



Angling Trust

Tier 4 Update



New Covid Guidance for Tier 4 was issued on 19th December 2020, following the Prime Minister's announcement, and the regulations were published the following day. We have taken advice and can provide these formal Angling Trust guidelines for the benefit of anglers, angling clubs and fisheries who now find themselves in a Tier 4 area or who have fisheries in multiple tiers. All national governing bodies are tasked by Sport England with this responsibility.

In drawing up these guidelines we have examined carefully what is specified in the regulations and what remains as government advice. However, we urge all anglers to act within the spirit of the collective battle against this dreadful Coronavirus which is having such a devastating impact on our lives, our economy and our NHS. We are fortunate that even under Tier 4 restrictions angling remains a permitted activity. It is important that as anglers we continue to practice our sport safely and responsibly and maintain social distancing at all times.

The Tier 4 regulations are broadly similar to the 2nd national lockdown in that it is an offence to leave home without a 'reasonable excuse'. Among the 16 categories set out is the provision for 'Exercise and Recreation'. More specifically 'outdoor recreation' in parks, countryside and outdoor public spaces with one other person, not in your household or support bubble. It is under this provision that angling remains a permissible activity and a

'reasonable excuse' to be outside of your home. Once again no time limits have been placed on how long you can fish for although you should return home at the end of your trip.

As in the national lockdown, the Government have banned virtually all grass roots sporting competitions in Tier 4 areas. So unfortunately, and regardless of the ability to run angling competitions with no form of 'gathering', the new regulations mean that any form of competition including more than two people from different households is prohibited.

The Government have made clear in their guidance, rather than in regulation, that they do not wish to see travel into or out of Tier 4 areas and we encourage anglers to respect this, notwithstanding the obvious anomalies where a County boundary might divide a fishery or separate a club carpark from the water it serves.

The guidance states that you can leave home for the purpose of: "spending time or exercising outdoors. This should be done locally wherever possible, but you can travel a short distance within your Tier 4 area to do so if necessary (for example, to access an open space)". We want anglers to continue to enjoy their fishing safely but please do so as locally as possible whatever tier you are living in.

[Full Government Guidance here](#)

Please be aware that the new Tier 4 regulations give a specific power to police constables and police support officers (PCSOs), where they 'consider that a person is outside the place where they are living' in contravention of the restriction on movement, to 'direct that person to return to the place where they are living'. So even if commonsense dictates that visiting your local fishery situated just outside your Tier 4 area is more sensible than driving a further distance in the opposite direction it is possible that a police officer may take a different view. Failure to comply with a direction could make you liable for a fine.

IMPACTS ON ANGLING IN TIER 4

- Outdoor recreation remains a 'reasonable excuse' to leave your home so going fishing locally with one other, outside of your household or support bubble, is permissible.
- The regulations are a return to lockdown in Tier 4 meaning no sporting gatherings including fishing matches.

- Travelling to fish should be local 'wherever possible' and entering or leaving a Tier 4 area is actively discouraged within government guidance.
- Tackle shops and other stores can still remain open to operate a click and collect service.
- Outdoor facilities such as fisheries can remain open.
- No time limits have been placed on outdoor recreation so night fishing remains permissible, as previously confirmed in writing by both DEFRA and DCMS.
- Voluntary or paid fishery management work, including bailiffing and maintenance work, remain a legitimate reason to leave home.
- Charter boats can continue to operate in Tier 4 areas but with only one client.
- Angling coaching and guiding can continue to operate in Tier 4 areas but with only one client.
- The police have powers of direction to order people in breach of the regulations: 'to return to the place where they are living'.

The rules for Tiers 1, 2 & 3 remain in place and can be found [here](#).

Details of Covid restrictions and how they affect angling in Wales can be found [here](#).

