

Closing places

What will be closed because of this latest change?

We do now need to close shops and organisations that are not essential to everyday life.

We are therefore asking hair, beauty and nail salons, clothes and electronics shops, and outdoor and indoor markets to close [this does not include supermarkets].

We also need to close community spaces where people gather. These include places of worship, playgrounds and other enclosed spaces in parks, libraries, community centres, indoor recreation centres and outdoor gyms.

Are you closing parks?

We're not closing parks, although enclosed spaces within parks, such as playgrounds, will be closed. We urge people to use parks responsibly, by following the social distancing guidelines and keeping 2m between yourself and others.

Parks are for running or walking, they're not for having picnics with friends.

Can you update us on what is currently on the list of places that have been closed?

We have to close shops and organisations that are not essential to everyday life.

We have now closed bars, pubs, restaurants and all non-essential retail. This includes hair, beauty and nail salons, clothes and electronics shops, and outdoor and indoor markets.

Schools, colleges and nurseries are already closed, unless they've been asked to stay open for vulnerable children and children of critical workers, but this now extends to other areas where communities gather, including places of worship, playgrounds and other enclosed spaces in parks, libraries, community centres, indoor recreation centres and outdoor gyms.

When will this come into effect?

This will come into effect from midnight tonight, with affected businesses closing as soon as possible and not opening tomorrow.

Communities

Are you closing community centres? Why?

Yes. Community centres will close for social gatherings.

Where they are essential to the delivery of services, and to our new Local Support System, they will remain open.

Our message is clear – people should stay at home if possible. This will save lives, protect the vulnerable and support the NHS.

Are you worried about closing these community assets given that you have said you need communities to mobilise and help the vulnerable in communities?

We recognise the challenges this will present, but our priority is to protect the most vulnerable people.

A new Local Support System will make sure those individuals that have been identified by the NHS to stay at home, and are without a support network of friends and family, will receive basic groceries and medicine.

Members of the armed forces, are already supporting Local Resilience Forums to develop and implement their plans in support of this effort.

Many communities have already begun using the social media to consider how to help their neighbours and those in need in their community. This is excellent work, but should not lead to groups gathering together.

Should people get together to support vulnerable yes or no? (example: people meet in church hall stand 2m apart pack support packages)

People should not be gathering together, but we will do everything to support vulnerable people who are without a network of friends and families, and members of the armed forces are supporting Local Resilience Forums with these efforts.

Many communities have already begun using the social media to consider how to help their neighbours and those in need in their community. This is excellent work, but should not lead to groups gathering together.

Are you closing all places of worship?

Yes. We sadly must close community spaces where people gather, including places of worship.

This also includes people gathering together for collective worship in private homes.

People are encouraged connect digitally or with family for services.

When will that come into effect?

This should take effect immediately from this evening.

Is there any prospect of churches opening for Easter Sunday?

With the greatest regret, for the time being, places of worship will be closed.

We will revisit these policies in three weeks.

We do not want this to go on for a day longer than it has to. But protecting the NHS and saving lives is the national priority.

Will you ban priests/imams/rabbis from entering their places of worship too?

No – that is for individual priests, imams or rabbis to decide.

What we are saying, it that the public should not be gathering together at places of worship. We have seen examples of faith leaders reaching out to communities across the country in innovative ways.

What will happen with funerals?

Funerals will continue to go ahead, but the number of mourners should be restricted to immediate family only and to allow a safer distance between individuals of at least 2 metres.

What about Ramadan?

Again, for the time being mosques will remain closed.

We understand the importance of gathering together in Ramadan so we encourage Muslim communities to use digital technology to connect with your friends and families.

Government will work closely with Muslim leaders to develop specific suggestions closer to the time.

And Passover?

The same restrictions will apply to Passover. The Jewish community should have Seder within the household and find alternative ways to share with wider family/community.

Are you closing parks?

Parks will remain open for people to exercise, provided you are at least 2 metres away from anyone not in your household.

Exercise is very important for people's mental and physical well-being.

However outdoor leisure facilities and communal places within parks, including playgrounds must not be used.

We are giving the police powers to enforce these rules if they are flouted.

Why has X council decided to close parks?

It is for local councils to decide whether or not to keep their parks open, taking into account the availability of safe outdoor space and public health advice on social distancing.

What is your message to people over the weekend?

Our message is clear – people should stay at home if possible. This will save lives, protect the vulnerable and support the NHS.

If you are going out and socialising when you don't need to then you are putting people's lives at risk.

When you are outdoors (for example, on a walk) ensure that you stay at least 2 metres away from other people.

Why has this taken you so long to take this action? Ireland did it last week?

