



## **Covid-19 Tier Restrictions and Requirements**

### **MRS Guidance Note**

**16<sup>th</sup> October 2020**

#### **Introduction**

The aim of this Guidance Note is to give context to support the current suite of MRS guidance on undertaking safe face to face data collection considering the new restrictions, including the three tier Covid-19 alert levels, announced by the UK Government on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2020. The new UK Government restrictions have applied from Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> October.

The current MRS guidance consists of:

[MRS Guidance: Undertaking Safe Face to Face Data Collection](#)  
[MRS Guidance: Undertaking Safe Face to Face Mystery Shopping](#)  
[Guidance on Facilities Used for Face to Face Data Collection](#)

At the time of writing Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales have also adopted specific measures. We have tried to cover these requirements, but given the fast pace of changes and updates, research practitioners are required to give priority to local guidance i.e. where research practice takes place.

The Government guidance for the country in which you are undertaking data collection will apply and research practitioners must follow the relevant Government guidance:

- [England](#)
- [Northern Ireland](#)
- [Scotland](#)
- [Wales](#)

#### **Context**

MRS advice is based on our current understanding of Government guidance and support on COVID-19 (link: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>) which is subject to continuous development. MRS will update and publish accordingly, but it remains the responsibility of research practitioners to keep up to date.

It should be noted the MRS guidance does not replace government advice; it is meant to supplement the official sources with the addition of some research considerations. Remember to continue to check the up-to-date guidance on the [UK Government website](#).

Research is a business activity, not a social activity, as such research practitioners can continue to undertake face to face data collection except in those locations that remain closed as a result of Covid-19 restrictions and those locations that are currently restricted within the MRS guidance (i.e. data collection on the doorstep rather than in-home).

## **New Restrictions and Requirements**

### **England**

The new restrictions are summarised on the UK Government site:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-covid-alert-levels-what-you-need-to-know>

Table 1 summarises the England restrictions and the implications for face to face data collection.

### **Northern Ireland**

The new restrictions in Northern Ireland came into effect on Friday 16<sup>th</sup> October and will be in place for a four-week period. The new restrictions are detailed here:

<https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/news/executive-tightens-restrictions-curb-covid-19> and a one page summary is available here:

[https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/covid-19\\_NI-RESTRICTIONS-TABLE\\_14102020.pdf](https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/covid-19_NI-RESTRICTIONS-TABLE_14102020.pdf)

Table 2 summarises the Northern Ireland restrictions and the implications for face to face data collection.

### **Scotland**

The new restrictions for Scotland were announced on 7<sup>th</sup> October and the temporary measures being introduced on a national basis with other specific measures being introduced across the central belt. The central belt is for these purposes defined as covering the health board regions of Lothian, Lanarkshire, Forth Valley, Ayrshire & Arran and Greater Glasgow & Clyde.

The new measures are detailed here: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-additional-measures-october-2020/>

### **Wales**

The new travel restrictions were announced on 14<sup>th</sup> October and apply from Friday 16<sup>th</sup> October at 6pm. The new travel measures are detailed here: <https://gov.wales/wales-to-introduce-travel-restrictions-to-prevent-the-spread-of-coronavirus>

The local lockdowns for Wales are detailed here: <https://gov.wales/local-lockdown>

**Table 1: England Alert Level Restrictions**

Alert Level	Restrictions	Mandatory implications for data collection	Other considerations – best practice and other potential implications
<p><b>Medium</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individuals <b>must not socialise</b> in groups larger than 6, indoors or outdoors (other than where a legal exemption applies)</li> <li>• <b>Businesses and venues can continue to operate, in a COVID-secure manner, other than those that remain closed in law</b></li> <li>• Certain businesses are required to ensure customers only consume food and drink while seated, and must close between 10pm and 5am</li> <li>• Businesses and venues selling food for consumption off the premises can continue to do so after 10pm as long as this is through delivery service, click-and-collect or drive-through</li> <li>• Schools and universities remain open</li> <li>• Places of worship remain open, subject to the <a href="#">rule of 6</a></li> <li>• Weddings and funerals can go ahead with restrictions on numbers of attendees</li> <li>• Exercise classes and organised sport can continue to take place outdoors, or indoors if the <a href="#">rule of 6</a> is followed</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Research is a business activity, not a social activity, as such research practitioners can continue to undertake face to face data collection except in those locations that remain closed as a result of Covid-19 restrictions and those locations that are currently restricted within the MRS guidance (i.e. on the doorstep rather than in-home).</li> <li>2. Research practitioners must <a href="#">wear a face covering in those areas where this is mandated</a> when undertaking face to face data collection.</li> <li>3. Research practitioners must continue to follow social distancing rules when undertaking face to face data collection.</li> <li>4. Research practitioners must <a href="#">check whether additional restrictions apply in their area</a>.</li> <li>5. Research practitioners must follow any other local lockdown restrictions which</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Research practitioners when travelling for face to face data collection, should plan ahead to avoid busy public transport times and routes.</li> <li>2. Research practitioners should act with consideration with participants and be aware of heightened awareness linked with the new restrictions when approaching participants.</li> <li>3. Research practitioners should take extra care with their working safely and infection hygiene arrangements including themselves and the materials and tools they use.</li> </ol>

