



Guidance for Performing Arts PA

Excerpts taken from the Government website relating to Guidance for the Performing Arts Sector and in relation to the Roadmap Out of Lockdown.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>BUSINESSES & VENUES</u>	PG 2-3
<u>PERFORMING ARTS PROFESSIONALS</u>	PG 3
<u>OUTDOOR EVENTS</u>	PG 3-4
ORGANISED OUTDOOR EVENTS	PG3- 4
<u>NON-PROFESSIONAL PERFORMING ARTS</u>	PG 4-5
HOW TO TAKE PART IN NON-PROFESSIONAL PERFORMING ARTS ACTIVITY	PG 4
WHAT YOU SHOULD DO	PG 4-5
AVOID RAISED VOICES AND TAKE THE FOLLOWING STEPS TO MINIMISE RISK	PG 5
<u>PRE-PRODUCTION AND REHEARSALS</u>	PG 5-6
CASTING & AUDITIONS	PG 5
REHEARSALS AND PRE-PRODUCTION	PG 6
<u>BACK OF HOUSE PROCESSES</u>	PG 7
SET DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION	PG 7
STAGE MANAGEMENT AND BACKSTAGE	PG 7
<u>PERFORMANCE SETTINGS</u>	PG 8
SOUND AND LIGHTING	PG 8
<u>CLOSE CONTACT SERVICES</u>	PG 8-9
COSTUMES AND CONCERT DRESS	PG 8-9
HAIR AND MAKEUP	PG 9
<u>ROADMAP OUT OF LOCKDOWN</u>	PG 10-13
STEP 2 - NOT BEFORE 12 APRIL 2021	PG 10
STEP 3 - NOT BEFORE 17 MAY 2021	PG 11-12
STEP 4 - NOT BEFORE 21 JUNE 2021	PG12- 13

Performing arts

Guidance for people who work in performing arts, including arts organisations, venue operators and participants. (ENGLAND)

Working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19)

From: [Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy](#) and [Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport](#)

Published: 11 May 2020

Updated: 15 April 2021, [see all updates](#)

BUSINESSES AND VENUES

Concert halls and dedicated grassroots music venues must remain closed to the public.

Theatres, cinemas and circuses must remain closed to the public, except for outdoor drive-in events, which are permitted.

Performing arts professionals can continue to rehearse and train, and perform (without an audience) for broadcast or recording purposes. Performing arts venues, including theatres and concert halls can be used for these purposes. Indoor dance and fitness studios are open at Step 2 for professional and non-professional use (in line with social contact rules).

Performance events with an audience are not permitted (indoor or outdoor) before Step 3 (no earlier than 17 May). Venues that are permitted to open at Step 2 and can operate as hospitality venues (such as grassroots music venues) may, like other hospitality venues, provide ancillary performance activity, such as live music, for their seated food and/or drink customers outdoors at Step 2. Venues should not admit an audience in addition to seated food and/or drink customers, and should not charge for admission to any ancillary performance. Any venue operating as a hospitality venue should follow the guidance for restaurants, pubs, bars and takeaway services, which includes the need to ensure that music is kept at a low volume and that customers should not be encouraged to sing, dance or gather around the performance.

Venues which remain closed are permitted to open if necessary for a limited number of legally permitted reasons:

- formal education (for example, hiring a space to a school or college)
- use in government pilots
- enabling access by the site owners or managers, or staff or people authorised by them (including volunteers) for maintenance where this is reasonably necessary
- work to ensure readiness to open, such as receiving deliveries of supplies

- providing essential voluntary or public services (including the provision of food banks or other support to the homeless or vulnerable, hosting blood donation sessions, or support in an emergency)
- making a film, television programme, audio programme or audio-visual advertisement
- voting or related activities

You cannot open your venue for other reasons. This includes non-professional activity (such as amateur choirs and music groups).

PERFORMING ARTS PROFESSIONALS

During the current national restrictions, anyone who can work from home should do so. If it is unreasonable for you to work from home, you can go to your place of work.

