

SOCIAL DISTANCING: ADDITIONAL MEASURES

1. This paper proposes increasing social distancing by requiring the closure of leisure businesses and cultural facilities across the UK, building on the existing advice to citizens to avoid such premises. It begins by reviewing the latest data on compliance with social distancing and hence the case for further action, before detailing the businesses that should be closed. It concludes by running through the decisions required to implement closures.

Current position on compliance

2. On Monday 16 March, the Government advised citizens across the country to begin working from home where possible, and to minimise social interactions, including by not visiting pubs, restaurants, clubs, and theatres, with the aim of achieving 75% reduction in non-household contact. This decision reflected clinical advice that the spread of infection is likely where people are in close contact for more than 15 minutes. Whilst it remains too early to judge compliance properly, and the decision to close schools from Friday will have a further effect, early data including from Google as well as anecdotal evidence on compliance is mixed, with some positive trends (more at **Annex A**).
 - a. Tube travel was down 69% on Thursday compared to the same day last year, continuing a trend of dropping further every day this week, but bus travel was only down 40%, again continuing a consistent downward trend. Initial data from this morning suggests both trends are continuing into today.
 - b. As of Wednesday, West End footfall was down almost 80%, compared to the same day last year. OpenTable reported that the number of diners at UK restaurants on 17 March was down 82% year on year.
 - c. Google places data shows average falls across London and UK mainline stations were similar at 54% and 52% of their usual levels on Thursday. In London, the largest decreases were seen in Euston, King's Cross, St Pancras, and Cannon Street, with City Thameslink and London Bridge seeing less change or even an increase in activity. Elsewhere falls were similar, with Manchester Oxford Road and Birmingham Moor Street (both smaller stations) seeing small falls, and Bristol Parkway a greater change particularly earlier in the day.
 - d. There was an up to 72% reduction in visits to the UK's major tourist sites in the first three days of this week as reported by their representative body, and Google data for Westminster Abbey shows a substantial reduction on Thursday with only 19% of usual activity.
3. In addition, it is worth considering the latest public polling data, which shows that the number of people who claim to be engaging in socially distancing behaviours continues to rise. As of Friday morning:
 - a. 58% now claim to have stopped going to bars entirely (up from 51% yesterday);
 - b. 44% claim to have stopped seeing friends (up from 40%);
 - c. 37% have stopped seeing family members who they do not live with (up from 34% yesterday), including 44% of those aged 65 or over; and

- d. 47% of full time workers are still going to work as much as before (down from 59% the day after social distancing measures were announced), but 31% have stopped entirely.
- 4. This mixed picture means that there is merit in considering further measures to increase compliance. It is also worth noting that overnight polling shows that 66% of people now think that the Government should force bars and clubs to close, with only 17% of the view that they should stay open. Whilst measures could be applied to a specific geographic location, this could have a perverse impact on compliance elsewhere, and, as has been the case in other countries that have imposed localised restrictive measures, there is also some risk of displacement with residents traveling in order to access goods and services not available locally. As such, **it is proposed that measures apply to the whole UK.**

Businesses to be closed

- 5. Based on an epidemiological view of what further measures would have the greatest impact, it is proposed that the Government require the closure of:
 - a. those leisure and cultural businesses already identified in Government advice on social distancing (list at **Annex B**); and
 - b. an additional set of leisure businesses where the spread of infection is likely and they are evidently non-essential (list at **Annex C**).

Closing leisure and cultural businesses already identified in Government advice on social distancing

- 6. The first step would be to require the closure of all leisure and cultural businesses already identified in Government advice. On Monday, the Government highlighted pubs, cinemas, restaurants, theatres, bars, and clubs as examples of businesses to avoid in order to minimise social mixing in the community. In moving to require closure, the Government would need to be more specific about the businesses in question, and explicit about the inclusion of cultural facilities.
- 7. In summary, this would mean requiring the closure of: food and drink venues *for consumption on-site*; drinking establishments; and entertainment venues, including cinemas, theatres, museums, and galleries. There would be an economic impact in taking this step, although compliance with the existing guidance has already had a significant effect, meaning the delta is likely limited; HMT estimates that the impact on the economy from decisions already taken (case isolation, household quarantine, school closures) is very significant, and we should expect a peak to trough fall in GDP of 10-30%.
- 8. As an exception, to maintain food resilience, relieve pressure on supermarkets, and support continued business activity where it does not pose a particular risk, **takeaway and delivery facilities should remain open and operational**. This will mean, for example, that cafes can continue operating to provide takeaway, whilst closing their seating areas. Planning regulations will be changed to enable restaurants and cafes to offer delivery and hot-food takeaway where they do not at present.

