



Summary of the Government's recovery roadmap

11 May 2020

OUR PLAN TO REBUILD: The UK Government's COVID-19 recovery strategy

The Government's roadmap for how and when the UK will adjust its response to the COVID-19 crisis, issued by the Cabinet Office.

The following provides an *initial summary* of content in this 50-page document, highlighting issues of particular relevance. For the full and definitive version of the recovery strategy document please see: www.gov.uk/government/publications/our-plan-to-rebuild-the-uk-governments-covid-19-recovery-strategy

1. Protective and other measures

Step One of the Government's recovery roadmap (changing its coronavirus public and workplace policy) will apply from **Wednesday 13 May in England**. It adds "this guidance should be considered alongside local public health and safety requirements for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland".

Step One includes advising the use of face coverings in enclosed public areas, such as on public transport. In addition, from 13 May:

- All workers who cannot work from home should travel to work if their workplace is open;
- Sectors of the economy that are allowed to be open should be open, which includes construction and distribution; and
- As soon as practicable, workplaces should follow the "COVID-19 Secure" guidelines

Significantly, it points to "COVID-19 SECURE" guidelines that set out "how physical spaces can be adapted to operate safely", issued in consultation with industry bodies, local authorities, trades unions, the HSE and Public Health England. An important set of workplace and other guidelines* was published on Monday afternoon at: www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19

ECA will issue a separate note on these supporting documents, which include significant documents covering **construction, domestic work, offices, factories (relevant to offsite manufacturing) and vehicles.*

See also 'More on protective and return to work measures' below.

2. Job Retention Scheme

The roadmap confirms that by 3 May, 800,000 employers had applied to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme to help pay the wages of 6.3m jobs. Acknowledging that any significant increase in unemployment will have negative economic and social impacts, the main message is that the CJRS and other economic support measures “are extraordinarily costly and cannot be sustained for a prolonged period of time”. It goes on to state that the UK Government needs to “wind down the economic support measures while people are eased back to work”. The Chancellor of the Exchequer is expected to confirm details about the future of the CJRS in a Commons statement on Tuesday (12 May).

3. Safeguarding Vulnerable people

The roadmap also emphasises the need for continued special safeguards for vulnerable individuals. In particular, those deemed to be ‘extremely clinically vulnerable’ are told to continue shielding, whilst those classified as ‘clinically vulnerable’ should still remain home as much as possible.

ECA note: whilst not acknowledged, these continued restrictions on individuals’ ability to leave their homes will have significant employment implications for both them and their employers, which will need to be reflected in any continued Government support, such as under the furlough scheme.

4. More on protective and return to work measures

Other measures and advice covered in the new roadmap include:

Travel: when travelling, everybody (including critical workers) should continue to avoid public transport wherever possible. If they can, people should instead choose to cycle, walk or drive. “Government will close some roads in cities to traffic (apart from buses)”. Social distancing guidance on public transport must be followed rigorously. “If you have to use public transport, try and avoid peak times. Employers should consider staggering working hours and expanding bicycle storage facilities, changing facilities and car parking”.

Face coverings: (please note this and the management of site health and welfare-related issues are covered in more detail in the new [construction guide](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/construction-and-other-outdoor-work) at www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/construction-and-other-outdoor-work)

The document advises that people should “aim to wear a face-covering in enclosed spaces where social distancing is not always possible and they come into contact with others that they do not normally meet”, for example on public transport. Cloth face-coverings (not to be confused with tight fitting or surgical masks) can “help reduce the risk of transmission in some circumstances”, though evidence suggests face-coverings aren’t designed to protect the wearer, but to protect against inadvertent transmission to others from a wearer who has COVID-19 asymptotically.

“Surgical masks or respirators must continue to be reserved for those who need it” (notably NHS and care premises - and those in industrial settings working with *other hazards* such a harmful dust).

Shift patterns etc: to limit the number of people that an individual come into contact with regularly, employers “can, where practical, change shift patterns and rotas to keep smaller, contained teams”. This is covered in much more detail in the construction guide above.

Antibody testing: The Government will increasingly augment swab-based antigen testing, which determines whether a person *currently* has the virus, “with antibody testing, which shows whether a person has previously had it, once it is sufficiently reliable to do so”. (ECA note: we understand that UK-validated (reliable) antibody testing is not yet available for widespread use.)

Further advice includes:

- clothes should be washed regularly as “there is some evidence that the virus can stay on fabrics for a few days, although usually it is shorter”. Changing clothes in workplaces should normally only be considered in higher risk environments, such as a care home;
- evidence suggests the virus is “less likely to be transmitted in well-ventilated areas”; and
- the virus “can exist for up to 72 hours on surfaces”. Frequent cleaning is particularly important for all communal surfaces.

Other return to work measures include...

The roadmap cites further measures, which are characterised (explicitly or implicitly) as helping to get more employees back to work. These include:

- Increasing the availability and speed of swab testing (to reduce the period of self-isolation for those suspected of displaying COVID-19 symptoms, or with household members thus suspected);
- Encouraging more critical workers and parents of vulnerable children to send their children to school, and more childminders to return to work (freeing up more parents to return to work);
- Restoring public transport services to pre-COVID-19 levels ‘as quickly as possible’, alongside social distancing in line with ‘COVID-19 Secure’ guidelines;
- Encouraging and financially supporting local authorities to widen pavements, create pop-up cycle lanes, and close some roads in cities to traffic (apart from buses);
- Preparing schools for a phased return, starting (potentially) from 1st June with primary school pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6.



ECA, Rotherwick House, 3 Thomas More Street, St. Katharine's & Wapping, London E1W 1YZ
Tel: 020 7313 4800 Email: info@eca.co.uk www.eca.co.uk