Performing arts venues can be used for rehearsals, training and performances for broadcast or recording.

Performances with an audience are not permitted (indoor or outdoor).

Non-professional activities (such as amateur choirs and orchestras) are not permitted indoors. Outdoors, non-professional performing arts activity is permitted, within the legal gathering limits. People can take part in non-professional performing arts activity outdoors in groups of up to 6 people, or as a group of 2 households. A group made up of 2 households can include more than 6 people, but only where all members of the group are from the same 2 households (each household can include an existing support bubble, if eligible) or an exemption applies. Social distancing should be maintained between people who do not live together or share a bubble. You can find more information in the section on non-professional performing arts.

2.3 OUTDOOR EVENTS

Where possible, rehearsals, performances and events should be outdoors. Holding events outdoors can lower transmission risk compared to enclosed indoor spaces, however transmission can still occur. It is important that you take steps to mitigate crowding, contact and other risks you identify through your risk assessment.

Under the coronavirus restrictions, most outdoor performing arts venues are closed, but can be used by performing arts professionals for rehearsals, training and performances for broadcast or recording. **Performances with an audience are not permitted.**

ORGANISED OUTDOOR EVENTS

Some outdoor events organised by a business, charity, public body or similar organisation, are permitted at Step 2 providing that:

Event organisers follow all relevant COVID-secure guidance depending on the type of event. This guidance varies according to the type of event and could include outdoor events, funfairs, performing arts or sports events.

Audiences (other than those attending a drive-in) are not permitted at this time

Organisers and attendees adhere to all legal requirements including maintaining group sizes permitted by the social contact restriction at the relevant step in the roadmap, and preventing mixing between groups; enforcing social distancing guidelines; and mandating face coverings in indoor areas where required.

All reasonable action has been taken by the event organiser to mitigate risk to public health.

Permitted events could include drive-in events at theatres, cinemas and circuses (such as cinema screenings, or comedy, dance, music and theatre shows). Drive-in events must take place outdoors, and attendees should refrain from leaving the area where they are parked, unless accessing onsite facilities. When visiting drive-in events,

people must not share their vehicle with those outside of their household or support bubble unless an exemption applies (such as providing care for a vulnerable person).

2.4 NON-PROFESSIONAL PERFORMING ARTS

Non-professionals are defined as those participating in the performing arts other than for work purposes, such as in an amateur choir, orchestra or music group.

COVID-19 spreads from person to person through small droplets, aerosols and direct contact. Singing, shouting and physical activity increase the risk of transmission through small droplets and aerosols. If singing does take place, steps should be taken to reduce the risk of transmission, including limiting the number of people participating and increasing ventilation. The cumulative effect of aerosol transmission means the more people involved, the higher the risk of transmission.

DCMS commissioned scientific studies to develop the scientific evidence on singing, wind instruments and performance activities. The resulting SAGE paper can be found [here](#), as well as a recent paper on principles for safer singing published by the PHE-led Singing and Wind Instrument Group. Organisations should consider its findings and follow the mitigations in this guidance as a result.

HOW TO TAKE PART IN NON-PROFESSIONAL PERFORMING ARTS ACTIVITY

Non-professional performing arts activity is permitted outdoors, within the legal gathering limits.

People should only take part in non-professional performing arts activities outdoors in groups of up to 6 people, or as a group of 2 households. A group made up of 2 households can include more than 6 people, but only where all members of the group are from the same 2 households (each household can include an existing support bubble, if eligible). Social distancing should be maintained between people who do not live together or share a bubble.

Indoor non-professional performing arts activity is not currently permitted. **You should not take part in non-professional performing arts activity indoors, unless an exemption exists, such as performances which form part of an act of worship (see guidance on places of worship).**

Before undertaking non-professional performing arts activity, you should consider the case for proceeding (or not) based on any restrictions in your area, the risk involved in the activity and location, and the number and health of participants, particularly if vulnerable individuals are involved.

