

East Woodhay & Highclere Coronavirus Community Support



Highclere
Society



EWH Neighbourcare



Newsletter #25b – 20th December

We are here for you, especially if you need to talk – we have one number to have:

- prescriptions delivered
- shopping collected
- a friendly chat on the phone
- attending a medical appointment
- or someone to go for walk with

01635 745 600

Over the festive period, please keep up to date with all the latest information by listening to local news and looking at this Facebook [PAGE](#) where there are frequent posts.

Christmas and new Tier Rules Update

Since our last Newsletter on Friday 18th December, the government have changed the rules and regulations on what we can and cannot do in our daily lives and for Christmas. They have introduced a new Tier 4 and West Berkshire falls into Tier 4.

These new rules come into force today. This update provides a summary of how you may be affected, and it replaces the section 'Stay Safe at Christmas' within [Newsletter 25](#) (issued on Friday 18th December). For more details, please consult the links to the official guidance at the end of this update.

Stay Safe at Christmas

Although we have lived with Covid-19 for nearly a year and a vaccine may be just around the corner, we all know it does not make it any less dangerous. We can all catch it, we can all spread it and unfortunately, no one is yet immune. Therefore, we all have a personal responsibility to prevent it spreading.

Now, the new strain of Covid-19 is making it easier to catch and easier to pass on to others. This is why the rules are being tightened.

The simple guidance is if you don't have to mix with others outside your normal household, don't. The more people you mix with, particularly indoors at this time of year, the greater the chance of catching Covid-19 or passing it on.

No legislation can cover all situations. It is therefore broad in defining what you can and cannot do. But that does not mean it is a good thing to do everything that is permitted.

The very clear guidance, with a vaccination not far away, is for the time being to minimise your interaction with others to essential contacts. And if you decide to go ahead, do everything you can to cut down risk by keeping safe distancing, washing your hands regularly for 20 seconds and wearing a face mask.

Let's try and make the situation as simple as possible to understand. It is more complicated for us than for most because we live on the border between a Tier 2 and a Tier 4 area.

Do you know where you live?

Many people do not know if they are in Tier 2 or Tier 4. The dividing line is the county boundary which roughly speaking is the River Enborne.

- If you live in Hampshire and pay your council tax to Basingstoke and Deane and HCC you are in Tier 2.

- If you live in W. Berks and pay your council tax to W. Berks you are now in Tier 4.

The Reading RG postcode is irrelevant but if you are still confused you can use your full postcode to check which Tier applies to you using this checker <https://www.gov.uk/find-coronavirus-local-restrictions>

So, Ball Hill, Woolton Hill and the other parts of East Woodhay, Highclere, Penwood, Burghclere, Newtown, Sydmonton, Ecchinswell, Headley, Kingsclere and Ashford Hill and all areas south of these districts are in Hampshire and Tier 2.

Wash Water, Wash Common, Enborne, West Woodhay, Hampstead Marshall, Kintbury and Inkpen are in W. Berks and Tier 4.

What are the main differences between Tiers 2 and 4?

- **Meeting indoors**

In Tier 2 you can only meet indoors with people you live with or who are in your "bubble". Indoors means private homes and other indoor venues such as pubs and restaurants. In Tier 2 you can continue to visit pubs and restaurants but only with your household or bubble, not with other friends and relations.

If you live in a Tier 4 area, you cannot meet other people indoors, including over the Christmas period, unless you live with them, or they are part of your existing support bubble. Pubs and restaurants will be closed except for takeaways and you must not meet indoors in any other venues e.g. village halls.

In Tier 4 you must not leave or be outside of your home except for where you have a specific purpose, or a 'reasonable excuse'. A reasonable excuse includes:

- Work and volunteering

You can leave home for work purposes, where your place of work remains open and where you cannot work from home (including if your job involves working in other people's homes).

- Essential activities

You can leave home to buy things at shops which are permitted to open in your area, but you should stay local. For instance, you can leave home to buy food or medicine, or to collect any items - including food or drink - ordered through click-and-collect or as a takeaway, to obtain or deposit money (e.g. from a bank or post office), or to access critical public services (see section below).

