

26 February 2021

3CS Newsletter

EMPLOYMENT

Road map to recovery

On 22 February, the Prime Minister announced the government's plans on how England will come out of its latest lockdown which came into force on 6 January 2021. The 'roadmap to recovery' takes a staged approach with the key features being:

From 8 March:

- Schools and colleges open for all students
- Two people from different households will be able to meet in a public, outdoor space

From 29 March:

- Up to 6 individuals or 2 households will be able to gather outdoors, including in private gardens
- Organised outdoor sport will be permitted

From 12 April (at the earliest):

- Non-essential retail, personal care and outdoor hospitality will open
- Indoor leisure e.g. gyms swimming pools will open

From 17 May (at the earliest):

- Most social contact rules will be lifted on outdoor activities
- Six people or two households can meet indoors
- Indoor hospitality and hotels will open

From 21 June (at the earliest):

- All legal limits on social contact will be removed
- Hope to reopen final closed sectors of the economy

Any easing of restrictions will be subject to the coronavirus vaccination programme continuing at pace and NHS capacity remaining at manageable levels. The threat and potential impact of new coronavirus variants will also determine whether adjustments are made to the timeframes for lifting various restrictions. However, as matters stand it is anticipated that lockdown should be lifted in its entirety on 21 June. Each stage in the easing of restrictions will be confirmed one week in advance.

Social distancing measures and the use of face masks is likely to continue for the foreseeable future.



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The registered office of 3CS Corporate Solicitors Ltd is 35 New Broad Street, London EC2M 1NH. Mainline Tel: 0207 194 8140 Web: www.3cslondon.com



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What about pubs, bars and restaurants?

Currently, the hospitality sector is only permitted to operate delivery or click and collect services; however, it is expected that by the end of April hospitality venues will be able to welcome customers to their outdoor spaces. An estimated 650,000 jobs have been lost across the hospitality industry since the pandemic began and understandably hospitality bodies are calling for further support measures if venues are not likely to be permitted to serve customers indoors for some months.

When will offices re-open?

The government's work-from-home guidance has been in place now for almost a year, and under the Prime Minister's roadmap out of lockdown it could remain until the summer. Providing earlier steps of relaxed measures are deemed successful, all restrictions on social contact could be removed by 21 June at the earliest.

Extension of the furlough scheme?

There has been no further comment on the furlough scheme that was extended to the end of April earlier this year. We will have to wait until the Budget is announced by the Chancellor on 3 March to see what financial support the government makes available to help struggling businesses as its roadmap is rolled out.

Return to work

Employers will need to ensure that Covid-19 policies, procedures, and risk assessments are robust before the resumption of work in the workplace, ensuring the safety of workers and others visiting company premises. In the event an employee does accuse their employer of failing to provide a safe working environment, it will be essential for the employer to have clear and comprehensive policies in place as evidence that government guidelines have been followed. An employer will also need to provide written evidence that risk assessments were carried out and all possible precautions were taken to provide the employee with a safe working environment.

If you would like assistance with:

- conducting a risk assessment of your work premises or preparing a home health and safety assessment for your employees;
 - creating a return to work policy;
 - consulting with your staff about your workplace safety plans/policies;
 - guidance about vaccinations and/or covid-19 testing; or
- require any other advice before requesting employees return to work; please contact us.

Beth Baird
Solicitor/Director/Employment
E: beth.baird@3cslondon.com



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