

Coronavirus outbreak FAQs: what you can and can't do

1. When am I allowed to leave the house?

You should only leave or be away from your home for very limited purposes:

- shopping for basic necessities, for example food and medicine, which must be as infrequent as possible
- one form of exercise a day, for example a run, walk, or cycle - alone or with members of your household
- any medical need, including to donate blood, avoid injury or illness, escape risk of harm, or to provide care or to help a vulnerable person
- travelling for work purposes, but only where you cannot work from home

These reasons are exceptions and a fuller list is set out in the regulations. Even when doing these activities, you should be minimising time spent away from the home and ensuring that you are two metres apart from anyone outside of your household.

[Find out more about staying at home and away from others](#)

2. Can I go to the dentist, my GP or another medical appointment?

Yes. You can leave home for medical appointments.

GP practices may postpone non-urgent health checks or routine appointments.

You are advised to go to the doctor if there is an essential medical need.

3. Can I walk my dog / look after my horse?

Yes – provided you are alone or with members of your household.

People must stay at home as much as possible to reduce the spread of the virus. You may leave your home to exercise once a day and combine this with walking your dog. When doing this you should minimise the time you are out of your home and stay at least two metres away from anyone else who isn't from your household.

[Further advice for people with animals](#)

4. Should I stay at home or go to work?

You may travel for work purposes, but only where you cannot work from home.

Certain jobs require people to travel to their place of work – for instance if they operate machinery, work in construction or manufacturing, or are delivering front line services such as train and bus drivers.

Employers and employees should discuss their working arrangements, and employers should take every possible step to facilitate their employees working from home, including providing suitable IT and equipment to enable remote working.

5. I'm not a critical worker and I can't work from home. What should I do?

If you cannot work from home then you can still travel to work. This is consistent with the Chief Medical Officer's advice.

[Critical workers](#) are those who can still take their children to school or childcare. This critical worker definition does not affect whether or not you can travel to work – if you are not a critical worker, you may still travel to work provided you cannot work from home.

Anyone who has symptoms or is in a household where someone has symptoms should not leave their house to go to work and should self-isolate.

Verification to prove you need to go to work is not required. Anyone needing to travel to work because they are unable to work from home is permitted to do so. You can carry ID with you if you wish but are not obliged to.

6. How can I find out if my work is essential or not?

The government is not saying only people doing “essential” work can go to work. Anyone who cannot work from home can still go to work.

Separately, there is a [list of critical workers](#) who can still take their children to school or childcare. Provision has been prioritised for these workers.

Every worker – whether critical or not – should work from home if they can but may otherwise travel to work.

We have also required by law certain businesses where people gather, such as pubs and most shops, to close to the public. [Separate guidance](#) has been published on this.

7. Can I see my friends?

We must all stay away from each other to stop spreading the virus, and that means you should not be meeting friends unless you live in the same household.

Instead, you could keep in touch with your friends using phone or video calls.

8. Can I visit elderly relatives?

In general, you should not be visiting family members who do not live in your home.

You should keep in touch with them using phone or video calls.

Where your relatives are elderly or vulnerable, you may leave your home to help them, for example by dropping shopping or medication at their door. You can also help them to order online. If you are a regular, formal carer, you may continue to help them as you usually do if that care is essential for their normal daily living.

9. Can I go out to help a vulnerable person?

You can go out to care for or help a vulnerable person, or to provide other voluntary or charitable services, following the advice set out here. You should not do so if you have coronavirus symptoms, however mild.

Wherever possible, you should minimise your time away from home, stay at least two metres away from others, and wash your hands for at least 20 seconds (or use hand sanitiser if soap and water are not available).

We have seen an incredible effort across the country already, and we're hugely grateful to those who support the vulnerable in their communities by volunteering day-to-day.

10. My boss is forcing me to go to work but I'm scared of coronavirus. What should I do?

Employers must make all efforts to help people to work from home where possible, as this will help limit the spread of the virus by reducing the amount of contact between people.

