

COVID-19 – Weekly Round-up

Monday 29 June 2020

Heart of London Business Alliance is committed to ensuring our members receive the support they need while the situation in relation to COVID-19 is fast-changing. Our Daily Bulletin provides you with an update on the important announcements and guidance from the Government. In addition, it is recommended that our members monitor the [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) website for guidance regarding COVID-19.

Together with our local Member of Parliament, Nickie Aiken, Heart of London will continue to lobby Government for support for our members and your employees during this difficult time.

Headlines

- This week, as the UK's COVID-19 alert level is reduced, the Prime Minister has announced the most wide-ranging relaxation of lockdown measures yet, facilitated in part by the reduction of the two-metre social distancing rule.
- Additional funds have been pledged to help children “catch-up” with their schooling, and to provide further accommodation for rough sleepers.

Lockdown measures eased in England

23rd June: In a statement to the House of Commons, the Prime Minister announced the biggest package of measures yet on easing lockdown restrictions, following evidence of a decline in UK transmission rates satisfying requirements to do so. Johnson has been under pressure from Conservative backbenchers in recent weeks to reduce social distancing measures in line with his previously announced timetable, while striking a balance between the health risks of COVID-19 and the economic cost of current lockdown restrictions.

Although most restrictions will remain in place, under the plans from July 4th:

- The 2-metre social distancing guidance will be reduced to “1 metre plus”
- Restaurants, pubs and hairdressers will be allowed to reopen, though hospitality will be limited to table service and opening will be contingent on safeguarding social distancing measures
- Two households of any size will be able to meet either indoors or outdoors, and it will be possible to stay overnight, in accordance with social distancing guidelines
- Camping sites, tourist attractions and leisure centres will reopen if they can do so safely
- Nightclubs, swimming pools and indoor gyms will remain closed for the time being, given heightened risks of transmission in those settings.

Further guidance can be found [here](#). Furthermore, the Prime Minister announced that primary and secondary education will recommence in September with full attendance. It was reported on 25th June that the Culture Secretary Dowden and the Cultural Renewal taskforce, set up for this purpose, is working towards a five-stage roadmap which will see the return of the performing arts sector after lockdown.

UK COVID-19 alert level reduced

19th June: The UK's Joint Biosecurity Centre, which comprises of the UK's Chief Medical Officers, downgraded the country's COVID-19 alert level from level 4 to 3, following a steady decrease in cases seen in all four nations. While this does not mean that the pandemic is over, as the virus is still in general circulation, the downgrade signifies that transmission rates are not considered high or rising exponentially. The Centre will continue to monitor transmission rates in the UK and evaluate the extent of the COVID-19 alert level.

£1 billion COVID-19 catch-up package for schools

19th June: The Education Secretary Gavin Williamson confirmed a £1 billion COVID-19 catch-up plan to tackle the impact of lost teaching time for children in England. £650 million will be shared across state primary and secondary schools over the 2020/21 academic year, while a National Tutoring Programme, worth £350 million, will increase access to high-quality tuition for the most disadvantaged young people over the same period.

Interim housing for rough sleepers

24th June: The Government announced £105 million of funding to provide interim housing to keep rough sleepers safe and off the streets during the pandemic, following concerns that homeless communities can rapidly become the epicentres of new outbreaks. The funding will support those at risk of homelessness to afford deposits for accommodation and secure rooms that are available and ready for use.

2 billion items of PPE delivered

25th June: The Government announced two billion items of PPE have been delivered to NHS and social care staff across the UK since the start of the COVID-19 outbreak. PPE remains a high political priority, given previous pressure to deliver equipment to frontline workers and accusations of a PPE shortfall in the government's pandemic stockpile.

Devolved Nations

- **23rd June:** The Scottish Parliament has approved £257.6 million of funding for vital local services and the provision of £72 million is being agreed with COSLA.
- **23rd June:** The Northern Irish Government have announced an additional £1.4 million to alleviate student hardship, bringing the total to £5.6million.
- **23rd June:** The Welsh Government have awarded Fire and Rescue Authorities in Wales £3 million in funding to support national resilience capabilities.

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