WHAT YOU SHOULD DO

The list below sets out the key considerations for organisers and performers involved in non-professional performing arts. In addition to these measures, you should also follow the other important steps outlined in this guidance, including preventing unwell people from attending, ensuring a distance of at least 2 metres between any performers, maintaining cleanliness and supporting contact tracing.

Ensure that your activity is permitted. You must adhere to the legal gathering limits and any other restrictions, such as venue closures. Audiences are not permitted at this time. At present you should only engage in activity outdoors.

Ensure that anyone with COVID-19 symptoms (or who has been in contact with others who have symptoms, or who has been told to self-isolate) does not attend events or participate in singing (even if they have no symptoms).

Ensure that social distancing is maintained at all times, including on arrival and departure. This may involve redesigning your activity, for example by spacing singers at least 2 metres apart, ensuring that performers are not face-to-face, and having performers or audience members seated rather than standing (where possible). Direction

can continue to take place during the activity i.e. between a conductor and a group or reflection between actors and directors, but other physical and social interaction is prohibited.

Limit the number of people involved. The cumulative effect of aerosol transmission means that the more people who are involved, the higher the risk of transmission (to each other or an audience). It is therefore advisable to limit the total number of individuals involved in performing arts activity.

Limit the duration of activity as far as possible, including considering the need for breaks and intervals.

AVOID RAISED VOICES AND TAKE THE FOLLOWING STEPS TO MINIMISE RISK

- Avoid face-to-face singing and ensure that social distancing is maintained by spacing singers at least 2 metres apart in all directions. If you apply additional measures (such as wearing face coverings) this distance can be reduced, but there should always be at least 1m between people who do not live together (except where they are part of the same support bubble).

- Reduce the volume of singing and speaking, and use microphones (if available) rather than breath for amplification.

- You can find more information in the guidance on safer singing.

Wear face coverings where possible. You can find more information in the section on face coverings and PPE and the guidance on safer singing.

Ensure that you follow any specific guidance relevant to your activity. For example, the guidance for places of worship where singing is part of an act of worship. Even when in a COVID-secure venue such as a place of worship, individuals must observe guidance on meeting with others safely and the principles set out in the guidance on safer singing.

4.5 PRE-PRODUCTION AND REHEARSALS

You should take steps to minimise risk during training, rehearsals, pre-production and other performance preparations.

CASTING AND AUDITIONS

Use self-taping or online auditions wherever possible to reduce unnecessary contact for those auditioning and workers on-site. A live feed may help reduce numbers of a creative team attending casting and auditions.

Where casting and auditions must take place in-person, take steps to minimise risk to those taking part. Remove waiting rooms where it is not possible to facilitate social distancing, asking people not to arrive ahead of their allocated time slot, and providing clear instruction not to congregate in other areas if waiting.

Consider how to appropriately protect the workers, such as the crew and creative team. This may involve using screens to create a physical barrier (for example, between the casting team or accompanist and candidates), or increasing ventilation through air-conditioning or propping open doors and windows.

Consider the needs of workers and participants with disabilities (such as those who have hearing difficulties) when making adjustments to management of casting and auditions.

REHEARSALS AND PRE-PRODUCTION

Design your production to minimise contact wherever possible. **Avoiding rehearsing and performing face-to-face wherever possible.** Manage call schedules so that only those required are on-site, for example, performers attending rehearsals and performances only when required for their part. Consider using remote options where possible, for example using video-conferencing for auditions and readthroughs.

Ensure social distancing can be maintained between performers, production team members and other workers, and audience members. Organise and design repertoire, rehearsals, training and performances to avoid situations where performers cannot socially distance, wherever feasible. Reduce as far as possible any time that individuals are not able to maintain social distancing. Use phones and radios to manage on-site logistics where possible.