In some circumstances this may be impossible – this would apply to those working for a business or organisation that we have not required to close and requires them to travel and be at work, such as train or bus drivers, construction workers or those in manufacturing, restaurant workers handling deliveries, or those on the frontline like NHS workers.

[Further sector specific guidance which sets out different scenarios as examples \(including tradespeople working in people's homes, construction, outdoor businesses\).](#)

For these workers who need to be at work, do not have symptoms or live with anyone who has symptoms, we have outlined [clear guidance for employers to help protect workers](#).

11. I can't go to work because I need to look after my child, but my boss is threatening to sack me if I don't. What should I do?

We would urge employers to take socially responsible decisions and listen to the concerns of their workforce – particularly when they have childcare responsibilities.

Employers and employees should come to an agreement about these arrangements.

If individuals need advice they should approach [ACAS](#) where they can get impartial advice about in-work disputes.

12. Can I travel to someone's house to look after children?

If you provide paid-for childcare in a child's home, you can go to your place of work - this is in line with Government guidance that you can travel to work if working from home is not possible. However, it is important that you take as many precautions as possible in line with Public Health England guidance, including:

- if you or someone in your own home has symptoms, you should not go to work, but self-isolate in accordance with Government advice
- you should not work in any household which is isolating or where an individual is being shielded, unless it is to remedy a direct risk to the safety of the household
- wash your hands more often than usual, for 20 seconds using soap and hot water, particularly after coughing, sneezing and blowing your nose, including when you arrive at work and when you return home
- to reduce the spread of germs when you cough or sneeze, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue, or your sleeve (not your hands) if you don't have a tissue, and throw the tissue in a bin immediately. Then wash your hands
- clean and disinfect regularly touched objects and surfaces using your regular cleaning products to reduce the risk of passing the infection on to other people
- maintain social distance as far as possible with family members and others that you are not directly caring for

Your employers are responsible for informing you and supporting you in how to maintain these measures.

People should not be leaving their home to undertake unpaid and informal care of others' children.

13. Can I move house?

You are strongly advised to delay moving house while measures are in place to fight coronavirus.

However, the law does permit people to move house (and for removal people to assist) where this is unavoidable - for example for contractual reasons and/or where the parties are unable to reach an agreement to delay. In these cases, you should follow advice on staying away from others to minimise the spread of the virus.

[Read the detailed guidance on moving house during the coronavirus outbreak](#)

14. Can I go to the park?

You can still go to the park for outdoor exercise once a day but only alone or with members of your household, not in groups.

Communal places within parks such as sports courts, playgrounds and outdoor gyms have been closed to protect everyone's health.

We ask that households use parks responsibly and keep two metres apart from others at all times.

Unless you are with members of your household, you must not gather in groups of more than two people in public spaces like parks. The police have the powers to disperse gatherings and issue fines if necessary. If you (or a person in your care) have a specific health condition that has routinely required you to leave the home to maintain your health - including if that involves travel beyond your local area - then you can do so. This could, for example, include where individuals with learning disabilities or autism require specific exercise in an open space two or three times each day - ideally in line with a formal care plan agreed with a medical professional.

15. Can I drive to a national park or other green space to walk?

We advise you to stay local and use open spaces near to your home where possible – do not travel unnecessarily.

You can still go to the park for outdoor exercise once a day but only by yourself or within your household, not in groups.

We ask you to keep two metres apart from others outside your household at all times when outdoors.

You should avoid places where it may be hard to follow the guidelines. If you live in an area where it's difficult to stay two metres apart when exercising, you can travel to a more open space to do so – but should only do this if absolutely necessary, and should not meet up with people from outside your household.