- Fulfilling legal obligations
- Education and childcare
- Exercise and recreation
- Medical reasons, harm and compassionate visits
- Communal worship and life events

- **Meeting outdoors**

In Tier 2 you can continue to meet friends and family you do not live with in groups of no more than 6 outdoors in a private garden or other outdoor space.

In Tier 4 meeting outdoors including private gardens and most outdoor public venues is not allowed. The exceptions are parks, beaches, countryside accessible to the public, forests, public gardens (whether or not you pay to enter them), allotments, the grounds of a heritage site, outdoor sports courts and facilities, playgrounds.

You can exercise or meet in a public outdoor place with people you live with, your support bubble (or as part of a childcare bubble), or with **one** other person.

- **Places of worship**

You can attend places of worship for a service in both tiers. However, you must not mingle with anyone outside of your household or support bubble. You should follow [national guidance on the](#)

[safe use of places of worship.](#)

• **Businesses and Venues**

Most businesses and venues can remain open in Tier 2 but with some restrictions on opening times and the use by households and bubbles only.

In Tier 4 most retail businesses must close. The exceptions are those providing essential goods and services, including:

- essential retail such as food shops, supermarkets, pharmacies, garden centres and Christmas tree retailers, building merchants and suppliers of building products and off-licences
- market stalls selling essential retail may also stay open
- businesses providing repair services may also stay open, where they primarily offer repair services
- petrol stations, automatic (but not manual) car washes, vehicle repair and MOT services, bicycle shops, and taxi and vehicle hire businesses
- banks, building societies, post offices, short-term loan providers and money transfer businesses
- funeral directors
- laundrettes and dry cleaners
- medical and dental services
- vets and pet shops
- animal rescue centres, boarding facilities, and animal groomers (may continue to be used for animal welfare, rather than aesthetic purposes)
- agricultural supplies shops
- mobility and disability support shops
- storage and distribution facilities
- car parks, public toilets and motorway service areas
- outdoor playgrounds
- outdoor gym, pools, sports courts and facilities
- golf courses
- archery/driving/shooting ranges (outdoors)
- outdoor riding centres

• **Public services**

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

- the NHS and medical services like GPs and dentists. The government is supporting the NHS to carry out urgent and non-urgent services safely, and it is vital anyone who thinks they need any kind of medical care comes forward and seeks help
- Jobcentre Plus sites

• **Travelling**

If you live in a tier 4 area, you must stay at home. You must not leave your home to travel unless for work, education or other legally permitted reasons. If you need to travel you should stay local - meaning avoiding travelling outside of your village, town or the part of a city where you live - and look to reduce the number of journeys you make overall. The list of reasons you can leave your home and area include, but are not limited to:

- work, where you cannot work from home
- accessing education and for caring responsibilities
- visiting those in your support bubble - or your childcare bubble for childcare
- visiting hospital, GP and other medical appointments or visits where you have had an accident or are concerned about your health
- buying goods or services from premises that are open in Tier 4 areas, including essential retail, but these should be within your local area wherever possible
- spending time or exercising outdoors. This should be done locally wherever possible, but you can travel a short distance within your Tier 4 area to do so if necessary (for example, to access an open space)
- attending the care and exercise of a pet, or veterinary services

If you live in Tier 2 you can travel within your Tier area but should avoid journeys across Tier boundaries other than for necessary visits to venues that are open including for work, health and education. You should not travel into a Tier 4 area, other than for reasons such as:

- travel to work where you cannot work from home
- travel to education and for caring responsibilities
- to visit those in your support bubble - or your childcare bubble for childcare
- to attend hospital, GP and other medical appointments or visits where you have had an accident or are concerned about your health
- for reasonably necessary food and fuel shopping

Therefore, the advice must be to shop in a Tier 2 area such as Andover, Basingstoke or Marlborough if you can but if you use the Newbury retail food outlets try to reduce the number of visits as much as possible, use click and collect or delivery where you can rather than the shop itself, and make sure you take the necessary safety precautions at all times.

If you have difficulty with shopping, please call our helpline on **01635 745 600** to get assistance.

