



'Local COVID alert level: high' restrictions in Stockton-on-Tees - FAQs

To help reduce the spread of Coronavirus the Government has introduced 'Local COVID alert level: high' restrictions which apply to all residents of the Borough of Stockton-on-Tees.

Here you can find out what the restrictions are and how they affect you.



What are the new local restrictions?

No mixing between households anywhere indoors or in a private garden.

If you live in Stockton-on-Tees it is against the law to:

- Have guests in your home or visit someone else's home (in or outside Stockton-on-Tees)
- Meet up with another household in any indoor public venue such as a restaurant, bar or café



Why are the measures being introduced?

The Government has introduced the measures to reduce the spread of Coronavirus because there has been a significant increase in cases in our Borough in recent weeks and the latest information shows that the virus is most likely to be passed on when households mix socially.



How does the Government know the infection is being spread inside homes?

People who test positive are contacted by NHS Test and Trace and provide information on their contacts and likely cause of infection. Recent data shows approximately 80% of people who have tested positive had been exposed to the virus by a household member or visitor.



Where do the restrictions apply?

The restrictions apply to homes and businesses within the Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council boundary area which includes:

- Billingham
- Ingleby Barwick
- Norton
- Stockton
- Thornaby
- Yarm

If you are unsure who your local Council is you can [look it up online](#). If your local Council is 'Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council', these new rules apply to you.



How long will the restrictions be in place?

The situation will be monitored closely and reviewed every 14 days by Government.



Who is allowed to visit my home?

People should only come inside your home if they are:

- In your support bubble
- Attending a birth at the mother's request
- Visiting a person who is dying
- Fulfilling a legal obligation
- There for a work purpose (**see guidance on working safely in other people's homes**), or for the provision of voluntary or charitable services
- There for the purposes of education or training
- There for the purposes of childcare provided by a registered provider
- Providing emergency assistance
- There to enable one or more people to avoid injury or illness or to escape a risk of harm
- Facilitating a house move
- Providing care or assistance to a vulnerable person
- Continuing 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.
- Providing childcare on an "informal" basis to children under the age of 14 to allow parents to work provided this is a consistent arrangement and the informal carers aren't looking after any other children



What is a support bubble?

A **support bubble** is where a household with only one adult (a single adult household) joins with another household (on an exclusive basis). Households within a bubble can still visit each other, stay overnight, and visit public places together.

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.



What if I do not live with my spouse or partner?

If you are in an established relationship and do not live together, you can only meet in a home or garden if you are in a support bubble together. If you are not in a support bubble you can still meet outside of a private home or garden and do not need to social distance from each other.

Find out more about support bubbles on GOV.UK



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.



What is a 'childcare bubble'?

A childcare bubble is where someone in one household can provide informal (i.e. unpaid and unregistered) childcare to a child aged 14 or under in another household. This applies to extended family members and friends but must be on an exclusive basis - always the same two households.

[Find out more about childcare bubbles on GOV.UK](#)



My child/children have two sets of grandparents can they all help with childcare?

No, grandparents who live in the same household, can link with one other household so that the parents of the children can work. If you have two sets of grandparents who live in separate households, you can only link with one set at any time. If you're a grandparent, you can only look after one set of children from one household, so their parents can work.



Do these measures affect education?

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



Can I travel outside the area for work or education?

Yes, you can continue to travel for work or education. Workplaces and education settings should also be implementing COVID-secure measures. For example, if you live in Stockton-on-Tees but work in York, you can still travel there for work purposes. However, if you can work from home you should.



Does my child need to wear a face covering?

Face coverings should be worn in secondary schools, colleges or universities by staff, visitors and students when moving around buildings in corridors and communal areas where social distancing is difficult.



Can I visit someone's home outside of Stockton-on-Tees?

No, you should not visit anyone's home inside or outside of Stockton-on-Tees (except for your support bubble).



Can I still go to a hospitality venue with family and friends who don't live with me?

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

- Cafés
- Restaurants, including restaurants and dining rooms in hotels or members' clubs
- Bars, including bars in hotels or members' clubs
- Public houses
- Social clubs
- Casinos
- Workplace canteens (except those at hospital, care homes, education settings, prisons, those providing food or drink to the homeless or those intended for armed forces purposes, or those where there is no practical alternative for staff at that workplace to obtain food.)

It is also advised that you don't visit a beer garden/pavement café with other households or congregate outside a public venue. Hospitality venues must close from 10pm to 5am. There should be table service only for ordering drinks and food.



Can I meet a friend in a pub, café or restaurant in another town?

No, if you live in Stockton-on-Tees you must not socialise indoors with people who you do not live with.



Can I meet up outdoors with other households - including parks and beaches?

To help reduce the spread of Coronavirus it is advised that you should not meet with people you do not live with outdoors unless they're in your 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 six and you must keep two metres apart or wear a face covering if this isn't possible.



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, by their website, telephone, text message, post, or by 'drive-throughs.'



Do the changes affect care homes?

Care homes are closed to non-essential visitors, excluding health care professionals and those involved in end of life care (including family members).



What about public transport and car sharing?

Where possible you should walk or cycle. When travelling by car you should only travel with people in your household and/or support bubble. Public transport should only be used for essential purposes, such as travelling to an education setting or work. Face coverings must be worn unless exempt, including children over 11 years old.



Can I still go on holiday?

Yes, 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 and adhere to the self-isolation rules when travelling to/from certain countries.



Can I visit Stockton-on-Tees on holiday?

Yes, you can still visit Stockton-on-Tees for a holiday, but you should only do this with people you live with (or have formed a support bubble with) and you need to follow our local rules.



Are the train stations in Stockton-on-Tees still open?

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



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 crematoriums) are limited to up to 30 people depending on the venue.
- All other religious or belief-based standalone life cycle ceremonies including christening and naming 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.



Can I still move house?

Yes.



Can I still 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.



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) as long as you stay two metres apart. 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.

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-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.**



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.



Can youth groups and activities still take place indoors?

Yes as long as there are no more than 15 young people plus staff/volunteers, face coverings are worn by anyone over the age of 11, they are able to maintain social distancing at all times and households or support bubbles do not mix. This guidance also applies to 'before' and 'after' school clubs. You can read more about the guidance for youth activities on the **National Youth Agency website**



Can I still attend my medical appointments?

Yes, you should continue to attend your medical appointments. Please check with your GP practice/ service/ hospital before you attend as many appointments are now carried out virtually and over the phone. Your GP/health professional will be able to advise further.



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

If you suspect that an individual is breaching restrictions, you can report it to Cleveland Police by calling 101. It is up to the police to assess the circumstances to determine the appropriate action.

If you have concerns that a business or venue is not following the rules, you can report it to the Council by emailing **Covidoutbreak@stockton.gov.uk**. It is up to the Council to 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 the law, including asking people to disperse, closing down commercial premises and issuing fixed penalty notices.