You can leave your home and/or be outside for medical need. If you (or a person in your care) have a specific health condition that has routinely required you to leave the home to maintain your health - including if that involves travel beyond your local area - then you can do so. This could, for example, include where individuals with learning disabilities or autism require specific exercise in an open space two or three times each day - ideally in line with a formal care plan agreed with a medical professional.

[Read more information on accessing green spaces during the coronavirus outbreak](#)

16. I have a disability. What are the rules for me regarding travel for the purpose of exercise?

If you have a disability (for example, if you use a wheelchair) and need to travel a bit further to appropriate outdoor space where you can exercise safely (for example, a location that has accessible parking and level access), you can do so.

17. Is there any time restriction on being outdoors for the purpose of exercise?

There is no limit on how long you can exercise for, but you should spend as short a time away from your home as possible. Stay local if you can and act responsibly at

all times. Once you have undertaken exercise, you should go home immediately. Do not linger in public places. For example, after having gone for a run or a cycle, you should not sit down or rest away from your home, unless necessary for health reasons.

[Read more information on accessing green spaces during the coronavirus outbreak](#)

18. Can I exercise more than once a day if I need to due to a significant health condition?

You can leave your home and/or be away from your home for medical need. If you (or a person in your care) have a specific health condition that has routinely required you to leave the home to maintain your health - including if that involves travel beyond your local area - then you can do so. This could, for example, include where individuals with learning disabilities or autism require specific exercise in an open space two or three times each day - ideally in line with a formal care plan agreed with a medical professional.

Even in such cases, in order to reduce the spread of infection and protect those exercising, travel away from the home should be limited, as close to your local area as possible, and you should remain at least two metres apart from anyone who is not a member of your household or a carer at all times.

19. Can I stay at a hotel or B&B to self-isolate?

Unless you have a good reason, you must stay in the place that you live normally and you cannot choose to self-isolate in holiday accommodation. This is for your own safety and the safety of those around you - including other guests and staff.

If you start to experience symptoms while staying in holiday accommodation for a permitted reason, you should normally stay where you are, inform your accommodation provider, and follow self-isolation guidance until you are able to safely return to your main residence after 7 days. Once you are able to return home, please follow the government guidance on [self-isolation](#), [household isolation](#) and [social distancing](#).

20. When can I use my car?

When using a private vehicle to make a journey that is permitted, you should only travel with members of your household. Those who normally share a car with people who are not members of their own household - for example, to get to work - should consider alternatives such as walking, cycling and public transport where you can maintain a distance of two metres from others.

If the journey is permitted, such as travel to work, and there is no option but to share a car with people who are not part of the same household, journeys should be shared with the same individuals and with the minimum number of people at any one time.

Good ventilation (i.e. keeping the windows open) and facing away from each other may help to reduce the risk of transmission. Private vehicles that are used by people from multiple households should be cleaned regularly using gloves and standard cleaning products with particular emphasis on handles.

21. Am I allowed to pay for items with cash?

Yes. You should wash your hands after handling money, especially if handling or eating food. Some retailers may have implemented their own rules regarding cash to safeguard their staff, so it is worth checking their policy in advance.

22. What will happen to me if I break the rules?

We appreciate all the effort people are putting into containing the spread of coronavirus which will help protect our NHS and save lives.

If you breach the regulations, the police may:

- instruct you to go home, leave an area or disperse
- instruct you to take steps to stop your children breaking these rules if they have already done so
- take you home, or arrest you, where they believe it necessary
- issue a fine (fixed penalty notice) of £60, which will be lowered to £30 if paid within 14 days.
- issue a fine (fixed penalty notice) of £120 for second time offenders, doubling on each further repeat offence, up to a maximum of £960

Individuals who do not pay their fine could be taken to court, with magistrates able to impose unlimited fines.

23. Does this guidance apply across the UK?

The rules apply to everyone in the UK, but the law and some of the specific guidance are different in each part of the UK.

If you live in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland additional guidance is available:

- [Scotland](#)
- [Wales](#)
- [Northern Ireland](#)