

New guidance published to ensure transport network is safe for those who need to use it

- new guidance published on how to make journeys safely
- public urged to continue to work from home if they can and avoid public transport where possible to reduce pressure on the network
- those who have to travel for work should consider changing their travel habits – including cycling, walking or driving, and avoiding rush hour – to help people socially distance from others and reduce pressure on public transport

New guidance published today (12 May 2020) provides advice on how passengers should make journeys safely, following the publication of the government's [roadmap and strategy for the next phase of the pandemic](#). It urges people to consider cycling, walking or driving to help ensure there is enough capacity for those who need to travel on public transport to do so safely.

As the [Transport Secretary stated on Saturday \(9 May 2020\)](#), even as public transport begins to revert to a full service, the 2-metre social distancing rule would only leave effective capacity for one in ten passengers on many parts of the network.

The advice sets out that if people who cannot work from home and have to travel for work, they should first consider alternatives to public transport. Those driving their own cars have been asked to avoid busy areas.

For those who have to use public transport, the [guidance for passengers on how to travel safely](#) recommends:

- keeping 2 metres apart from others wherever possible
- wearing a face covering if you can
- using contactless payment where possible
- avoiding rush hour travel where feasible
- washing or sanitising your hands as soon as possible before and after travel
- following advice from staff and being considerate to others

All transport operators have been issued guidance on ensuring stations and services are regularly cleaned, making clear to passengers how to stay 2 metres apart where possible in stations, airports and ports, and to ensure routes for passengers are clearly communicated to avoid crowding. The government's guidance also sets out steps operators should take to provide safe workplaces and services for their staff and passengers across all modes of private and public transport.

To help reduce pressure on the transport network so there is space for social distancing where possible, the Transport Secretary has spoken to train and

bus operators and local authorities to ensure they increase the number of available services over the coming weeks.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

Transport operators and staff have been working hard to ensure that people who need to get to work are able to do so, including crucial NHS workers and all those on the frontline of the fight against the virus.

Alongside the cycling and walking revolution we are launching, and clear guidance to passengers and operators published today, we can all play our part by following the advice and reducing pressure on public transport.

If we take these steps, all those who need to use public transport should feel confident that they can do so safely, with the space to maintain social distancing as far as possible.

This follows the Transport Secretary announcing [a £2 billion package of cycling and walking investment](#) on Saturday that will deliver a green revolution in travel, easing the pressure on public transport services by helping more people than ever choose alternative forms of travel. This included £250 million for local authorities in England to create pop up bike lanes with protected space for cycling, wider pavements, safer junctions, and cycle and bus-only corridors.

The government's strategy and advice recognises that there will be times and some settings on public transport where social distancing is not possible. The new guidance outlines how people should try to minimise the duration of this, and take all necessary steps to observe these measures where possible.

[PM statement on coronavirus: 11 May 2020](#)

Good evening and thank you for joining us for this Downing Street press conference.

First of all, I want to update you on the latest data in our fight against coronavirus. I can report through the Government's ongoing testing and monitoring programme that, as of today:

- 1,921,770 tests for coronavirus have now been carried out in the UK, including 100,490 tests carried out yesterday;
- 223,060 people have tested positive, that's an increase of 3,877 cases

since yesterday;

- 11,401 people are currently in hospital with coronavirus, down from 11,768 the previous day.
- And sadly, of those tested positive for coronavirus, across all settings, 32,065 have now died. That's an increase of 210 fatalities since yesterday. This figure includes deaths in all settings not just in hospitals.

Before we begin questions from the public and from the media I just want to remind people of a number of important things I said in my address to the nation last night.

First, in order to monitor our progress, we are establishing a new COVID Alert Level System. The COVID Alert Level has five levels, each relating to the level of threat posed by the virus. The level will be primarily determined by the R value and the number of coronavirus cases. In turn, that COVID Alert Level will determine the level of social distancing measures in place. The lower the level the fewer the measures; the higher the level the stricter the measures.

Throughout the period of lockdown which started on March 23rd we have been at Level 4 – meaning a Covid19 epidemic is in general circulation, and transmission is high or rising exponentially. Thanks to the hard work and sacrifices of the British people in this lockdown, we have helped to bring the R level down and we are now in a position to begin moving to Level 3, in steps.

And we have set out the first of three steps we will take to carefully modify the measures, gradually ease the lockdown, and begin to allow people to return to their way of life – but crucially while avoiding what would be a disastrous second peak that overwhelms the NHS.

After each step we will closely monitor the impact of that step on the R and the number of infections, and all the available data, and we will only take the next step when we are satisfied that it is safe to do so.

