

British Chambers of Commerce

Key Business Questions for the restart of the UK Economy

1. Forward guidance. When we are close to the end of the second three-week period, can the Government give clearer guidance on how long current restrictions will be maintained? What further period of broad-based shutdown do businesses need to plan for?
2. Phases of re-opening. Does the evidence point to a re-start that is sectoral, geographic, based on age/risk groups - or some combination of all of these? Over what sort of estimated timeframe?
3. Interdependence. How do we ensure that the services businesses require to operate successfully (e.g. public transport, education/childcare, etc) are safe and available to permit reopening?
4. Clear expectations of business. What steps will businesses be expected to take to keep their people safe? When will official guidance be available? And how will they get any necessary PPE - given current efforts are rightly focused on supplying the NHS, social care, and volunteers?
5. A UK-wide approach. Divergence between the nations has created confusion and hurt the economy. Will HMG, devolved nations, Parliament and local leaders agree a shared strategy - in the common interest?
6. Support for businesses that are open now. Can ministers from all governments reiterate that many businesses are currently allowed to operate - and that they will be supported to do so by governments, councils, police forces? How can we bring employers, unions, and other organisations together to help businesses operate safely?
7. Plan B. What is the plan if a loosening of restrictions leads to a worsening of public health outcomes? How can ministers help businesses to plan for a return to tighter restrictions, in the unfortunate circumstance that this becomes necessary?
8. Clarity on business support. Can the Treasury swiftly confirm that the CJRS, CBILS loans, business rate grant schemes and other forms of support will be in place as long as needed? Will the CJRS furlough scheme be extended beyond 1st June – which is necessary and pressing to avoid millions of redundancies over the summer?