Closing additional leisure businesses considered evidently non-essential

9. In addition to requiring the closure of those leisure and cultural businesses already identified in Government advice, there is a strong epidemiological case for also requiring the closure of a further set of leisure businesses that arguably fall outside of the scope of existing advice, but where the spread of infection is likely and they are evidently non-essential.
10. This would mean requiring the closure of: casinos and betting shops; wellness centres, spas, and massage parlours; and indoor leisure facilities. Again, guidance would need to be specific about these businesses.

Implementation and next steps

11. In order to proceed with closures, the following decisions are required.
 - a. First, the Government could seek voluntary compliance, or compel compliance under the law. **An update on the legal position, taking into account existing legislative options as well as the Coronavirus Bill, will be presented in the meeting.**
 - b. Second, guidance either needs to be framed as asking types of business to close, or types businesses to stay open, with clarity where there are exceptions or nuances. The former is considered the more practical approach, as attempting to specify businesses that can stay open risks omitting crucial outlets. It would be vital that the guidance was monitored and updated on an ongoing basis. In addition, the guidance would need to reflect the fact that some business units serve multiple purposes, and shopping centres are likely to include a mix of essential and non-essential units. **It is therefore recommended that the Government frames this measure around the businesses it is asking to close, and require that all spaces considered non-essential within units otherwise deemed essential be closed.**
 - c. Third, a decision needs to be made as to when any measures should enter into effect. The Government could require that affected businesses close within hours of an announcement made in an afternoon press conference on Friday or Saturday. That would have the advantage of forestalling a “surge” in usage the following day before closure. However, it could be unrealistic to expect immediate compliance, and there is a risk that too rapid a timeline causes unnecessary public concern. **If announced on Friday 20 March, it is therefore recommended that the Government require closures apply from 1200 on Saturday 21 March.** Whilst this would lead to some increased demand for goods and services over the course of Friday evening and Saturday, it would strike a balance between providing businesses time to close in an orderly manner and bringing the measures into place at pace. It would also depress the risk of a “rush” to pubs and restaurants on Saturday afternoon and evening, and is therefore the Met’s preference over entry into force at close of business, noting that the most important thing from a public order perspective is clear communication and advance notice for the police.
 - d. Fourth, whilst it is not possible to be clear now how long these measures will need to apply, it will be important to set out when they will next be reviewed, and the possibility of

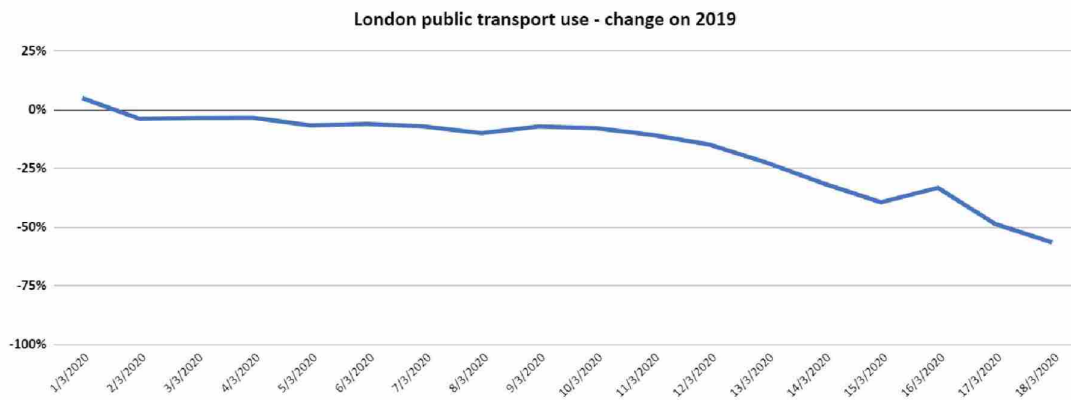
phasing out of them as conditions improve. **It is therefore recommended that the Government commits to review these measures every 28 days.**