Review rehearsal logistics and take steps to minimise risk. Map out productions in advance of commencing in-person rehearsals, and give performers time to learn lines or parts in advance to minimise the need to carry scripts. Avoid the unnecessary use of shared items such as scripts, for example by displaying scripts onto screens in rehearsal rooms. Minimise the use of shared items such as props in rehearsals or until necessary. Where it is necessary to use shared items, ensure that they are thoroughly cleaned between users. Where possible, avoid raised voices. Consider reducing the volume of speaking and singing during rehearsals and performances, and use microphones (if available) rather than breath for amplification.

Maintain social distancing where possible during training. Avoid any unnecessary training exercises that compromise social distancing guidelines (such as close face-to-face contact). Where it is essential for performers in training to breach social distancing, divide classes and training sessions into small groups and ensure they take place for the minimum possible time.

Review rehearsal, pre-production, performance and other spaces and take steps to minimise transmission risk. **Work outdoors where possible.** Where this is not possible, take steps to mitigate risk in all rehearsal, training and performance areas (such as increasing ventilation and using one-way systems and floor markings to ensure social distancing). **Remove or block access to non-essential common areas such as waiting rooms.** You can find more information in the section on managing your facility.

Consider whether live performing arts can be managed safely (when permitted), and take steps to mitigate risk. This could include using screens and barriers to separate performers from the audience (particularly if performers are likely to spit) and using large, well-ventilated spaces. Consider the use of technology solutions to reduce interactions and ensure social distancing (for example for castings, rehearsals, training and performance).

Design your production to minimise transmission risk, wherever possible. This could mean avoiding high-risk activities, such as singing, or taking steps to mitigate risk. Singing and shouting increase the risk of transmission, so you should only include singing by performers where necessary, and take the following steps to minimise risk:

- **Avoid face-to-face singing and ensure that social distancing is maintained by spacing singers at least 2 metres apart in all directions.** If you apply additional measures or controls (such as wearing face coverings, increasing ventilation or performing outdoors) this distance can be reduced, but **there should always be at least 1m between people who do not live together** or share a support bubble).
- Where possible, reduce the volume of singing during rehearsals and performances, **and use microphones (if available) rather than breath for amplification.** Singing at a high volume can generate 20-30 times more aerosol and droplets than quiet speaking or singing.
- You can find more information in the guidance on safer singing.

Ensure that your production, event or performance has adequate infection controls. This could include screening workers and performers before entry into venues through symptom questionnaires or COVID-19 testing, where

appropriate and available. Where testing is used, this should be supplementary and does not allow you to relax other control measures such as social distancing, hygiene and cleaning requirements.

Ensure you have a clear policy in place for managing reported cases, in line with government guidance and NHS test and trace requirements. You can find more information in the section on COVID-19 cases or outbreaks in the workplace.

4.6 BACK OF HOUSE PROCESSES (SET DESIGN, CONSTRUCTION, STAGE MANAGEMENT AND BACKSTAGE)

You should take steps to minimise risk for back of house roles and settings.

SET DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

Ensure that crew and creative teams can maintain social distancing. Where this is not possible, use fixed teams to minimise contacts and minimise close proximity during setup and transportation.

Consider ways to reduce unnecessary contacts. This could involve using additional trucks for transport of equipment and large items, or increasing the use of mechanical handling equipment such as forklifts to reduce the number of people required to lift heavy cases and scenery.

Allocate sufficient time and workspace for any off-set prep work to be carried out safely. Ensure that as much work as possible takes place off-site, such as pre-fabricating the set which is then assembled and painted on the site. You can find more information in the guidance for factories, plants and warehouses.

STAGE MANAGEMENT AND BACKSTAGE

Restrict the number of people permitted backstage and onstage wherever possible. Consider limiting access to essential workers only.

Review the performance staging and redesign where needed, to minimise risk. This could mean limiting the staging of the performance to the performance or stage area only. Remove any higher-risk activities such as close contact between performers and the audience, and remove directions for the performers or crew to move amongst the audience.

