

## **CORE SCRIPT ON PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND CORONAVIRUS**

On 23 March the Government, stepped up measures to prevent the spread of coronavirus and save lives (detailed advice [here](#)).

All non-essential premises must now close. Takeaway and delivery services may remain open and operational in line with guidance published on Friday 20 March ([link to press release](#)).

Online retail is still open and encouraged, and postal and delivery service will run as normal.

All retail outlets must remain closed with some notable exceptions, including petrol stations, bicycle shops, garages, and car rentals.

Retail and public premises which we expect to remain open must:

- Ensure a distance of two meters between customers and shop assistants.
- Let people enter the shop only in small groups, to ensure that spaces are not crowded.
- Queue control to maintain a distance of two meters between customers is required outside of shops and other essential premises that remain open.

We are encouraging all employers to follow Public Health England's advice on health and safety in the workplace and urge those staff that can do their role from home to do so. For those roles that cannot be done from home, we urge employers to identify reasonable measures to protect their staff.

The Government will look again at these measures in three weeks, and relax them if the evidence shows this is possible.

This is in addition to the steps taken on 19th March to close schools, and other educational establishments (including nurseries). However, schools and other educational establishments are continuing to provide care for the limited number of children who absolutely need to attend.

The system is currently working well with employers identifying critical workers in the spirit of the guidance, and schools welcoming a manageable number of children. However, we understand there have been localised instances of schools and businesses not adhering to the guidelines. Where schools or businesses are not adhering to the guidance, please keep telling us who they are and we will issue further guidance and clarification if necessary.

### **How did you decide who is classed as a critical worker?**

Critical workers are those whose work is critical to the coronavirus response. For transport, this includes those who will keep air, water, road and rail passenger and freight transport operating during the COVID-19 response, including those working on transport systems through which supply chains pass.

It is up to businesses to decide which of their workers meet the requirements of being a critical worker. The system is currently working well with employers identifying critical workers in the spirit of the guidance. However, the Government will keep this under review, and issue further guidance and clarification if necessary.

### **If I am on the critical worker list, does this mean I have to go to work?**

You should speak to your employer about your specific role. Where it is possible to work from home, even if you fall into one of the categories of critical workers, we encourage you to do so in agreement with your employer.

### **Should I stop working if I am not classed as a critical worker?**

Not necessarily. The Government has called on specific sectors to close – the full list of business, premises and places which have been asked to close is [here](#).

If your job is not on this list, then you should work from home if at all possible.

If it is absolutely impossible for you to work from home as part of your job, you should follow the below advice;

- 1) Minimise contact with colleagues and customers. Minimum contact is a combination of time and distance.
- 2) When close contact is not required then you should be separated by at least two meters.
- 3) Regular hand hygiene either using formal hand washing (best) or alcohol gel (good) is important.
- 4) Do not bring hands to face / head (for instance to blow your nose) unless you have just washed / gelled hands.
- 5) Dispose of any tissue used to blow nose and then wash/gel hands prior to any further action.
- 6) If using gloves, change them if physical damage or visible contamination present or if physical damage, or as needed for operator comfort.
- 7) If you use PPE, ensure that it (e.g. gloves and / or aprons) is removed safely when you have finished – this is the most important step - and safely disposed of.

### **What if it is not possible to follow the 2m social distances guidance and do my job?**

If it is absolutely impossible for you to work from home as part of your job, you should follow the below advice;

- 1) Minimise contact with the colleagues and customers. Minimum contact is a combination of time and distance.
- 2) When close contact is not required then you should be separated by at least two meters.
- 3) Regular hand hygiene either using formal hand washing (best) or alcohol gel (good) is important.

- 4) Do not bring hands to face / head (for instance to blow your nose) unless you have just washed / gelled hands.
- 5) Dispose of any tissue used to blow nose and then wash/gel hands prior to any further action.
- 6) If using gloves, change them if physical damage or visible contamination present or if physical damage, or as needed for operator comfort.
- 7) If you use PPE, ensure that it (e.g. gloves and / or aprons) is removed safely when you have finished – this is the most important step – and safely disposed of.

