

# Garden centres reopen in England

Press release

All garden centres reopening should put in place social distancing and safety measures.



Garden centres will be able to reopen to the public from today (Wednesday 13 May).

All garden centres reopening should put in place social distancing, cleaning and protective measures for both staff and customers. In particular, they should ensure that people can stay 2m apart wherever possible, as is already the case in supermarkets and other shops which have remained open in recent weeks. Further [detailed guidance for businesses](#) has been published by BEIS.

Biosecurity Minister Lord Gardiner said:

We know that this time of year is crucial for the horticulture industry and are very aware of the impacts of coronavirus on the sector.

Our decision to reopen garden centres and nurseries in a safe way, will allow businesses to sell their products directly to the public and in doing so bringing about wider benefits to consumers, especially for physical and mental wellbeing, which gardening can bring.

It is vital all garden centres implement strict social distancing and I urge businesses to use the Government's extensive guidance and the Horticultural Trades Association's Safe Trading Guidance when planning their reopening.

To help Garden Centres put in place appropriate measures, the Horticultural Trades Association (HTA) has also produced [Safe Trading Guidance](#), closely aligned to the Government's guidance and specifically for garden centres, which includes a series of recommendations to protect customers.

The guidance document has been based on insight from leading HTA retailers, the British Retail Consortium, and from government advice as a recommendation of best practice regarding social distancing. Recommendations include advice on customer numbers in stores, entrance and exit protocols, and queueing and checkout procedures. It also contains practical advice on how to protect the health and wellbeing of staff.

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## [Environment Agency and Angling Trust welcome lifting of restrictions on recreational fishing](#)

Restrictions on angling in England are eased from today (Wednesday 13th May) following updated government [guidance on outdoor activities](#).

The news has been welcomed by both the Environment Agency and Angling Trust. The Trust recently put forward its [‘When We Fish Again’](#) report to the government, encouraging a phased return to the sport and highlighting the significant benefits fishing offers to both personal well-being and the economy.

Under the new government guidelines, people can fish on their own, with their household, or with one other person while adhering to social distancing rules and staying two metres apart at all times.

Outside members of your own household, people should remain two metres apart from other anglers or members of the public at all times. The most up-to-date information on these restrictions can be found at [www.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.gov.uk/coronavirus).

The Angling Trust already advises anglers to fish no closer than 15 metres and that matches and organised angling events are still not permissible.

Anglers must also ensure they are in possession of a valid fishing licence, adhere to fisheries byelaws including the close season and have permission of the fishery owner.

Dr Graeme Storey, Environment Agency Acting Deputy Director for Fisheries and the Natural Environment, said:

We welcome the lifting of restrictions on recreational fishing. This decision recognises that fishing can be done safely while still adhering to social distancing guidelines. However, it is vital that when we do go fishing, we all do so responsibly and

safely in order to continue playing our own part in protecting ourselves, others and key public services.

In these challenging times responsible fishing provides a wonderful opportunity to connect with nature and feel the range of benefits doing so can bring. If you are going fishing then you must have a valid fishing licence and adhere to fishing byelaws and fishery rules.

Angling Trust Chief Executive Jamie Cook said:

The Angling Trust have brought all disciplines of angling together in presenting a blueprint for the safe resumption of recreational fishing which has led the way for the sporting sector. Fishing delivers huge benefits to physical health, mental wellbeing, active lifestyles and our economy. Angling has shown the value of coming together as a community to speak coherently and professionally at the highest level with a single voice. I thank anglers for their patience and ask that we follow the Angling Trust guidance which is there to protect us all.

The Angling Trust have issued additional helpful advice to individuals and angling organisations which can be found on their [online hub](#).

