

BUSINESSES AND OTHER VENUES SUBJECT TO FURTHER SOCIAL DISTANCING MEASURES

As a country, we all need to do what we can to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

That is why the government has given clear guidance on self-isolation, household isolation, social distancing, and asked that schools only remain open for those children who absolutely need to attend.

This guidance is helping reduce the spread of the virus and reduce the mounting pressure on our National Health Service, allowing those most acutely affected with COVID-19 to access the care they need.

While the public has already made a huge effort to avoid unnecessary social contact, we are now at a stage where we need to go further.

The government is therefore asking the following businesses and other venues across the United Kingdom to close as soon as they reasonably can, and **not to open for trade on Saturday 21 March**:

- Food and drink venues for consumption on-site, such as restaurants and cafes – noting the exception for takeaway and delivery services discussed below.
- Drinking establishments, including pubs, bars and nightclubs – noting the exception for takeaway and delivery services discussed below.
- Entertainment venues, including cinemas, theatres, concert halls and bingo halls.
- Museums and galleries.
- Spas, wellness centres and massage parlours.
- Casinos and betting shops.
- All indoor leisure and sports facilities, including gyms.

These businesses and other venues must close as they involve prolonged close social contact, which increases the chances of infection spreading.

Takeaway and delivery facilities should remain open and operational. Planning regulation will be changed to enable restaurants, cafes and pubs which do not currently offer delivery and hot food takeaway to do so. This will be clearly communicated by the government when in effect.

Those venues offering takeaway or delivery services must not include alcoholic beverages in this list if their license does not already permit. Any forthcoming changes to licensing for delivery and takeaway will be clearly communicated by the government.

Length of closure

We are asking the businesses and other venues outlined above to close as soon as they reasonably can and **not to open for trade on Saturday 21 March 2020**.

These measures will be reviewed every 28 days to consider their necessity and effectiveness, in light of changing circumstances. The government will look for opportunities to phase out their application as the situation improves.

Compliance

Everyone has a duty to comply with the advice provided by the government in relation to COVID-19, in order to protect both themselves and others.

The government expects all businesses and other venues that are in the list above to comply with this request. The government will keep in close contact with local partners to understand what is happening in their areas to inform further decisions on this matter.

Where necessary, the government will move to enforce compliance with these measures by law.

Financial Support

Her Majesty's Treasury also announced on 20 March 2020 a comprehensive series of measures supporting wages, cash-flow for businesses, and the welfare system.

Business support

In England, under the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant (RHLG) announced on Monday March 16, businesses in England in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors will be eligible for cash grants of up to £25,000 per property.

Eligible businesses in these sectors with a property that has a rateable value of up to £15,000 will receive a grant of £10,000. Eligible businesses in these sectors with a property that has a rateable value of between £15,001 and £51,000 will receive a grant of £25,000. Businesses with a rateable value of over £51,000 are not included in this scheme. For more information please visit gov.uk.

Business rates

In England, as announced on Monday 16 March, the government will provide a business rates holiday for businesses in the retail, hospitality and/or leisure sector. This includes the businesses in scope for closure listed above. This will apply automatically to your next business rates bill in April 2020. For more information please visit gov.uk.

Further information

This guidance will be updated regularly as the situation develops. For businesses and others who have further questions related to this guidance, or the measures outlined within the guidance, please visit gov.uk.

Devolved Administrations may issue further guidance on these matters within their nations.