

His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh

10 June 1921 to 9 April 2021

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3. Reopening businesses and venues in England
(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reopening-businesses-and-venues-in-england>)

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- Cabinet Office (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/cabinet-office>)

Guidance

Reopening businesses and venues

Updated 12 April 2021

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This publication is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reopening-businesses-and-venues-in-england/reopening-businesses-and-venues>

Some of the rules on what you can and cannot do changed on 12 April. However, many restrictions remain in place. You should continue to work from home if you can, minimise the number of journeys you make where possible, and follow the rules in the Coronavirus Restrictions guidance (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-coronavirus-restrictions-what-you-can-and-cannot-do>). You should refer to the closures guidance (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/further-businesses-and-premises-to-close>) for the latest rules for closing certain businesses and venues in England, this includes full details on exceptions to closure and other restrictions.

The government has published the 'COVID-19 Response - Spring 2021' (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-response-spring-2021>) setting out the roadmap out of the current coronavirus restrictions. This is a step-by-step plan to ease restrictions in England cautiously.

Due to the current relatively uniform spread of the virus across the country, the four steps set out in the roadmap are designed to apply to all regions. The indicative, 'no earlier than' dates for Steps 3 and 4 in the roadmap are all contingent on the data and subject to change.

Step 1 - from 8 March

Businesses eligible to host childcare and supervised activities for children (such as community centres or libraries) were able to host these activities for children providing that they are necessary to enable parents to work, seek work, attend education, seek medical care, or attend a support group.

From 29 March

At this stage, some further settings were permitted to open.

This included outdoor sports facilities such as:

- gyms
- swimming pools
- sports courts (such as tennis and basketball courts)
- golf courses, including mini golf
- water sports venues
- climbing walls
- driving and shooting ranges
- riding arenas at riding centres
- archery venues

People can use these venues in a group of six people, or with members of up to two households.

At this step, formally organised outdoor sport also returned - this can include a larger number of participants, provided that appropriate steps are taken to make it COVID-Secure in line with the law.

Businesses eligible to host childcare and supervised activities for children were able to host all outdoor children's activities. Parent-and-child groups for up to 15 people (not counting those aged under five) were also able to take place outdoors.

Step 2 - from 12 April

Following the move to Step 2, further settings were permitted to open. Unless a specific exemption exists, these must only be attended/used in line with the wider social contact limits at this stage - as a single household or bubble indoors; or in a group of 6 people or 2 households outdoors.

Non-essential retail is permitted to reopen. This includes but is not limited to:

- clothing stores and tailors
- charity and antique shops
- homeware and carpet stores
- showrooms (such as for vehicles as well as kitchens and bathrooms)
- electronic goods and mobile phone shops
- florists and plant nurseries
- retail travel agents
- photography stores
- remaining auction houses and markets
- tobacco and vape stores
- betting shops (subject to additional COVID-Secure measures, such as limiting the use of gaming machines).
- car washes (except for automatic car washes that are already open)

Personal care facilities and close contact services are also permitted to reopen. This includes:

- hair, beauty and nail salons
- body and skin piercing services
- tattoo studios
- spas and massage centres (except for steam rooms and saunas)
- holistic therapy (including acupuncture, homeopathy, and reflexology)
- tanning salons

Those who provide personal care services from a mobile setting including their own home, in other people's homes and in retail environments (such as a concession in a larger, separate business), will also be able to reopen.

Indoor sports and leisure facilities are also permitted to reopen for individual exercise with your household or support bubble. This includes at:

- gyms and leisure centres
- sports courts
- swimming pools
- dance studios and fitness centres
- driving and shooting ranges
- riding arenas
- archery venues
- climbing wall centres

Self-contained holiday accommodation may reopen. This is accommodation in which facilities are restricted to exclusive use of a single household/support bubble. Such facilities include: kitchens, sleeping areas, bathrooms and indoor communal areas such as: lounges, sitting areas and any lifts, staircases or internal corridors for entry and exit into the accommodation.

Further guidance on hotels and other guest accommodation (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/hotels-and-other-guest-accommodation>) is available for self-contained holiday accommodation that is able to reopen.

Outdoor areas at hospitality venues (cafes, restaurants, bars, pubs, social clubs, including in members' clubs) can reopen. Hospitality venues will also be able to provide alcohol for takeaway, click-and-collect, and drive-through (in addition to delivery services). Some venues may wish to erect outdoor shelters. To be considered 'outdoors', shelters, marquees and other structures can have a roof but need to have at least 50% of the area of their walls open at all times whilst in use. These venues may allow customers to use toilets located inside.