We've been following the latest scientific and medical advice from the start, and we've been clear it is important to bring in the measures at the right time.

Our message is clear – people should stay at home if possible. This will save lives, protect the vulnerable and support the NHS.

Can children still play with each other? Wasn't advice from the CMO that children could continue to 'buddy'?

Playgrounds will now be closed to avoid families and children gathering together.

We do not yet need to close parks, but we ask families to use their parks responsibly, observing the 2 metre rule.

People should continue to stay at home if possible, protecting our NHS and saving lives.

Non-essential retail

What is non-essential retail? What is classed as non-essential?

These are shops that are not essential to the critical response to coronavirus, to ensuring key public services keep running, or to supporting people to stay at home.

For example, non-essential retail includes stores, where many of the products can be ordered online and directly home, such as clothing, furniture and department stores. Hair, beauty and nail salons must also close to reduce long periods of unnecessary close contact.

Why has it taken you so long to go further on the closure of non-essential retail?

Our approach is always guided by the best and latest scientific advice, taking the right steps at the right time.

People should stay at home, unless they have an exceptional reason to go out – closing non-essential retail is a part of this.

What is the impact of closing non-essential retail? How many jobs do you expect to be lost?

There are strong measures in place to protect businesses, jobs and incomes as part of the national effort in response to coronavirus. Non-essential retailers and their workers will be eligible for different schemes to support them through this time, such as the coronavirus business retention scheme.

Should businesses you've told to close be worried about security of their stock and premises? Will the government accept liability?

Businesses should ensure to leave all premises secure with the appropriate level of security surveillance. We would expect companies to have the appropriate insurance.

Is it a waste for police to patrol empty streets? Are you concerned about looting?

The police will be on hand to ensure that any disturbances are dealt with quickly and effectively. Businesses should ensure to leave all premises secure with the appropriate level of security surveillance.

Are bike shops really essential?

Bike shops support delivery drivers who are essential to the distribution of food and other essential goods. They also support people to make essential travel without coming into contact with others.

Are hardware shops really essential?

Yes, it will help the public perform minor repairs without having to call a professional (reducing unnecessary contact) and also support plumbers, electricians and carpenters to carry out essential services.

Are laundrettes really essential?

Of course where people can clean their clothes at home, they must do so. But laundrettes will allow people to clean their clothes when they cannot from home, including workers on the front line of the coronavirus response.

Why grocery markets but not farmers markets?

There will be increased contact between individuals at farmers markets, which also attract crowds. Grocery markets are contained indoors, typically with one seller, rather than many. Many people across the UK also depend on their local grocery market for fresh food.

Who has decided this list?

The Government.

What support is there available to X? and their employees?

The Chancellor has outlined an unprecedented package of measures to protect businesses, jobs and incomes as part of the national effort in response to coronavirus. All non-essential retailers will be eligible for different schemes to support them through this time.

High street is already dying – can you give me a guarantee these shops will reopen?

We recognise the challenges facing the retail industry and our high streets. We are doing everything we can to support businesses to pay their employees, rents, and suppliers, so that they can continue to operate during this time.

What can staff do to help the national effort if they want too?

The best way to support the national effort is to stay at home, as this will help protect the NHS and save lives.

Why has it taken so long to close communal eating places like food markets?

Our approach is always guided by the best and latest scientific advice, taking the right steps at the right time.

Closing communal eating spaces will reduce non-essential contact between people and help people to stay at home, unless they have an exceptional reason to go out, which will help to reduce the spread of the virus.

Should businesses you've told to close be worried about security of their stock and premises? Will the government accept liability?

Businesses should ensure to leave all premises secure with the appropriate level of security surveillance. We would expect companies to have the appropriate insurance.

If they can't then won't food shortages become an issue again?

No. We have taken this approach to ensure continued food supply – supermarkets will continue to operate, and other retail shops like grocery shops and fresh food suppliers will also be able to stay open to reduce the pressure on supermarkets.

A large number of these people are self-employed. You've announced little in the way of support haven't you?

We understand the difficult position the self-employed are in and the Chancellor has announced a package of measures to protect their incomes. We have always said we will go further where we can and are actively considering further steps.

A self-employed person could be entitled to combination of Universal Credit + Local Housing Allowance + Child Benefits to see them through the next few months depending on their circumstances.

Removing the minimum income floor means benefits will no longer assume that you earn a minimum amount and will take into account your actual earnings - meaning it will properly catch those who have seen their income fall to nothing.

In addition to these measures we have worked to reduce the fixed outgoings of self employed people. So they can also benefit from:

- Rent deferral
- Mortgage deferral
- Energy Bill deferral
- Tax Bill deferral
- Business VAT deferral
- IR35 deferral