**Table 1: England Alert Level Restrictions**

Alert Level	Restrictions	Mandatory implications for data collection	Other considerations – best practice and other potential implications
		could be <a href="#">imposed in specific areas</a>	
<b>High</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individuals <b>must not socialise</b> with anybody outside of their household or support bubble in any indoor setting, whether at home or in a public place</li> <li>• Individuals must not socialise in a group of more than 6 outside, including in a garden or other spaces like beaches or parks (other than where specific exemptions apply in law)</li> <li>• <b>businesses and venues can continue to operate, in a COVID-secure manner, other than those that remain closed in law</b></li> <li>• Certain businesses are required to ensure customers only consume food and drink while seated, and must close between 10pm and 5am</li> <li>• Businesses and venues selling food for consumption off the premises can continue to do so after 10pm as long as this is through delivery service, click-and-collect or drive-through</li> <li>• Schools, universities and places of worship remain open</li> <li>• Weddings and funerals can go ahead with restrictions on the number of attendees</li> <li>• Exercise classes and organised sport can continue to take place outdoors. These will only be permitted indoors if it is possible for people to avoid mixing with people they do not live with or share a support bubble with, or for youth or disability sport</li> <li>• <b>Individuals can continue to travel to venues or amenities that are open, for work</b> or to</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Research is a business activity, not a social activity, as such research practitioners can continue to undertake face to face data collection except in those locations that remain closed as a result of Covid-19 restrictions and those locations that are currently restricted within the MRS guidance (i.e. on the doorstep rather than in-home).</li> <li>2. Research practitioners must <a href="#">wear a face covering in those areas where this is mandated</a> when undertaking face to face data collection.</li> <li>3. Research practitioners must continue to follow social distancing rules when undertaking face to face data collection.</li> <li>4. Research practitioners must <a href="#">check whether additional restrictions apply in their area</a>.</li> <li>5. Research practitioners must follow any other local</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Research practitioners when travelling for face to face data collection, should plan ahead to avoid busy public transport times and routes.</li> <li>2. Research practitioners should consider the amount of travel required to undertake face to face data collection and introduce approaches which minimise the amount of travel required e.g. localise data collection to specific areas.</li> <li>3. Research practitioners should act with consideration with participants and be aware of heightened awareness linked with the new restrictions when approaching participants.</li> <li>4. Research practitioners should take extra care with their working safely and infection hygiene arrangements including themselves and the</li> </ol>

