



CORNWALL ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

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Serving the parish and town councils of Cornwall

CALC BRIEFING – FAQ 14

January 5th, 2021

GUIDANCE ON LOCAL COUNCIL SERVICES DURING NEW NATIONAL LOCKDOWN

On January 4th, 2021 Government announced that that all areas of England had been placed under a new lockdown similar to the one introduced in March 2020. There are a number of key differences to the early restrictions and this FAQ tries to pick up on the latest Government advice.

The Government has produced guidance to support the introduction of the new statutory requirements which will include fixed penalties for breaches. [National lockdown : Stay at Home](#) was published with the Prime Minister's Statement on January 4th, 2021 and councils are advised to use this document as their main point of reference for details of the new restrictions.

This briefing will summarise our understanding of the new restrictions and we will work to clarify the details in the coming days.

Covid 19 Principles

The Covid 19 principles remain unchanged, but a number of restrictions have been introduced aimed at restricting movement and contact with others. Local councils should bear these restrictions and simple measures when considering any activity.

- Hands, face, space – these principals remain in place, but the Government has reintroduced the threshold of 2m for social distancing. Further information about [meeting others safely and social distancing](#) has been produced.
- The requirement to stay at home has been reintroduced and you are only permitted to leave home where it is necessary to work, exercise,

shop, access medical or veterinary care or support others within a recognised bubble.

- If you must leave home then you should stay local to the village, town or part of the area in which you live.
- You cannot meet with anyone you do not live with (or share a support bubble with). You can exercise with your household or one other person but must always remain 2 meters apart from anyone not in your household.

There is further guidance for those who are [extremely vulnerable to Covid](#).

Meetings

Council and Committees

With the reintroduction of restrictions on movement, it is CALCs understanding that it would be unlawful to ask people to attend your meetings. The latest government briefing states that 'you must not leave or be outside of your home except where you have a reasonable excuse'. This restriction is being put into law with Fixed Penalty Notices for those who breach the requirement.

At this time, you should continue to hold virtual meetings and not undertake physical council meetings either indoors or outdoors.

Site Meetings

We have been asked for guidance on site meetings which are not open to the public and are necessary for the work of the council. The lockdown states that 'you must not leave your home unless you have a reasonable excuse'. The regulations do permit work meetings provided that they are necessary for the business of the council. This would include undertaking risk assessments, inspections and planning site visits. However, these meetings/visits must be done in accordance with the Covid 19 guidelines and when considering if a meeting is necessary councils must consider

- Why do you need to meet?
- Is it essential?
- Why does it need to be a physical meeting?
- What are the risks and how do you manage them?

Community Facilities

Public Buildings

The Government has yet to publish the full list of building and business closures. However, the Tier 4 restrictions advice is a comprehensive list of local businesses and community facilities which are required to close. The full list of closures can be found under [the list of businesses and premises to close](#).

The list includes all community centres, town and village halls subject to a number of exceptions in support of the Covid 19 response i.e. food banks, support groups, registered childcare.

Public toilets,

These all remain open and should be managed under the Covid 19 guidelines and risk assessment.

Recreation - Public outdoor places

Exercise in public outdoor places is permitted and these include the following which should remain open :

- Parks, beaches, countryside accessible to the public, forests
- Public gardens
- Grounds of a heritage site
- playgrounds

Recreation - Leisure and sports facilities

All leisure and sports facilities including swimming pools, sports courts and pitches, indoor play areas must now be closed. There are some exceptions for elite sport and if in doubt, you should check the guidance in place at the time.

Sport England has produced [FAQs on the new national lockdown restrictions](#).

Markets

Market stalls are permitted to stay open if they are selling essential supplies; all other non-essential retail must close.

Places of worship, cemeteries and Crematoria

These facilities all remain open but must follow the Covid 19 guidelines of hands, face and space.

I hope that the above summarises the latest lockdown restrictions which are likely to remain in place for some time. The full list of CALC FAQs including guides to risk assessment, standing orders and virtual meetings remains available to download from our website www.cornwallalc.org.uk

Please do not hesitate to contact the offices if you have any questions by emailing enquiries@cornwallalc.org.uk. I will continue to provide updates as further information becomes available.

Sarah Mason
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