Consider how to manage attendance so that unnecessary contact is limited. For example, not permitting visitors backstage or at the stage door.

Reconfigure staging and backstage areas to minimise contacts. For example, introduce one-way systems and implement schedules for green rooms and crew rooms by fixed teams. Consider how wings can be managed to minimise interaction, such as one-way systems, or allocating dedicated wings for stage managers and dressers.

Limit prop handling to the minimum possible number of people and introduce enhanced cleaning. Props should be thoroughly cleaned after every performance, particularly if touched by multiple people. Where possible, clean props that are handled by different people between uses. You could also consider limiting handling of key props on set to a dedicated crew member and relevant cast only.

Use clear markings to ensure social distancing on and around the stage. Provide markers onstage for musicians and large/static groups so they can maintain social distancing. Mark out a clear route onto the stage for performers, soloists and conductors entering for a performance.

Consider how to manage cover responsibilities to minimise contact. For example, an Assistant Stage Manager covering the book to maintain (where possible) a separation between those operating front of house and back of house.

4.7 PERFORMANCE SETTINGS (SOUNDS, LIGHTING, ORCHESTRAS AND BANDS)

You should take steps to minimise risk during performances.

SOUND AND LIGHTING

Consider how best to minimise risk to staff in sound and lighting. This could involve creating a screen around sound and lighting desks to create a barrier which aerosols do not pass through between the sound team and audience or other crew.

Take particular care where crew are located near audiences (when audiences are permitted). For example, where the sound desk is positioned close to audience seating, consider leaving empty the closest row of seats.

Introduce additional cleaning processes for shared workspaces and equipment. Regularly clean sound and lighting desks, as well as equipment such as mics and battery packs.

Orchestra pits and band areas:

Review the musician workspace in your risk assessment, and take steps to manage risk if needed. Orchestra pits and band areas are often small and tight spaces where social distancing may be difficult, so you should take additional steps to ensure the musicians can work as safely as possible.

If the space is inadequate, consider reducing the number of musicians using the orchestra pit or band area. You could reduce the size of the orchestra or band, or consider other ways to manage the space. For example, you could relocate some or all of the musicians to a different area of the performance space to enable social distancing.

Ensure that social distancing can be maintained wherever possible. Mark up the orchestra pit or band area to enable appropriate social distancing, and ensure all musicians have adequate spacing for their needs. Ensure that there is appropriate distance between musicians and other workers or performers (such as those onstage).

Avoid face-to-face positioning where possible. Face-to-face positions increase the risk of transmission, so consider positioning musicians side-by-side or back-to-back where feasible, or using screens and barriers to separate them. If using screens or barriers, you must take into account any health and safety issues that they could cause (such as increased noise exposure).

4.8 CLOSE CONTACT SERVICES (COSTUMES, CONCERT DRESS, HAIR, MAKEUP)

COSTUMES AND CONCERT DRESS

Staff providing close contact services (such as hair, makeup and costume fittings) must wear a face covering. This is a legal requirement. They should also take additional precautions by ensuring this is a specific type of mask, and wearing PPE such as a visor. You can find more information in the guidance for close contact services.

Complete costume fittings during prep or off-site if possible, to avoid people congregating backstage.

Review costume fitting procedures to ensure that social distancing guidelines can be followed wherever possible. Where assistance is necessary (for example, during quick changes in the wings), avoid face-to-face positioning if possible.

Where social distancing or face-to-face contact is necessary, consider additional measures to minimise risk. This could involve using screened-off cubicles for cast to receive their costume and dress without assistance, and using fixed teams to minimise the number of people the team and performer are exposed to.

Review the guidance for close contact services and follow any measures that will help to mitigate risk in close contact settings.

Reduce cross-contamination risk as much as possible. This could include sanitising and ventilating changing cubicles between use, **separating cast members' costumes in plastic covers**, hanging cast members' own clothes in plastic covers, **laundering costumes between each use and covering individually in plastic covers after cleaning**.

