

Stay Home - Save Lives

New rules on staying at home and away from others

A message from the Leader of Essex County Council, Cllr David Finch and Dr Mike Gogarty, Director of Public Health

Dear Resident

The single most important action we can all take, in fighting coronavirus, is to stay at home in order to protect the NHS and save lives.

When we reduce our day-to-day contact with other people, we will reduce the spread of the infection.

That is why the Government has introduced three new measures.

1. Requiring people to stay at home, except for very limited purposes
2. Closing non-essential shops and community spaces
3. Stopping all gatherings of more than two people in public

Every one of us **MUST** comply with these new measures. The relevant authorities, including the Police, will be given the powers to enforce them – including through fines and dispersing gatherings. These measures are effective immediately. The Government will look again at these measures in three weeks, and relax them if the evidence shows this is possible.

1. Staying at home

You should only leave the house for one of four reasons:

- shopping for basic necessities, for example food and medicine, which must be as infrequent as possible
- one form of exercise a day, for example a run, walk or cycle - alone or with members of your household
- any medical need or to provide care or to help a vulnerable person
- travelling to and from work, but only where this absolutely cannot be done from home.

These four reasons are exceptions - even when doing these activities you should be minimising time spent outside the home and ensuring you are two metres apart from anyone outside your household.

These measures must be followed by everyone. Separate advice is available for individuals or households who are isolating, and for the most vulnerable who need to be shielded.

If you work in a critical sector outlined in this guidance, or your child has been identified as vulnerable, you can continue to take your children to school.

2. Closing non-essential shops and public spaces

Last week, the Government ordered certain businesses - including pubs, cinemas and theatres - to close. The Government is now extending this requirement to a further set of businesses and other venues, including:

- all non-essential retail stores - this will include clothing and electronics stores; hair, beauty and nail salons; and outdoor and indoor markets, excluding food markets
- libraries, community centres and youth centres
- indoor and outdoor leisure facilities such as bowling alleys, arcades and soft play facilities
- communal places within parks, such as playgrounds, sports courts and outdoor gyms
- places of worship, except for funerals attended by immediate families
- hotels, hostels, bed and breakfasts, campsites, caravan parks, and boarding houses for commercial/leisure use (excluding permanent residents and key workers).

3. Stopping public gatherings

To make sure people are staying at home and apart from each other, the Government is also stopping all public gatherings of more than two people.

There are only two exceptions to this rule:

- where the gathering is of a group of people who live together - this means that a parent can, for example, take their children to the shops if there is no option to leave them at home
- where the gathering is essential for work purposes - but workers should be trying to minimise all meetings and other gatherings in the workplace.

In addition, the Government is stopping social events, including weddings, baptisms and other religious ceremonies. This will exclude funerals, which can be attended by immediate family.

Delivering these new measures

These measures will reduce our day to day contact with other people. They are a vital part of our efforts to reduce the rate of transmission of coronavirus.

Every citizen is instructed to comply with these new measures. The Government will therefore be ensuring the Police and other relevant authorities have the powers to enforce them, including through fines and dispersing gatherings where people do not comply.

They will initially last for the three weeks from 23 March, at which point the Government will look at them again and relax them if the evidence shows this is possible.

Volunteering

We have been overwhelmed by the response already from the amazing people in Essex who want to help others in their communities.

Please do continue to support your neighbours and family but remember to maintain the social distancing rules. That means, for example, you could leave food on their doorsteps and not go into their house.

We also want to ensure that volunteers don't do more harm than good. Gathering together will spread the virus and so we are asking people not to do this, unless we are asking them to.

Instead we want people to continue to register to volunteer via facebook – go to www.facebook.com/essexcoronavirusaction – or local schemes and groups. That way we will be able to give you the best advice on how you can make the best contribution.

If people are in need of urgent support, we will provide help through the Essex Welfare Service, on **0300 303 9988** (Mon-Fri 8am-7pm and Sat-Sun 10am-2pm) or email: provide.essexwelfareservice@nhs.net. This will be a single person response.

We will advise people further in the coming days on how they can make the best and safest contribution to supporting the vulnerable in our communities.

The NHS

We must not allow the peak of the epidemic to outstrip the NHS's capacity to care. Every single one of us can ensure that this nightmare scenario does not happen. Our great county of Essex has always risen to the challenges over the decades. This is the greatest one of our times. Please, follow the advice. Stay Home. Save Lives. #StayHomeSaveLives

Cllr David Finch, Leader, Essex County Council

Dr Mike Gogarty, Director of Public Health, Essex County Council