

COVID-19 Defra Update

At this busy time, Government communications are increasing to ensure that stakeholders are aware of updated guidance. This is a summary of guidance to date, 21 April 2020.

If you have insights from a relevant sector send it to agrifoodchainengagement@defra.gov.uk

Latest guidance from Public Health England can be found [here](#).

Celebrating the food industry

Defra has published a [Twitter Moment](#) and [Facebook Note](#) on how the food industry is changing the way it's working.

It has also published a [Twitter Moment](#) and [Facebook Note](#) on how the food industry is helping the vulnerable.

Guidance for consumers on food

The Food Standards Agency has published [guidance](#) for consumers on coronavirus and food.

Guidance for food businesses on Coronavirus

New guidance for food businesses [was published](#), on 25 March 2020.

'Stay at Home, Save Lives' campaign

Assets for the 'Stay at Home, Save Lives' are [available to download online](#), including posters, digital screens, and social media resources.

We are encouraging all stakeholders use these assets and amplify the campaign as much as possible.

Updated guidance: Further businesses and premises to close

The Government has updated its [guidance for businesses as part of further social distancing measures](#).

Guidance on producing hand sanitiser and gel for coronavirus

HMRC has produced [updated guidance](#) to help businesses who produce – or would like to start producing – hand sanitiser and gel, including for licensed distillers and gin manufacturers.

A joint initiative between the government and Companies House will allow businesses to apply for a three-month extension for filing their accounts, allowing them to prioritise managing the impact of coronavirus.

As part of the agreed measures, while companies will still have to apply for the 3-month extension to be granted, those citing issues around COVID-19 will be automatically and immediately granted an extension. Applications can be made through a fast-tracked online system which will take just 15 minutes to complete.

Guidance on how to apply for an extension can be found on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk).

Coronavirus: Latest retailer activity

The British Retail Council (BRC) are providing a [daily update](#) on the actions taken by retailers to respond to the Coronavirus pandemic.

In their latest update they have covered: new and further measures by supermarkets to support social distancing, measures to implement social distancing between staff members in offices and staff rooms, changes to opening hours to support NHS and emergency staff, and bonuses for workers.

Number of coronavirus (COVID-19) cases and risk in the UK

[Find out](#) the risk level in the UK, what to do if you have symptoms, and what the government is doing about the virus.

New Coronavirus Information Service on Whatsapp

The government has [launched a Coronavirus Information Service](#), an automated 'chatbot' which will allow the public to get answers to the most common questions about coronavirus.

Gender pay gap

The Government Equalities Office and the Equality and Human Rights Commission have announced the suspension of the enforcement of the gender pay gap deadlines for this reporting year, meaning that there will be no expectation on employers to report their data.

Six-month MOT exemption

The Department for Transport [has announced](#) that owners of cars, motorcycles, and vans which usually require an MOT test will be granted a six-month exemption from 30 March, enabling them to carry on with essential travel.

New requirements for travelling and moving goods to France

The French Authorities have put a [new temporary requirement](#) in place for anyone travelling or moving goods to France.