Avoid sharing equipment where possible, for example maintaining a dedicated sewing machine for one user.

Minimise unnecessary costume changes and clothes storage. Consider working with the stage manager and crew to reduce the number of quick changes or increase time between changes. Where appropriate, you could ask musicians and other performers not in full costume to arrive at the venue in the clothes they will wear for the performance.

HAIR AND MAKEUP

Staff providing close contact services (such as hair, makeup and costume fittings) must wear a face covering. This is a legal requirement. They should also take additional precautions by ensuring this is a specific type of mask, and wearing PPE such as a visor. You can find more information in the guidance for close contact services.

Review hair and makeup procedures to allow for additional safety measures. For example, allowing extra time for processes to limit cross-contamination risk, but limiting the amount of time performers spend in a hair and make-up chair whenever possible.

Reconfigure hair and makeup spaces to ensure that social distancing guidelines can be followed wherever possible. Position hair and make-up stations to allow appropriate social distancing, and consider using screens between stations. Avoid face-to-face positioning, wherever possible.

Where social distancing or face-to-face contact is necessary, consider additional measures to minimise risk. This could involve using fixed teams to minimise the number of people the team and performer are exposed to. You could also consider asking performers to do their own hair and makeup where this is practical, or requesting cast and supporting artists to remove their own makeup.

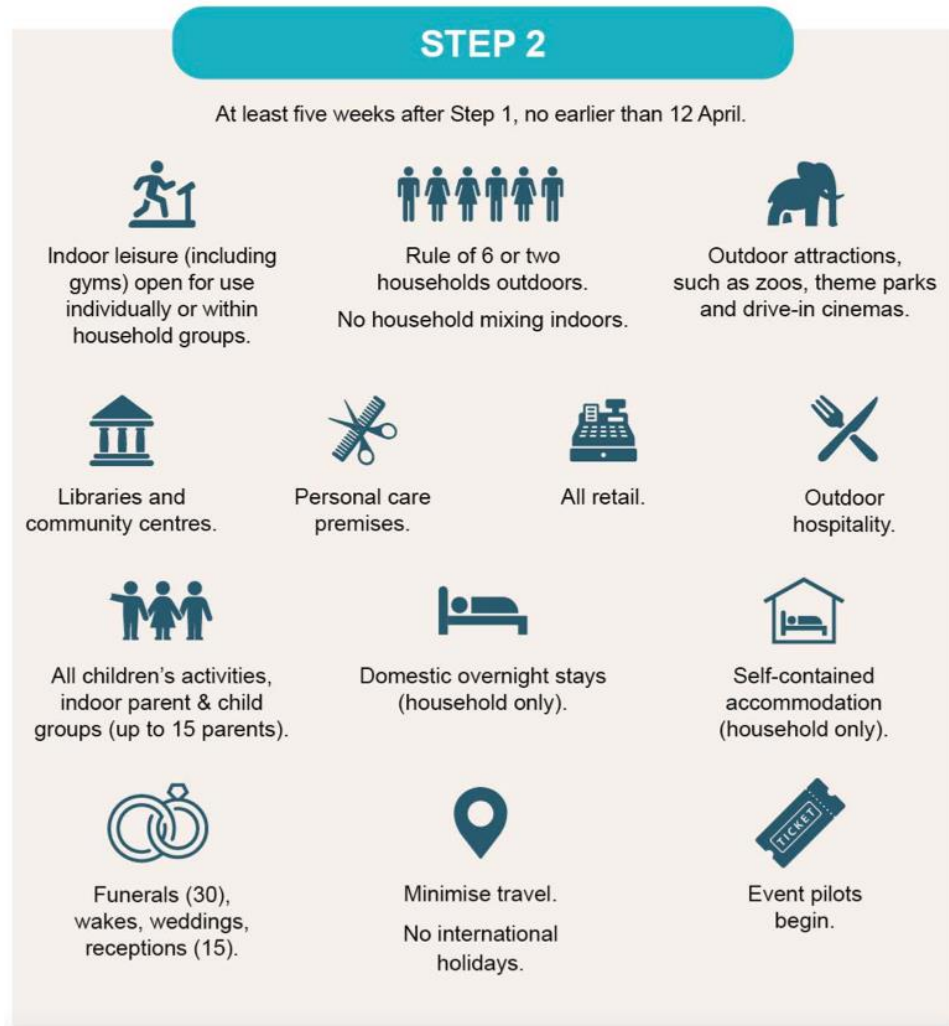
Review the guidance for close contact services and follow any measures that will help to mitigate risk in close contact settings.

