

These FAQs were last updated at 3.30pm on September 30 and the most recent changes are highlighted in yellow.

FAQS – NEW RESTRICTIONS

1. What are the new measures?

From Friday 18 September, regulations will lawfully ban the following:

- Residents must not socialise with other people outside of their own households or support bubble in private homes and gardens
- Hospitality for food and drink will be restricted to table service only
- Late night restriction of operating hours will be introduced, with leisure and entertainment venues required to close between 10pm to 5am.

From September 30, regulations also lawfully ban:

- **Residents must not socialise with other people outside of their own households or support bubble indoors, such as pubs and restaurants (a full list of these venues is below)**

Residents are also advised to adhere to the following guidance to further reduce rates of infection:

- Residents are advised to only use public transport for essential purposes, such as travelling to school or work
- Holidays should be taken within your own household or support bubble
- Residents are advised against attending outdoor amateur and semi-professional sporting events as spectators.

More detail follows below.

2. What areas does it cover?

The whole of North Tyneside, Newcastle, Northumberland, Gateshead, County Durham, Sunderland and South Tyneside.

3. Why are the measures being introduced?

These measures will help to address the significant rise in coronavirus cases in the region in recent weeks.

There is an increased risk of transmission the more people who gather together. Our data shows an increased rate of transmission in homes, hospitality venues and through grassroots sports.

We are doing everything we can to protect our most vulnerable, keep businesses open and children in school, which these measures will help with.

4. There were new national measures announced on September 22, what does this mean?

Residents in the region should follow the most restrictive measures – so this means following the local restrictions at this time.

5. Why are North Tyneside, Northumberland and Durham subject to these measures when they're not on the Government's 'watchlist'?

Infection rates have risen significantly in all areas, with increased numbers of outbreaks, leading to more community transmission across the region. While our rates of infections are different, all local authorities in this area are seeing significant rises in positive cases.

People also travel frequently between the different area for work and leisure, so it makes sense for us to come together to contain this latest increase in infections.

6. How long will it last?

It started from 00:01 hours on Friday 18 September and the amendment restrictions started from 00.01 hours on Wednesday 30 September. They will be monitored closely and reviewed on a fortnightly basis. The next steps will depend on the impact the measures have.

7. What are the household changes?

You must not meet people who do not live with you or are not part of your support bubble, either indoors or outdoors, unless for the specific purposes mentioned below.

People should only come inside your home for specific purposes:

- where everyone in the gathering lives together or is in the same support bubble
- to attend a birth at the mother's request
- to visit a person who is dying (the visitor can be someone the dying person lives with, a close family member, friend or, if none of those is visiting, anyone else)
- to fulfil a legal obligation
- for work purposes (see guidance on working safely in other people's homes), or for the provision of voluntary or charitable services
- for the purposes of education or training
- for the purposes of childcare provided by a registered provider
- to provide emergency assistance
- to enable one or more persons in the gathering to avoid injury or illness or to escape a risk of harm
- to facilitate a house move
- to provide care or assistance to a vulnerable person
- to continue existing arrangements for access to, and contact between, parents and children where the children do not live in the same household as their parents, or one of their parents.

8. Do these measures affect childcare?

You can continue to use early years and childcare settings, including childminders and providers offering before or after school clubs or other out-of-school settings for children. You can also continue to employ nannies, including those living outside of the region.

Children of parents who are separated can continue to move between households.

'Informal' childcare, for example grandparents looking after children, is allowed for children under 14 or vulnerable adults where that is necessary for caring purposes (see questions 9-11 for further information)

It does not allow for play-dates or parties.

This informal arrangement exemption was announced by government on September 21 after initially not being permitted.

The seven local authorities had asked for informal childcare to be exempt from the restrictions and lobbied for this to change.

We would advise that vulnerable people should not provide childcare.

9. Can grandparents from the same household (i.e. grandma and grandad) both provide childcare?

Yes. Grandparents who live in the same household, i.e. grandma and grandad, can link with one other household so that the parents of the children can work.

10. I have two sets of grandparents who live in separate households looking after my children. Is this allowed?

No. You can only link with one other household at any time, so the parents of the children can work.

11. I am a grandparent, how many of my grandchildren can I look after?

One set from one household, so the parents can work.

12. What is a support bubble?

A support bubble is a close support network between a household with only one adult in the home (known as a single-adult household) and one other household of any size.

Once you're in a support bubble, you can think of yourself as being in a single household with people from the other household. It means you can have close contact with that household as if they were members of your own household.

Once you make a support bubble, you should not change who is in your bubble.

You should not have multiple bubbles.

13. Do these measures affect access to education?

No. Schools, colleges and universities remain open and are operating in a COVID-secure way.

