

# Jobcentre guidance on new national Covid restrictions

Press release

On 31 October 2020, the Prime Minister announced that the Government will be introducing new national COVID-19 measures in England to protect the NHS and save lives.



This means from 5 November 2020 until 2 December 2020 in England, the following updated jobcentre guidance will apply to customers, and will ensure essential support is provided whilst keeping colleagues and customers safe.

- Jobcentres will remain open, as they have throughout this pandemic, to provide essential services and support to those whom we cannot help in any other way.
- We will ensure that this support continues to be delivered in line with the latest government and PHE guidance – such as maintaining social distancing and rigorous cleaning regimes – keeping our colleagues and customers safe.
- Customers will continue to be supported by Work Coaches online and over the phone, with jobcentres remaining open to help those who need extra support and are unable to interact with us on the phone or digitally.
- Our Work Coaches will continue to deliver employment support programmes such as Kickstart and JETS, by phone or through online channels.
- Face-to-face assessments for disability benefits remain suspended.
- If you think you might be entitled to a health and disability benefit, you should contact us as soon as possible to make a claim in the usual way.
- For existing customers, payments will continue as normal. Anyone who has a change in their needs should contact us immediately so we can ensure they are receiving the correct level of support.

On 3 November 2020, we also confirmed that the suspension of the Minimum Income Floor – for self-employed customers claiming Universal Credit in England, Scotland, and Wales – has been extended to the end of April 2021. This means that self-employed customers on Universal Credit will receive a

payment that reflects their earnings at this difficult time.

### **For Scotland:**

On 2 November, the Scottish Government introduced a new five level tiered system. The following will therefore apply to jobcentres and customers in Scotland:

#### **Levels 0, 1 and 2 guidance:**

- Customers will continue to be supported by Work Coaches online and over the phone, with jobcentres remaining open to help those who need extra support and are unable to interact with us on the phone or digitally.
- All jobcentres to remain open – maintaining social distancing and regular desk and communal space cleaning in line with current Covid-19 guidance.
- If you think you might be entitled to a health and disability benefit you should contact us as soon as possible to make a claim in the usual way.
- For existing customers, payments will continue as normal. Anyone who has a change in their needs should contact us immediately so we can ensure they are receiving the correct level of support.

#### **Levels 3 and 4:**

- For these levels, the jobcentre guidance in place for the new national restrictions in England until 2 December 2020 (above) will apply.

### **For Wales:**

The Welsh Government introduced the two week 'firebreak' restrictions in Wales on 26 October 2020 that will last until 9 November 2020. The jobcentre guidance in place for the new national restrictions in England until 2 December 2020 (above) will apply during this period.

After 9 November 2020, the Welsh Government announced an easing of restrictions. From then, the following will apply to jobcentres and customers in Wales:

- All jobcentres to remain open – maintaining social distancing and regular desk and communal space cleaning in line with current Covid-19 guidance.
- Customers will continue to be supported by Work Coaches online and over the phone, with jobcentres remaining open to help those who need extra support and are unable to interact with us on the phone or digitally.

### **For Northern Ireland:**

Please contact the Department for Communities for more information on measures introduced in Northern Ireland – 028 9082 9000.

A DWP spokesperson said:

Jobcentres have remained open throughout this pandemic to provide vital support and essential services to those whom we cannot help remotely.

These new measures will ensure that we can continue this support while keeping our colleagues and customers safe, following the latest Government and PHE guidance.

Media enquiries for this press release – 020 3267 5144

Follow DWP on:

Published 9 November 2020

---

## [Report 10/2020: Signal passed at danger at Loughborough South Junction, Leicestershire](#)

Press release

RAIB has today released its report into a signal passed at danger at Loughborough South Junction, Leicestershire, 26 March 2020.



Signal LR507 (image courtesy of Network Rail)

PDF, 3.94MB, 31 pages

This file may not be suitable for users of assistive technology.

Request an accessible format.

If you use assistive technology (such as a screen reader) and need a version of this document in a more accessible format, please email [enquiries@raib.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@raib.gov.uk). Please tell us what format you need. It will help us if you say what assistive technology you use.

## **Summary**

At around 10:57 hrs on 26 March 2020, a train formed of two locomotives and an empty, un-braked, passenger multiple unit passed a signal at danger about 0.75 miles (1.2 km) south of Loughborough station. The train passed the signal at a speed of about 20 mph (32 km/h) and came to a stand around 200 metres beyond it. The signal was at danger to protect the movement of a passenger service which was just about to leave Loughborough station.

The incident occurred because the train was travelling too fast for its braking capability, and because the braking applied by the driver was insufficient to stop the train from that speed within the available distance. Evidence indicates that the train was travelling at a speed of around 75 mph (121 km/h) on the approach to the signal, whereas the maximum permitted speed for the train, which takes into account its braking capability, was 60 mph (97 km/h). The driver stated that he believed that the maximum permitted speed of the train was 75 mph (121 km/h), based on information that had been provided to him on a train planning document. An underlying cause of this incident was that the train operator's management assurance processes did not detect a lack of compliance with its own safety management system, in areas that resulted in the driver and shunter being inadequately prepared for the movement of the train. RAIB further observed that the driver did not conduct an adequate running brake test at the beginning of the journey, and that the train operator did not adequately manage the retrieval of evidence from the on-train data recorders on the locomotives.