**Table 1: England Alert Level Restrictions**

Alert Level	Restrictions	Mandatory implications for data collection	Other considerations – best practice and other potential implications
	access education, <b>but should look to reduce the number of journeys you make where possible</b>	lockdown restrictions which could be <a href="#">imposed in specific areas</a>	materials and tools they use.
<b>Very high</b>	<p>At a minimum, this means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individuals <b>must not socialise</b> with anybody you do not live with, or have formed a support bubble with, in any indoor setting or in any private garden or at most outdoor hospitality venues and ticketed events</li> <li>• Individuals <b>must not socialise</b> in a group of more than 6 in an outdoor public space such as a park or beach, the countryside, a public garden or a sports venue</li> <li>• Pubs and bars must close. They can only remain open where they operate as if they were a restaurant, which means serving substantial meals, like a main lunchtime or evening meal. They may only serve alcohol as part of such a meal.</li> <li>• Schools and universities remain open.</li> <li>• Places of worship remain open, but household mixing is not permitted.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Weddings</a> and <a href="#">funerals</a> can go ahead with restrictions on the number of attendees. However, wedding receptions are not allowed.</li> <li>• Exercise classes and organised sport can continue to take place outdoors. These will only be permitted indoors if it is possible for people to avoid mixing with people they do not live with (or share a support bubble with), or for youth or disability sport.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Research is a business activity, not a social activity, as such research practitioners can continue to undertake face to face data collection except in those locations that remain closed as a result of Covid-19 restrictions and those locations that are currently restricted within the MRS guidance (i.e. on the doorstep rather than in-home). Research practitioners <b>must however review projects in very high risk areas</b> and determine if face to face data collection is essential. <b>If not essential</b>, research practitioners must use alternative data collection methods such as online, telephone, mail etc.</li> <li>2. When undertaking essential face to face data collection research practitioners must <a href="#">wear a face covering in those areas where this is</a></li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Research practitioners should not travel into and out of very high risk areas for face to face data collection purposes except for essential research projects and/or unless absolutely necessary</b> i.e. interviewers located in very high risk areas should only undertake face to face data collection in their local high risk area.</li> <li>2. The current very high risk restrictions are the baseline in very-high alert level areas. The UK Government will also seek to agree additional interventions in consultation with local authorities, in order to drive down transmission of the virus. These <b>could</b> include the following options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restrictions preventing the sale of alcohol in hospitality or closing all hospitality (except takeaway and delivery)</li> </ul> </li> </ol>

**Table 1: England Alert Level Restrictions**

Alert Level	Restrictions	Mandatory implications for data collection	Other considerations – best practice and other potential implications
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Individuals should try to avoid travelling outside the very-high alert level area they are in or entering a very-high alert level area, other than for things like work, education or youth services, to meet caring responsibilities or if individuals are travelling through as part of a longer journey.</b></li> <li>• <b>Individuals should avoid staying overnight in another part of the UK if you are resident in a very-high alert level area, or avoid staying overnight in a very-high alert level area if you are resident elsewhere.</b></li> </ul>	<p><a href="#">mandated</a> when undertaking face to face data collection.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Research practitioners must continue to follow social distancing rules when undertaking essential face to face data collection.</li> <li>4. Research practitioners must consider the amount of travel required to undertake essential face to face data collection and introduce approaches which minimise the amount of travel required e.g. localise data collection to specific areas.</li> <li>5. Research practitioners when travelling for essential data collection projects, must plan ahead or avoid busy public transport times and routes.</li> <li>6. Research practitioners must not stay overnight in very high-risk areas if this area is not where they are resident.</li> <li>7. Research practitioners must <a href="#">check whether additional restrictions apply in their area</a>.</li> <li>8. Research practitioners must follow any other local lockdown restrictions which could be <a href="#">imposed in specific</a></li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closing indoor and outdoor entertainment venues and tourist attractions</li> <li>• Closing venues such as leisure centres and gyms (while ensuring provision remains available for elite athletes, youth and disabled sport and physical activity)</li> <li>• closing public buildings, such as libraries and community centres (while ensuring provision remains available for youth and childcare activities and support groups)</li> <li>• Closing personal care and close contact services or prohibiting the highest-risk activities</li> <li>• Closing performing arts venues for the purposes of performing to audiences</li> </ul>

**Table 1: England Alert Level Restrictions**

<b>Alert Level</b>	<b>Restrictions</b>	<b>Mandatory implications for data collection</b>	<b>Other considerations – best practice and other potential implications</b>
		<a href="#">areas</a> (see other best practice considerations).	

