



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Coronavirus Q&A: Stay-at-home regulations

What changes are being introduced to the regulations today?

The Welsh Government is making three very small amendments to the Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (Wales) Regulations 2020:

- Allowing people to exercise more than once a day but exercise must be local
- Enabling garden centres to open if they can comply with the [physical distancing duty](#).
- Enabling local authorities to begin the process of planning how to reopen libraries and local recycling centres.

The main stay-at-home restrictions will stay in place until the next review period.

Why are the stay-at-home regulations being changed?

The Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (Wales) Regulations 2020 introduced the stay-at-home restrictions on March 26. They must be reviewed every 21 days. The first review was carried out on 16 April and the second on 7 May.

Welsh Ministers are required to consider whether the restrictions or requirements are still needed to prevent, protect against, control or provide a public health response to the incidence or spread of infection of coronavirus in Wales and whether they remain a proportionate response to that purpose. They have been reviewed in line with an assessment from the UK's Scientific Advisory Group on Emergencies (SAGE) about what activity can resume without affecting the transmission of coronavirus and public health.

We have been able to make these small changes because of the impact of the regulations have had on the spread of coronavirus in Wales to date – and people's compliance with the regulations. This has helped to stabilise the situation in Wales – reducing the number of people who are admitted to hospital with coronavirus; the number of people who are seriously ill in intensive care and the number of people who are dying from coronavirus.

The main aim of the regulations is to reduce the speed and spread of coronavirus. Preventing unnecessary travel helps to reduce the risk of the virus spreading further and imposing additional burdens on health services. We therefore continue to advise people to stay home, protect the NHS and save lives. But exercising outdoors is an important exception to this rule and it can have a beneficial effect on health and wellbeing.

Why are the rules now different in Wales than in England?

The Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (Wales) Regulations 2020 were introduced at the same time in Wales and England and they contained many similar provisions.

However, there were some significant differences – for example, the English legislation has not imposed requirements on employers to take all reasonable measures to maintain physical distancing where people work, and there was no provision made in the English legislation requiring local authorities and national park authorities to close beauty spots.

All governments are required to review the regulations every 21 days, based on the unique circumstances in their country.

The Welsh Government has reviewed the coronavirus regulations in Wales and decided to make some very small adjustments. The UK Government has reviewed its regulations and decided to make its own, slightly different, changes to the regulations, including allowing people to travel to exercise, for example.

However, in all parts of the UK, the overarching stay-at-home regulations remain in place.

Why are garden centres being opened?

We have taken the decision to allow garden centres to reopen, if they are able to comply with the [physical distancing duty](#). This is because they are more likely to be based outdoors and the evidence suggests the risk of spreading coronavirus is considerably less outdoors than indoors. Due to their location and size, it is also likely that people visiting garden centres will be able to maintain social distancing.

Does this relaxation of the rules mean I can reopen my business now?

The [coronavirus regulations](#) introduced on March 26 set out a list of all businesses which must be closed – these included bars and restaurants; leisure and hotels. Most retail outlets are required to be closed but they can fulfil internet and telephone orders, including by “click and collect”.

Where possible, people should work from home. Where that is not possible, we have enshrined the [physical distancing duty](#) in law, which means workplaces should take all reasonable steps to ensure a 2m distance is maintained between people while working. If businesses, which are not on the March 26 closed list, can comply with the physical distancing duty, they can remain open.

What sort of exercise can I do?

The regulations do not set out what type of exercise is allowed, but in practice the type of exercise allowed is constrained by some of the other restrictions, which have been put in place to control coronavirus.

For example, indoor swimming pools have been closed; leisure centres are closed and certain footpaths, beauty spots and parts of the countryside are closed.

The regulations also prevent unnecessary travel – one of the purposes of the restrictions is to reduce pressure on the Welsh NHS.

Our laws are clear that you must exercise alone or with members of your household.

What about cycling?

Cycling is a very effective form of exercise and is a healthy and environmentally friendly way of travelling to work. Cycling is generally a low-risk activity but with emergency services under pressure, it is important to take steps to manage risk wherever possible. An accident or a breakdown far from home would place additional strain on health services or require a further journey to be made by someone else to provide assistance.

People are expected to only cycle on routes they know well and are well within their ability level. Cyclists on shared paths should be considerate of walkers, runners and other people cycling: they should stay two metres away from others, slow their pace and stop to let people pass as appropriate.

Cycling to work, or for work, is considered a reasonable excuse to be outside, if you cannot work from home.