## **Recommendations**

As a result of this investigation, RAIB has made one recommendation for Rail Operations Group to review its management assurance processes relating to operational safety. RAIB also identified two learning points relating to awareness of and adherence to maximum permitted speeds, and the importance of conducting proper running brake tests.

### **Simon French, Chief Inspector of Rail Accidents said:**

Good safety management is all about making sure that the systems you have set up, and what you have said you will do, are actually happening on the ground. Our investigation of this signal passed at danger found some significant deficiencies in the way that the train operator was managing safety. This led to a train being driven faster than was permitted on the route, and therefore unable to stop before passing a red signal by a significant distance.

Our investigation revealed a gap between documented safety

processes, and what was actually happening. Drivers were supposed to be issued with train documents, giving basic information about loads, available brake force and permitted speeds; but this was not happening. There also appeared to be no management awareness of how well, if at all, the company was following its own safety processes, including those related to competence management.

What went wrong is a reminder of how any train operating company, no matter how small, needs to live its safety management system, not just have one 'sitting on the shelf'. It needs to make a difference to the people who actually plan the work and drive the trains.

### **Notes to editors**

1. The sole purpose of RAIB investigations is to prevent future accidents and incidents and improve railway safety. RAIB does not establish blame, liability or carry out prosecutions.
2. RAIB operates, as far as possible, in an open and transparent manner. While our investigations are completely independent of the railway industry, we do maintain close liaison with railway companies and if we discover matters that may affect the safety of the railway, we make sure that information about them is circulated to the right people as soon as possible, and certainly long before publication of our final report.
3. For media enquiries, please call 01932 440015.

**Newsdate: 9 November 2020**

Published 9 November 2020

---

## **[UK Statement: Myanmar elections 2020](#)**

Press release

FCDO Minister for Asia, Nigel Adams statement on the Myanmar elections, held on Sunday 8 November.



FCDO Minister for Asia, Nigel Adams said:

The 2020 elections are a significant milestone on Myanmar's path from military dictatorship to democracy. We are pleased that many people in Myanmar were able to exercise their hard won right to vote this weekend and remain committed to supporting their aspirations for peace and full democracy. We will work with the new government and civil society to this end.

However, we were disappointed to see the Rohingya and other minorities were once again disenfranchised. Elections were cancelled in areas of conflict without a clear rationale or transparency. It is now vital to amend the citizenship laws to ensure that everyone can participate fully in Myanmar's political process. We urge the authorities in Myanmar to ensure free and fair elections are held at the earliest opportunity in those areas where they were cancelled. We also condemn the kidnapping of Parliamentary candidates by the Arakan Army and call for their immediate release.

Published 9 November 2020

---

## [Edition 23: News from the Adjudicator](#)

### **Welcome from the Groceries Code Adjudicator**

The relationship between the UK's regulated retailers and their direct suppliers is entering a new era created by or, in some cases, brought forward by, Covid-19 and at this very challenging time I am delighted to introduce myself as the new Groceries Code Adjudicator.

A great deal of progress has been made since the Groceries Supply Code of Practice was introduced and my thanks go to Christine Tacon for the immense

role she played in achieving real change in the sector.

However, there is still more to do and the pandemic has created huge economic challenges that will undoubtedly have an impact on the large supermarkets and their direct suppliers. I want to bring my commercial and legal experience to ensure the retailers continue to comply with the Code and build constructive relationships with their suppliers.

I enjoyed a long career in industries selling products and services in highly competitive, price-sensitive markets. Notably, I worked for the world's largest foodservice business. As a result I have a strong understanding of the food supply chain and recognise the fine balance that exists between suppliers and their customers as well as the wide disparity between the size of some parties to the buy/sell relationship.

For the past three months I have been the Deputy Groceries Code Adjudicator and using the time to meet the retailers' Code Compliance Officers (CCOs), CEOs and Audit Committee Chairs, suppliers and trade associations. I have already held more than 40 meetings. I have been particularly encouraging all CCOs to ensure that suppliers understand the role the CCOs can play in resolving any issues they may have with the retailers. Throughout this period my GCA team has been providing excellent support. You can meet the team below.

## **My approach**

My approach will be very much "open door". As soon as conditions allow I intend to get out and meet suppliers at as many events and opportunities as possible. I want suppliers to recognise that I am there to support them and – vitally important – that they can always trust me to preserve confidentiality. That will be central to all engagement I have with suppliers because I understand that concerns about retaliation can be very real.

I also intend to build on the collaborative approach that Christine Tacon had with the retailers and drive forward the whole-house approach to compliance including training within each of the retailers. My objective is that I will never have to arbitrate a dispute or carry out an investigation – but if I have to, I will.