At any premises serving alcohol, customers are be required to order, be served and eat/drink while seated ("table service"). If it's not possible to take payment outdoors, for example due to a technical issue, you can take payment indoors as a last resort. Further guidance can be found here (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/restaurants-offering-takeaway-or-delivery>).

Venues are prohibited from providing smoking equipment, such as shisha pipes, for use on the premises.

Outdoor attractions are permitted to reopen at:

- adventure parks and activities (such as obstacle courses and ziplining)
- animal attractions (such as at zoos, safari parks and aquariums)
- drive in events, such as for cinemas, theatres, and other performances. Visitors must not share their vehicle with those outside of their household or support bubble unless an exemption applies. Further guidance can be found here (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/performing-arts>).
- film studios
- funfairs and fairgrounds
- model villages
- museums and galleries
- skating rinks
- games and recreation venues, including laser quest, escape rooms, paintballing and recreational driving facilities
- theme parks
- trampolining parks
- water and aqua parks

Public buildings, such as community halls and centres, and libraries, can reopen.

Businesses eligible to host childcare and supervised activities for children are now able to host these activities (including sport) for all children, regardless of circumstances.

Permitted businesses operating in otherwise closed attractions (such as a gift shop or a takeaway kiosk at an indoor museum) may only open where they are a self-contained unit and can be accessed directly from the street.

Some outdoor events, organised by a business, charity, public body or similar organisation, can be organised, subject to specific conditions: that they comply with COVID-Secure guidance including taking reasonable steps to limit the risk of transmission, complete a related risk assessment; and ensure that those attending do not mix beyond what is permitted by the social contact limits (unless

another exemption exists, such as for work purposes, or supervised activities for children). This could enable events such as a village fete, fairground, or literary fair to be organised, provided people do not mix beyond groups of 6 people or two households. The government has published guidance for local authorities and event organisers (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-organised-events-guidance-for-local-authorities/coronavirus-covid-19-organised-events-guidance-for-local-authorities>) setting out which types of events can go ahead at Step 2 and how smaller outdoor events like these should be run safely.

Indoor events or gatherings outside of someone's household or support bubble are not permitted at Step 2 (even in a venue permitted to open) unless a specific exemption applies. This might include, for example:

- for work purposes (where this cannot be done from home)
- support groups
- supervised activities for children and parent and child groups

Wedding ceremonies and civil partnerships (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-small-marriages-and-civil-partnerships/covid-19-guidance-for-small-marriages-and-civil-partnerships#key-principles-for-planning-covid-19-secure-marriages-and-civil-partnerships>), funerals and commemorative events such as wakes (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-managing-a-funeral-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic/covid-19-guidance-for-managing-a-funeral-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic>) can also take place indoors. Social distancing guidance applies in all such cases. Wedding receptions may only take place outdoors in Step 2.

Over the spring, the Government will run a scientific Events Research Programme. This will include a series of pilots using enhanced testing approaches and other measures to run events with larger crowd sizes and reduced social distancing to evaluate the outcomes. These pilots will start in April.

Step 3 - no earlier than 17 May

Following the move to Step 3, further settings will be permitted to open. Unless a specific exemption exists, these must only be attended/used in line with the wider social contact limits at this stage - in a group of 6 people or 2 households indoors; or in a group of no more than 30 people outdoors.

Indoor areas of hospitality venues will reopen. As outdoors, table service will be required. Venues will be prohibited from providing smoking equipment such as shisha pipes, for use on the premises.

Indoor entertainment and visitor attractions will reopen. This will include:

- cinemas (outdoor cinemas will also be permitted to open)
- theatres (outdoor cinemas will also be permitted to open)
- concert halls
- amusement arcades and adult gaming centres
- bingo halls
- casinos
- bowling alleys
- snooker and pool halls

Indoor as well as outdoor attractions will also reopen at the following:

- museums and galleries
- adventure playgrounds and activities

- skating rinks
- games and recreation venues, including laser quest, escape rooms, paintballing and recreational driving facilities
- play areas (including soft play centres and inflatable parks)
- model villages
- trampolining parks
- water and aqua parks
- theme parks and film studios
- zoos, safari parks, aquariums and other animal attractions
- botanical gardens, greenhouses and biomes
- sculpture parks
- landmarks including observation wheels or viewing platforms
- stately or historic homes, castles, or other heritage sites

Conference centres and exhibition halls will also be able to open for conferences, exhibitions, tradeshows, and private dining and banqueting events (subject to the capacity limits set out below).

