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Firebreak – Business Questions about Rationale and Timeframe

Q Is my business allowed to open?

A A full list businesses that are required to close can be found in the [Regulations](#). The regulations includes a list of businesses and services whose premises are subject to restrictions or closure. The list can be found on page 36 of the regulations.

Q When will my closed business be allowed to re-open?

A We understand that businesses will need to plan to re-open.

These measures will be in place for from 6pm Friday 23 October until the start of Monday 9 November 2020. Your business can reopen at 00:01 on Monday 9 November.

Q Are non-essential businesses that are required to close expected to stop all operations by 6pm Friday?

Yes. The regulations come into force at 6pm on Friday

Q What will happen afterwards?

A Following the end of the firebreak, a new set of national rules will be introduced, covering how people can meet and how the public sector and businesses operate.

Businesses Required to Close - Support

Q: what evidence is there that non-essential retail is contributing to escalating numbers?

A We recognise the enormous efforts businesses have made to become safe places. This requirement to close during the 'firebreak' period is not a

reflection on those efforts and we appreciate that some business environments make only a low or moderate contribution to the risk of transmitting the virus. But at this stage, minimising any contribution to the spread of the virus is important, which is why we are requiring certain businesses to close temporarily.

Q What support is available for businesses that are required to close?

A A package of support has been developed by the Welsh Government in addition to support provided by the UK Government.

Businesses affected by the firebreak will be supported with a new £300 million fund, which will open next week:

- Every business covered by the small business rates relief will receive a £1,000 payment.
- Small and medium-sized retail, leisure and hospitality businesses, which have to close will receive a one-off payment of up to £5,000.
- There will also be additional discretionary grants and support for smaller businesses, which are struggling.
- The £80 million fund announced last week to help businesses develop in the longer term, will be increased to £100 million, which includes £20 million ring-fenced for tourism and hospitality.

Businesses will also be able to access the support available through the existing Job Retention Scheme or the new expanded Job Support Scheme.

Access COVID-19 Support for your business [here](#)

Q Is there any support the mental well-being of staff during this period?

A As a Government the wellbeing of the all during this period is paramount. Advice for employees and employees can be found at <https://phw.nhs.wales/services-and-teams/healthy-working-wales/>

Businesses Required to Close – Trading Restrictions

Q What are the rules for non-essential businesses?

A You cannot open your premises to the public. You can however, carryout maintenance and repairs or other work to ensure your premises are suitable for use once restrictions are lifted.

See information in our online [guidance](#).

Q Can garden centres continue to operate?

A No, garden centres are required to close.

Q What if my garden centre has a food hall, can it stay open?

A Garden centres are required to close but can operate delivery services.

Q My business is on the required to close list, what trade can we do?

A Your premises have to remain closed to the public but you can operate a delivery service.

Q Can we continue to operate a repair service for consumer electricals and enter a customer's home to repair key appliances?

A Yes, emergency repairs are a legitimate reason to carry out work in someone's home. Work carried out inside other people's homes can only take place if it is urgent or to repair a fault which poses a direct risk to people's safety – for example, emergency plumbing or carry out an adaptation to allow that household to remain in their property, or the property is vacant. Work should not be carried out at someone else's house if the worker or any member of the household is [self-isolating](#) or showing [COVID-19 symptoms](#), however mild.

Businesses Remaining Open – Staff Travel & Accommodation

Q My business is classed as essential and will remain open. Can my workers travel to work?

A Yes, travelling for work is deemed as a reasonable reason to travel. Any staff who can do duties from home should be supported to do so where that is reasonable and practical. If your staff cannot effectively work from home, they are not displaying COVID symptoms and your business is not required to close your staff should be reassured that they can travel to work safely and legally.

We recognise people in some sectors, such as manufacturing and construction, cannot work from home.

We are urging workers and employers in these sectors to continue to do everything possible to operate safely and reduce the spread of the virus during the firebreak period.

Your staff are not required to carry a letter to demonstrate that they are key workers.

Q Our staff travel for work and need to stay in accommodation overnight for work purposes – can we book overnight accommodation?

A Hotels and other accommodation are required to close but are able to provide services at the direction of Welsh Ministers or local authorities. Key workers, and those working in sectors that can remain open but for which working from

home is not viable, such as for professional sports. Businesses will need to speak to their local authority to clarify the rules in their area.

