

UPDATED: COVID-19 Guidance for Gurdwaras and Sikh Community

Tuesday 10th November 2020

FULL LOCKDOWN FROM 5th NOVEMBER - 2nd DECEMBER 2020.

Updates:

1. Funerals must have no more than 30 people attending the crematorium and a maximum of 15 people attending the *Bhog* of *Sehaj Paath* at the Gurdwara.
2. *Sangat* can continue to come to the Gurdwara for *Darshan of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Jee* on '**Bandhi Chorh Diwas**' (**Diwali**) and the '**Parkash Purab of Sri Guru Nanak Dev Jee**' following the below guidance.
3. *Sangat* should come to the Gurdwara for individual prayer only (even on the above occasions). Gurdwara Management should allow *sangat* to enter rotationally for a limited time, as is the practise at many historic *asthaans*. *Sehaj Paath*, *Akhand Paath* etc can still be done if broadcasting or livestreaming for the benefit of *sangat* at home.
4. Gurdwaras are able to hold *diwaan* (Paath/Kirtan/Katha) to live stream or broadcast. Ideally, this should happen separately to *main divaan hall* but this is not compulsory.
5. Anand Karaj is still not permitted with the exception of those in the exceptional circumstances of someone not expected to recover from a serious illness.

Background

In response to this worsening situation, the UK Government has announced tougher action with nationwide restrictions to slow down the spread of the virus. This means 4 weeks of full lockdown from November 5th to December 2nd. This may be extended if there is not enough reduction in COVID-19.

The measures will be imposed across England and **will replace** the recently introduced three-tier 'traffic light' system used locally from October 12th.

Introduction

This guidance should be read with previous guidance issued by the Sikh Council UK, which can be found on our website (www.sikhcouncil.co.uk).

General hygiene and safety advice remains paramount and is the same as in previous guidance.

Please see the **latest** updated Government guidance applicable from November 5th:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/new-national-restrictions-from-5-november>

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Each Gurdwara is strongly advised to apply this guidance with reference to its own specific circumstances, including its size and type of activities, how it is organised, operated, managed and regulated.

It is the responsibility of the Gurdwara Management Committee to ensure that it carries out a risk assessment in relation to the safety of each function during the current pandemic of COVID-19.

Gurdwara Management committees are advised to seek the advice of local Sikh Healthcare Professionals and adopt best governance, with an appointed covid-19 lead.

Anand Karaj

Anand Karaj cannot take place until at least 2nd December 2020 with the exception of those in the exceptional circumstances of someone not expected to recover from a serious illness.

Funerals

Funerals must have no more than 30 people attending the crematorium and a maximum of 15 people attending the *Bhog* of *Sehaj Paath* at the Gurdwara.

Please refer to detailed Guidance on Funerals issued by SCUUK (1-4-20) for further information.

Sangat coming to the Gurdwara

Gurdwaras can and should remain open for 'Darshan' of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Jee as individual prayer is allowed.

Practically, *sangat* is allowed to attend the Gurdwara, 'mathatek' and sit in the darbar sahib and engage in individual prayer, for example, by reciting MoolMantar, Nitnem, Sukhmani Sahib or Rehras Sahib etc(on their own).

***Face coverings should be worn at all times.**

You should take into account and include:

- limits for Sangat members entering and sitting in darbar sahib - this should be decided on the basis of the capacity following an assessment of risk.
- people should sit in darbar sahib with 2m social distancing.
- *sevadars* monitoring likely pinch points and busy areas (such as entrances, exits)
- one-way routes inside with an alternative exit.

Daily Maryada

Gurdwaras should continue their daily Maryada and record or "live stream" *Kirtan*, *Katha* or any *Paath*, thus enabling people to watch and worship online.

Langar

Langar should not be served to eat in the Gurdwara. Gurdwaras can continue to offer *langar*, like food banks, to *sangat* and the wider-community as they were doing during the first national lockdown period.

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NHS Test and Trace

Gurdwaras can consider participating in the Test and Trace system by keeping a temporary record of visitors for 21 days (this is not compulsory) or display official NHS QR code posters. We recommend that consent is taken. **NHS Test and Trace may request your help in contact tracing and in the investigation of local outbreaks.**

Mental health support

Faith helps people cope and make meaning, especially during times of difficulty. We appreciate that this second lockdown may lead to a rise in mental health issues. Many of us will feel lonely, isolated or anxious.

***Sikh your Mind* provides a support line for mental health support to Sikhs. Freephone from 7pm until 10pm, daily, on 0333 210 1021.**

Further Information

This guidance has been issued by **Sikh Council UK** in partnership with **Sikh Doctors' Association**.

Please do not hesitate to contact us for further advice: info@sikhcouncil.co.uk or 07703325038

For detailed information on preventing the spread of COVID-19 in Gurdwaras please contact:
Dr Sukhdev Singh (Chairman Sikh Doctors' Association/ Executive Committee Member SCUk)
sukhdev.singh1@nhs.net