

**UPDATED: COVID-19 Guidance for Gurdwaras and Sikh Community**

**Wednesday 2nd December 2020**

**This guidance takes effect from 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2020.**

**Background**

The Government have replaced the second national lockdown with a revised three-tier ‘traffic light’ system:

**Tier 1: Medium alert                      Tier 2: High alert                      Tier 3: Very High alert**

Please visit the Governments website to see what tier your area is in. This will be updated regularly:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/full-list-of-local-restriction-tiers-by-area>.

The tier system will remain in operation until March 2021. However the tiers will be assessed every 14 days and may change (up or down). There will be no local variations allowed in this latest tier system operations (previously, local authorities could supplement changes in addition to national guidance).

The only difference **for gurdwaras** between the tiers is in how the Sangat can socialise (meet others) when within the Gurdawara.

**Introduction**

This guidance should be read with previous guidance issued by the Sikh Council UK, which can be found on our website. General hygiene and safety advice remains the same as in previous guidance.

The latest updated Government guidance applicable from 2nd December can be accessed via: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-during-the-pandemic-from-4-july/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-from-2-december>

Each individual 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.

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

Management committees are advised to seek the advice of their local covid-19 expert and adopt best governance, with an appointed covid-19 lead.

### **Anand Karaj**

National guidance is that **Weddings are restricted to 15 people for all 3 tiers**. Please refer to previous SCUUK Anand Karaj guidance. However, Gurdwaras might want contact their local authorities for further information.

### **Funerals**

**Funerals must have no more than 30 people attending** for all 3 tiers There are no changes in numbers. Please refer to previous SC UK funeral guidance.

### **Numbers attending Gurdwara and sitting in Diwan**

**Communal worship is now allowed in all 3 tiers**. This means that normal diwans can take place (katha, kirtan and dhadis etc). However, we stress that Gurdwara Management Committees should take into account and include:

- limits for Sangat members entering and sitting in darbar sahib - decide on the basis of the capacity of the Gurdwara following an assessment of risk.
- people should sit in darbar sahib with 2m social distancing and masks worn.
- sevadar monitoring of likely pinch points and busy areas (such as entrances, exits)
- hand sanitizers should be made available.
- one-way routes inside with an alternative exit.
- adequate ventilation in the hall (open windows, keep doors open)

***Ensure there is regular monitoring of numbers and distancing within the diwan hall.***

### **Kirtan**

As Communal worship is allowed in all 3 tiers, this means that **Kirtan is allowed**. As such, there is no restriction in doing Kirtan in the Gurdwara, subject to good practice, for example:

- Kirtani Jatha to observe social distancing on stage.
- Set up rope barriers separating Sangat from Kirtani Jatha

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Guidance on suggested principles of safer singing can be found on:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-suggested-principles-of-safer-singing/covid-19-suggested-principles-of-safer-singing>

### Langar

Langar is part of communal worship, in the principles of 'Pangat and Sangat'.

**There is no restriction on serving langar in Tiers 1 and 2.** However a risk assessment must be carried out when preparing and distributing Langar.

We recommend as per the government guidance for cafes, langar is provided as direct service to those seated in pangat, to avoid queuing and touching of utensils, and if possible, use disposable utensils. Please see our previous guidance for examples of good practice that Gurdwaras already have in place'.

**However for Gurdwaras in Tier 3 areas, there is restriction on Langar which cannot be consumed at the Gurdwara.** Langar can be prepared and then given to Sangat as take-away to be consumed at their premises (homes).

### Meeting other people in the Gurdwara

A face covering must be worn inside the Gurdwara. There are differences in how you can interact socially, mingle with other Sangat members, whilst in the Gurdwara based on what tier your area is in:

#### **Tier 1:**

You must not attend or socialise in groups of more than 6 people

#### **Tier 2 and 3:**

You must not attend with or socialise with anyone outside of your household or support bubble while you are there, unless a legal exemption applies. **Practically this means no standing or sitting together to have conversations after the Diwan.**

### Test and Trace

Gurdwaras can consider participating in the Test and Trace system by displaying your official NHS QR code on posters so that those with the mobile app can scan if they choose. This is adequate.

Others may want to additionally keep a temporary record of visitors for 21 days (this is not compulsory) after consent is taken (for GDPR) . NHS Test and Trace may request your help in contact tracing and in the investigation of local outbreaks.