

Coronavirus: Latest guidance on work and staying away from others

The government has published new guidance on work, which includes requiring the closure of a range of specified kinds of retail shops and other premises. The guidance makes no reference to key workers, and government has confirmed to us this morning that there remains no blanket ban on people going to work.

We have confirmation from government this morning that ‘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’.

For individuals, the advice is that ‘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’.

The government is saying that all work that can be done from home should be done from home. The government is not yet saying only a set of defined “key workers” should go to work.

We cannot rule that out for the future, and we have been stressing the need to include as key workers the range of workers who are required to keep key services running throughout the supply chain in sectors such as health, food, energy and communications. That must include provision for maintenance of machinery and systems.

The government is faced with huge challenges. The measures yesterday target those areas where there was no control of the flow of people mixing and are to improve obvious temptations for people to leave their house for non-essential leisure reasons. As is always the case employers should be ensuring employees are not placed at any unnecessary risk in the workplace.

The government is aware of the importance of clarity, and we are working with officials to help where we can.

The latest guidance is here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/full-guidance-on-staying-at-home-and-away-from-others>

Ends

Jack Semple
Alliance Secretary
Tuesday 24th March