Step 1 – from this week:

- Those who cannot work from home should now speak to their employer about going back to work.
- You can now spend time outdoors and exercise as often as you like.
- You can meet one person outside of your household outside (outdoors), provided you stay 2 metres apart. The social distancing measures remain absolutely crucial to us keeping the infection rate and the number of cases down as low as we possibly can.

Step 2 – from June 1, at the earliest, as long as the data allows, we aim to allow:

- Primary schools to reopen for some pupils, in smaller class sizes;
- Non-essential retail to start to reopen, when and where it is safe to do so;

- Cultural and sporting events to take place behind closed doors, without crowds.

And then Step 3 – no earlier than July 4, and again, only if the data says it safe, we aim to allow:

More businesses and premises to open, including potentially those offering personal care such as leisure facilities, public places, and places of worship. Many of these businesses will need to operate in new ways to ensure they are safe, and we will work with these sectors on how to do this.

So, given we have taken the first step in carefully adjusting some of the measures today, and therefore our advice to people on what to do, we have also updated our messaging. We are now asking people to Stay Alert, Control the Virus and Save Lives.

Yes – staying alert, for the vast majority of people, still means staying at home as much as possible. But there are a range of other actions we're advising people to take as we modify measures.

People should Stay Alert, by:

- working from home if you can;
- limiting contact with other people;
- keeping distance if you go out – 2 metres apart where possible;
- washing your hands regularly;
- wearing a face covering when you are in enclosed spaces where it's difficult to be socially distant – for example in some shops and on public transport;
- and if you or anyone in your household has symptoms, you all need to self-isolate.

Because if everyone stays alert and follows the rules, we can control coronavirus by keeping the R down and reducing the number of infections. This is how we can continue to save lives, and livelihoods, as we begin as a nation to recover from coronavirus.

[Details on phased wider opening of schools, colleges and nurseries](#)

Plans for schools, colleges and early years settings across England to potentially open to more children and young people have been set out today (11 May).

As the Prime Minister announced yesterday, by 1 June at the earliest primary schools in England may be able to welcome back children in key transition

years – nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6.

Secondary schools, sixth forms and colleges will also work towards the possibility of providing some face-to-face contact with young people in Year 10 and Year 12 to help them prepare for exams next year.

However, as the PM has said, progress will be monitored every day. If the virus stays on the downward slope, and the R remains below 1, then – and only then – will it become safe to go further, move to the second step and reopen schools.

Early years settings may also be able to open for all children. The aim is for other primary years to return later in June, but this will be kept under review, and there are currently no plans to reopen secondary schools for other year groups before the summer holidays.

Priority groups, including vulnerable children and children of critical workers who have been eligible to attend throughout school closures, will continue to be able to attend schools, colleges and early years settings as they are currently.

The transmission rate has decreased, and the aim is that by 1 June at the earliest it will be safe for a greater number of children and young people to return to education and childcare. As a result, the Government is asking schools and childcare providers to plan on this basis, ahead of confirmation of the scientific advice.

This will only happen when the five key tests set by Government justify the changes at the time, including the rate of infection decreasing and the enabling programmes set out in the Roadmap operating effectively.

[Guidance to the sector](#), published today (11 May), sets out a range of protective measures to ensure education settings remain safe places, including:

- reducing the size of classes and keeping children in small groups without mixing with others
- staggered break and lunchtimes, as well as drop offs and pick ups
- increasing the frequency of cleaning, reducing the used of shared items and utilising outdoor space

Preparation for the potential reopening of schools will be part of the second phase of modifications to social distancing measures which the Prime Minister set out yesterday – following more people returning to work in step one, and coming alongside the possible reopening of some non-essential retail in phase two.

The Government will continue to work closely with the sector in the build up to and following pupils' return.

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

I know how hard schools, colleges, early years settings and parents are working to make sure children and young people can continue to learn at home, and I cannot thank them enough for that.

But nothing can replace being in the classroom, which is why I want to get children back to school as soon as it is safe to do so. The latest scientific advice indicates it will be safe for more children to return to school from 1 June, but we will continue to limit the overall numbers in school and introduce protective measures to prevent transmission.

This marks the first step towards having all young people back where they belong – in nurseries, schools and colleges – but we will continue to be led by the scientific evidence and will only take further steps when the time is right.

Whilst there will be no penalty for families who do not send their children to school, families will be strongly encouraged to take up these places – unless the child or a family member is shielding or the child is particularly vulnerable due to an underlying condition.

The Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies advising the Government has a high degree of confidence that the severity of the disease in children is lower than in adults and a moderately high degree of confidence that children aged up to 11 are less susceptible to it.