### **Should I use public transport to get to work?**

If it is absolutely impossible for you to work from home, you may use public transport to go to work. If possible, please consider timing your journey so that you avoid rush hour.

### **School Closures**

The guidance for closures of schools, and other educational establishments (including nurseries) was published 19<sup>th</sup> March; please see [here](#).

In summary:

1. The Government has asked that **if it is at all possible for children to be at home, then they should be**. Schools and other educational establishments should only be continuing to provide care for a limited number of children who absolutely need to attend.
2. The guidance is clear that, **if your work is critical to the COVID-19 response**, or you work in one of the critical sectors listed in the guidance, and you cannot keep your child or children safe at home then your child or children will be prioritised for education provision.
3. **This does not, however, guarantee provision**, as decisions need to be made locally by schools, nurseries and education authorities.
4. Many parents working in these critical sectors may be able to ensure their child is kept at home; **every child who can be safely cared for at home should be**.

Please see below for further guidance which we are actively keeping under review.

### **Why are you keeping some schools open when the scientific advice is still to stay at home?**

The most recent scientific advice is clear. If children can stay safely at home, they should, to limit the chance of the virus spreading. That is why we have asked parents

to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and have asked schools, and other educational establishments to remain open only for those children who absolutely need to attend. Schools, colleges and other educational establishments remain safe places for children, especially if fewer children are in these educational settings. Alongside the children of critical workers, schools and childcare providers are being asked to continue to provide care for vulnerable children.

### **Do both parents need to be critical workers or just one?**

**Only one parent or carer needs to be a critical worker, but if children can stay safely at home, they should, to limit the chance of the virus spreading.** Many parents working in these sectors may be able to ensure their child is kept at home, but children must of course be safely cared for.

### **What does this mean for those who think they fall within the critical worker category?**

If workers think they fall within the critical categories above, they should confirm with their employer that, based on their business continuity arrangements, their specific role is necessary for the continuation of this essential public service.

### **What should an employer do if they think their workers are critical but not on the list?**

Employers should carefully consider the guidance. It sets out the critical workers who will not be able to work from home. Employers should help their staff find alternative arrangements to support them working from home. They can contact the government department responsible for their sector if they have any questions.

### **What if my child or children's school is closed?**

If your school is closed, then please [contact your local authority](#), who will seek to redirect you to a local school in your area that your child, or children, can attend.

### **Is a letter from my employer required for my child or children's school or nursery?**

A letter is not required but some organisations including DfT are issuing them for use if required. If a letter is requested, you should seek confirmation through a letter from your employer confirming that you are designated as a critical worker. This does not mean you are guaranteed a place for your child at your school and nursery as that will depend on decisions taken by the school, nursery or education authority.

### **Will the definition of critical worker change?**

COVID-19 is a rapidly developing situation. The Government will issue further guidance should the definition of critical worker need to expand or contract.

**If there are critical workers within my business or organisation, does this mean all workers identify as critical workers?**

Not necessarily. If your specific role is critical to the COVID-19 response, you would fall into the critical worker category. Those who do not fall within the guidance should speak to their employer about their personal circumstances so they can support them.

**My child or children's school is suggesting that both parents need to be critical workers, when only one parent falls into that category. What do I do?**

Government guidance is that only one parent or carer needs to be a critical worker for your child or children to remain in education. You should seek confirmation from their employer that you are a critical worker and provide that confirmation to your school or educational establishment.

**My child or children's school is suggesting that I do not qualify as a critical worker when I have been told by my employer that I do. What do I do?**

You should seek confirmation from your employer that you are a critical worker and provide that confirmation to your school or educational establishment.

**Does the critical worker list apply UK-wide?**

This guidance is specifically for schools, childcare providers, colleges and local authorities in England.

**Will there be more detailed guidance published around critical workers?**

We are not planning to publish detailed guidance around critical workers; if your work is critical to the COVID-19 response, or you work in one of the critical sectors listed in the guidance, government considers you to be in that category.