

Changes to Covid-19 Legislation December 2020



A guide for Variety Artists and Entertainers

Introduction

Government guidance and legislation has been constantly changing and evolving throughout the pandemic. This guide outlines the most recent changes introduced from **Wednesday 2nd December 2020** and how these might affect the work of entertainers including doing work in private homes and gardens as well as in more regular settings such as theatres, pubs, clubs and restaurants. This guide should not be regarded as a substitute for reading the official government guidance which applies along with any local restrictions.

Note also that special provisions are being put in place for the whole of the UK covering the Christmas period. These apply for 5 days from 23rd to 27th December 2020 and allowing 3 households to come together socially indoors or outdoors in private homes but not in hospitality settings such as pubs and restaurants.

What is the current situation in England?

From Thursday 5th November 2020 England entered a one-month lockdown until **2nd December 2020**. During that time theatres, pubs, restaurants, museums, galleries and cinemas, concert halls and casinos and other similar venues were closed so no entertainment was able to take place at those venues. Entertainment venues were able to open for rehearsals and training but not to audiences. Following this period of lockdown England will revert again to local restrictions under the 3 Tier system.

What entertainment work will be able to go ahead under the Tier system?

From 2nd December 2020, the following restrictions will be applied locally under the 3 Tier system. The general rules under the tiers are as follows:-

Tier 1 Medium Alert: Theatres, social clubs, pubs, restaurants and other entertainment venues will open with Covid-Secure measures in place including social distancing under the Rule of 6. There are general rules such as table service being required if alcohol is served and reduced opening hours with last orders at 10pm and closing at 11pm. Public attendance is allowed at entertainment events such as performances and shows, indoors or outdoors, subject to either 50% capacity or 1,000 indoors or 4,000 outdoors whichever is the lower.

The Rule of 6 applies for socialising outdoors or indoors whether in homes or public venues.

Tier 2 High Alert: Theatres, social clubs, pubs, restaurants and other entertainment venues are open with Covid-Secure measures in place including social distancing with no socialising between different households. As well as the restrictions under Tier 1, alcohol can only be served with a substantial

meal and pubs must effectively operate as restaurants. People from different households cannot meet indoors either in homes or public venues. Public attendance is allowed at entertainment events such as performances and shows, indoors or outdoors, subject to either 50% capacity or 1,000 indoors or 2,000 outdoors whichever is the lower. People are allowed to meet people from different households outdoors including private gardens and public spaces in accordance with the Rule of 6.

Tier 3 Very High Alert: Theatres, social clubs, pubs, restaurants and other entertainment venues are to close with limited exceptions such as for take-aways. No outdoor events are allowed other than drive-ins. Hotels, B&Bs and other accommodation is closed other than for long term residents and for reasonable work and other essential use. No socialising is allowed indoors or outdoors at most public or private venues. The Rule of 6 applies in certain outdoor publicly accessible spaces such as parks, beaches, gardens of heritage sites etc.

Under all tiers the following should be permitted to go ahead:-

- Working in other peoples' homes including in gardens or on doorsteps. This includes making deliveries combined with a performance to one household. The guidelines say working in peoples' homes is allowed 'if necessary'. Carol singing is also allowed under certain conditions.
- Work within schools or education settings as schools will remain open during the lockdown this time. The school should have put the necessary Covid-19 secure measures in place having undertaken risk assessments. Note that a 'school bubble' does not apply outside the school or school organised events.
- Work in Care Homes although there may be other restrictions in place regarding the protection of residents who are usually in vulnerable groups.
- Street performance and busking
- Film and TV Production

Under Tiers 1 and 2 only

- Theatres and other entertainment venues can open for performances and shows up 50% capacity or a maximum of 1000 indoors or 2,000 outdoors (Tier 3) or 4,000 outdoors (Tier 2).
- Touring Tented Circus as per the outdoor capacities above.
- Santa work in shopping centres with Covid-19 secure measures

What are the rules in the other nations of the UK?

Wales: Wales will face new restrictions from Friday 4th December at 6pm. There will be new restrictions to hospitality venues who will no longer be able to serve alcohol and will have to close at 6pm, although take away provision is possible after 6pm. All indoor entertainment venues, including cinemas, will be closed. Theatres and Concert Halls remain closed for public performance by law as they have been since March 2020.