14. Does my child need to wear a face covering at school?

Unless exempt, in education settings where students in Year 7 and above are educated, including middle schools, face coverings should be worn by staff, visitors and students when moving around in corridors and communal areas.

15. Can I travel outside the area for work or school?

Yes, people living inside and outside of these areas can continue to travel for work or school. Workplaces and schools themselves should also be implementing covid-secure measures.

16. Can I go to someone's house in an area not subject to the restrictions?

You must not visit anyone's home inside or outside of the restricted area (except for your support bubble).

17. Can I go to a care home?

Care homes in the region have been advised to stop non-essential visiting, excluding health care professionals and those involved in end of life care (including family members).

If you are planning to visit relatives in care homes outside the affected areas (see question 2), then check with the care home prior to travelling to ensure that they are still open to visits from family members.

18. What are the changes for the hospitality venues?

The following must close from 10pm to 5am:

- Pubs
- Bars and restaurants (including hotel dining rooms and members' clubs)
- Cafes including workplace canteens (but not including cafes or canteens at hospitals, care homes, prisons, establishments intended for the use of naval, military or air force purposes and for providing food or drink to the homeless)
- Social clubs
- Cinemas
- Theatres
- Casinos
- Bingo halls and concert halls
- Amusement arcades or other indoor leisure centres or facilities
- Static/fixed funfairs (indoors or outdoors), theme parks, and adventure parks and activities

During opening hours (5am to 10pm), venues serving alcohol must operate table service only for food and drinks – this includes ordering. Those venues who don't serve alcohol can operate counter service, but the consumption of food and drinks should take place at a table as much as possible.

Hospitality venues must take reasonable steps to ensure that bookings are not accepted, or customers admitted onto the premises if they

- are groups of more than one household and support bubble if they will be located indoors.
- or more than 6 people if the group does include multiple households if they will be seated outside.

As elsewhere in the country, venues must also take details of customers for NHS Test and Trace from September 18.

19. What about takeaways?

Hot food takeaways should close to walk-ins between 10pm and 5am each day, but they can continue to operate a delivery service during these hours, via a website, telephone, text message, post, or by 'drive-throughs'.

20. Can I still go to a hospitality venue, like a pub or restaurant, with family and friends who don't live with me?

No. From September 30, you can only visit the venues listed below with members of your own household (or support bubble).

- Restaurants, including restaurants and dining rooms in hotels or members' clubs
- Bars, including bars in hotels or members' clubs
- Public houses
- Social clubs
- Casinos
- Cafes
- Workplace canteens (except those at hospital, care home, school, prison, those providing food or drink to the homeless or those intended for naval military or air force purposes)

It is also advised that you don't visit a beer garden/pavement cafe with other households or congregate outside a public venue.

21. Why can I visit the pub but not my relative's house?

This is because the hospitality industry has enhanced measures, such as risk assessments and test and trace, which private homes don't have.

22. Can I meet up outdoors, i.e. on the beach or in the park, with other households?

Guidance is that you should not meet with people you do not live with in outdoor areas, including areas directly outside of settings or venues, such as the pavement or road or parks (unless they're in your household or support bubble). If you do decide to meet with friends and family you do not live with outdoors, perhaps for exercise, you must not meet in a group of more than 6 and you must practice social distancing. You should not meet up in someone's garden/yard.

23. Are there restrictions on weddings, civil partnerships and funerals?

For England, including in the North East of England, the following attendance limits apply for weddings and funerals:

- Weddings and civil partnership ceremonies are limited to 15 people

- Wedding receptions and celebrations can continue for up to 15 people in the form of a sit-down meal and in a Covid Secure setting, not in a private dwelling.
- Funerals (including ceremonies at crematoria) are limited to 30 people
- All other religious or belief-based standalone life cycle ceremonies or celebrations are limited to 6 people

Anyone working at these ceremonies or events are not included as part of the person limit.

The additional restriction on mixing with other households within indoor settings does not change the attendance limits.

24. What are the changes to playing sports?

You can continue to take part in organised sporting or licensed physical activity in groups of more than six outdoors and up to six people indoors (for over 18s). There is an exemption for indoor sports if it is organised for the purposes of someone who has a disability taking part and for children's activities.

The additional restriction brought in on September 30, on mixing with other households within indoor settings, does not change these limits.

You should only be playing team sports where the relevant governing body has published guidance on how to do so safely. See a [list of team sports governing bodies which have developed guidance](#). Activities must be organised by a national governing body, club, registered instructor/coach, business or charity, and/or involve someone who has received an official licence to use equipment relevant to the activity. In all cases, the organiser must conduct a risk assessment and ensure compliance with COVID-19 secure guidance.