All staff are already eligible for testing, and staff in shielding and high-risk groups should remain at home.

[From 1 June](#), all children and young people eligible to return to their settings will have access to testing, if they display symptoms, as will any symptomatic member(s) of their household.

This will enable children and staff to get back to school if they test negative, and if they test positive a test and trace approach can be taken. Where a setting has a positive case, Public Health England will advise on the appropriate course of action, and the relevant group of people with whom the individual has mixed closely, should be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 14 days.

[Government launches new portal for care homes to arrange coronavirus](#)

testing

A [new online portal](#) that makes it easy for care homes to arrange deliveries of coronavirus test kits has been launched today.

As the national testing capacity has increased, the government is prioritising testing for care homes and other areas with the greatest need.

All symptomatic and asymptomatic care home staff and residents in England are now eligible for testing. Testing will be prioritised for care homes that look after the over 65s.

Secretary of State for Health and Social Care Matt Hancock said:

The additional testing capacity we have achieved delivers many thousands of tests a day for residents and staff in care homes.

This new portal allows those who book tests for staff and residents to do so even more easily, and it also offers a route for the prioritisation of care homes with the greatest need.

We will continue to grow our testing capacity, as we know the certainty and confidence that high quality testing can provide.

Minister of State for Care Helen Whately said:

Care homes are on the frontline in the fight against COVID-19 and we are determined that staff have everything they need to keep themselves and their residents safe. Testing is a crucial part of this. It helps prevent and control outbreaks and means steps can be taken to reduce the spread the virus and protect the most vulnerable.

By prioritising thousands of tests for care home staff and residents, we can target our national testing capacity in the areas and care homes with the greatest need.

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) is working with local authority Directors of Public Health, Directors of Adult Social Services and local NHS providers to deliver this testing programme for care homes.

Tens of thousands of care home workers and residents have already been tested, either by Public Health England or at drive-through testing sites, mobile testing units and via satellite testing kits – packages of tests sent to care homes for staff to use on residents.

Testing asymptomatic workers helps prevent and control outbreaks. It means those who test positive can be isolated, reducing the number of people who

can spread the virus and protecting the most vulnerable. It also helps to build up a strategic understanding of the prevalence of the virus in local areas and the sector as a whole.

Test results for residents will be communicated to the care home managers. This information will also be provided to councils in order to help manage coronavirus outbreaks in local areas.

- Public Health England's Health Protection Teams have, from the outset, been testing residents when an outbreak is reported at a particular care home. More than 45,000 residents have been tested through this route.
- On 20 April, the government began deliveries of test kits to care homes under the satellite programme. Since then, over 140,000 tests have been delivered to 4,387 care homes.
- On 28 April, the government announced that testing would be expanded in the care sector to include both symptomatic and asymptomatic care home staff and residents.
- The first time a care home suspects an outbreak of coronavirus, care home managers should contact their local health protection team to arrange testing. Subsequent testing will be through this DHSC programme.
- Care worker staff who are self-isolating, either because they or a member of their household has symptoms, should continue to use the [self-referral website](#) to book a home test or an appointment at a test site.
- Domiciliary care staff who need a test should also continue to use the [self-referral website](#) to request a home test or book an appointment at a test site.
- This programme is for England only and supplements the local systems already in place. We are working with the devolved administrations to support their needs around adult social care testing.
- Detailed guidance has been produced for care home managers. A tutorial video is also available to guide staff through the swab collection process:

[Coronavirus test tutorial for care homes with Dr Sarah Jarvis](#)

New guidance launched to help get Brits safely back to work

- Practical guidelines published today to make workplaces as safe as possible and give people confidence to go back to work during coronavirus pandemic
- documents developed in consultation with approximately 250 businesses, unions, industry leaders as well as devolved administrations
- up to an extra £14 million made available for the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) for extra call centre employees, inspectors and equipment
- guidance provides employers with a downloadable notice businesses should display to show people they have followed the guidance

New 'COVID-19 secure' guidelines are available to UK employers to help them get their businesses back up and running and workplaces operating as safely as possible.

This follows the Prime Minister setting out steps to beat the virus and restart the economy, so we can protect jobs, restore people's livelihoods and fund the country's vital public services.

The government has consulted approximately 250 stakeholders in preparing the guidance. It has been developed with input from firms, unions, industry bodies and the devolved administrations in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales and in consultation with Public Health England (PHE) and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), to develop best practice on the safest ways of working across the economy, providing people with the confidence they need to return to work.