My clear message is that the Code is there to support suppliers and can be used to level up the very uneven playing field on which suppliers – particularly smaller suppliers – often find themselves operating. This year an important focus for me will be to understand why so many suppliers – just over a third – still reported Code-related issues in the 2020 GCA survey.

## **The Code: Know it, Use it, Grow your business**

In all my discussions and meetings I will be encouraging suppliers to maintain a constructive relationship with buyers so that the retailer is aware of their business and decisions can be taken jointly, and on a "no-surprises" basis, as far as possible. I will be continuing to encourage them to Know the Code and Be Code Confident but to use it wisely. This way

suppliers can grow their businesses.

My advice will be not to continuously drop the Code into conversations and negotiations or as a throwaway when the going gets tough – but to use it when it is needed; for example when a retailer makes a proposal that is clearly contrary to the Code. I expect the retailers to respond positively if this happens. If this does not happen, please let me or your trade association know. Details of how to contact the GCA are given below.

It is clear that the sector is changing in response to the pressures created by Covid-19 with, for example, some retailers extending more favourable payment terms to smaller suppliers originally introduced at the start of the pandemic. Also, while promotions may become less common (or are converting into everyday low pricing strategies) making forecasting somewhat easier, retailers are looking carefully at their ranges, their routes to market and their pricing propositions to consumers.

As the sector changes so will my focus – issues such as funding the costs of a promotion may give way to more considerations of dealing in good faith, delisting and delays in payment as range reviews are conducted and Good Faith Receiving becomes more commonplace.

We are entering a new phase of relationships and I want the retailers to know that I will be closely following how they operate in the new “normal” as we adapt to the conditions created by Covid-19. I urge suppliers to let me know, confidentially, of any issues of concern – if I do not know I will not be able to help.

Mark White

---

## **Meet the team**

Mark White will be supported by a small team ensuring smooth running of the GCA office, finances, governance, events, communications and projects. Meet the team below.

### **Alice Ellison – Head of Office**

Alice joined the GCA Team over the summer on secondment from the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS). She is responsible for overall running of the GCA office and Team and her previous roles include working as Head of Environment for the British Retail Consortium.

### **Jilly Cole – Policy Manager**

Jilly has been with the GCA Team since January 2018 and is on secondment from the Housing Ombudsman Service. Jilly’s projects include the annual GCA survey of suppliers and analysis of the Annual Compliance Reports provided by Designated Retailers.



## **Louisa Briki – Operations Manager**

Louisa started with the Team in July on secondment from BEIS. Louisa leads on finance, governance and HR issues and is responsible for ensuring that the GCA publishes its annual reports and accounts.

We will be joined soon by a Deputy Operations Manager who will look after the GCA website and the GCA conference.

---

## **2021 survey**

Mark White is keen to have early information about what suppliers think and the behaviour they experience from retailers. There will also be an opportunity for suppliers to provide positive feedback and compliment their retailers. The GCA is currently planning the next annual survey. This will be launched in January – earlier than previous years. Look out for information on how to complete.

Once again YouGov will conduct the survey for the GCA so suppliers can be completely confident that their information is being handled confidentially. For 2021 YouGov has been asked to carry out interviews with a number of suppliers to explore some areas in more detail.

---

## **Code Confident pack**

The GCA has published (electronically) a handy ‘pocket guide’ to the Code. It contains a copy of the Code together with other useful information such as retailer CCO contact details and a collection of GCA publications about the Code. Visit the GCA website to download the [Code Confident pack](#) today.

---

News about developments will be regularly provided on the [GCA website](#) – and Twitter feed – [UKGCA](#). Mark White has uploaded an introductory video on the [GCA YouTube channel](#) and new videos will be uploaded as created. Please subscribe to see the latest additions.

If you would like to get in touch with the GCA and his team to tell him about your experiences, please email [Enquiries@GroceriesCode.gov.uk](mailto:Enquiries@GroceriesCode.gov.uk) or call 020 7215 6537.

---

# 36th Universal Periodic Review: UK statement on the Marshall Islands

World news story

The UK delivers statement on the Marshall Islands at the 36th Session of Universal Periodic Review (UPR), sharing recommendations to improve their human rights record.



# UK Government

Thank you Madam President.

The United Kingdom appreciates the Republic of the Marshall Islands' continued participation in the UPR process.

We applaud the Republic of the Marshall Islands' work to address human rights risks posed by climate change driven threats, including through the "Lighting the Way" climate strategy. We also welcome the Marshall Islands' accession to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Convention against Torture and the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination.

We congratulate the Marshall Islands on its steps to tackle discrimination against women through the Gender Equality Act, Domestic Violence Prevention and Protection (Amendment) Act, and National Gender Mainstreaming Policy. We

encourage continued reform to further protect women from violence and other forms of discrimination.

We recommend the Republic of the Marshall Islands:

1. Ratify the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime;
2. Adopt an open, merit-based process when selecting national candidates for UN Treaty Body Elections;
3. Ensure the national Human Rights Committee complies with the Paris Principles on National Human Rights Institutions.

Thank you.

Published 9 November 2020