FAQS – NEW RESTRICTIONS

1. What are the new measures?

From Friday 18 September, regulations will lawfully ban the following:

- Residents must not socialise with other people outside of their own households or support bubble in private homes and gardens
- Hospitality for food and drink will be restricted to table service only
- Late night restriction of operating hours will be introduced, with leisure and entertainment venues required to close between 10pm to 5am.

Residents are also advised to adhere to the following guidance to further reduce rates of infection
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- Residents should not socialise with other people outside of their own households in all public venues.
- Residents are advised to only use public transport for essential purposes, such as travelling to school or work
- Holidays should be taken within your own household or support bubble
- Residents are advised against attending amateur and semi-professional sporting events as spectators.

More detail follows below.

2. What areas does it cover?

The whole of North Tyneside, Newcastle, Northumberland, Gateshead, County Durham, Sunderland and South Tyneside.

3. When are the measures being introduced?

Friday 18 September at 00:01.

4. Why are the measures being introduced?

These measures will help to address the significant rise in coronavirus cases in the region in recent weeks.

There is an increased risk of transmission the more people who gather together. Our data shows an increased rate of transmission in homes, hospitality venues and through grassroot sports.

We are doing everything we can to protect our most vulnerable, keep businesses open and children in school, which these measures will help with.

5. Why are North Tyneside, Northumberland and Durham subject to these measures when they're not on the Government's 'watchlist'?

Infection rates have risen significantly in all areas, with increased numbers of outbreaks, leading to more community transmission across the region. While our rates of infections are different, all local authorities in this area are seeing significant rises in positive cases.

People also travel frequently between the different area for work and leisure, so it makes sense for us to come together to contain this latest increase in infections.

6. How long will it last?

It starts from 00:01 hours on Friday 18 September and will be monitored closely and reviewed on a weekly basis. The next steps will depend on the impact the measures have.

7. What are the household changes?

You must not meet people who do not live with you or are not part of your support bubble, either indoors or outdoors, unless for the specific purposes mentioned below.

People should only come inside your home for specific purposes:

- where everyone in the gathering lives together or is in the same support bubble
- to attend a birth at the mother's request
- to visit a person who is dying (the visitor can be someone the dying person lives with, a close family member, friend or, if none of those is visiting, anyone else)
- to fulfil a legal obligation
- for work purposes (see guidance on working safely in other people's homes), or for the provision of voluntary or charitable services
- for the purposes of education or training
- for the purposes of childcare provided by a registered provider
- to provide emergency assistance
- to enable one or more persons in the gathering to avoid injury or illness or to escape a risk of harm
- to facilitate a house move
- to provide care or assistance to a vulnerable person
- to continue 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.

8. 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.

Children of parents who are separated can continue to move between households.

9. What is a support bubble?

A support bubble is a close support network between a household with only one adult in the home (known as a single-adult household) and one other household of any size.

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.

10. Do these measures affect access to education?

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

11. Does my child need to wear a face covering at school?

Unless exempt, in education settings where students in Year 7 and above are educated, including middle schools, face coverings should be worn by staff, visitors and students when moving around in corridors and communal areas.

12. Can I travel outside the area for work or school?

Yes, people living inside and outside of these areas can continue to travel for work or school. Workplaces and schools themselves should also be implementing covid-secure measures.

13. Can I go to someone's house in an area not subject to the restrictions?

You should not visit anyone's home inside or outside of the restricted area (except for your support bubble).

14. Can I go to a care home?

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

If you are planning to visit relatives in care homes outside the affected areas (see question 2), then check with the care home prior to travelling to ensure that they are still open to visits from family members.

15. What are the changes for the hospitality venues?

The following must close from 10pm to 5am:

- Pubs
- Bars and restaurants (including hotel dining rooms and members' clubs)
- Cafes including workplace canteens (but not including cafes or canteens at hospitals, care homes, prisons, establishments intended for the use of naval, military or air force purposes and for providing food or drink to the homeless)
- Social clubs
- Cinemas
- Theatres
- Casinos
- Bingo halls and concert halls
- Amusement arcades or other indoor leisure centres or facilities
- Static/fixed funfairs (indoors or outdoors), theme parks, and adventure parks and activities

During opening hours (5am to 10pm), there should be table service-only, including ordering drinks and food.

As elsewhere in the country, venues must also take details of customers for NHS Test and Trace from September 18.

Between 10pm and 5am each day hot food takeaways can only operate a delivery service.

Travelling funfairs are also prohibited.

16. Can I still go to a hospitality venue, like a pub or restaurant, or meet up outdoors with family and friends there who don't live with me?

You are advised to only visit these venues with other members of your household (or support bubble).

17. Why can I visit the pub but not my relative's house?

This is because the hospitality industry has enhanced measures, such as risk assessments and test and trace, which private homes don't have.

18. What are the changes to playing sports?

Unless formally organised by a sports club or similar organisation, with guidance issued by a sports governing body, team sports should not take place at an indoor or outdoor venue with people who you don't live with.

You should not spectate at any sports events, including at professional and semi-professional sports events.

19. Can I travel to play sport outside of the areas with restrictions?

Yes. Please wear a face covering if using public transport unless exempt.

20. Can I go to the gym, gym class or a swimming pool?

Yes, as long as these venues have the required Covid-secure risk assessments and guidelines in place.

21. Can I have someone in my house (or go into someone's house) to do repairs or other work?

Official/registered tradespeople can go to other people's homes for work purposes as long as you follow national guidance on how to work safely there.

22. Can I still go on holiday?

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 the self-isolation rules when travelling to and from certain countries.

People can visit the region on holiday but must comply with the local restrictions.

23. What about public transport and car sharing?

Residents are advised to only use public transport for essential purposes, such as travelling to school or work.

Face coverings must be worn unless exempt.

You are advised not to share a car with those outside your household or support bubble, and to use public transport for essential journeys instead.

24. Are the airport, train stations and ports still open?

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

25. Can I move home?

Yes

26. What support is available for medically vulnerable residents?

Our Citylife Line continues to be available to help vulnerable. Please go to www.newcastle.gov.uk/citylifeline for full information.

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

Where people are breaking the rules, we will seek to engage, explain and encourage them to adhere to the restrictions. However, enforcement action will be taken where appropriate.

If an individual is breaching restrictions, you can report it to Northumbria Police. To do so, where possible, people are asked to use the reporting tool on the force's website www.northumbria.police.uk. Alternatively, you can call 101. The police will assess the circumstances to determine the appropriate action.

If you have concerns that a business or venue is not following the guidance, you can report it to the council via psr@newcastle.gov.uk.

Once the legislation is in place, the police or the local authority will be able to take action against those who break these rules, including asking people to disperse and issuing fixed penalty notices starting at £100 for those who participate in illegal gatherings.

People aged 18 or over will be able to be fined:

- £100 for the first offence, lowered to £50 if paid within 14 days
- £200 for the second offence, then doubling for each further offence up to a maximum of £3,200

28. Where do I find information on infection rates?

You can find information on the Government's website here.