Notes to editors:

- If you are in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland, you must adhere to the guidance and regulations set by the Scottish and Welsh governments or Northern Ireland Executive at all times.
- To date, the Environment Agency have paused the majority of non-essential fisheries activity including improving habitats for fish, facilities for anglers and stocking in line with government guidelines. Proactive operational activity will be restarted as soon as possible, also in line with those guidelines.
- The Environment Agency will continue to prioritise responding to reported incidents of serious harm to the environment, subject to local conditions. The Agency is also liaising with police regarding illegal fishing incidents. The police have powers to deal with people breaking coronavirus rules and are able to achieve outcomes beneficial to public health and fisheries legislation.
- Illegal fishing, pollution and incidents harming the environment should be reported to the Environment Agency on 0800 80 70 60. Significant

issues or serious breaches of the coronavirus restrictions should be reported to the police on 101 or the local police website.

Ends.

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## [Government announces roadmap taskforces](#)

News story

New ministerial-led taskforces have been set up to plan how closed sectors can reopen safely.



Five new ministerial-led taskforces have been set up to develop plans for how and when closed sectors can reopen safely, following publication of the UK's [roadmap to rebuild Britain](#).

Businesses and shops in indoor environments or with closer contact between people, like pubs, hotels and non-essential retail, will likely have a higher risk of transmission, as is the case with many places of worship.

It is the Government's ambition to open as many of these other businesses and public places as possible over the coming months, when the scientific advice provided allows us to.

Similarly, the Government recognises this has been a particularly challenging time for the international aviation industry.

These taskforces will be crucial to the reopening of Britain's economy and each one will lead on developing new COVID-19 secure guidelines for the reopening of public places and businesses, where and when it is safe to do so.

The five new ministerial taskforces will look at the following sectors:

- pubs and restaurants (Department for Business, Energy and industrial Strategy)
- non-essential retail (including salons) (Department for Business, Energy and industrial Strategy);
- recreation and leisure, including tourism, culture and heritage, libraries, entertainment and sport (Department for Culture, Media and Sport)
- places of worship, including faith, community and public buildings (Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government)
- international aviation, reflecting the unique challenges that sector is facing (Department for Transport)

As part of this science-led approach, each taskforce will work across Government and engage with key stakeholders in public health, industry, trade unions and devolved administrations to:

- ensure that COVID-19 secure guidelines are developed in line with the phased approach and public health directions, building on the existing guidance and providing intelligence and sector-specific expert input
- agree and ensure alignment of all relevant sectoral guidance
- provide key sector stakeholders direct access to Ministers to shape the guidance.

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## [Check your vehicle for these five things before driving](#)

You should still stay at home as much as possible. But if you are leaving home for one of the reasons the Government has given, remember that any vehicle which hasn't been on the road for some time will need a thorough check to ensure it is roadworthy and safe.

Richard Leonard, Highways England Head of Road Safety, said:

We should only be leaving home for the reasons the Government has set out – and we want those journeys to be safe ones. If you haven't driven for a few weeks you might feel a bit strange getting back behind the wheel, and your car will need a few simple checks, like your tyres, oil, water, lights and fuel.

As our teams have been able to continue working, while following social distancing guidelines, the layout of some roads have slightly changed.

Everything will not be the same as the last time you were on the road, so please ensure you and your vehicle are prepared.

You should still stay at home as much as possible. The reasons you may leave home include:

- for work, where you cannot work from home
- going to shops that are permitted to be open – to get things like food and medicine
- to exercise or spend time outdoors
- any medical need, including to donate blood, avoid injury or illness, escape risk of harm, or to provide care or to help a vulnerable person

Here is Highways England's advice for drivers:

### **Check tyres**

Prior to setting off on a long/significant journey, check your tyre pressures are suitable for the load and the condition of your tyres, including the spare. Look out for cuts or wear and make sure the tyres have a minimum tread depth of 1.6mm, which is the legal limit.

### **Check engine oil**

Use your dipstick to check oil regularly and before any long journey, and top up if needed. Take your car back to the garage if you're topping up more than usual.

### **Check water**

To ensure you have good visibility, always keep your screen wash topped up so you can clear debris or dirt off your windscreen.

### **Check lights**

If your indicators, hazard lights, headlights, fog lights, reverse lights or brake lights are not functioning properly, you are putting yourself and your family at risk. In addition, light malfunctions can be a reason for your vehicle to fail its MoT.

