

Medical visits/work

I live by myself, am in the vulnerable group and need to get my medicine. What should I do?

We recognise the concern and uncertainty about the practicalities of everyday life that these new measures create, but we're determined you won't face this alone.

Where friends and family aren't able to help you access your medicine, we will provide the support you need through the new Local Support System, which will ensure you receive basic groceries and your medicine is delivered to you.

Government advice isn't clear. Our company works much better in the office together but I can get by at home. Shall I work at home?

We have been repeatedly clear that people should work from home where they can, and we urge those who can do so to stay at home.

We therefore ask you and your employer to take every possible step to allow you to work from home.

We must ensure that everyone plays their part during this challenging period, to reduce the spread of the coronavirus and save lives.

Should only key workers still go to work in person?

If it is impossible for you to work from home, you are able to go to work. For example, this will apply to those who do manual labour, such as in the construction and manufacturing industries, as well as those who provide services that cannot be done from home, such as restaurant workers providing takeaways.

You are able to go to work if you absolutely have to, unless you are a vulnerable member of society, in which case we urge you to stay at home as per the guidance.

Why are you allowing construction/manufacturing to carry on as before?

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Do you care more about the economy than saving lives?

No. This is first and foremost a public health emergency and our absolute priority is saving lives.

However, the coronavirus will have a significant impact on people's livelihoods and our economy and it's important we address this, as we're also facing an economic emergency.

As the Chancellor has said, he will do whatever it takes to support the economy through this crisis so that individuals, families and businesses are protected.

Workplaces

How will you enforce people going to work?

Employers need to play their part and be responsible about who actually needs to be in the office. We've been clear that you can only travel to work which you are doing work that absolutely cannot be done from home.

What about companies that are offering staff accommodation in skyscrapers?

We've been clear that employers should carefully consider the guidance. It sets out that they should help their staff find alternative arrangements to support them working from their homes.

Could some workplaces be used for hospitals?

We are taking steps in order to slow the spread of the disease, flatten the peak and stop the NHS and its facilities being overwhelmed when we need them most.

We keep our healthcare facilities under constant review and hotels, hostels or similar could be used in future to house the vulnerable or provide overflow space.

Are you asking all businesses to close?

No, we are only asking shops that sell non-essential goods to close. Other businesses can stay open, but all workers must work from home unless it is impossible for them to do so.

Enforcement

What will happen if businesses do not close?

As of 2pm on 21 March 2020, closures are now enforceable by law in England and Wales due to the threat to public health.

Environmental Health and Trading Standards officers, with police support if appropriate, will work together to issue prohibition notices challenging unsafe behaviours where businesses do not follow these restrictions.

Environmental Health and Trading Standards officers will monitor compliance, and businesses who fail to comply can also receive fines. Officers will also have powers to prosecute for breaches of regulations.

As agreed with the devolved administrations these measures will be extended to Scotland and Northern Ireland by Ministerial Direction once the Coronavirus Bill is in force.

If you are withdrawing licenses from pubs, how long will that last?

Where pubs are in violation of the Regulations, our first approach will be to use prohibition orders. If businesses break these, then they can be prosecuted for ignoring the regulations and face unlimited fines. If pubs continue to fail to comply, then non-compliance could lead to the loss of their alcohol license, as set out in the Licensing Act.

Licensing authorities would need to consider on a case by case basis, following the process set out in the Licensing Act.