

Appendix B: Timeline of UK and devolved country restrictions, including national lockdowns and other social distancing measures in response to COVID-19 pandemic

Table 1: Timeline of UK and devolved country restrictions, including national lockdowns and other social distancing measures in response to the COVID-19 international pandemic (1)

Date (all dates 2020)	
10 February	The total number of recorded COVID-19 cases in the UK reaches 8.
25 February	Government guidance states that travellers returning from Hubei, Iran, and certain regions of South Korea should self-isolate on reaching home or their destination, even if they have no symptoms.
2 March	The UK government holds a COBRA meeting to discuss its preparations and response to the virus.
12 March	The UK Chief Medical Officers raise the risk to the UK from moderate to high. The government advises that anyone with a new continuous cough or a fever should self-isolate for 7 days.
15 March	The UK government announces a package of measures, advising those who are or may be at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19 to be particularly stringent in following social distancing measures.
16 March	Prime Minister Boris Johnson advises everyone in the UK against non-essential travel and contact with others, to work from home if possible and avoid visiting social venues such as pubs, clubs or theatres. Pregnant women, people over the age of 70 and those with certain health conditions are urged to consider the advice particularly important and will be asked to self-isolate within days. This will later be known as shielding advice (see 21 March).
20 March	Prime Minister Boris Johnson orders all cafes, pubs and restaurants to close from the evening of 20 March, except for takeaway food (2).

	All UK schools close from the afternoon of 20 March, except for those looking after the children of key workers and vulnerable children.
21 March	The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Business Closure) (England) Regulations 2020 (SI 327) come into legal effect at 2pm, enforcing the closure in England of businesses selling food and drink for consumption on the premises. GPs are first asked to identify their patients who are 'most clinically vulnerable' for whom NHS England will send a standard letter over the coming weeks asking them to 'shield', that is, stay at home at all times and avoid any close contact for at least 12 weeks.
23 March	The UK public are instructed that they must stay at home, except for certain very limited purposes – shopping for basic necessities; for one form of exercise a day; for any medical need; and to travel to and from work when absolutely necessary. This is viewed as the start of the first national lockdown due to COVID-19.
28 March	The UK and devolved governments begin to offer a 'direct-to-doorstep' weekly food parcel delivery service for all those who are extremely clinically vulnerable who require support getting essential supplies (that is, those shielding).
16 April	Announcement that lockdown restrictions would continue for "at least" another 3 weeks.
10 May	Prime Minister Boris Johnson asks those who cannot work from home to go to work, avoiding public transport if possible; and encourages the taking of "unlimited amounts" of outdoor exercise, and allowing driving to outdoor destinations within England. The 'Stay at Home' slogan is changed to 'Stay Alert' as part of this statement.
11 May	COVID-19 5-Level alert system announced; UK on Level 4 (severe risk, high transmission), moving towards Level 3 (substantial risk, general circulation).
14 and 19 May	Lockdown in Northern Ireland begins to ease with groups of 6 people being allowed to meet outdoors.
29 May	Easing of lockdown measures in Scotland with 2 households able to meet outdoors in groups of up to 8.
1 June	Car and caravan showrooms, outdoor sports amenities and outdoor non-food markets may reopen in England. The prohibitions on leaving home are replaced by a prohibition on staying overnight away from home, with certain specific

	exceptions. Groups of up to 6 people from more than one household able to meet outdoors in England Gatherings of people from more than one household prohibited entirely indoors, with exceptions including education. Primary schools partially reopen in England.
12 June	Non-essential retailers reopen in Northern Ireland.
13 June	In England and Northern Ireland, single-adult households (containing or not containing children) may now link with one other household of any size, allowing them to be treated as one for the purpose of permitted gatherings. This also allows the members of one household to stay overnight at the home of the other. The government refers to this as a “support bubble”. The rules on gatherings are also relaxed to allow medical appointments and births to be accompanied, and to permit some visits to people in hospital, hospices and care homes.
15 June	General reopening in England of non-essential retail shops and public-facing businesses apart from those that are on a list of specific exclusions such as restaurants, bars, pubs, nightclubs, most cinemas, theatres, museums, hairdressers, indoor sports and leisure facilities. Secondary schools partially reopen in England.
19 June	The UK's COVID-19 Alert Level is lowered from Level 4 (severe risk, high transmission) to Level 3 (substantial risk, general circulation), following the agreement of all 4 Chief Medical Officers.
22 June	Easing of lockdown restrictions in Wales – non-essential retailers can open and restrictions on outdoor sports lifted.
4 July	Social distancing rules for England relaxed, with people required to stay a metre apart but advised to maintain 2 metres distance whenever possible. Pubs, restaurants, hotels and hairdressers can reopen, but social distancing must be maintained. Spas, nail bars and gyms are among premises that must remain closed. Two households can also meet up indoors and need not be exclusive to each other. Weddings with up to 30 guests permitted.
10 to 15 July	Lockdown restrictions in Wales and Scotland relaxed 2 households allowed to meet indoors in Scotland. Pubs, restaurants, holiday accommodation, and hairdressers in Scotland can reopen. Pubs, bars, cafes and restaurants can open outdoors in Wales.