**Table 2: Northern Ireland's New Restrictions**

<b>New Restrictions</b>	<b>Mandatory implications for data collection</b>	<b>Other considerations – best practice and other potential implications</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools to close for two weeks until 2<sup>nd</sup> November when closure will be reviewed.</li> <li>• Bubbling is limited to a maximum of 10 people from two households;</li> <li>• No overnight stays in a private home unless in a bubble;</li> <li>• Closure of the hospitality sector apart from deliveries and takeaways for food, with the existing closing time of 11.00pm remaining.</li> <li>• Other takeaway premises to be brought in line with hospitality with a closing time of 11.00pm;</li> <li>• Close contact services such as hairdressers and beauticians are not permitted to open, apart from those relating to the continuation of essential health interventions and therapeutics.</li> <li>• No indoor sport of any kind or organised contact sport involving household mixing other than at elite level;</li> <li>• No mass events involving more than 15 people (except for allowed outdoor sporting events where the relevant number for that will continue to apply);</li> <li>• Gyms may remain open but for individual training only with local enforcement in place;</li> <li>• Funerals to be limited to 25 people with no pre- or post-funeral gatherings;</li> <li>• Off licenses and supermarkets will not sell alcohol after 8.00pm;</li> <li>• Wedding ceremonies and civil partnerships to be limited to 25 people with no receptions. This will be implemented on Monday 19 October. Venues providing the post-ceremony or partnership celebration this weekend may remain open for this purpose but may not provide other services for people who are not part of the wedding or partnership party and this will be limited to 25;</li> <li>• The retail sector will stay open at this time.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Research is a business activity, not a social activity, as such research practitioners can continue to undertake face to face data collection except in those locations that remain closed as a result of Covid-19 restrictions and those locations that are currently restricted within the MRS guidance (i.e. on the doorstep rather than in-home).</li> <li>2. Research practitioners must <a href="#">wear a face covering in those areas where this is mandated</a> when undertaking face to face data collection.</li> <li>3. Research practitioners must continue to follow social distancing rules when undertaking face to face data collection.</li> <li>4. Research practitioners must follow any <a href="#">local lockdowns which could be imposed</a> in specific areas.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Research practitioners when travelling for face to face data collection, should plan ahead to avoid busy public transport times and routes.</li> <li>2. Research practitioners should act with consideration with participants and be aware of heightened awareness linked with the new restrictions when approaching participants.</li> <li>3. Research practitioners should take extra care with their working safely and infection hygiene arrangements including themselves and the materials and tools they use.</li> </ol>



<p>The following advice has been added to the existing health guidance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Work from home unless unable to do so;</li><li>• Universities and further education to deliver distance learning to the maximum extent possible with only essential face to face learning where that is a necessary and unavoidable part of the course;</li><li>• No unnecessary travel should be undertaken</li></ul>		
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**Table 3: Scotland's New Restrictions**

New Restrictions	Mandatory implications for data collection	Other considerations – best practice and other potential implications
<p><b>Nationwide measures (outside the central belt area)</b></p> <p>The following temporary measures will apply nationwide outside the central belt:</p> <p><b>Hospitality (food and drink premises)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All premises may only open indoors between 6 am and 6 pm, with no sale of alcohol</li> <li>• All premises may open outdoors until 10pm, including for the sale of alcohol, if licensed to do so</li> <li>• Current meeting rules apply in hospitality settings: maximum of 6 people from 2 households</li> <li>• Limited exemption for meals and drinks (without alcohol) for guests staying in accommodation, for transport and for student residences that are licensed premises. (Alcohol sales are permitted as part of room service within licensed accommodation)</li> <li>• Exemption for specific life events (e.g. wedding receptions), which may continue (with alcohol) as per current meeting rules (e.g. 20 person limit in regulated premises)</li> <li>• Exemption for take-aways – subject to local licensing</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Research is a business activity, not a social activity, as such research practitioners can continue to undertake face to face data collection except in those locations that remain closed as a result of Covid-19 restrictions and those locations that are currently restricted within the MRS guidance (i.e. on the doorstep rather than in-home).</li> <li>2. Research practitioners must <a href="#">wear a face covering in those areas where this is mandated</a> when undertaking face to face data collection.</li> <li>3. Research practitioners must continue to follow social distancing rules when undertaking face to face data collection.</li> <li>4. Researchers must check whether additional <a href="#">local restrictions apply in their area</a>.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Research practitioners when travelling for face to face data collection, should plan ahead to avoid busy public transport times and routes.</li> <li>2. Research practitioners should act with consideration with participants and be aware of heightened awareness linked with the new restrictions when approaching participants.</li> <li>3. Research practitioners should take extra care with their working safely and infection hygiene arrangements including themselves and the materials and tools they use.</li> </ol>

