



Covid-19

MRS Face to Face Data Collection Guidance Interpreting Scotland's Level Restrictions and Requirements

November 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 announced by the UK Government on 31st October 2020. **The new UK Government restrictions applied in Scotland from Monday 2nd November 2020. Further new regulations regarding travel to and from Scotland were introduced on Friday 20th November.**

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 England, Northern Ireland and Wales have also adopted specific measures. 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 the Scottish Government guidance and support on COVID-19 (<http://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-protection-levels/>) 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 Scottish Government website: <https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Research is a business activity, not a social activity. Research practitioners have a responsibility to protect participants and the reputation of the profession.

New Restrictions and Requirements

Scotland

The new tier restrictions are summarised on the Scottish Government site:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/new-national-restrictions-from-5-november?priority-taxon=774cee22-d896-44c1-a611-e3109cce8eae#history>

The new travel and transport restrictions are detailed here:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-travel-and-transport/>

Table 1 summarises the Scottish restrictions which have direct implications for essential face to face data collection.

Interpretation of Requirements

When requirements use the word “must” these are mandatory requirements and is a principle or practice that applies the MRS Code of Conduct, which Members and Company Partners are obliged to follow.

The requirements which use the phrase “should” describe implementation and denotes a recommended practice.

“May” or “can” refer to the ability to do something, the possibility of something, as well as granting permission.

General Requirements for Scotland

1. Scotland has extra protection level advice for people at higher risk from Covid-19. Research practitioners must follow the [protection level advice](#) for practitioners and participants in Scotland.
2. Research practitioners must wear a face covering in shops, on public transport and public transport premises such as railway and bus stations and airports, and in certain other indoor public places (when open) such as shops, restaurants/cafes including canteens (including in workplaces and when not seated), libraries and places of worship. In workplaces (other than an early learning or school setting), individuals are legally obliged to wear a face covering in communal areas indoors, unless exempt. Full details are available here: <http://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-public-use-of-face-coverings/#Face%20coverings%20at%20work>
3. Scotland has [additional restrictions about travelling](#) around Scotland which research practitioners must follow. Travel for work, where it can not be done from home (which would include essential face to face data collection), is included within the limited exceptions not to travel into or out of Level 3 and Level 4 local authority areas, or to or from other parts of the UK.
4. Scotland has [further requirements on vehicle sharing](#) which research practitioners must follow. Research practitioners should avoid sharing a vehicle with people who are not members of their household or extended household as much as possible. If research practitioners have no other option they should:
 - keep to small groups of people up to 6 at any one time
 - keep your distance and take care entering and exiting the vehicle
 - sit as far apart as possible in the vehicle, avoiding face-to-face
 - maintain good ventilation by keeping the car windows open

- wear a face covering, unless you are exempt
 - clean your hands before and after your journey
 - if the vehicle is a research practitioners' responsibility, clean the door handles and other areas that people touch
5. If research practitioners regularly share transport (e.g. field interviewers who work in pairs) they should try and share with the same people each time.

Table 1: Scotland Restrictions – extract of those rules relevant to face to face data collection – applicable from 2nd November 2020 (based upon the Scottish Government guidance dated 1st November 2020)

Protection level	Restrictions	Mandatory implications for data collection	Other considerations – best practice and other potential implications
<p>Level 0</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indoor 8 people from 3 households and 15 people from 5 households outdoor • Licensing times apply for hospitality • Essential travel only from levels 3 or 4 in Scotland and/or rest of the UK • Active travel allowed and avoid car sharing with people outside of household • Shops, close contract services, support services, places of worship, childcare, schools, universities, visitor attractions, public buildings and services, sports and exercise and accommodation all open • Work from home is advised for offices and call centres • Level 0 shielding rule • Leisure and entertainment open except night clubs and adult entertainment • Weddings, funerals and wakes for up to 50 people • Outdoor events open • Indoor events open to seated and restricted numbers only 	<p>1. Research practitioners must follow the appropriate Scottish Government safe working guidance and the current MRS Covid-19 guidance which consists of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<p>1. Research practitioners who live in a Level 0, 1, or 2 area in Scotland, or are considering travel to Scotland from anywhere else, should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • minimise unnecessary journeys between areas in different levels • and avoid any unnecessary travel to places in Level 3 or Level 4 areas • if practitioners have to travel for essential purposes, follow the Scottish Government guidance on travelling safely <p>Research practitioners can find out which parts of Scotland are in Levels 3 and 4 via the Scottish Government's postcode checker.</p>

