



## **Covid-19 England Lockdown Restrictions and Requirements**

### **MRS Guidance Note**

**5<sup>th</sup> 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 31<sup>st</sup> October 2020. **The new UK Government restrictions apply to England from Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> November 2020.**

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. 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 UK 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. Research practitioners have a responsibility to protect participants and the reputation of the profession. As such, as a result of the new England lockdown restrictions, research practitioners must only undertake **essential face to face data collection which cannot be achieved using other methods such as telephone, online or mail.**

## **New Restrictions and Requirements**

### **England**

The new restrictions are summarised on the UK Government site:

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

Table 1 summarises the England 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.

**Table 1: England Restrictions – extract of those rules relevant to face to face data collection – applicable from 5<sup>th</sup> November 2020** (based upon UK Government guidance dated 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2020)

1. **Stay at home** except for specific purposes. **Individuals can leave home for work purposes**, or to **provide voluntary** or charitable services, where individuals cannot do this from home.
2. **Staying safe outside the home (social distancing):**
  - hands – wash hands regularly and for 20 seconds
  - **face – wear a face covering in indoor settings where social distancing may be difficult, and when individuals come into contact with people they do not normally meet**
  - **space – stay 2 metres apart from other individuals who you do not live with where possible**, or 1 metre with extra precautions in place (such as wearing face coverings or increasing ventilation indoors)

**Businesses and venues:** To reduce social contact, the Government has ordered certain businesses and venues to close. These include:

- Non-essential retail, such as clothing and homeware stores, vehicle showrooms (other than for rental), betting shops, tailors, tobacco and vape shops, electronic goods and mobile phone shops, and market stalls selling non-essential goods. These venues can continue to be able to operate click-and-collect (where goods are pre-ordered and collected off the premises) and delivery services
- Hospitality venues such as cafes, restaurants, pubs, bars and social clubs; with the exception of providing food and drink for takeaway (before 10pm; and not including alcohol), click-and-collect, drive-through or delivery
- Accommodation such as hotels, hostels, guest houses and campsites. Except for specific circumstances, such as where these act as someone's main residence, where they cannot return home, for homeless people, or where it is essential to stay there for work purposes
- Leisure and sports facilities such as leisure centres and gyms, swimming pools, tennis and basketball courts, golf courses, fitness and dance studios, climbing walls, archery, driving, and shooting ranges
- Entertainment venues such as theatres, concert halls, cinemas, museums and galleries, casinos, amusement arcades, bingo halls, bowling alleys, skating rinks, go-karting venues, soft play centres and areas, circuses, funfairs, zoos and other animal attractions, water parks, theme parks. Indoor attractions at botanical gardens, heritage homes and landmarks must also close, though outdoor grounds of these premises can stay open
- Personal care facilities such as hair, beauty, tanning and nail salons. Tattoo parlours, spas, massage parlours, body and skin piercing services must also close. It is also prohibited to provide these services in other peoples' homes
- Community centres and halls must close except for a limited number of exempt activities as set out below Libraries can also remain open to provide access to IT and digital services - for example for people who do not have it at home - and for click-and-collect
- Places of worship, apart from for the purposes of independent prayer, and service broadcasting and funerals

These businesses and places will also be permitted to be open for a small number of exempt activities, including:

- education and training (including for schools to use sports and leisure facilities where that it part of their normal provision)
- childcare purposes and supervised activities for children
- blood donation and food banks

**Table 1: England Restrictions – extract of those rules relevant to face to face data collection – applicable from 5<sup>th</sup> November 2020** (based upon UK Government guidance dated 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2020)

- to provide medical treatment
- for elite sports persons (in indoor and outdoor sports facilities), professional dancers and choreographers (in fitness and dance studios)
- for training and rehearsal without an audience (in theatres and concert halls)
- for the purposes of professional film and TV filming

### **Businesses and venues which can remain open**

**Other businesses are permitted to stay open, following COVID-19 Secure guidelines.** This includes those providing essential goods or services, including:

- Essential retail such as food shops, supermarkets, pharmacies, garden centres, hardware stores, building merchants and off-licences.
- Petrol Stations, car repair and MOT services, bicycle shops, and taxi and vehicle hire businesses.
- Banks, building societies, post offices, loan providers and money transfer businesses
- Funeral directors
- Launderettes and dry cleaners
- Medical and dental services
- Vets and pet shops
- Agricultural supplies shops
- Storage and distribution facilities
- Car parks, public toilets and motorway service areas.
- Outdoor playgrounds

### **Public Services**

The majority of public services will continue and individuals will be able to leave home to visit them. These include:

- the NHS and medical services like GPs and dentists
- Jobcentre Plus sites
- Courts and probation services
- Civil Registrations Offices
- Passport and Visa Services
- Services provided to victims
- Waste or Recycling Centres

3. **Going to work:** everyone who can work effectively from home must do so. **Where people cannot do so they should continue to travel to work/attend their workplace.**

Public sector employees working in essential services, including education settings, should continue to go into work. Where it is necessary to work in other people's homes - for example, for nannies, cleaners or tradespeople - can do so. The risk of transmission can be substantially reduced if [COVID-secure guidelines](#) are followed closely. Extra consideration should be given to those people at higher risk.

**Table 1: England Restrictions – extract of those rules relevant to face to face data collection – applicable from 5<sup>th</sup> November 2020 (based upon UK Government guidance dated 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2020)**

4. **Protecting people more at risk from coronavirus:** Clinically vulnerable <sup>1</sup>and those over 60 years old should minimise contacts with others and should wash their hands carefully and more frequently than usual and maintain thorough cleaning **of frequently touched areas in home and workspaces.**

**Clinically extremely vulnerable<sup>2</sup> are advised to work from home.** If individuals cannot work from home, individuals are advised not to go to work and may be eligible for Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) or Employment Support Allowance (ESA).

**Individuals who live in England,** cannot travel overseas or within the UK, **unless for work, education or other legally permitted reasons,** and individuals should look to reduce the number of journeys they make. However, individuals can and should still travel for a number of reasons, including:

- **travelling to work where this cannot be done from home**

<sup>1</sup> Clinically vulnerable people are those who are:

- aged 70 or over (regardless of medical conditions)
- under 70 with an underlying health condition listed below (that is, anyone instructed to get a flu jab each year on medical grounds):
  - chronic (long-term) mild to moderate respiratory diseases, such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), emphysema or bronchitis
  - chronic heart disease, such as heart failure
  - chronic kidney disease
  - chronic liver disease, such as hepatitis
  - chronic neurological conditions, such as Parkinson's disease, motor neurone disease, multiple sclerosis (MS) or cerebral palsy
  - diabetes
  - a weakened immune system as the result of certain conditions or medicines they are taking (such as steroid tablets)
  - being seriously overweight (a body mass index (BMI) of 40 or above)
- pregnant

<sup>2</sup> People with the following conditions are automatically deemed clinically extremely vulnerable:

- solid organ transplant recipients
- people with specific cancers:
  - people with cancer who are undergoing active chemotherapy
  - people with lung cancer who are undergoing radical radiotherapy
  - people with cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma who are at any stage of treatment
  - people having immunotherapy or other continuing antibody treatments for cancer
  - people having other targeted cancer treatments that can affect the immune system, such as protein kinase inhibitors or PARP inhibitors
  - people who have had bone marrow or stem cell transplants in the last 6 months or who are still taking immunosuppression drugs
- people with severe respiratory conditions including all cystic fibrosis, severe asthma and severe chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
- people with rare diseases that significantly increase the risk of infections (such as severe combined immunodeficiency (SCID), homozygous sickle cell disease)
- people on immunosuppression therapies sufficient to significantly increase risk of infection
- women who are pregnant with significant heart disease, congenital or acquired
- other people who have also been classed as clinically extremely vulnerable, based on clinical judgement and an assessment of their needs. GPs and hospital clinicians have been provided with guidance to support these decisions

**Table 1: England Restrictions – extract of those rules relevant to face to face data collection – applicable from 5<sup>th</sup> November 2020 (based upon UK Government guidance dated 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2020)**

- travelling to education and for caring responsibilities
- to visit those in a support bubble - or a childcare bubble for childcare
- hospital, GP and other medical appointments or visits where individuals have had an accident or are concerned about their health
- to buy goods or services from premises that are open, including essential retail
- to spend time or exercise outdoors - this should be done locally wherever possible, but individuals can travel to do so if necessary (for example, to access an open space)
- attending the care and exercise of a pet, or veterinary services

If individuals need to travel encourage them to walk or cycle where possible, and to plan ahead and avoid busy times and routes on public transport. This will allow individuals to practise social distancing whilst they travel.

