

Venues required to enforce rule of 6, NHS QR code posters and contact logs

- Regulations come into force today to ensure that businesses comply with the rule of 6 and maintain social distancing between customers
- businesses failing to comply could be issued with fines of up to £4,000
- designated venues will also will now have a legal requirement to maintain records of customer contact details and display an official NHS QR code poster ahead of the rollout of the NHS COVID-19 app

Hospitality venues in England are from today (18 September) legally required to enforce the rule of 6 or face a fine of up to £4,000.

Designated businesses and organisations, including hospitality, close contact services and leisure venues, will also be legally required to log details of customers, visitors and staff for NHS Test and Trace and from Thursday 24 September they will be required to display official NHS QR code posters under law ahead of the NHS COVID-19 app being rolled out nationally next week.

A majority of businesses and organisations have been playing their part in tackling the virus by putting in place COVID-secure measures in their venues, but new legal requirements will make it compulsory for them to do so or risk facing a fine:

- from today, pubs, bars, cafes and restaurants in England will now need to take bookings of no more than 6 people, ensure people are not meeting in groups of more than 6 people on their premises, and make sure there is sufficient space between tables
- it will be also mandatory for a wider range of businesses and organisations, including hospitality, close contact services and leisure venues to collect customer, visitor and staff contact detail logs from today, Friday 18 September. This is vital for the NHS Test and Trace service in England to contact the necessary people if coronavirus outbreaks are identified in venue.
- from Thursday 24 September, these businesses will also need to display the official NHS QR code posters to make it easier for people to check-in at different premises once the app is rolled out nationally. If individuals choose to check-in using the QR code poster they do not need to log in via any other route

The regulations will be enforced by Local Authorities, who will have the power to issue fines of up to £1,000 for venues that are failing to comply, or the police as a last resort. Fines will rise to up to £4,000 for repeat offenders.

Businesses will be expected to make sure their customers are aware of the rules around QR codes by displaying posters and speaking to customers directly.

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

It is vital we do all we can to control the spread of the virus. Businesses have already stepped up to ensure they are supporting the NHS Test and Trace effort, and it is essential contact logs and displaying NHS QR codes are mandatory so there is consistency across the country and the public can seamlessly provide their details.

Venues should record and maintain contact details logs for customers, visitors and staff, and they should also download an official NHS QR code poster for their premises ahead of the launch of the NHS COVID-19 app.

With cases rising, it is vital NHS Test and Trace continues to reach as many people as possible to prevent further transmission of the virus. Businesses have a duty to ensure this function is in place, and those not complying will face fines.

Business Secretary Alok Sharma said:

With cases on the rise, each and every one of us needs to play our part to control the virus and to save lives.

Businesses up and down the country have taken great steps to welcome customers back safely, but at this critical moment in the fight against the virus, we need to take these tough measures to reduce the risk of another national lockdown in the future.

In order to keep these venues open and protect jobs, it is absolutely vital that businesses comply with these new regulations and make sure their customers are following the rules.

When someone enters a venue and scans an official NHS QR code poster, the venue information will be logged on the user's phone. The device will check if users have been at that location at the relevant time and if the app finds a match, users will get an alert anonymously with advice on what to do based on the level of risk.

The rule of 6 regulations apply to hospitality venues, including pubs, bars, restaurants.

Services included in the new legal requirements are:

- hospitality, including pubs, bars, restaurants and cafés
- tourism and leisure, including gyms, swimming pools, hotels, museums, cinemas, zoos and theme parks
- close contact services, including hairdressers
- facilities provided by local authorities, including town halls and civic

centres (for events) and libraries

It will be an offence for a business to fail to adhere to the rule of 6 (respecting all exceptions to this) when taking a booking, allowing entry to a group of more than 6 people. Once groups are within the premises, businesses also risk offending if they fail to advise groups not to merge in ways that breach the rules is also an offence.

Businesses will also need to ensure adequate distance between tables (2m or 1m+) and prevent customers from dancing. The following information should be collected by the venue for those people that have not checked-in using the QR poster.

Customers and visitors will need to provide their name and, if there is more than one person, record the name of the 'lead member' of the group and the number of people in the group (maximum of 6).

They will also need to leave a contact phone number for the lead member of a group of people (maximum of 6), date of visit and arrival and, where possible, departure time.

If a customer will interact with only one member of staff (for example a hairdresser), the name of the assigned staff member should be recorded alongside the name of the customer. No additional data should be collected for this purpose.

Venues will be required to collect the names of staff who work at the premises. A contact phone number for each member of staff and the dates and times that staff are at work.