Protection level	Restrictions	Mandatory implications for data collection	Other considerations – best practice and other potential implications
<p>Level 1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No in-home socialising in same locations • Max 6 people from 2 households indoor and 8 people from 3 households outdoor • Hospitality last entry 9.30pm and closed 10.30pm • Essential travel only to/from level 3 or 4 areas in Scotland and to/from rest of UK • Active travel where possible and avoid car sharing with people outside of household • Shops, close contract services, support services, places of worship, childcare, schools, universities, visitor attractions, public buildings and services and accommodation all open • Offices and call centres open to essential activities only; work from home default • Level 1 shielding • Sports and exercise permitted except 18+ indoor contact sports • Leisure and entertainment open except night clubs and adult entertainment • Weddings, funerals and wakes for up to 20 people • Outdoor events seated and open space open • Small indoor events open to seated and restricted numbers only 	<p>1. Research practitioners must follow the appropriate Scottish Government safe working guidance and the current MRS Covid-19 guidance which consists of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<p>1. Research practitioners who live in a Level 0, 1, or 2 area in Scotland, or are considering travel to Scotland from anywhere else, should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • minimise unnecessary journeys between areas in different levels • and avoid any unnecessary travel to places in Level 3 or Level 4 areas • if practitioners have to travel for essential purposes, follow the Scottish Government guidance on travelling safely <p>Research practitioners can find out which parts of Scotland are in Levels 3 and 4 via the Scottish Government's postcode checker.</p>

Protection level	Restrictions	Mandatory implications for data collection	Other considerations – best practice and other potential implications
Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No in-home socialising • 6 people from 2 households outdoors and in public places • Indoors hospitality alcohol with main meal only and hospitality last entry 7pm and closed 8pm • Outdoors hospitality last entry 9.30pm and closed 10.30pm • Essential travel only to/from level 3 or 4 areas in Scotland and to/from rest of UK • Active travel where possible and avoid car sharing with people outside of household • Shops, close contract services (with guidance), support services, places of worship (restricted to 50), childcare (with measures), schools (with measures), universities (blended), visitor attractions, public buildings and services (but reduced) and accommodation all open • Offices and call centres open for essential activities only; work from home the default • Other workplace open with work from home the default • Level 2 shielding rule • Sports and exercise permitted except 18+ indoor contact sports • Leisure and entertainment closed except cinemas, amusement arcades and bingo halls 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 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). 2. Research practitioners must wear a face covering in those areas where this is mandated when undertaking face to face data collection. 3. Research practitioners must continue to follow social distancing rules when undertaking face to face data collection. 4. Research practitioners must check whether additional restrictions apply in their area. 5. Research practitioners must follow the appropriate Scottish Government safe working guidance and the current MRS Covid-19 guidance which 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 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Research practitioners when travelling for face to face data collection, should plan ahead to avoid busy public transport times and routes. 2. Research practitioners should act with consideration with participants and be aware of heightened awareness linked with the new restrictions when approaching participants. 3. Research practitioners should take extra care with their working safely and infection hygiene arrangements including themselves and the materials and tools they use. 4. Research practitioners who live in a Level 0, 1, or 2 area in Scotland, or are considering travel to Scotland from anywhere else, should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • minimise unnecessary journeys between areas in different levels • and avoid any unnecessary travel to places in Level 3 or Level 4 areas • if practitioners have to travel for essential purposes, follow the Scottish

Protection level	Restrictions	Mandatory implications for data collection	Other considerations – best practice and other potential implications
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weddings, funerals and wakes for up to 20 people • Drive in only events permitted 		<p>Government guidance on travelling safely</p> <p>Research practitioners can find out which parts of Scotland are in Levels 3 and 4 via the Scottish Government's postcode checker.</p>
Level 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No in-home socialising • 6 people from 2 households outdoors and in public spaces • No alcohol at hospitality venues • Hospitality last entry 5pm and closed 6pm • Essential travel only to/from level 3 or 4 areas in Scotland and to/from rest of UK • Active travel where possible, essential use of public transport and avoid car sharing with people outside of household • Shops, close contract services (with protective measures), support services (online where possible), places of worship (restricted to 50), childcare (with measures), schools (with measures), universities (restricted blended), visitor attractions (with protective measures), public buildings (with protective measures) and services (but reduced) and accommodation 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 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). 2. Research practitioners must wear a face covering in those areas where this is mandated when undertaking face to face data collection. 3. Research practitioners must continue to follow social distancing rules when undertaking face to face data collection. 4. Research practitioners must check whether additional restrictions apply in their area. 5. Research practitioners must follow must follow the appropriate Scottish Government safe working guidance 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Research practitioners who live in a Level 3 local authority area should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • avoid any unnecessary travel out of the area • if research practitioners have to travel for essential purposes, follow the Scottish Government guidance on travelling safely <p>Research practitioners can find out which parts of Scotland are in Levels 3 and 4 via the Scottish Government's postcode checker.</p> 1. Research practitioners when travelling for face to face data collection, should plan ahead to avoid busy public transport times and routes. 2. Research practitioners should consider the amount of travel