Indoor events and remaining outdoor events, such as elite sports, business events, cinemas and live performance events will also be permitted. Attendance at these events will be restricted to 50% of capacity up to 1,000 people for indoor events, and 50% of capacity up to 4,000 people for outdoor events. For outdoor events taking place in venues with seated capacity of over 16,000, event organisers may apply a 25% capacity cap, up to a maximum of 10,000 seated people.

Remaining holiday accommodation can reopen, as can saunas and steam rooms. Indoor team sport and group exercise classes will return.

At this step, both outdoor and indoor gatherings or events, organised by a business, charity, public body or similar organisation, can be organised, subject to specific conditions: that they comply with COVID-Secure guidance including taking reasonable steps to limit the risk of transmission, complete a related risk assessment; and ensure that those attending do not mix beyond what is permitted by the social contact limits (unless another exemption exists, such as for organised sport or exercise, supervised activities for children or a significant life event).

Step 4 - no earlier than 21 June

In Step 4 we hope to reopen remaining settings such as nightclubs and adult entertainment venues, and to lift the restrictions on social contact and large events that apply in Step 3. This is subject to the outcome of the Events Research Programme, and a review of social distancing measures.

We will also look to relax COVID-Secure requirements on businesses, subject to the outcome of the reviews.

Business support

The government has put in place a wide range of support for businesses affected by Coronavirus. For more information please visit the government's business support page (<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus/business-support?priority-taxon=774cee22-d896-44c1-a611-e3109cce8eae>).

The Restart Grant scheme provides support to businesses to reopen safely as COVID-19 restrictions are lifted. Grants are available from 1 April 2021. These grants will make available up to £6,000 per premises for non-essential retail businesses and up to £18,000 per premises for hospitality and other sectors that are opening later.

Local Authorities in England are also receiving a further £425 million of discretionary business grant funding, in addition to £1.6 billion already allocated, through the Additional Restrictions Grant. This funding is for additional business support to complement the Local Restrictions Support Grant and Restart Grant schemes for affected businesses. Local authorities have significant discretion as to how they use this funding to support businesses.

For more information businesses can check eligibility here for a coronavirus grant because of national restrictions. (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/financial-support-for-businesses-during-coronavirus-covid-19>)

The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) has been extended until the end of September 2021 and is available for all eligible firms across the UK.

Access full guidance on claiming for wages through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-for-wages-through-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme>)

Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) 4 and 5 were announced by the Chancellor in the March 2021 budget. SEISS 4 will provide support for the 3 months from February and SEISS 5 will provide support from May until the end of September 2021. This will provide support to self-employed individuals whose businesses have been adversely affected by COVID-19.

Access full guidance on claiming income support for self-employment through SEISS 4 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/self-employment-income-support-scheme-grant-extension/self-employment-income-support-scheme-grant-extension>).

From 6 April, the government has introduced the new Recovery Loan Scheme to replace the existing loan schemes: providing lenders with a guarantee of 80% on eligible loans between £25,000 and £10 million to give them confidence in continuing to provide finance to UK businesses.

Access full guidance on applying for the loan here. (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/recovery-loan-scheme>)

The government also announced at Budget plans to extend the 5 per cent reduced rate of VAT for goods and services supplied by the tourism and hospitality sector for a further six months until the end of September 2021. The rate will then increase to 12.5 per cent from October until the end of March 2022, before returning to the normal 20 per cent rate from April 2022.

For further information businesses can check eligibility here on VAT rate reductions (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/revenue-and-customs-brief-10-2020-temporary-reduced-rate-of-vat-for-hospitality-holiday-accommodation-and-attractions/guidance-on-the-temporary-reduced-rate-of-vat-for-hospitality-holiday-accommodation-and-attractions>).

Business Rates

In England, the government has provided a 100 per cent business rates holiday for businesses in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors. This 100 per cent holiday has been extended to June 2021, after which businesses will receive 66% relief, up to a cap, for the following nine months. Nurseries in England will also receive this relief.

For further information businesses can check eligibility here on business rate reliefs. (<https://www.gov.uk/apply-for-business-rate-relief>)

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