

Business Secretary appeals to everyone to stay calm and carry on the good work

Our country and economy need all our support in tackling the coronavirus pandemic. This is a shared national effort and workers and businesses, across the country, have answered the call to action.

Workers across all industries and sectors are making a hugely valued and critical contribution to the resilience of our nation. Whether it is the millions of people working from home, or the army of workers in distribution centres, supermarkets, transport, construction and manufacturing across the country, you are all playing your part in keeping Britain moving, so that as a nation we can support our fantastic NHS workers on the frontline of this pandemic.

Worker Safety

I want to recognise and pay tribute to those efforts. We appreciate just how tough the situation is. The government has asked people to take unprecedented action by staying at home other than for four exceptions – to buy essentials, for one form of exercise a day, to attend medical appointments, or for work which cannot be done from home.

Safety has always been our number-one priority – and throughout this crisis, we have followed the scientific and medical advice. The government has provided guidance on how those who cannot do their work from home can continue to operate safely in the workplace. I want everyone to be assured that if they are in their workplace, keeping our economy going, they know what they need to do to play their part in reducing the spread of coronavirus. Many employers are already taking measures to ensure the safety of their workers.

Supermarkets, for instance, have put down two-metre markings on shop floors, installed protective screens for cashiers and are disinfecting stations for trolleys and baskets. Construction firms have changed shift patterns and numbers on sites to maintain social-distancing rules. Without the valiant efforts of builders and engineers, who have worked flat out, vital infrastructure such as the NHS Nightingale hospital would not have been built in record time.

Stepping up

We have also seen gin distilleries and breweries like Brewdog start developing hand sanitiser to help meet the unprecedented demand at this time, and staff in distribution centres are keeping the public stocked up on essential items.

These are just a few examples of businesses and workers from across the UK that are stepping up to protect our people and economy. It reinforces the fact that businesses are a force for good as we tackle the coronavirus pandemic. It is crucial that when we overcome this crisis, as in time we will, the UK's economy is ready to bounce back and businesses are in a good position to move forward.

And all of those who have had to go to work – to stack shelves, to keep phone lines connected, to drive our trains or to build vital infrastructure – deserve the understanding of others as they go about their work. Instances of abuse being thrown at these people are completely unacceptable – they are keeping us safe, keeping us fed and keeping us connected.

While our fantastic NHS workers and the wider carer community are rightly at the forefront of our minds, I want to pay tribute to all those who are working to support them by keeping our economy going. You are doing your bit to deliver for our country. Times are tough – and we have harder times ahead of us. But I know that, together, we will pull through.

UK announces first charter flights from India to bring British nationals home

- Only go outside for food, health reasons or work (but only if you cannot work from home)
- If you go out, stay 2 metres (6ft) away from other people at all times
- Wash your hands as soon as you get home

Do not meet others, even friends or family.

You can spread the virus even if you don't have symptoms.

Foreign Office steps up plans to bring home Britons stranded overseas

The Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) advises all British travellers to return to the UK now. Read our latest [coronavirus travel advice](#).

- Charter flights from Bolivia, Ecuador, Philippines and India to bring back thousands of Britons
- 10 new airlines join Government's scheme to get more British travellers back to the UK
- FCO extends advice against travelling overseas for an indefinite period

The Government is ramping up efforts to bring home thousands of travellers stranded overseas by coronavirus with a new package of extra flights and 10 additional airlines joining its scheme to keep commercial routes open and get British people back to the UK.

From next week the Government will start to bring stranded British travellers back from India with flights from Delhi, Goa and Mumbai. Passengers interested in these flights from India are advised to check the [travel advice for India](#) which we will be updating when booking for these flights opens.

The number of airlines signed up to the Government's scheme to get Britons home now stands at 14 after 10 new airlines, including British Airways, Norwegian, TUI and Ryanair, joined Virgin Atlantic, Titan, easyJet, and Jet2 who signed up earlier this week.

Since Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab announced on Monday (30 March) that the Government had reached an agreement with airlines more than 1,450 British travellers have flown home on specially chartered flights.