The new guidance covers 8 workplace settings which are allowed to be open, from outdoor environments and construction sites to factories and takeaways. This sets out practical steps for businesses focused on 5 key points, which should be implemented as soon as it is practical:

1. Work from home, if you can

All reasonable steps should be taken by employers to help people work from home. But for those who cannot work from home and whose workplace has not been told to close, our message is clear: you should go to work. Staff should speak to their employer about when their workplace will open.

2. Carry out a COVID-19 risk assessment, in consultation with workers or trade unions

This guidance operates within current health and safety employment and equalities legislation and employers will need to carry out COVID-19 risk assessments in consultation with their workers or trade unions, to establish

what guidelines to put in place. If possible, employers should publish the results of their risk assessments on their website and we expect all businesses with over 50 employees to do so.

3. Maintain 2 metres social distancing, wherever possible

Employers should re-design workspaces to maintain 2 metre distances between people by staggering start times, creating one way walk-throughs, opening more entrances and exits, or changing seating layouts in break rooms.

4. Where people cannot be 2 metres apart, manage transmission risk

Employers should look into putting barriers in shared spaces, creating workplace shift patterns or fixed teams minimising the number of people in contact with one another, or ensuring colleagues are facing away from each other.

5. Reinforcing cleaning processes

Workplaces should be cleaned more frequently, paying close attention to high-contact objects like door handles and keyboards. Employers should provide handwashing facilities or hand sanitisers at entry and exit points.

A downloadable notice is included in the documents, which employers should display in their workplaces to show their employees, customers and other visitors to their workplace, that they have followed this guidance.

Business Secretary Alok Sharma said:

This guidance provides a framework to get the UK back to work in a way that is safe for everyone.

These are practical steps to enable employers to identify risks that COVID-19 creates and to take pragmatic measures to mitigate them.

And as we are able to reopen new sectors of the economy, we will continue our collaborative approach working with a wide range of stakeholders, to provide guidance for additional workplaces.

Sarah Albon Chief Executive, Health and Safety Executive

The BEIS guidance issued today sets out practical steps employers can take to enable staff to continue and return to work. We have worked with BEIS to ensure businesses have access to the

information they need to put in place measures to help them work safely. This will assist employers in carrying out risk assessments and putting practical measures in place.

At the heart of the return to work is controlling the risk posed by the virus. Ensuring safe working practices are in place will help deliver a safe return to work and support businesses across the country.

Craig Beaumont, Director of External Affairs and Advocacy at the Federation of Small Businesses commented:

FSB has engaged through this process with the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy and we appreciate that our points have been taken on board for the UK small business community.

Today's guidance is practical, workable and proportionate for small businesses.

It will be a long journey but this guidance will provide the basis for small employers to have the positive conversations needed with their staff. This is the first step to getting the economy back on its feet.

Carolyn Fairbairn, Director-General of the CBI commented:

Safety is at the heart of business thinking. Unless people feel safe, employees won't return, customers will stay away and the restart will falter, harming livelihoods and public services.

This guidance will help. It gives firms a clearer picture of how to reopen safely and gradually.

The guidance builds on the good proactive plans many firms have developed during lockdown. Excellent employee engagement, fast workplace innovation and transparency have helped many companies support livelihoods. It's right to build on this.

The UK faces months of change and challenge. These guidelines will need to continue to evolve based on insight from the ground.

And employers, employee representatives and relevant enforcement agencies must work together, supporting these plans to build public trust and get our economy back on its feet.

Jonathan Geldart, Director General of the Institute of Directors commented:

This guidance is an important first step. It won't provide every answer, no guidance can, but directors can use it to inform their risk assessments for operating in this pandemic.

Ultimately, the decision lies with a company's directors, and they need to feel comfortable they can operate safely. Decisions on re-opening will not be taken lightly. Business leaders want to stand on their own two feet, but most can't operate at anything like normal capacity at the moment, and making adjustments to protect staff and customers will be a big challenge for many workplaces.

We hope and expect the guidance to evolve over time, but this is a place for employers to start on the long path to getting the economy going again.

The guidance applies to businesses currently open. This also includes guidance for shops which we believe may be in a position to begin a phased reopening at the earliest from the 1 June. Guidance for other sectors that are not currently open will be developed and published ahead of those establishments opening to give those businesses time to plan. The government will also shortly set up taskforces to work with these sectors to develop safe ways for them to open at the earliest point at which it is safe to do so, as well as pilot re-openings to test businesses' ability to adopt the guidelines.

As part of today's announcement, the government has made available up to an extra £14 million for the HSE, equivalent to an increase of 10% of their budget, for extra call centre employees, inspectors and equipment if needed.

Notes to editors

There are 8 workplace guidance documents now available under [Working safely during coronavirus \(COVID-19\) guidance](#).