The relevant [indoor sport facilities guidance](#) or [outdoor guidance](#) must be followed for activities such as organised dance classes and exercise classes. Outdoor organised sport and physical activity events are allowed provided they follow [guidance for the public on the phased return of outdoor sport and recreation in England](#).

We advise that you should not spectate at any sports events, including at professional and semi-professional sports events.

25. Can I travel to play sport outside of the areas with restrictions?

Yes, providing it is organised by a national governing body, club, registered instructor, business or charity or someone with an official licence. Please wear a face covering if using public transport unless exempt.

26. Can I go to the gym, gym class, leisure centre or a swimming pool?

Yes, as long as these venues have the required Covid-secure risk assessments and guidelines in place.

27. Can I have someone in my house (or go into someone's house) to do repairs or other work?

Only official/registered tradespeople can go to other people's homes for work purposes as long as you follow national guidance on how to work safely there. This includes mobile hairdressers and beauticians.

28. Can I still go on holiday?

You can still go on holiday within the UK or abroad, but you should only do this with people you live with (or have formed a support bubble with). You need to follow any rules in the area you visit and be aware of the self-isolation rules when travelling to and from certain countries.

People can visit the region on holiday but must comply with the local restrictions.

29. What about public transport and car sharing?

Residents are advised to walk or cycle when possible and when travelling by car to only travel with those in your household and/or support bubble.

It is advised to only use public transport for essential purposes, such as travelling to school or work.

Face coverings must be worn unless exempt.

30. Are the airport, train stations and ports still open?

Newcastle Airport, train stations and ports remain open and members of the public are permitted to travel to and from these locations.

31. Can I move home?

Yes

32. What support is available for medically vulnerable residents?

Those who are classed as more medically vulnerable to coronavirus, or who have previously been shielding, are advised to take extra care. The advice about shielding announced by the prime minister on September 22 doesn't apply in the region at this time.

Our support hub continues to be available for our vulnerable residents, who cannot call on others for support, and can be contacted on 0345 2000 101 or via contact.us@northtyneside.gov.uk.

33. How to do I book a test and what happens next?

You need to get tested as soon as possible (within the first five days of having symptoms).

You can book online [here](#) or by calling NHS 119. You will then be invited to a test site - or you can order a home test kit if you can't get to a test site.

The testing service continues to be very busy throughout the country, so please only [book](#) one if you have [symptoms](#) or have been asked to get tested by the NHS Test and Trace Programme.

If you cannot get a test at first, or the location or time are not convenient, try again in a few hours as slots become available. If no tests are available online, do not call the helpline to get a test as no extra tests are available through it.

NHS Test and Trace has seen unprecedented demand for testing recently, but new booking slots and home testing kits are made available daily and it is targeting testing capacity at the areas that need it most. It has also doubled its capacity to process tests – most people get their results the next day.

34. I have symptoms, does the rest of my household need to book a test?

If someone in your household starts to have symptoms, then that person must get tested and the rest of the household should self-isolate with them whilst they wait for the results. If you or other members of the household don't have symptoms, then you should not get a test – only people with symptoms should get tested.

It is very important that people with symptoms and their household members stay at home before the test and until they receive their results.

35. Do I need to self-isolate even though my test result was negative?

A negative result means the test did not find coronavirus.

You do not need to self-isolate if your test is negative, as long as:

- Everyone you live with (or your support bubble) who has symptoms tests negative
- You were not told to self-isolate for 14 days by NHS Test and Trace
- If you feel well – if you feel unwell, stay at home until you're feeling better.

Full guidance on self-isolating can be found on the Government's website [here](#).

36. What do I do if I see someone breaking the rules?

Where people are breaking the rules, we will seek to engage, explain and encourage them to adhere to the restrictions. However, enforcement action will be taken where appropriate.

If an individual is breaching restrictions, you can report it to Northumbria Police. To do so, where possible, people are asked to use the reporting tool on the force's website www.northumbria.police.uk. Alternatively, you can call 101. The police will assess the circumstances to determine the appropriate action.

Once the legislation is in place, the police or the local authority will be able to take action against those who break these rules, including asking people to disperse and issuing fixed penalty notice.

People aged 18 or over can be fined:

- £200 for the first offence, lowered to £100 if paid within 14 days
- £400 for the second offence, then doubling for each further offence up to a maximum of £6,400

The government has also introduced fines for those who hold illegal gatherings of over 30 people. Holding or being involved in the holding of an illegal gathering of more than 30 people is an offence, and police may issue fines of £10,000 to those who break the law.

37. Where do I find information on infection rates?

You can find information on the Government's website [here](#).