

# Coronavirus: Two-metre rule reduced as pubs and restaurants in England given green light to reopen from 4 July

Setting out the latest easing of the lockdown, the PM says the two-metre social distancing rule will be reduced to 1m-plus.



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COVID-19

CORONAVIRUS



PM explains 'one metre plus' rule



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**The prime minister has announced a reduction in the two-metre social distancing rule, as he gave the green light for pubs, restaurants, hotels, hairdressers and barbers in England to reopen from 4 July.**

Setting out the latest easing of the [coronavirus](#) lockdown, [Boris Johnson](#) said "our long, national hibernation is coming to an end" and "life is returning to our streets".

The PM said people will from next month be required to keep "one-metre plus" apart from others, while also taking measures to mitigate the risk of transmitting [COVID-19](#).

"Where it is possible to keep two metres apart, people should," Mr Johnson said.

"But where it is not, we will advise people to keep a social distance of one-metre plus, meaning they should remain one metre apart while taking mitigating measures to reduce the risk of transmission."

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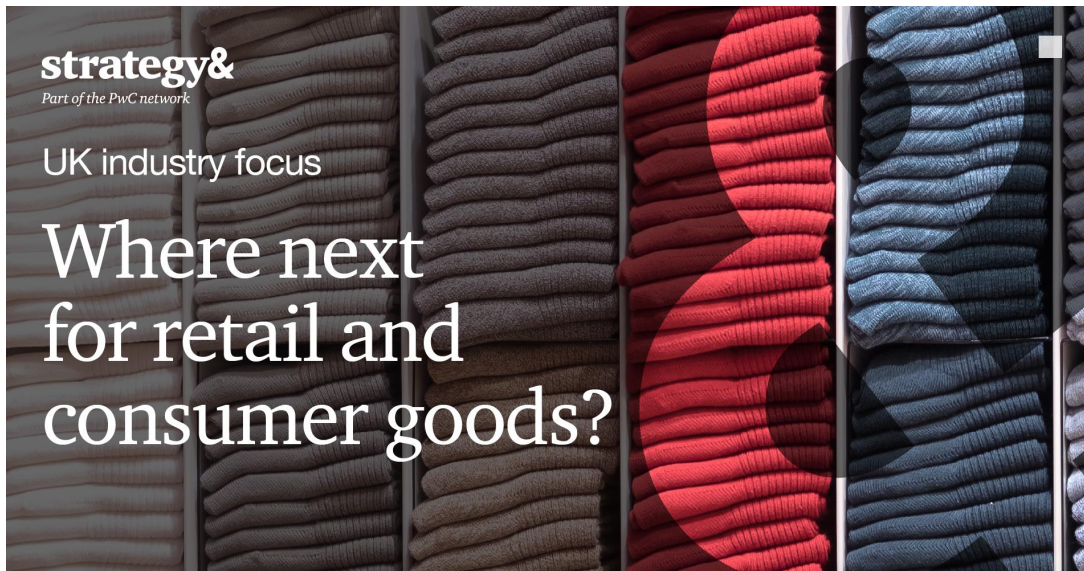
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Rules around 'shielding' to be relaxed

These include wearing a face mask on public transport, handwashing, screens, being outside and limiting time spent with others.

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Another change to the guidelines from 4 July will allow gatherings of two different households indoors, provided social distancing is maintained.

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This will mean families can be reunited and dinner parties will be allowed, but people will still be unable to hug their loved ones.

But the public have been warned life will not return to normal for a long time.

"I would be surprised and delighted if we weren't in this current situation through the winter and into next spring," England's chief medical officer Prof Chris Whitty warned at the final daily Downing Street briefing.

"I expect there to be a significant amount of coronavirus circulating at least into that time and I think it is going to be quite optimistic that for science to come fully to the rescue over that kind of timeframe."

### **Changes that will take effect from 4 July include:**

Theatres and concert halls can operate once again, but cannot stage live performances

In a boost for domestic tourism, most leisure facilities and tourist attractions can reopen, while people will be allowed to stay overnight in hotels, bed and breakfasts and campsites

Wedding services of up to 30 people will be allowed, provided social distancing is maintained, with places of worship permitted to reopen

Outdoor gyms and playgrounds can be used once more

Community centres and bingo halls will be permitted to reopen

Although a raft of businesses will reopen in the weeks to come, Mr Johnson said nightclubs, indoor gyms and beauty salons must remain closed "for now".

