

20 December 2020

COVID-19: Updated restrictions across the home nations

The nations of Great Britain and Northern Ireland will all have tightening of COVID-19 restrictions, either with immediate effect or in the coming days, so members of equestrian industry are urged to familiarise themselves with the changes.

From all leaders, the overriding message is to observe:

- Stay at home – reduce travel and all physical contact with others as much as possible in any setting
- Social distancing – keep at least two metres apart
- Hand hygiene – wash with soap and water, or using hand sanitiser if this isn't available
- Face coverings – wear one in indoor settings where others outside your household or bubble are present, and where keeping a two-meter distance isn't possible

The following is a summary of changes across the home nations, but please visit government websites for full details.

England

Action: Tier 4 introduced in areas of the south east, east and all of London, including:

- Kent
- Buckinghamshire
- Berkshire
- Surrey (excluding Waverley)
- Gosport
- Havant
- Portsmouth
- Rother and Hastings
- London (all 32 boroughs and the City of London)
- East of England (Bedford, Central Bedford, Milton Keynes, Luton, Peterborough, Hertfordshire and Essex, excluding Colchester, Uttlesford and Tendring)

Find out what tier you're in using the post code checker online.

<https://www.gov.uk/find-coronavirus-local-restrictions>

Time frame: Review 30 December

Guidance:

TIER 4 – STAY AT HOME

Link: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/tier-4-stay-at-home>

- You must not leave or be outside your home, except for where you have a specific purpose (work, essential activities, education, etc) or a reasonable excuse (care of horses, exercise and recreation, etc)
- Outdoor leisure and sports facilities may continue to stay open for individual exercise, for people within your household, support bubble, or with one other person from another household. Those from other tiers should not travel into a tier four area for the purpose of exercise/sport
- Organised outdoor sport can continue for under-18s and disabled people only – all other activity should be suspended. (Please note, the use of indoor/covered arenas for equestrian activity has previously been classified as outdoor activity in England and Scotland)
- You can't mix with other households indoors, or in private gardens and pub gardens
- Avoid travelling outside a tier 4 area and, if you need to travel for legally permitted reasons, you should stay local. Overnight stays are not permitted.

As a reminder, the tier ratings for the remainder of England are:

TIER 1 – MEDIUM ALERT

- Organised outdoor sport, physical activity and exercise classes can continue (Please note, the use of indoor/covered arenas for equestrian activity has previously been classified as outdoor activity in England and Scotland)
- Organised indoor sport, physical activity and exercise classes can continue to take place, if the rule of six is followed. There are exceptions for indoor disability sport, sport for educational purposes, and supervised sport and physical activity for under-18s, which can take place with larger groups mixing
- If you live in a tier 1 area and travel to an area in a higher tier, you should follow the rules for that area while you are there. Avoid travel to or overnight stays in tier 3 areas other than where necessary, such as for work, education, youth services, to receive medical treatment, or because of caring responsibilities. You can travel through a tier 3 area as part of a longer journey.

TIER 2 – HIGH ALERT

- Organised outdoor sport, and physical activity and exercise classes can continue (Please note, the use of indoor/covered arenas for equestrian activity has previously been classified as outdoor activity in England and Scotland)
- Organised indoor sport, physical activity and exercise classes will only be permitted if it is possible for people to avoid mixing with people they do not live with (or share a support bubble with). There are exceptions for indoor disability sport, sport for educational purposes and supervised sport and physical activity for under-18s, which can take place with larger groups mixing
- You can't socialise with other households indoors
- You can meet in a group of up to six outside - including in a garden, or a public place
- If you live in a tier 2 area, you must continue to follow tier 2 rules when you travel to a tier 1 area. Avoid travel to or overnight stays in tier 3 areas other than where necessary, such as for work, education, youth services, to receive medical treatment, or because of caring responsibilities. You can travel through a tier 3 area as a part of a longer journey.

TIER 3 – VERY HIGH ALERT

- Leisure and sports facilities may continue to stay open

- Organised outdoor sport, and physical activity and exercise classes can continue, however higher-risk contact activity should not take place (Please note, the use of indoor/covered arenas for equestrian activity has previously been classified as outdoor activity in England and Scotland)
- You can't mix with other households indoors, or in private gardens and pub gardens
- You can meet in a group of up to six in other outdoor spaces, such as parks, beaches or countryside
- Avoid travelling to other parts of the UK, including for overnight stays other than where necessary, such as for work, education, youth services, to receive medical treatment, or because of caring responsibilities. You can travel through other areas as part of a longer journey. You may travel out of a tier 3 area for individual exercise.

Scotland

Action: Country moved to level four from 00.01hrs on 26 December.

Time frame: Restrictions remain until level four is lifted.

Guidance:

- Outdoors: you may meet people from other households in a private garden or public place in numbers of up to six which can be from two separate households. Children under the age of 12 do not count in these numbers.
- Indoors: you can meet another household indoors in a public place (not a home) in numbers up to six as above.

The government advice outlines the overall requirements while horsescotland has specific guidance for the equestrian community.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-protection-levels/pages/protection-level-4/>

horsescotland guidance - <https://www.horsescotland.org/covid-19support>

Wales

Action: Country moved to level four from 20 December

Time frame: Reviewed in three weeks

Guidance:

- You may only meet with members of your household or support bubble in all settings.
- You may leave the house to tend to and exercise a horse in your ownership or care, but journeys should be kept to a minimum. The advice is not to travel horses off a premises for the purposes of exercise – it should 'start and finish at home'.
- Organised equine sport is suspended and facilities closed.

Link: <https://gov.wales/alert-level-4>

Link – level four FAQs <https://gov.wales/alert-level-4-frequently-asked-questions#section-58322>

Northern Ireland

Action: A set of stricter measures are being introduced from 26 December to 2 January, then further regulations from 2 January.

Time frame: Six weeks with a review after four weeks

Guidance (from 2 January):

- Households should not mix indoors in private homes. Up to six people from no more than two households can meet in an outdoor setting (including a private garden), but with social distancing. Children under 12 are not included in these numbers.
- Unique household bubbles can form up of to 10 people
- Up to 15 people can meet outdoors, with social distancing and hand and respiratory hygiene practices in place.
- Equestrian activity (care and exercise) should be for equine welfare purposes only.
- Sports and leisure facilities should close.
- No one to one or group training sessions may run.
- Only elite training and competition may continue.

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-regulations-guidance-what-restrictions-mean-you>

Further information

Our coronavirus hub answers your frequently asked questions on what the guidance means for equestrians.

<https://www.britishequestrian.org.uk/coronavirus/covid-19-faqs>