have a major impact on the services of school catering and cleaning. However equally some demand will continue with schools now, as in the first lockdown, remaining open for children of key workers and vulnerable children. The services fall generally under the category of essential public services. There will be ongoing issues for the services in funding and contract terms for school catering and cleaning providers.

8. Transport, Fleet, Highways and MOT testing

Again, across the UK's four Government Administrations' exceptions apply for public services, which cannot be operated from home, and emphasis is placed on ensuring services are capable of keeping essential public infrastructure going to support the pandemic. The overriding continuation of services is ensuring Covid-19 secure workplaces or work environments.

9. Links to Full Guidance

Although different guidance notes are again anticipated for different service areas the following overview guidance on the restrictions in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland may be helpful.

[England: Guidance National lockdown: Stay at Home](#)

[Scotland: Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): stay at home guidance](#)

[Wales: Alert Level 4](#)

[Northern Ireland: Coronavirus Restrictions](#)

APSE will regularly update its Covid-19 support hub as new information emerges and APSE's services, supporting our member local councils will continue to be delivered online, including specific Covid-19 support meetings and advisory group services.

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