

Chancellor visits one of thousands of shops set to open on Monday

News story

The Chancellor Rishi Sunak visited a Waterstones in London to see some of the measures they've put in place to ensure they are ready to welcome customers again.



- the Chancellor visited a Waterstones, one of the thousands of shops opening their doors again
- nearly 7,000 high streets will reawaken on Monday as non-essential retail can open as part of the government's plan to gradually and safely reopen the economy
- non-essential retail employs 1.3 million people and provides £46.6 billion to our economy every year

Together, the non-essential retail sector employs 1.3 million people in high streets up and down the country and provides £46.6 billion to our economy every year. They're able to reopen thanks to the ongoing efforts of people across the country to meet the Five Tests set out by the Prime Minister.

Waterstones is one of the many shops set to open their doors again from Monday provided they follow the COVID-19 secure guidelines, such as limiting the number of customers allowed inside and frequently cleaning objects and surfaces. Waterstones have installed sneeze guards and sanitiser stations, and browsed books will be removed and quarantined. Rishi Sunak, Chancellor of the Exchequer said:

From Monday, shops selling books, clothes, and electronics are able to open for business for the first time in more than two months, as part of our plan to gradually and safely reopen the economy.

There are nearly 7,000 high streets across the country, each providing a valuable service to their community. They will be vital in helping kickstart the economy as we recover from the virus.

The retail sector employs more people than any other sector in the UK and more than 10 million people live within 200 metres of a high street.

Kate Skipper, Waterstones' Chief Operating Officer said:

We are delighted to be reopening on 15 June as we bring our shops safely out of hibernation. We can't wait to welcome booklovers back to their natural habitat as we return to serving our customers within their communities. Healthy local high streets are vital to communities at all times, providing much-needed services and employment to their neighbourhoods.

New measures will be in place to ensure the safety of our customers and our booksellers but our shops will still be bursting full of interesting books to read. We look forward to seeing you there.

Mike Cherry, Federation of Small Businesses' National Chair said:

As our high streets begin to reopen after this period of crisis, small businesses will be at the very heart of that economic recovery.

Making up 99 per cent of all businesses in the country, small firms are the backbone of the economy and at the heart of the economic recovery in their local communities in the weeks and months to come.

The general public and communities have been fantastic in supporting their local businesses through this difficult time. The reopening of shops is a landmark day, so please do support your local small businesses this week.

Further information

- Pictures from the Chancellor's visit to Waterstones can be found on our [Flickr page](#).
- Businesses should only reopen once they have completed a risk assessment, in consultation with trade union representatives or workers, and are confident they are managing the risks. They must have taken the necessary steps to become COVID-19 secure in line with current Health and Safety legislation.

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