Q Can the staff canteen remain open?

A Staff canteens can only remain open where there is no practical alternative for staff at that workplace to obtain food.

Businesses Remaining Open – Operating

Q Where can my customer base travel from?

A People are advised to avoid unnecessary travel and travel to their closest shopping destination for their essential shopping needs. The need to stay within county borough boundaries has been removed whilst in the firebreak lockdown.

Q Can I trade on a click and collect / customer collection basis?

A Yes, but only if your business is permitted to remain open and provided you establish a safe system of maintaining social distancing and the customer does not enter your premises.

Q Can non-essential items ordered online be picked up via click and collect in store if a customer is in store making essential purchases?

A Only shops that are allowed to be open can continue to offer click and collect services, and these services should only be available for items that are allowed to be sold in store where possible. See our online guidance for [click and collect services](#).

Q Can I make deliveries to my customers?

A Yes, delivering goods to customers is permitted. Delivery drop-off points will also be permitted to remain open.

Q My retail business is allowed to stay open. Are there restrictions on the goods we are allowed to sell?

A Yes, please refer to our [online guidance](#) for clarification.

Q Can DIY stores, such as ironmongers and building merchants stay open?

A Yes, DIY stores are key to allowing essential repairs to buildings and other construction work to be carried out. However, wherever possible people should avoid unnecessary visits to these, and use alternative approaches such as online services and deliveries.

Q Can essential retailers continue to open if they are housed in shopping centres, malls that are required to close?

A Yes. Essential retail can continue to trade, even if they are housed in shopping centres or malls.

Q Can newsagents stay open? Newsagents often house post offices.

A Yes, newsagents are permitted to remain open.

Q Can bicycle shops stay open?

A Yes, bicycle shops are permitted to remain open.

Q Can retailers who are allowed to remain open sell non-essential goods?

A Please refer to our [online guidance](#) for clarification.

Q Can construction projects continue?

A Yes, the construction sector has not been required to close. Construction projects can continue.

Q Can plant hire firms stay open?

A Yes, suppliers to the construction industry can remain open.

Q Can deliveries of goods be taken into a customer's home?

A Yes, provided it is managed in a safe way and both the worker and household members are well and have no symptoms of coronavirus. However we recommend that people consider whether the work can be safely deferred until after this short lockdown.

Please refer to our [online guidance](#) on 'work carried out in people's homes' for clarification.

Food Businesses, including supermarkets

Q Can customers purchase food and drink to go to consume off the premises?

A Food retailers, including food markets, supermarkets, convenience stores, corner shops and establishments selling food or drink for consumption off the premises are not required to close.

Customers are not able to consume the goods on the premises. Instead, customers can purchase food and drink to consume off the premises via takeaway, drive-thru, delivery and click & collect services.

These should be provided in a Covid secure way. Customers should not travel long distances to pick up takeaways.

Q Can coffee-to-go trucks and burger vans remain open?

A Yes, these should be provided in a Covid secure way. Customers should not travel long distances to pick up takeaways.

Q We are an essential retailer. Can we continue to sell all goods?

A Alcohol may not be sold or supplied between 10.00 p.m. and 6.00 a.m.

[Support Retail Sector can offer](#)

Q What support can retailers provide?

A The firebreak is for a short and defined period of time. We hope essential retailers will continue to provide clear messaging.

We ask you to:

- continue to act responsibly to the benefit of both your customers and staff
- review your health and safety procedures to ensure you are maintaining the necessary standards of hygiene and distancing
- ensure your customers have clear guidance on how to enter, flow through and exit your premises to maintain social distancing
- where necessary, replace or install clear signage on social distancing and the wearing of masks,
- continue to provide hand, basket and trolley sanitising facilities

[Employee / Self Employed Information on the firebreak](#)

Q I work in a business that will be forced to close down/impacted by these regulations. Is financial support being made available to support my job?

A Yes, eligible businesses impacted by Covid-19 should have access to the support available from the UK Government through the existing Job Retention Scheme or the new expanded Job Support Scheme.

In addition, the Welsh Government has announced a comprehensive package of financial support, including the £300 million Economic Resilience Fund which will be open for applications from the week commencing 26 October 2020.