<p><b>Temporary central belt measures</b></p> <p><b>Hospitality (food and drink premises)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Licensed premises must close <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ only the parts of a licensed premises where food or drink are served have to close. For example, the bar in a licensed clubhouse would have to close, but the shop could remain open. Licensed cafes may open from 0600—1800 (without alcohol sale or consumption)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Unlicensed premises may open between 6 am and 6 pm</li> <li>• Current meeting rules apply: maximum of 6 people from 2 households</li> <li>• Limited exemption for meals and drinks (without alcohol) for guests staying in accommodation, for transport and for student residences that are licensed premises. (Alcohol sales are permitted as part of room service within licensed accommodation)</li> <li>• Exemption for specific life events (e.g. wedding receptions) – which may continue (with alcohol) as per current meeting rules (20 person limit in regulated premises).</li> <li>• Exemption for take-aways – subject to local licensing</li> </ul> <p><b>Travel</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Scottish Government want people to be safe. They are not advising that people who have already booked holiday accommodation in October need to cancel. More generally, please think about whether they need to travel, especially if they live in or would be travelling to, or through, the central belt. <b>The Scottish Government is asking people within the central belt areas to think carefully about whether they need to travel outside their local health board area and, where that is necessary, to plan to do so safely</b></li> <li>• Working from home is expected of all those who can. Non-essential offices should remain closed. Public transport use</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Research is a business activity, not a social activity, as such research practitioners can continue to undertake face to face data collection except in those locations that remain closed in the central belt as a result of Covid-19 restrictions and those locations that are currently restricted within the MRS guidance (i.e. on the doorstep rather than in-home).</li> <li>2. Research practitioners must <a href="#">wear a face covering in those areas where this is mandated</a> when undertaking face to face data collection.</li> <li>3. Research practitioners must continue to follow social distancing rules when undertaking face to face data collection.</li> <li>4. Research practitioners must consider the amount of travel required to undertake face to face data collection and introduce approaches which minimise the amount of travel required in the central belt of Scotland e.g. localise data</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Research practitioners when travelling for face to face data collection, should plan ahead to avoid busy public transport times and routes.</li> <li>2. Research practitioners should act with consideration with participants and be aware of heightened awareness linked with the new restrictions when approaching participants.</li> <li>3. Research practitioners should take extra care with their working safely and infection hygiene arrangements including themselves and the materials and tools they use.</li> </ol>
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<p>should be minimised as much as possible – such as for education and work - where it cannot be done from home</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active travel (walking, cycling) is encouraged to leave safe space on public transport for those who have no alternative</li> </ul> <p><b>Sports, exercise and leisure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No group exercise classes for indoor gyms/sports courts, pools. (Exemption for U18s)</li> <li>• No contact sports/ training – except professional sports, indoor or outdoor. (Exemption for U18s)</li> <li>• No outdoor live events</li> <li>• Snooker and pool halls, indoor bowling, casinos and bingo halls must close</li> </ul> <p><b>Additional measures to reduce transmission of the virus</b></p> <p>Further Additional Measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Face coverings: the Scottish Government will regulate on the use of face-coverings in indoor communal and social settings – for example in corridors, workplace canteens and break rooms etc</b></li> <li>• Retail: Further transmission-reducing measures will be developed with the sector: for example, 2 metre distancing requirement and stronger communications activity on the importance of adhering to the regulations.</li> <li>• Self-isolation: the Scottish Government will work with councils and third sector partners to mobilise community volunteers to support people who are self-isolating.</li> <li>• Safer workplaces: the Scottish Government will develop a Food Sector Protocol to help food businesses deal more effectively with outbreaks.</li> </ul>	<p>collection to specific areas.</p> <p>5. Researchers must check whether additional <a href="#">local restrictions apply in their area.</a></p>	
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**Table 4: Wales' New Restrictions**

	<b>Mandatory implications for data collection</b>	<b>Other considerations – best practice and other potential implications</b>
Under new regulations people living in areas with a high-prevalence of coronavirus in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland would not be able to travel to Wales for the time being.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Research is a business activity, not a social activity, as such research practitioners can continue to undertake face to face data collection except in those locations that remain closed as a result of Covid-19 restrictions and those locations that are currently restricted within the MRS guidance (i.e. on the doorstep rather than in-home).</li> <li>2. Research practitioners must <a href="#">wear a face covering in those areas where this is mandated</a> when undertaking face to face data collection.</li> <li>3. Research practitioners must continue to follow social distancing rules when undertaking face to face data collection.</li> <li>4. Research practitioners must consider the amount of travel required to</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Research practitioners when travelling for essential data collection projects, should plan ahead or avoid busy public transport times and routes.</li> <li>2. Research practitioners should act with consideration with participants and be aware of heightened awareness linked with the new restrictions when approaching participants.</li> <li>3. Research practitioners should take extra care with their working safely and infection hygiene arrangements including themselves and the materials and tools they use.</li> </ol>

	<p>undertake face to face data collection and introduce approaches which minimise the amount of travel required e.g. localise data collection to specific areas in Wales.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>5. Research practitioners from high risk areas outside of Wales must not travel to Wales to undertake face to face data collection.</li><li>6. Researchers must check whether additional <a href="#">local restrictions apply in their area.</a></li></ol>	
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