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said:

Travellers are facing an unprecedented challenge on a global scale, and I know people are understandably desperate to get back to their homes and loved ones.

We are committed to supporting Britons getting home either through commercial routes we have helped keep open or through specially chartered flights. With more airlines signing up it should mean more flights available but also a fairer deal for travellers by providing more flexibility over tickets and costs.

Secretary of State for Transport, Grant Shapps said:

We continue to work with airlines round the clock to reunite British citizens with their families and loved ones. With more airlines pledging support, this huge operation becomes a little easier, speeding up the process and helping ensure a greater number of people return home quickly and safely.

Where it is possible to get back to the UK on commercial routes by any carrier, the FC0 continues to encourage all British nationals to take such opportunities. The Department for Transport is working closely with airlines to bring those with pre-booked tickets home, either with the airline they booked with or on alternative routes where available. This includes airlines allowing passengers to change tickets between carriers, where permissible, and offering them the latest information and advice as the situation changes.

- The 14 airlines that have signed up to the FC0 plan are: Air Tanker, Blue Islands, British Airways, Eastern Airways, easyJet, Jet2.com, Jota Aviation, Loganair, Norwegian, Ryanair, Titan Airways., TUI, Virgin and Wizz.
- Where commercial flights are available, we strongly urge all British travellers to take those opportunities.
- Advice to British travellers on returning to the UK can be found on the [coronavirus travel advice page](#)

New MoU between the UK and the UAE

- Only go outside for food, health reasons or work (but only if you cannot work from home)
- If you go out, stay 2 metres (6ft) away from other people at all times
- Wash your hands as soon as you get home

Do not meet others, even friends or family.

You can spread the virus even if you don't have symptoms.

Caroline does her bit to support community Covid-19 response

When someone asks you what you did to help during the Coronavirus pandemic, what will you say?

It was this question, along with proud memories of her gran that compelled Sellafield employee, Caroline Easdon, to answer Sellafield Ltd's call for employees to volunteer support to our local communities.

Caroline said:

During the Second World War my gran volunteered to be part of the land army. In years to come, when we look back on all of this and people ask me what did I do? I want to be able to say that I helped. And hopefully someone down the line will be proud that I stepped up in the same way that I am proud of my gran.

To do her bit, Caroline has volunteered to help at Cumbria County Council's emergency call centre for vulnerable people.

Along with her fellow call centre volunteers, Caroline is connecting people who need help with the community hub that can best provide support.

She said:

Most of the people who I have spoken with at the call centre are ringing in because they are worried about how to get food and prescriptions. Others are concerned that they haven't seen their neighbour for a while and want someone to go and check on them.

I take the details of those calls and feed them into the network of community hubs and local groups so that vulnerable people can get the help they need.

All the precautions that you would expect to see, like social distancing and welfare and handwashing facilities are in place, and from next week we should be able to man the call centre virtually from home.

If anyone is considering volunteering, go for it. Hearing someone tell you that they appreciate being able to talk to a real person about their concerns, and that you've helped, is really rewarding.

Caroline works as part of the Corporate Affairs team at Sellafield which is headed up by Jamie Reed. He said:

Like all our volunteers, Caroline is heeding the call from our community and doing her bit. As an individual she's doing what she can to make a difference in the situation we all find ourselves in. I'm proud of her response and that of everyone else who has been able to step forward and answer the call in their own way. Right now, volunteering is making a real difference in helping our community meet this unprecedented challenge.

Stephen Hall, assistant director of economy and environment at Cumbria County Council, said:

We can't thank the staff from Sellafield enough. The helpline is supporting around 200 people each day now. It's not just the

material support with food and medication that we can provide that is important but also the reassurance vulnerable residents feel by being able to speak to a caring and sensitive member of the team.

We are incredibly grateful to them for volunteering their time, it has been invaluable and has made all the difference to those people in the community who need our help and support at this difficult time.

Sellafield Ltd has confirmed this week that any employee who isn't a key worker can volunteer to support their local community during work time. For further details, [see the employee area of our website](#)