

# Updated Coronavirus (COVID-19) regulations guidance

**Following an increase in coronavirus (COVID-19) cases, additional restrictions have been introduced for people in Northern Ireland. These new restrictions are in place to help reduce the spread of coronavirus and to help manage the pressures on our health and social care system. During this time, the single most important action we can all take is to stay at home.**

The current regulations are in place until 1 April 2021. They will be reviewed on 18 March 2021.

The regulations will be available on the Department of Health website (Arabic version included):

[Health protection coronavirus restrictions regulations](#)

Some of the restrictions will be in law through regulation, while others will be in guidance. Everyone is legally required to comply with the regulations.

If you fail to comply with the regulations without reasonable excuse, you are committing an offence. For some offences you may be given a [fixed penalty](#) or a fine on summary prosecution.

## **You must stay at home**

You must not leave, or be outside of your home except where necessary. You may leave the home:

- to get basic necessities, including food and medical supplies
- to take exercise
- to visit your bubble
- to visit hospital, GP and other medical appointments
- to provide care or assistance to a vulnerable person, or to provide emergency assistance
- to avoid injury, illness or risk of harm (including domestic abuse)
- to go to work, or provide voluntary or charitable services, if you cannot reasonably do so from home
- to access education or childcare
- to attend to the care and exercise of an animal
- to fulfil a legal obligation, such as attending court or jury service
- to donate blood
- to attend a place of worship
- to attend a funeral or wedding
- to attend a funeral or visit a burial ground
- to continue access and contact between parents and children who do not live in the same household

- to facilitate a house move, and to do associated activities for that purpose, including viewing properties and making arrangements for removals

## Households

Households are not allowed to mix indoors in private homes. Certain exemptions apply, including:

- bubbling with one other household
- childcare
- building or maintenance work
- the services of trades or professions (close contact services are not allowed)
- providing care or assistance, including social services, to a vulnerable person
- giving or receiving legal advice or assistance, or fulfilling a legal obligation
- providing emergency or medical assistance to any person
- a house move, and to do associated activities for that purpose, including viewing properties and making arrangements for removals
- a marriage or civil partnership where one of the couple is terminally ill

Children whose parents do not live in the same household can move between homes as normal.

## Gardens

Households are not allowed to mix in private gardens, with the exception of **two households that have formed an exclusive bubble with each other**.

A maximum of 10 people, including children, can be in a private garden at any one time (an exception applies for households of more than 10 people).

## Household bubbles

You can form one bubble with **one** other household. The two households in the bubble can be of any size, however indoor meetings between households in the bubble are limited to a **maximum of 10 people**, including children, at any one time.

To contain the risk of spreading the virus, **a household cannot be part of more than one bubble**.

If anyone within your bubble develops symptoms, all members of the bubble should self-isolate.

If a household wishes to change the household that they bubble with, the household **must wait 10 days** from the last visit of the original linked household before starting a new bubble with another household.

An overnight stay in a private home is not allowed unless it is a member of your bubble.

## **Indoor and outdoor gatherings (excluding private dwellings, weddings, and funerals)**

Up to **six people** (including children of all ages) from a maximum of **two households** can meet outdoors, or in non-domestic indoor settings for an essential purpose.

## **Travel**

You **must not** leave your home unless you have a reasonable excuse (for example, for work or education purposes).

You **should not travel more than 10 miles from your home** in order to take exercise.

Where travel is necessary for work, education and other essential purposes, you are asked to walk, cycle or use private transport, shared only with members of your household where possible.

## **Childcare**

Childcare can continue to be provided by a person registered in accordance with the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 or any childcare provided free of charge.

Informal childcare arrangements are also permitted to continue.

## **Education settings**

Pre-school education settings, primary and post primary schools are required to provide remote learning to pupils until the half term break in mid-February.

Special schools will remain open as usual.

Vulnerable children and children of key workers will have access to schools for supervised learning. Only one parent/guardian is required to be a key worker.

Direct payments will be made to families whose children are entitled to free school meals.

Further and Higher Education institutions should deliver distance learning to the maximum extent possible.

## **Hospitals**

Hospital visits are currently restricted. Certain exceptions do apply. You are recommended to check before you visit, as these exceptions are subject to change depending on prevailing circumstances in particular settings.

Hospitals, GP practices and pharmacies continue to provide care for those with health needs.

### **Care homes**

Care home visits are recommended to be restricted, with the exception of palliative care facilities and those who are receiving end of life care.

### **Hospitality and accommodation**

Hospitality venues such as cafes, restaurants, pubs, bars and social clubs must remain closed, with the exception of providing food and drink for takeaway, drive-through or delivery.

Businesses providing takeaway services must close at 11.00 pm and off-sales must stop at 8.00 pm. Outdoor areas are not permitted to be used.

### **Accommodation**

Hotels, guesthouses, bed and breakfast establishments, hostels and caravan sites and self-catering accommodation will only be able to operate on a restricted basis.

Accommodation can be provided for those already resident; for work-related purposes; for vulnerable people; for those in emergency situations; and people unable to return to their main address, people unable to return to their main address.

### **Entertainment, leisure activities and cultural attractions**

Leisure and entertainment venues are not permitted to open.

Outdoor visitor attractions are not permitted to open, along with drive-in events.

Community halls are allowed to remain open, but must adhere to current guidelines.

### **Business**

Anyone who can work from home **must** work from home.

Those who cannot work from home, for example, workers in food production, construction, manufacturing, logistics or distribution can continue to go to work.

### **Retail and services**

Close contact services, such as hairdressers, beauticians, make-up and nails, tattoo and piercing parlours, tanning shops, massage, electrolysis, well-being and holistic treatments, and driving instructors (except for motorcycles) are not permitted to operate.

Closure of all retail businesses except for essential retail.

Off-licences and supermarkets are not permitted to sell alcohol after 8.00 pm.

Garden centres and homeware stores must remain closed.

### **Exercising and sports**

You can only leave your home to exercise, and not for the purpose of recreation or leisure (for example, a picnic or a social meeting).

You can exercise in a public outdoor place:

- by yourself
- with the people you live with
- with your bubble
- or, when on your own, with one person from another household

Indoor and outdoor sport is not permitted, other than at elite level.

All sports facilities such as leisure centres, gyms, health clubs, swimming pools, tennis courts, golf courses, fitness and dance studios must close.

### **Religious services**

Places of worship are permitted to open in line with relevant guidance.

### **Marriages and civil partnerships**

Marriages and civil partnerships ceremonies are limited to 25 people. This number includes children under 12 and the celebrant.

A risk assessment for over 15 people is required.

Receptions or post ceremony gatherings are not permitted.

### **Funerals**

Funerals are limited to 25 people. Pre and post-funeral gatherings are not permitted.

The remains of the deceased may be taken back to private homes, but wakes are not to be held and funeral services in private homes are not to take place.

Existing restrictions on households apply.

A person responsible for organising or operating a funeral or associated event elsewhere must comply with [guidance on managing funerals and associated gatherings](#)(external link opens in a new window / tab) issued by the Department of Health.

*The above extracted information has been provided by the NI Direct. Get full information update (in English) at: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-regulations-guidance-what-restrictions-mean-you>*