Individuals must not travel if they are experiencing any coronavirus symptoms, are self-isolating as a result of coronavirus symptoms, are sharing a household or support bubble with somebody with symptoms, or have been told to self-isolate after being contacted by NHS Test and Trace. The fine for breaching self-isolation rules start at £1,000. This could increase to up to £10,000 for repeat offences and the most serious breaches, including for those preventing others from self-isolating.

If individuals need to use public transport - to travel to work for example - individuals should follow the [safer travel guidance](#). This includes the rules on wearing face coverings and [advice on car sharing](#).

5. **Overnight stays and holidays away from primary residences will not be allowed.** There are **specific exceptions, for example if individuals need to stay away from home (including in a second home) for work purposes**, but this means people cannot travel overseas or within the UK, unless for work, education or other legally permitted reasons.

***The following requirements directly apply to the new UK Government Restrictions. These must be read in conjunction with the appropriate UK Government and MRS Guidance.***

#### **Undertaking face to face data collection**

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 addressing regulatory and/or legislative adherence for non-Covid-19 matters.***

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.

**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.**

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. Research practitioners must follow relevant government guidance such as the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) guidance on Covid-19: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/coronavirus.htm> and the HSE interactive tools: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/risk/index.htm>

*Note: More information about risk assessments is available in the MRS Research Policy and Standards Webinar - Undertaking Risk Assessments available [here](#).*

6. Research practitioners must follow the appropriate [UK 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:
  - [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](#)

### **Research Practitioners: General**

5. If research practitioners begin to feel unwell, have been in contact with anyone who has been unwell, is feeling unwell or have been contacted by the Track and Trace service must self-isolate and work from home (if the individuals are fit to do so and their role enables home working).
6. Research practitioners who are classified as 'clinically extremely vulnerable' individuals had been advised by the UK Government to stay at home. Research practitioners who are clinically extremely vulnerable must not undertake any face to face data collection activities. Research practitioners who are clinically extremely vulnerable and fit and wish to work may undertake and/or be selected for other methods of data collection e.g. telephone, online, mail.
7. Research practitioners that are clinically vulnerable individuals or aged 60 years or over are advised by the government to minimise contact with others outside of their household. If Research practitioners that are identified as clinically vulnerable and/or are aged over 60 years or over and are fit and wish to work, they may be considered for essential face to face data collection.
8. Research practitioners must undertake a risk assessment and mitigations before any clinically vulnerable individuals or those aged 60 years or over are considered for essential face to face data collection. Research practitioners who are clinically vulnerable and/or aged over 60 years may undertake and/or be selected for other methods of face to face data collection e.g. telephone, online, mail.

### **During Essential Face to Face Data Collection**

9. When undertaking essential face to face data collection research practitioners must [wear a face covering in those areas where this is mandated](#) and in any locations where it is not possible to maintain a social distance of two metres when undertaking essential face to face data collection.
10. Research practitioners must continue to follow social distancing rules when undertaking essential face to face data collection.
11. In circumstances where social distancing may not be possible such as mystery shopping, research practitioners must endeavour to ensure there is enough space to undertake their essential face to face data collection activities safely, where possible adhering to social distancing requirements and not causing obstruction to other individuals, the possibility of contact and/or not meeting social distancing requirements with other individuals in the vicinity of any given project.

### **Travel To and From Essential Face to Face Data Collection**

12. 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.
13. Research practitioners when travelling for essential data collection projects, must plan ahead or avoid busy public transport times and routes.
14. Research practitioners must follow any lockdown restrictions which apply to Northern Ireland, Scotland 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.
15. 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.
16. Research practitioners should not travel beyond their local area for essential face to face data collection purposes unless absolutely necessary for the purposes of the project.