17 July	Further easing of lockdown restrictions for England, with plans for a "significant return to normality" by Christmas. The new rules allow people to use public transport for non-essential journeys with immediate effect, while employers will have more discretion over their workplaces from 1 August.
24 July	Face coverings become compulsory in shops and most other enclosed public places in England. (Similar policies came into effect in Scotland on 10 July, in Northern Ireland on 10 August, and in Wales on 14 September).
27 July	Launch of the Better Health campaign, The campaign targets groups with higher rates of obesity who are at increased risk of poor COVID 19 outcomes.
30 July	In a bid to avoid a resurgence of COVID-19, the period for which someone testing positive for, or showing signs of, the virus is required to self-isolate is extended from 7 to 10 days.
31 July	The shielding programme for Northern Ireland is paused.
1 August	The shielding programme is paused for England and Scotland (although it continued in areas where extra precautions have been introduced).
3 August	The month-long UK wide "Eat Out to Help Out" scheme begins, offering a 50% discount on meals at indoor venues, 3 days per week, with the remainder of the cost picked up by the government. Pubs, restaurants, cafes reopen for indoor customers in Wales.
10 August	Data collection for the Diet, Nutrition and Physical Activity study in 2020: a follow up study during COVID-19 (this study) commences.
11 August	Pupils in Scotland return to school (for the first time since March).
16 August	The shielding programme ends in Wales.
28 August	The UK government announces the launch of a drive to encourage people to return to their workplaces, starting in the first week of September.
31 August	Eat Out to Help Out scheme ends.
1 to 7 Sept	The majority of schools in England, Wales and Northern Ireland reopen for the autumn term.
9 Sept	New rules regarding social gatherings in England from 14 September are outlined by Prime Minister Boris Johnson in a government press conference, alongside details of new legal requirements for data gathering on behalf of venues, social distancing marshals to enforce restrictions, and a "moonshot"

	plan to further control the virus with greatly expanded mass virus testing.
11 Sept	The Welsh Government announces the compulsory wearing of face coverings in shops and other indoor spaces from 14 September and indoor gatherings of more than 6 people will be banned.
14 Sept	"Rule of six", limiting indoor or outdoor social gatherings to no more than 6 people, comes into force in England.
21 Sept	The UK coronavirus alert Level is upgraded to Level 4, meaning transmission is "high or rising exponentially".
22 Sept	New restrictions announced for England. These include a requirement that all shop staff wear face coverings, and a limit on weddings to 15 people. Initial fines for rule breaking are increased from £100 to £200. Similar measures are announced for other parts of the UK by the leaders of the devolved governments. In Scotland, a ban on visiting other households is extended across the whole of Scotland from the following day. In Wales, First Minister Mark Drakeford announces new restrictions, bringing Wales into line with England. In Northern Ireland households are prevented from mixing and groups of no more than 6 are allowed to meet.
24 Sept	New regulations in England, requiring businesses selling food and drink (including cafes, bars, pubs, restaurants and takeaways), indoor leisure centres and facilities and funfairs, theme park, adventure parks and activities to be closed between the hours of 22:00 and 05:00. Food delivery services are exempt. Similar regulations in Scotland and Wales.
30 Sept	Bars, pubs and restaurants are ordered to close in Northern Ireland.
14 Oct	New 3-tier system of restrictions for England comes into force. 3 levels of restrictions – medium, high or very high are applied to geographic areas. New restrictions in Northern Ireland are announced with hospitality businesses limited to takeaways only from 16 October and schools will be closed for 2 weeks from 19 October.
19 Oct	The Welsh Government announces a short lockdown from 23 October to 9 November, during which pubs, restaurants and hotels will close and people will be told to stay at home.

23 Oct	First Minister Nicola Sturgeon unveils Scotland's 5-tier COVID-19 system that will come into effect from 2 November.
31 Oct	Boris Johnson holds a Downing Street press conference at which he announces a second lockdown for England, for 4 weeks from Thursday 5 November to Wednesday 2 December.
31 Oct	Data collection for this study ends.

References

1. This table builds on the information published in the [Grocery Purchasing Report](#) (viewed on 13 August 2021). Information regarding devolved nations and February 2020 and October 2020 have been added. Information for this table was also taken from [Wikipedia](#) (viewed on 8 July 2021).
2. Cafes, pubs and restaurants could stay open throughout the pandemic for takeaways and food delivery services.