Q I'm on a zero hours contract and my employer has just told me I won't have any work during the circuit break lockdown, what can I do?

A You may be able to access support through the Discretionary Assistance Fund (DAF). We have relaxed the rules regarding Emergency Assistance Payments under the DAF to better support people impacted by Covid-19. If you are getting less work or no work because of Covid-19, you can also apply for Universal Credit.

Q I'm self-employed/a freelancer who will have to stop working because of the circuit break lockdown, am I eligible for any support or grants?

A You may be eligible to claim financial support through the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme. In addition, freelancers working in the cultural and creative sectors in Wales are able to apply through the Cultural Recovery Fund which is targeted specifically at those in the freelance sector hit hardest by Covid-19.

The Welsh Government is also making available £25m for local authorities to provide a **discretionary grant** for businesses that are closed or materially impacted that do not pay business rates and therefore not eligible for Non Domestic Rates linked grants. Eligible businesses will be able to apply for a grant £1.5k, and those who have been subject to 21 days or more of local restrictions prior to the national firebreak will be eligible for an addition £500.

Q I'm not sure how vulnerable I am to becoming seriously ill from coronavirus and whether my boss should make changes to the work I do to make it safer for me – what should I do?

You should check if you are at higher risk of more serious symptoms if you come into contact with Covid-19 by completing the Covid-19 workforce risk assessment tool (link below). You should discuss the results with your employer so that they may take appropriate action based on your level of risk. You should also speak to your Trade Union representative if you are a member of a Union.

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-08/covid-19-workforce-risk-assessment-tool-2020-08-12.pdf>

Q I believe that my income will be severely impacted by these regulations – where can I get financial assistance?

A You may be able to access support through the Discretionary Assistance Fund (DAF). We have relaxed the rules regarding Emergency Assistance Payments under the DAF to better support people impacted by Covid-19. If you are getting less work or no work because of Covid-19 you can also apply for Universal Credit.

Q My employer has had Welsh Government funding but is now making redundancies, what should I do?

A Any employer in receipt of Welsh Government funding will need to continue to meet the conditions that are attached to that funding. The conditions attached to funding will vary and do not necessarily prevent an employer from making redundancies.

Q My employer has had Welsh Government funding but is refusing to furlough me, what should I do?

A The Job Retention Scheme and its successor Job Support Scheme are there to assist employers to meet wage demands for employees who do not have enough work. Use of these schemes is at the employers' discretion and are not conditional upon Welsh Government funding. However, we expect employers to use a combination of all the support available at a UK and Wales level to safeguard as many jobs as possible. You can ask why your employer will not 'furlough' you and/or seek the support of your Trade Union.

Q I was previously advised to shield and on furlough. Now my employer says I can't work from home, what can I do?

A Your employer has a duty of care to protect your health and safety at work and this includes understanding if you are in a higher risk category. If you are unable to find resolution with your employer and feel your health and safety is being compromised, then you should contact your Trade Union (if you are a member) or seek advice on your rights at work from Acas <https://www.acas.org.uk/> .

Q I'm a new starter/I wasn't previously furloughed and now my employer isn't eligible for the JRS but must/is choosing to close, what are my options?

A We have asked the UK Government to bring forward the start date for the Job Support Scheme (JSS) to prevent businesses having to navigate two systems and ensure support is in place for those jobs that were not previously furloughed. We offered to make up the difference in funding but the UK Government has declined this request.

We remain concerned that some jobs will not fulfil the eligibility criteria to be enrolled on the Job Retention Scheme (JRS) for its last week of operation. We have asked the UK Government to waive the requirement for employees for whom JRS is claimed for this period to have been previously furloughed.

We recognise employers with no income because they are required to close will be faced with the difficult decision of paying wage costs or making redundancies. We would expect employers to use our Economic Resilience Fund to safeguard as many jobs as possible.

On the 22 October the UK government announced some changes to the original JSS which extends support to businesses that are not required to legally close but are materially impacted by the restrictions.

Welsh Government response to Frequently Asked Questions – 23/10/2020

Additional updates to follow as further questions submitted. Welsh translation in production.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/plan-for-jobs-chancellor-increases-financial-support-for-businesses-and-workers>

END.