### **Check fuel**

Before setting out, check your fuel levels and make sure you have enough to get to your destination.

[More tips, including 'how to videos'](#), are available online.

Real-time traffic information for England's motorways and major A roads is available through the [Traffic England website](#), local and national radio travel bulletins, electronic road signs and mobile apps. Local Twitter services are also available on [Highways England's website](#).

## General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

## Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

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# Applications for Self-Employment Income Support Scheme open early

- Self-Employment Income Support Scheme opens for applications today
- those eligible will receive government grant worth up to £7,500
- money expected to be in bank accounts by 25 May

From 8am this morning self-employed individuals or members of partnerships whose business has been adversely affected by coronavirus will be able to apply for a Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) grant worth 80% of their average monthly trading profits.

Millions are expected to benefit from the scheme with the payments – to be paid in a single instalment covering three months and capped at £7,500 – expected to land in bank accounts within six working days of each claim.

Everyone eligible for the SEISS, which is one of the most generous support schemes announced by any government in response to coronavirus, will be able to receive the government grant by 25 May, or within six days of a completed claim.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak, said:

We're working ahead of time to deliver support to the self-employed and from today, applications open for the millions of people eligible for the scheme.

With payments arriving before the end of this month, self-employed across the UK will have money in their pockets to help them through these challenging times.

From today, people will be able to make their claim on a specified date between 13-18 May, based on their Unique Tax Reference number. HMRC has assigned eligible self-employed individuals a specific date to apply on and this can be checked on HMRC's online checker.

The SEISS is part of a comprehensive package of support for self-employed people, including Bounce Back loans, income tax deferrals, rental support, increased levels of Universal Credit, mortgage holidays and the various business support schemes the government has introduced to protect businesses during this time. Derek Cribb, CEO of IPSE (the Association of Independent Professionals and the Self-Employed) said:

For the self-employed, Coronavirus is not only a health crisis, but also a pressing income crisis. It is therefore very welcome that the Government has managed to get this new scheme in place ahead of schedule, and that a section of the freelance community can now get the help they need early. We are delighted that the government has heeded much of IPSE's advice by setting up the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme, which extends a much-needed lifeline to those self-employed people who are eligible for it.

Mike Cherry, National Chairman of the Federation of Small Businesses, said:

The self-employment income support scheme represents a lifeline for the millions of self-employed people who are expected to qualify. I would encourage all those who think they are eligible to use the online checker if they've not done so yet, and to apply on the date allocated.

We are particularly pleased to see the scheme opening earlier than scheduled, with a simple fast-track application and a promise for speedy payment. Getting the system designed and built ahead of schedule is impressive. Just like the Job Retention Scheme portal we hope it will cope with the high expected demand. I would like to pay tribute to the staff of HMRC for the behind the scenes work to get this scheme off the ground.

Brian Berry, Chief Executive of the Federation of Master Builders said:

The self-employed account for 40% of the construction workforce so the government's decision to bring forward the payment to the end May will be very welcome news for the many independent tradespeople who operate in construction. The government's support package to date has been targeted at businesses so the self-employed will be welcoming this cash boost at a time when they need it most.

### **Further information**

Individuals are eligible if their business has been adversely affected by coronavirus, they traded in the tax year 2019 to 2020, intend to continue trading, and they:

- earn at least half of their income through self-employment
- have trading profits of no more than £50,000 per year
- traded in the tax year 2018 to 2019 and submitted their Self Assessment tax return on or before 23 April 2020 for that year

HMRC calculate the amount to be paid to each eligible claimant based on an average of the tax returns for 2016/17, 2017/18 and 2018/19.

Customers have been invited to claim their SEISS grant on a specified date, from 13 – 18 May. They won't be able to apply before their claim date but can make a claim after that day.

People can check their date using HMRC's online checker at any time.

<https://www.tax.service.gov.uk/self-employment-support/enter-unique-taxpayer-reference>

For further information, please read HMRC's guidance or speak to your tax agent. If you need further support, please use HMRC's webchat service or call the Covid-19 Helpline on 0800 024 1222.