If you live in Tier 2 you can still travel to hotels and other guest accommodation but only with people in your household and support bubble.

If you live in Tier 4 you must not stay with anyone you do not live with elsewhere in the UK or visit their home (unless you share a support bubble).

You must continue to follow your Tier rules even when visiting a lower Tier area.

What happens at Christmas?

Christmas arrangements have now changed. In a Tier 4 area, you must follow the rules in your tier over the Christmas period. This means that you cannot meet other people indoors over the Christmas period, unless you ordinarily live with them, or they are part of your existing support bubble. Outdoors, you can only meet one person from another household.

If you live in Tier 2 on 25th December, for that day only, you may choose to form a [Christmas bubble](#) but only with people from Tiers 1-3. You can only form a Christmas bubble if you do not live in a Tier 4 area.

If you are permitted to form a Christmas bubble and choose to do so:

- keep your Christmas bubble as small as possible. Two other households is a maximum
- do not join a Christmas bubble with anyone from a Tier 4 area
- stop all unnecessary social contact outside your immediate household as soon as possible and for at least five days before you meet other households in your bubble
- only meet your Christmas bubble in private homes or in your garden, places of worship, or public outdoor spaces
- only see your bubble on Christmas Day. Do not stay overnight and keep your visits as short as possible
- stay local where possible. Avoid travelling from a high prevalence to a low prevalence area
- only meet people who are not in your Christmas bubble outside your home according to the rules in the tier you live in (unless coming from a lower to a higher tier) and do not meet socially with friends and family that you do not live with in your home or garden unless they are part of your Christmas bubble

In all other settings, if you do form a Christmas bubble, you must still follow the [rules for the tier you meet in](#).

After Christmas

From 26 December, you must follow the guidance for the tier in your area. Christmas bubbles will no longer apply. In most places across the UK, that means you cannot mix with other households indoors, including on New Years' Eve.

Those who choose to form a Christmas bubble should exercise additional caution and cut down on any unnecessary social contact after seeing their Christmas bubble to reduce the risk of spreading the virus.

If someone is in your Christmas bubble, you can visit each other's homes. You can also go to a place of worship together or meet in public outdoor spaces.

You cannot meet your Christmas bubble in any other indoor setting, such as a pub, hotel, shop, theatre, or restaurant. In these settings, [rules on who you can and cannot meet depend on your tier](#).

We know that it's easier to catch and spread the virus in an indoor space, especially if there is little flow of fresh air. Therefore, when meeting your Christmas bubble, you should take these measures to prevent the spread of the virus:

- wash your hands frequently
- clean touch points regularly, such as door handles and surfaces
- keep socially distanced from anybody you do not live with as much as possible
- make sure you let as much fresh air in as you can during a visit and after visitors have left, without getting cold, by opening windows and doors

People may continue to work in other people's homes where necessary, such as nannies, cleaners or tradespeople. To reduce risk, they should observe social distancing wherever possible, and where it can be avoided should not go into homes that are hosting Christmas bubbles.

It is important to cut down on social contact after seeing your Christmas bubble, to reduce the risk of chains of transmission. From 26 December, you must follow the guidance for the tier in your area, as a minimum. Christmas bubbles will no longer apply. In most places across the UK, that means you cannot mix with other households indoors, including on New Year's Eve.

New Year's Eve

You must follow the rules according to your tier on where you can go and who you can meet on New Year's Eve. Your Christmas bubble will no longer apply. In most places across the UK, that means you cannot mix with other households indoors. One in three people who have coronavirus have no symptoms and will be spreading it without realising it. It is essential that these rules are followed by everyone.

If you formed a Christmas bubble, you should reduce your contact with people you do not live with as much as possible after meeting your Christmas bubble. This includes not meeting up with friends or family outside your household, including for New Year's Eve, even if you feel well.

For more information

This is just a summary of the main Covid-19 regulations and guidelines. For more detail on specific aspects which may affect you go to one of the following:

Tier 2 Regulations: [Tier 2: High alert](#)

Tier 4 Regulations: [Tier 4: Stay at Home - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Guidance for the Christmas period: [Guidance for the Christmas period - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

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