Spas, casinos, nail bars, tattoo parlours, massage parlours, soft play areas, swimming pools, bowling alleys and water parks will also not reopen at this next stage.

Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden said it was the government's "aspiration" to reopen gyms and leisure facilities in "mid-July".

As with non-essential shops, which began operating again earlier this month, premises that reopen will have to introduce a range of safety measures to ensure they are "COVID secure".

Sector-by-sector guidance is due to be published for businesses, advising them what action they need to take to reopen safely.

'Coronavirus is still accelerating globally'

Pubs and restaurants will have to take the names and contact details of customers, in case they have to be contacted as part

of the government's test and trace programme to contain the spread of the virus.

The announcement comes three months to the day since Mr Johnson took England into lockdown.

A total of 42,647 people have so far died in the UK after testing positive for the virus, according to government figures.

After telling people to remain indoors - with a few exceptions - for more than six weeks, the PM set out a roadmap out of lockdown in May.

Since then, the restrictions have been eased as more parts of the economy have been given the go-head to restart.

The PM said the progress made in the fight against the coronavirus meant steps could be taken to "safely ease the lockdown".

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But he added that "caution will remain our watchword" with every step of relaxing the lockdown "scrupulously weighed".

Mr Johnson said the government's approach was to "trust the British public to use their common sense in the full knowledge of the risks, remembering that the more we open up, the more vigilant we will need to be".

Although there was an optimistic tone to Mr Johnson's message, he said the virus has not gone away and the government "will not hesitate to apply the brakes and re-introduce restrictions - even at national level - if required".

Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer said: "There are obviously a number of questions that need to be answered, but overall I welcome this statement.

"I believe the government is trying to do the right thing and in that, we will support them."

Prof Whitty cautioned that "the biggest thing I worry about" is people not self-isolating if they are told to by the trace and test team, who will try to track down anyone who may have been infected by someone with coronavirus.

Sir Patrick Vallance, the UK government's chief scientific adviser, added the news parts of society can reopen were "reasonable" - but risks are attached.

"It is not risk free. It cannot be risk free. Every time you take a step to open up there is some associated risk with that," he told



the Number 10 news conference.

"You need to be prepared where there is local outbreaks to deal with them locally and if they become beyond local then you need to deal with them at regional and national levels which would mean reversal of some of the measures.

"That is the only way you can keep on top of this."

Coronavirus: The infection numbers in real time

## **ANALYSIS: PM's tone was strikingly sober and cautious**

**By Tamara Cohen, political correspondent**

*Today marked the most significant decision of the lockdown so far, essentially reopening the economy (in England at least), in earnest.*

*Going further than expected even a few days ago, a huge range of non-essential hospitality and community venues can throw open their doors next week, provided they are "COVID secure".*

*The PM's tone was strikingly sober and cautious, rather than triumphant.*

*He stressed that the reduction in infections which make this possible right now, must be balanced with the real risk of future outbreaks - which will mean slamming the brakes on again.*

*The excitement some will feel at returning to something more closely resembling normal - one MP shouted "hallelujah" at the reopening of pubs - will come with anxiety and trepidation for others that it may be too soon.*

Ministers know extricating the country from lockdown will be harder than getting into it

*A lot will clearly hinge on how workplaces enforce the new guidelines on distancing, to be published later.*

*The government has had a scare as to the scale of the recession looming this year; and has been facing siren calls from Conservatives and businesses to open up as a matter of urgency.*

*But ministers know extricating the country from lockdown will be harder than getting into it, which enjoyed widespread public support helped by a generous furlough scheme.*

*After weeks of vowing to be "following the science" - although the science was never quite as prescriptive as it sounded - these are now undeniably political judgements about the pace and scale of reopening.*

*As MPs pointed out, there is no virus or treatment ready, and big questions about the testing strategy.*

*For Boris Johnson, who has had a difficult few weeks of mutterings about his decision-making, and series of U-turns, this is not a decision he can fudge or reverse.*

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