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	<p>(work related only an staying local) all open</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offices and call centres open for essential activities only; work from home the default • Other workplace open with protective measures in place; work from home the default • Level 3 shielding rule • Indoor individual exercise only (exceptions for under 18s) and outdoor sports and exercise permitted contact sports • Leisure and entertainment closed • Weddings, funerals and wakes for up to 20 people • Events not permitted 	<p>and the current MRS Covid-19 guidance which consists of:</p> <p>MRS Guidance: Undertaking Safe Face to Face Data Collection</p> <p>MRS Guidance: Undertaking Safe Face to Face Mystery Shopping Guidance on Facilities Used for Face to Face Data Collection</p>	<p>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.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Research practitioners should act with consideration with participants and be aware of heightened awareness linked with the new restrictions when approaching participants. 4. Research practitioners should take extra care with their working safely and infection hygiene arrangements including themselves and the materials and tools they use.
Level 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No in-home socialising • 6 people from 2 household outdoors and in public place • Hospitality, leisure, in-door gyms, closed contact, shops, visitor attractions, public buildings and entertainment closed • Essential travel only to or from level 3 or 4 areas in Scotland and to/from the rest of the UK • No use of public transport except for essential purposes • Essential face to face public services only 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Research practitioners must review all face to face data collection projects and determine if face to face data collection is essential. Note: Essential data collection could include any projects which are supporting the Covid-19 response e.g. the Covid-19 Infection Study, research assessing adherence and attitudes to the lockdown measures, assessing essential public services and/or infrastructure, etc. or projects 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Research practitioners who live in a Level 4 local authority area should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • avoid any unnecessary travel out of the area • also keep journeys within the area to an absolute minimum • if you have to travel for essential purposes, follow the Scottish Government guidance on travelling safely 2. Research practitioners must consider the amount of travel

Protection level	Restrictions	Mandatory implications for data collection	Other considerations – best practice and other potential implications
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offices and call centres open for essential activities only; work from home the default • Only essential workplaces, outdoor workplace, construction and manufacturing open • Level 4 shielding rule • Outdoor non-contact sports only • Weddings, funerals and wakes for up to 20 people • Events not permitted 	<p><i>addressing regulatory and/or legislative adherence for non-Covid-19 matters.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Research practitioners must only undertake essential face to face data collection which cannot be achieved using other methods such as telephone, online or mail. 3. Research practitioners must only undertake essential face to face data collection in those locations that are unaffected as a result of Covid-19 closures and restrictions. <i>Note: the restrictions on outdoor gatherings such as participants’ front gardens do not apply for work-based activities such as undertaking essential face to face data collection on the doorstep.</i> 4. Research practitioners must not undertake essential face to face data collection in those locations that are currently restricted within the MRS guidance e.g. data collection in-home. 5. Research practitioners must undertake a risk assessment of any proposed essential face to face data collection exercise before beginning the activity. 6. Research practitioners must follow the appropriate Scottish 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 3. Research practitioners when travelling for essential data collection projects, must plan ahead or avoid busy public transport times and routes. 4. Research practitioners must follow any lockdown restrictions which apply to Northern Ireland, England and Wales if essential face to face data collection requires travel to any of these areas e.g. undertaking essential face to face data collection close to the borders. 5. Research practitioners should not stay overnight anywhere except in their primary residences. Whilst overnight stays are allowed for business purposes, research practitioners should minimise such stays. 6. Research practitioners should not travel beyond their local area for essential face to face data collection purposes unless

Protection level	Restrictions	Mandatory implications for data collection	Other considerations – best practice and other potential implications
		<p>Government safe working guidance and the MRS Covid-19 data collection guidance for any essential face to face data collection activities that are being undertaken. The relevant MRS guidance documents are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<p>absolutely necessary for the purposes of the project.</p>