Increase equipment and surface hygiene. You should sterilise and disinfect equipment and surfaces after each application. Consider using disposable brushes and applicators, and airborne sanitising sprays if appropriate.

Avoid sharing equipment where possible, for example by supplying pins, disposable brushes for lips and glues where possible. Use minimal equipment and disposable brushes and applicators if appropriate. Consider allocating equipment (such as makeup kits, brushes and hair products) to one cast member, and ensure it is not used on other cast members to avoid cross-contamination. Both dedicated and shared equipment should be cleaned regularly, and sterilised daily (particularly if touched by multiple members of the hair and makeup team).

Roadmap out of Lockdown

STEP 2 - NOT BEFORE 12 APRIL 2021



BUSINESS AND ACTIVITIES

Step 2, which will be no earlier than 12 April, will see the opening of non-essential retail; personal care premises such as hairdressers and nail salons; and public buildings, including libraries and community centres. Indoor leisure facilities such as gyms will also reopen (but only for use by people on their own or in household groups); as will most outdoor attractions and settings including outdoor hospitality venues, zoos, theme parks, and drive-in cinemas. Self-contained accommodation such as campsites and holiday lets, where indoor facilities are not shared with other households, can also reopen.

Hospitality venues will be allowed to serve people outdoors at Step 2 and there will be no need for customers to order a substantial meal with alcoholic drinks and no curfew, although customers must order, eat and drink while seated ('table service'). Wider social contact rules will apply in all these settings to prevent indoor mixing between different households.

EVENTS

While funerals can continue with up to 30 mourners, the number of people able to attend weddings, receptions and commemorative events such as wakes will rise to 15.

STEP 3 - NOT BEFORE 17 MAY 2021



SOCIAL CONTACT

As part of Step 3, no earlier than 17 May, the government will look to continue easing limits on seeing friends and family wherever possible, allowing people to decide on the appropriate level of risk for their circumstances.

This means that most legal restrictions on meeting others outdoors will be lifted - although gatherings of over 30 people will remain illegal. Indoors, the Rule of 6 or 2 households will apply - we will keep under review whether it is safe to increase this.

As soon as possible and by no later than Step 3, we will also update the advice on social distancing between friends and family, including hugging. But until this point, people should continue to keep their distance from anyone not in their household or support bubble.

BUSINESS AND ACTIVITIES

Most businesses in all but the highest risk sectors will be able to reopen. In all sectors, COVID-Secure guidance will remain in place and businesses may not cater for groups bigger than the legal limits. Indoor hospitality will reopen - and as in Step 2, venues will not have to serve a substantial meal with alcoholic drinks; nor will there be a curfew. Customers will, however, have to order, eat and drink while seated.

Other indoor locations to open up in Step 3 include indoor entertainment venues such as cinemas and children's play areas; the rest of the accommodation sector, including hotels, hostels and B&Bs; and indoor adult group sports and exercise classes. The government will also allow some larger performances and sporting events in indoor venues with a capacity of 1,000 people or half-full (whichever is a lower number), and in outdoor venues with a capacity of 4,000 people or half-full (whichever is a lower number). In the largest outdoor seated venues, where crowds can be spread out, up to 10,000 people will be able to attend (or a quarter-full, whichever is lower).

