

## PM's roadmap out of England's lockdown revealed

**On 22 February 2021, Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced the four steps that will allow England's coronavirus lockdown restrictions to be lifted. We explore what employers should know below:**

- Johnson has announced a roadmap out of lockdown, in place since 5 January 2021, by way of four steps with at least 5 weeks between them – 4 weeks for data collection and analysis, and 1 week for notice of any changes.
- Step 1 contains two key dates. 8 March 2021 will be when all schools and further education institutions can reopen, and from 29 March 2021, outdoor sports facilities, open air swimming pools, and basketball courts can also reopen.
- Step 2, no earlier than 12 April 2021, all non essential shops can re-open – e.g. gyms and pubs (outdoors).
- Step 3, no earlier than 17 May 2021, pubs and restaurants (indoors), hotels, and theatres can reopen.
- Finally, step 4 will happen no earlier than 21 June 2021 when all businesses will be allowed to reopen, including nightclubs.
- Johnson has emphasised that these dates should be used to determine the earliest that businesses can reopen, not as a definite timeline.
- It has also been confirmed that shielding will continue until the end of March 2021 and that all workers should continue to work from home until this guidance can be reviewed, on a date yet to be confirmed.
- The Government has also stated that it will not remove support packages to protect jobs/livelihoods.

### A partial re-opening of schools has begun in Wales

Children aged between three and seven have returned to face-to-face teaching in Wales from Monday 22 February 2021, mirroring similar provisions implemented in Scotland. These developments form the first part of plans to relax current coronavirus restrictions in Wales, which were unveiled last week. As with other parts of Britain, this will be a gradual process and could be subject to changes as time goes on.

#### Did you know?

Working parents who haven't been able to work from home will have likely been on leave, furlough, or reduced hours. Now employers who have stayed open will be able to get some staff back to work.

### Many more people asked to shield in England

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) has issued revised guidance on shielding. Up to 1.7 million people in England have now been identified to be clinically extremely vulnerable, in addition to the 2.3 million people already on the shielding list. This news comes as the DHSC has identified new technology that can help to identify people in England who are likely to become severely ill with Covid-19.

#### Did you know?

Shielders are advised to work from home, but even where this is not possible, they are still not expected to attend work. In this case, shielders can be placed on furlough or on statutory sick pay.

### Uber drivers are workers, Supreme Court has ruled

The Supreme Court has unanimously dismissed Uber's appeal in its much anticipated judgement as it holds that Uber's drivers are indeed workers. The appeal concerned the employment status of two private hire Uber drivers. The main question raised was whether these Uber drivers are "workers", or if they are "self-employed", for the purposes of employment legislation which gives "workers" certain employment rights.

#### Did you know?

Despite what the terms of a contract might say, employment tribunals have the ability to assess if the relationship between the parties does not reflect what is outlined in the contract.

This roadmap is good news for employers as they will now have some direction for the future of their business; however, this is dependent on how the pandemic progresses. For further advice, contact our 24-hour Advisory Service for up-to-date guidance on this and more.

Please contact the 24 Hour Advice Service for advice on your specific situation before acting on the information in this publication.