



05 January 2021

RENEWED NATIONAL LOCKDOWN RESTRICTIONS

I hope you managed to enjoy some respite during the festive period. As I'm sure you will be aware, the Prime Minister announced a national lockdown last night, renewing the message to the public to stay at home and providing a stark reminder of the continued impact of COVID-19 on all of us.

In light of these increased restrictions, I wanted to reassure you that the exceptions that we have become accustomed to remain in place. As we heard during the Prime Minister's address, the messaging is clear that **you can leave home to avoid injury or illness or to escape risk of harm, such as domestic abuse**. I know you will continue to pass this message onto survivors and victims accessing your services and we will continue to reiterate this message in any public communications.

As has been the case during the response to the pandemic, many of you continue to be classed as 'key' or 'critical workers'. The guidance is clear that **critical workers** include those delivering key public services, such as:

- those essential to the running of the justice system
- religious staff
- **charities and workers delivering key frontline services**
- those responsible for the management of the deceased
- journalists and broadcasters who are providing public service broadcasting

For those delivering therapeutic services or support groups in person, these activities will not count as a breach of the 'stay at home' rules as long as they are in compliance with the below:

- Support groups that have to be delivered in person can continue with up to 15 participants where formally organised to provide mutual aid, therapy or any other form of support - but they must take place at a premises other than a private home.

In all circumstances, in all settings, vulnerable children and young people and **the children of critical workers should have access to full-time educational provision**.

Under the latest guidance, courts and tribunals continue to be an essential public service and all those involved in keeping them running, participating in legal proceedings or required to attend court are critical workers. This definition applies to all those who work in courts and tribunals, as well as jurors and public users such as victims and witnesses. As such, they are permitted to attend their place of work when necessary, to travel, to stay overnight in accommodation and to access school places for children.

I appreciate that this is a testing start to the new year and one which we had hoped would not be necessary. Thank you for continuing to deliver your life-saving services in the most challenging of circumstances and we will continue to support you in any way we can.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Catherine Hinwood'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name 'Catherine' being more prominent and the last name 'Hinwood' following in a similar style.

CATHERINE HINWOOD