- e. Fifth, the vast majority of businesses are unlikely to be covered by insurance if forced to close, as few businesses bought policies that cover unspecified notifiable diseases such as Covid-19. Those businesses which have an insurance policy that covers both unspecified and notifiable diseases and government ordered closures should be able to make a claim. However, estimates are that fewer than 5% of SMEs have bought this type of cover.
 - f. Sixth, the businesses captured by the above options operate in employment-rich sectors. The available data suggests that because of growing levels of compliance with existing government measures, demand for leisure businesses and cultural facilities is already down significantly. In principle, therefore, it is possible that there are not significant additional economic effects from this specific measure. Nonetheless, a stop in economic activity in these sectors therefore risks job losses and regressive distributional impacts, given the incidence of low pay in these sectors. **It is therefore recommended that if the Government does wish to proceed, it does so in tandem with a further package of economic support.**
12. Finally, in the event that a decision is taken to proceed, the Prime Minister should use his statement outlining these measures to explain that this is a formalisation of the guidance issued earlier in the week, and to reinforce the vital importance of social distancing across the country over the weeks ahead.

ANNEX A - LATEST COMPLIANCE DATA

Reduction from same day in 2019 (%)					
Date	Bus	London Underground	TFL Rail	Non-TFL Rail (commuter rail)	Overall change* (%)
Mon 16	-22	-40	-37	-29	-33
Tue 17	-30	-56	-54	-48	-49
Wed 18	-35	-65	-63	-57	-57
Thur 19	-40	-69	TBC	TBC	TBC

Source: TFL

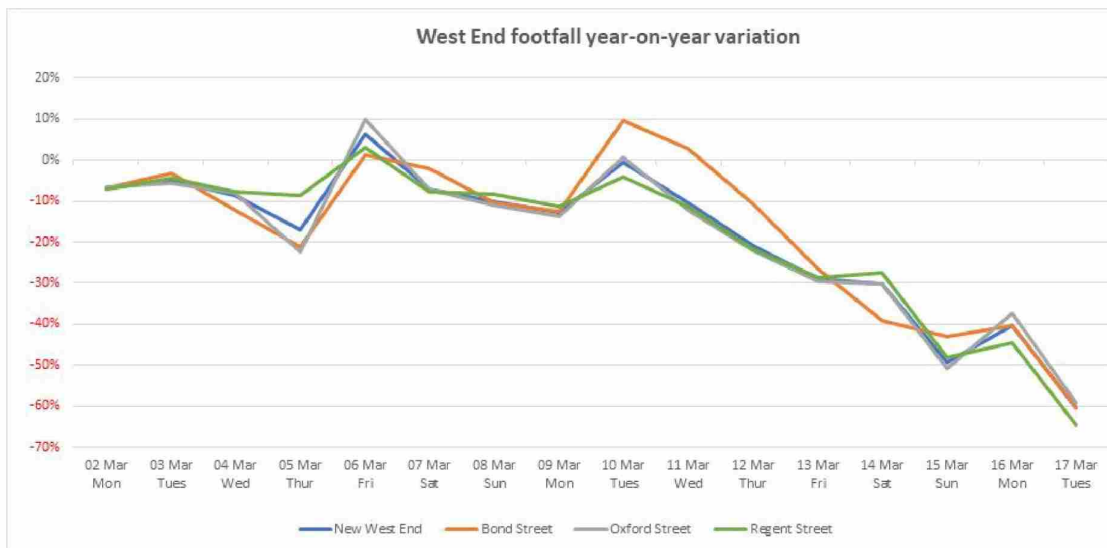


The graph above shows transport use from Bus, London Underground, TFL Rail and non-TFL Rail (commuter rail) Source: TFL

West End Footfall (change in % from 2019-2020)

Area	Mon 16 March	Tue 17 March	Wed 18 March	Thur 19 Mar
New West End	-40%	-60%	-69%	-77%
Bond Street	-42%	-52%	-65%	-76%
Oxford Street	-37%	-59%	-68%	-76%
Regent Street	-43%	-64%	-72%	-78%

Source: Greater London Authority



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Comments (data correct as of 19/03/20)

Roads

- Traffic on the Capital's red routes was down by 10.1% yesterday and central London traffic down by 29.1% yesterday (see also 15 below).
- More modest (15%) reduction in traffic flows on key M1 J4-J2 segment of the Strategic Road Network in London compared to last week.