Travel across the border between England and Wales is permitted from the 4th December for leisure reasons as long as you are travelling from a Tier 1 or Tier 2 area of England. Travel from Scotland is limited into Wales to those from Tier 1 or 2. Travel from Northern Ireland, Tier 3 in England and Tier 3 & 4 in Scotland is prohibited.

Bubbles between two households are allowed.

Organised activity, aside from performances to the public, is allowed with limits of 15 people indoors or 30 outdoors as long as covid precautions are taken and the necessary guidance is followed for rehearsals and performance. These limits do not apply to professional performers although rehearsals can only currently lead to live streamed or broadcast performances.

For social meeting there is a 'Rule of 4' in place meaning that 4 people from different households can meet indoors in pubs and other such venues and outdoor but not private gardens or homes.

Scotland: Scotland has had a 5 Protection Level system in place since 2nd November with little or no restrictions in place for Protection Level 0 and severe restrictions for 3 and 4. A rough summary is as follows:-

Protection Level 0 – Most businesses are open. Up to 8 people from 3 households can meet indoors in homes and hospitality settings. Outdoors 15 people from up to 5 households can meet in private gardens and public outdoor spaces including pub gardens. Children under 12 from those households do not count towards that total.

Protection Level 1 – Most businesses are open. Up to 6 people from 2 households can meet indoors in hospitality settings (not homes) and up to 8 people from 3 households outdoors. This includes private gardens as well as public spaces including pub gardens. Children under 12 from those households do not count towards that total.

Protection Level 2 – Pubs and restaurants are subject to restrictions. Alcohol can only be served with food indoors and must be closed by 20.00 with last entry at 19.00. Outdoors alcohol can be served without food. Closing must be by 22.30 with last entry 21.30. Indoor and outdoor socialising is limited to 6 people from 2 households in hospitality settings but not allowed indoors in homes. The same numbers are allowed to meet socially outdoors including private gardens. Children under 12 from those households do not count towards that total.

Protection Level 3 – Pubs are closed. Some cafés and restaurants are allowed to open under certain conditions but cannot serve alcohol. Such businesses must close by 18.00 with last entry 17.00. Socialising rules are the same as protection level 2 above.

Protection Level 4 – In addition to the above pubs and restaurants are closed except for take-away services.

What entertainment work can go ahead?

- Nightclubs and adult entertainment venues are closed at all levels.
- In protection levels 0 and 1 leisure and entertainment venues are able to open to restricted capacities and in line with events sector guidance. In levels 2, 3 and 4 theatres, concert halls and comedy clubs are closed.
- Subject to the limits on social gatherings entertainment in private gardens may be possible at all levels but limited to the children under 12 from 5 households at level 0, 3 households at level 1 and 2 households at levels 3 and 4.
- Film and TV Production in line with industry guidance

Northern Ireland: From Friday 27th November Northern Ireland entered another lockdown with most of the hospitality sector closed again along with close contact services and non-essential retail. Previously there was a four-week circuit break lockdown around the autumn

half term which had ended a week before this current lockdown following which the country had reopened.

Further sources of information

England

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/full-list-of-local-restriction-tiers-by-area>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/guidance-for-the-christmas-period>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/new-national-restrictions-from-5-november>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/rule-of-six-comes-into-effect-to-tackle-coronavirus>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/performing-arts>

Scotland

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-protection-levels/pages/protection-levels-by-area/>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-events-sector-guidance/>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-film-and-high-end-tv-production/>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-what-you-can-and-cannot-do/pages/sport-culture-and-leisure/>

Wales

<https://gov.wales/rehearsing-performing-and-taking-part-performing-arts-guidance-phased-return-html#section-55188>

<https://gov.wales/coronavirus-regulations-guidance#section-46358>

Northern Ireland

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-regulations-and-localised-restrictions>

Equity Contacts

England, Mike Day mday@equity.org.uk

Wales, Simon Curtis scurtis@equity.org.uk

Scotland and Northern Ireland, Adam Adnyana aadnyana@equity.org.uk

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