You must cycle alone or with members of your household.

Can I drive somewhere to exercise?

In general, exercise should not involve people driving away from home to exercise. No journeys outside your local area should be taken to exercise in the countryside, at the coast or at other beauty spots, for example – many beauty spots have been closed to prevent people gathering.

However, people with specific health or mobility issues may need to travel a short distance from their home to exercise. For example, some wheelchair users may not be able to exercise immediately outside their homes for practical reasons. In such circumstances the journey should be to the nearest convenient accessible location.

Our laws are clear that you must exercise alone or with members of your household.

What do we mean by local?

People should not travel a significant distance from their home to exercise.

We have deliberately not defined this more precisely as it could be seen to be arbitrary and it will also depend on the circumstances – what people perceive to be “local” in Cardiff on the one hand, and in Mid Wales on the other, could be quite different.

People are asked to exercise good judgement and common sense. If you live in Cardiff and have driven to Porthcawl to exercise on the beach, you haven't stayed local.

Will gyms be opened?

Gyms are not reopening yet. For the time being, we continue to advise people to exercise in their own home or outdoors.

We are lifting the previous restriction on only exercising once a day to enable everyone to exercise more frequently outdoors. But exercise must be local and

should start and end at home. People should also only exercise alone or with people from their own household.

Will golf courses reopen?

The regulations state that exercise should be done locally, which means people cannot drive to exercise outside their local area; people also cannot exercise with anyone other than a member of their own household. More than two people congregating in a public place is regarded as a gathering, which is an offence under the regulations.

We are continuing to prepare for the future, working with our partners and stakeholders. We would expect Wales Golf, working with the R&A and other UK governing bodies, to monitor the situation in England closely where golf will be permitted from May 13 and prepare detailed protocols for a potential partial resumption in Wales when the conditions are right.

Will angling be permitted?

The regulations state exercise should be done locally, which means people cannot drive to exercise outside their local area. The primary purpose for leaving home should be to exercise.

Can I play bowls?

The regulations state that exercise should be done locally, which means people cannot drive to exercise outside their local area; people also cannot exercise with anyone other than a member of their own household. More than two people congregating in a public place is regarded as a gathering, which is an offence under the regulations.

The English regulations allow people to leave home for any recreational purpose – I'm worried this increases the risk of more people coming to Wales.

We receive weekly updates from the four police forces in Wales, which monitor compliance with the regulations; we also monitor traffic flow on all main routes in and into Wales.

We understand having slightly different rules in Wales and England may cause some confusion for people; particularly along the border and we are working very hard to make sure people are aware that in Wales, the Welsh rules apply.

Travelling to Wales to spend time in the countryside or at the coast is not allowed under Welsh law.

We will use whatever means are available to convey this message, including signs on the major roads and motorways and articles in local newspapers along our borders.

Will local parks be opened – can I go to them?

Local authorities will make decisions about whether local parks are open. We encourage people to go out to exercise, and this is one of the reasons the regulations have been amended.

Can I go for a picnic in the park?

The main purpose of the amendments to the regulations is to enable people to leave home to exercise more often. But we also consider activity, which is “incidental” to exercise, which is good for people’s health or wellbeing, to be reasonable.

For example, going for a walk and stopping to have something to eat or sit in a park, would be permitted. But most of the time away from home should be spent exercising and your purpose for leaving home should be to exercise. Leaving the house simply to have a picnic would not meet this requirement.

Any “incidental” activity is subject to the requirement not to congregate with others, and the advice on social distancing should also be followed.

Can I meet friends or family if I do it outdoors?

Our overarching advice is to stay at home. You need a reasonable excuse to go out, and arranging to meet friends and family is not reasonable excuse. In addition the regulations require people not to congregate outdoors.

Are people allowed to visit their caravans to undertake routine maintenance or repair work?

Caravan and holiday parks are currently closed under the coronavirus regulations, although there are some exceptions – some people remain on site as otherwise they would be made homeless.

What do the new rules mean for people who live in Wales but work in England?

Our overarching advice has not changed – people should work from home wherever possible and continue to avoid all unnecessary journeys.

If your normal place of work is in England, please discuss your working arrangements with your employer.

Will the level of fines be increased?

The coronavirus regulations include provisions for a fixed penalty notice to be issued for breaches of the regulations, carrying a fine of £60; this is increased to £120 for a second offence.

We continue to keep fines under review and, if the police believe stronger fines are needed, this will be considered.