Rail

- Significant reduction in tube travel to the City financial district: -80%
- Significant reduction in National Rail journeys compared to same day last year: -73%

Tourism

- Significant reduction in tube travel to tourist locations: -75%
- Up to 72% reduction in visits to the UK's major tourist sites over the last three days reported by their representative body
- Historic Royal Palaces is closing all its buildings including the Tower of London and Kensington, Hillsborough and Hampton Court Palaces. But it will keep its gardens and outdoor areas open to promote health activity.
- London's main DCMS ALB sites are closed to the public including: British Film Institute; Imperial War Museums; National Portrait Gallery; Natural History Museum; the Tate Galleries (all sites); V&A Museum; British Library; and British Museum.

Leisure

- London's luxury hotels are currently reporting single-digit occupation levels and for week 9-15 March 2020 actual occupancy was down -41.6%.
- Significant reduction in tube travel to shopping locations: -69%.
- Major national branded restaurant groups including Byron, Pho, Zizzi, ASK Italian and Brasserie Blanc have closed their sites. Some are switching to delivery only.

Entertainment

- Footfall data for Tuesday 17 March was down ~60% at West End locations (New West End -60%, Bond Street -51.7%, Oxford Street -59.2%, Regent Street -64.6%).

ANNEX B - LEISURE AND CULTURAL BUSINESSES ALREADY IDENTIFIED IN GOVERNMENT ADVICE ON SOCIAL DISTANCING

TYPE AND DEFINITION	RATIONALE (PROS/CONS)
CLASS A2 – FOOD AND DRINK – NON-ESSENTIAL CLASS A5 – HOT FOOD AND TAKEAWAY - ESSENTIAL	
<p>Food and drink for consumption on site (e.g. cafes), <i>noting that premises will be able to provide takeaway or delivery for food and potentially alcoholic drinks following licence review.</i></p> <p>EXCEPTIONS: This will NOT include hot food takeaways/ food on the go (Class A5 Hot Food and Takeaway). Restaurants may also choose to provide a takeaway service for food under these guidelines following updated planning and licensing regulation. Drinks or other things should not be provided whilst people wait for collections to avoid virus spread.</p>	<p>Citizens are continuing to use these places e.g. working from cafes, or for social gatherings, which can increase virus spread.</p> <p>Consumption sites involve close contact across tables and a multiplicity of touched hard non-porous surfaces and hand to face contact. Strong risk of virus spread in these sites.</p> <p>If hospital food/drink cafes are left open that may lead to key workers feeling they are left in an increased vulnerable condition.</p>
CLASS A3 – DRINKING ESTABLISHMENTS	

<p>Drinking establishments (including public houses, wine bars, nightclubs or similar), <i>noting that premises will be able to provide takeaway or delivery for food and potentially alcoholic drinks following licence review.</i></p> <p>EXCEPTIONS: Pubs may choose to provide a takeaway service for food under these guidelines, following updated planning regulation. The Home Office is currently looking into changing licensing to enable takeaways or delivery of alcoholic drinks. This is not yet confirmed. Drinks or other things should not be provided whilst people wait for collections to avoid virus spread.</p>	<p>Citizens are continuing to use these places to have social gatherings which can increase the risk of virus spread. Strong risk of virus spreading in these sites.</p>
CLASS D2 – NON-RESIDENTIAL – ENTERTAINMENT AND LEISURE	
<p>Cinemas, theatre, bingo halls and concert halls</p>	<p>Some events entail close contact between spectators and attendees. High concentrated numbers of people still using increase virus spread, including among most at-risk population.</p>
<p>Museums and galleries</p>	<p>Museums and galleries require close contact in confined spaces for long periods of time. Closing them will help minimise spread of disease.</p>

ANNEX C - ADDITIONAL LEISURE BUSINESSES PROPOSED FOR CLOSURE

TYPE AND DEFINITION	RATIONALE (PROS/CONS)
CLASS A5 – SHOPS AND RETAIL OUTLETS	
Wellness centres, spas, massage parlours	These venues require close contact for long periods of time. Non-essential services.
CLASS D2 – NON-RESIDENTIAL – ENTERTAINMENT AND LEISURE	
Casinos and betting shops (categorised as individual section under planning categories)	Close social contact, involves a lot of touching of surfaces. Most used by vulnerable people who could be more at risk.
Indoor leisure facilities. Gyms, swimming baths, and other indoor recreation facilities.	More of a mixed picture. Gyms facilitate spread of the virus, and social contact around exercising exacerbates this. However, maintaining physical and mental health is crucial during this time.