

I understand that every company wants to keep operating as fully as they possibly can as long as their staff are safe, and lots of companies have really good reasons why they need to stay open. But with social distancing and stay at home policies now ramping up, it's important to note that the government's advice has now changed to emphasise that **everyone who can stay at home should now be doing so.**

- The full list of businesses that must close can be found [here](#). If a business is not in this list, it can remain open but if your employees can work from home, they should be instructed to do so.
- **The government has specifically advised that factories and construction sites *can* remain open, and that take away and delivery facilities *should* remain open with social distancing measures in place.**
- Retail and public premises that are expected to remain open must ensure a distance of two meters between customers and shop assistants, must let people enter the shop only in small groups to ensure that spaces are not crowded, and are required to implement queue control outside shops.

The list of businesses that can remain open is not the same as the list of sectors that the government has designated as key workers – those whose children may still go to school if there are no other provisions possible, individuals whose jobs have been defined as **fundamentally critical to the response to the coronavirus. That list can be found [here](#).** The government has made a judgement call that – with social distancing – some companies can remain open but with fewer employees attending.

This is a rapidly developing every day within government, so I must emphasise that this is just the situation at the moment. The CBI will continue speaking to government on the matter of essential services, on a number of issues that have been identified by businesses, including:

- **Where companies need a substantive amount of time in which to run down operations, such as in the chemicals sector and whisky production, or risk permanently damaging machines or unsafe situations**
- The need for a review mechanism if the current list of essential services needs to be improved as the government's response to the coronavirus evolves
- The challenges of different systems operating in different devolved nations.

I understand it's an incredibly tough thing to consider, but if your business does have to close its doors and its workers do have to be furloughed for an extended period of time as a result, the CBI's [coronavirus hub](#) provides up to date information on the government's latest financial support packages including those that will help cover 80% of employees' wages.

I hope this update has been helpful. We will continue to work with government on this process in the days ahead. If you have not already, please sign up to the CBI's coronavirus updates [here](#) for the latest information. We're also hosting daily webinars on a range of topics with an array of experts which can be accessed by all businesses [here](#).