

Details of new national lockdown restrictions

The Government has produced [posters](#) to help businesses in England to display the rules of the new national lockdown following the [Prime Minister's announcement](#) on 4 January 2021.

Leading with the messages 'Stay at home. The new strain of coronavirus is spreading fast. We all need to play our part to stop the spread', the posters are designed to promote a widespread understanding of the new restrictions and encourage compliance.

The [new lockdown guidance](#) requires that you can only leave home for work purposes where it is unreasonable for you to do your job from home, including but not limited to people who work within critical national infrastructure, construction or manufacturing that require in-person attendance.

'Click and collect' and vehicle deliveries can continue. Vehicle rental firms as well as MOT and repair shops are also allowed to stay open. The BVRLA has updated its [Guide to Operating during the Covid-19 Pandemic](#) following the new lockdown.

[Guidance](#) has also been updated providing information for individuals and businesses in Scotland.

Children of vehicle rental sector workers can attend school

The Government has [updated guidance](#) providing a list of critical workers and vulnerable children and young people who can access full-time education provision during the national lockdown.

This includes those who will keep the road passenger and freight transport modes operating during the coronavirus response. As the rental sector continues to play a role in providing essential goods and services during the pandemic, [vehicle hire companies remain exempt from closure](#) and have key worker status.

Furlough guidance updated following new lockdown

[Furlough guidance for employers](#) has been updated to include information about claiming through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme for employees that are unable to work following the new restrictions. [Guidance for employees](#) has also been updated.

The guidance states that your employee is eligible for the grant and can be furloughed if they are unable to work, including from home or working reduced hours because they:

- are [clinically extremely vulnerable](#), or at the highest risk of severe illness from coronavirus and following public health guidance.
- have caring responsibilities resulting from coronavirus, such as caring for children who are at home as a result of school and childcare facilities closing, or caring for a vulnerable individual in their household.

Further financial support announced for businesses

[Eligible businesses](#) in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors are to receive a one-off grant worth up to £9,000 per property to help them through to the Spring. The cash boost, which is expected to benefit over 600,000 business properties will be granted to closed businesses as follows:

- £4,000 for businesses with a rateable value of £15,000 or under
- £6,000 for businesses with a rateable value between £15,000 and £51,000
- £9,000 for businesses with a rateable value of over £51,000

A further £594 million is also being made available for local authorities and the devolved administrations to support other businesses that are not eligible for the grants but are affected by the restrictions. Businesses should apply to their local authority.

Latest travel restrictions

The Government is advising that those who need to travel should walk or cycle where possible, and plan ahead to avoid busy times. Those using public transport should follow the [safer travel guidance](#).

International travel is increasingly restricted and different rules apply in [England](#), [Scotland](#), [Wales](#) and [Northern Ireland](#). For example, in England you must not leave home including to travel abroad, unless you have a legally permitted reason to do so, such as for essential work purposes.

Those who are legally permitted to travel should [check the Government's advice](#) for the country they are visiting.

Driving tests suspended

The Driver & Vehicle Standards Agency has [updated guidance](#) confirming that driving tests and theory tests are suspended across England, Scotland and Wales during this lockdown period.

Testing sites for hauliers crossing the Channel

HGVs leaving England for France can only cross the Channel with evidence of an authorised negative Covid test, that has been conducted within the 72-hour period before their departure. This is mandated by the UK and French governments.

On 2 January, the Transport Secretary [announced the creation of new testing locations](#) across the country to help HGV and LGV drivers get a COVID test before travelling to Kent. Since the initial ten testing sites went live, further [testing sites](#) have been added across the country.

Vaccination update

The [Oxford University/AstraZeneca coronavirus vaccine](#) started to roll out on 4 January 2021 as the NHS looks to rapidly expand the Covid-19 vaccination programmes across the UK.

The Government has secured access to 100 million doses of the vaccine. More than half a million doses are available today, with tens of millions more to be delivered in the coming weeks and months once batches have been quality checked by the MHRA.

Private sector Covid tests

The Department of Health and Social Care has published a [list of private sector providers of Covid tests](#). The government does not endorse or recommend any particular private test provider and individuals should conduct their own research about available providers, the tests they supply and their locations.