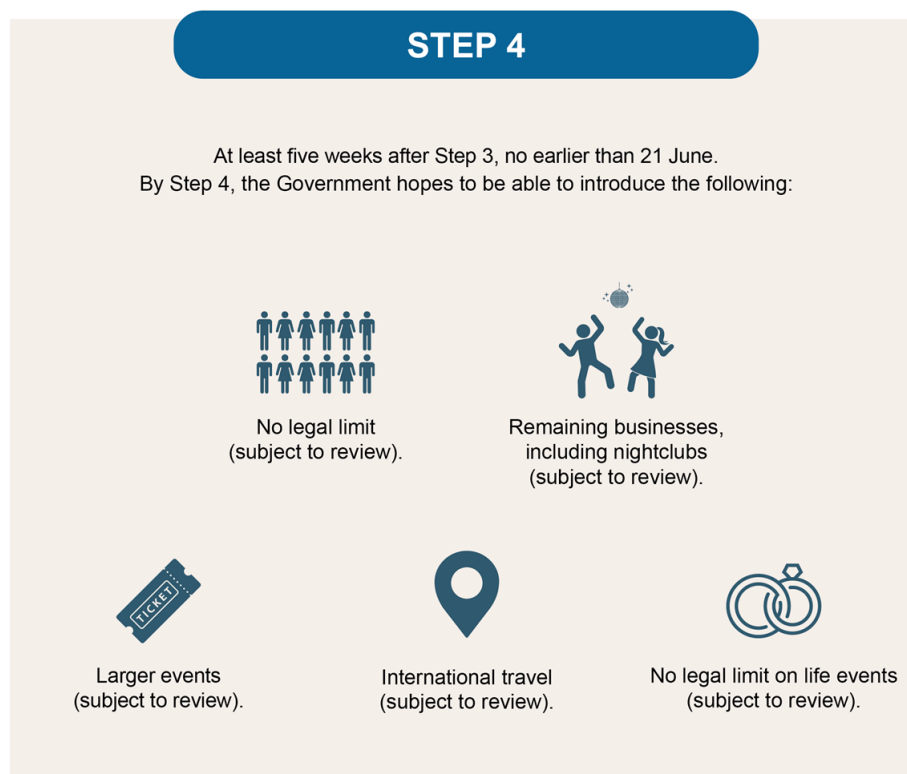
EVENTS

Up to 30 people will be able to attend weddings, receptions and wakes, as well as funerals. This limit will also apply to other types of significant life events including bar mitzvahs and christenings.

REVIEW OF SOCIAL DISTANCING

Finally, before Step 4 begins, the government will complete a review of social distancing and other long-term measures that have been put in place to cut transmission. This will inform decisions on the timing and circumstances under which the rules on 1 metre plus, the wearing of face coverings and other measures may be lifted. This will also inform guidance on working from home – which should continue wherever possible until this review is complete.

STEP 4 - NOT BEFORE 21 JUNE 2021



SOCIAL CONTACT

By Step 4 which will take place no earlier than 21 June; the government hopes to be in a position to remove all legal limits on social contact.

BUSINESS, ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

We hope to reopen remaining premises, including nightclubs, and ease the restrictions on large events and performances that apply in Step 3. This will be subject to the results of a scientific Events Research Programme to test the outcome of certain pilot events through the spring and summer, where we will trial the use of testing and other techniques to cut the risk of infection. The same Events Research Programme will guide decisions on whether all limits can be removed on weddings and other life events.

As we move through each of these phases in the roadmap, we must all remember that COVID-19 remains a part of our lives. We are going to have to keep living our lives differently to keep ourselves and others safe. We must carry on with 'hands, face, space'. Comply with the COVID-Secure measures that remain in place. Meet outdoors when we can and keep letting fresh air in. Get tested when needed. Get vaccinated when offered. If we all continue to play our part, we will be that bit closer to a future that is more familiar.