

COVID-19: KEEPING YOU INFORMED

Covid-19 (Coronavirus) Update: Complete our Members' Re-Opening Survey and more government updates

Welcome

Dear Kingston First member,

We have detailed below announcements from this week on retail and dentist re-opening dates, the creation of a London Transition Board and updates on some of the government support packages.

As part of our planning for re-opening the town safely, please do take a few moments to fill in our [Members' Re-Opening Survey](#). This will enable us to better shape the projects and services that you need to help you during this time and as we go into recovery.

Our contact details for business support and advice to our members is below. We will continue to keep you updated.

Best wishes.

Kirsten Henly, Chief Executive,
and all the team at Kingston First

BUSINESS SUPPORT ANNOUNCEMENTS AND NEWS

DENTAL SERVICES ABLE TO OPEN FROM 8 JUNE

The Chief Dental Officer at NHS England announced yesterday that face to face dental services can resume from Monday 8 June where they have the necessary IPC and PPE requirements in place. In a letter to dental practices, the Chief Dental officer asks practices to schedule services to patients based on urgency of needs, unmet needs of vulnerable groups and capacity to undertake the activity.

Find Out More: Read the Chief Dental Officer's letter [here](#).

NON-ESSENTIAL RETAILERS TO OPEN FROM 15 JUNE

As part of the phased approach to ease the lockdown restrictions and re-boot the economy the Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, on Monday announced that from 15 June all non-essential retailers will be able to re-open. This is conditional on the government being satisfied the country is meeting the five tests the government has set out to contain the virus and manage the country's response. Non-essential retailers are those categorised as stores selling clothes, shoes, toys, furniture, books and electronics. Over the coming weeks, businesses will need to be implementing the recommended measures and guidance set out by the government, including carry out risk-assessments, in consultation with trade unions or workers.

Find Out More: The guidelines can be found in full [here](#). To read the government's press release on re-opening non-essential retail, [click here](#).

A NEW LONDON TRANSITION BOARD TO AID LONDON'S ECONOMIC RECOVERY

This week the Communities Secretary, Robert Jenrick, and the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, announced plans to chair a board of senior leaders from across London to co-ordinate London's response as it emerges from the lockdown and begins to reopen its economy. The [London Transition Board](#) will focus on the issues that London will face over the coming months including phased lockdown lifting, infection control and recovery of public services. The board will run to December in parallel with the [London Recovery Board](#), which will plan and oversee London's wider economic and social long term recovery.

Find Out More: The government website features a full outline of the board, click here to [read more](#).

NEWS STORIES

NUMBER OF FURLOUGHED STAFF INCREASES BY NEARLY HALF A MILLION IN A WEEK

Latest figures announced this week from the Treasury show that an additional 400,000 workers are now covered by the Coronavirus Job Retention scheme in a week. Numbers reached 8.4 million with over £15 billion claims now reported to have been made in the UK.

The scheme was first launched in April and was due to end in July, this was further extended to the end of October. From August, businesses will need to start 'sharing the costs' of staff. Details of how this will be managed have yet to be announced by the government.

To Read More: The story is featured in full on the BBC website, [click here](#) to read.

SELF-EMPLOYMENT INCOME SCHEME DUE TO EXPIRE

The Self-employment Income Scheme set up by the government to support those self-employed by providing a one off grant payment which covers three months, is due to expire at the end of this month.

Details of how this sector of the workforce will be supported is yet to be announced.

KINGSTON COUNCIL UPDATE

DISCRETIONARY GRANT UPDATE

We have been in contact with the Council on the above grant and how it could support town centre members.

The government guidance provides specific criteria within which the Council is asked to prioritise the financial support. The Council have provided the following update: Kingston Council have been allocated approximately £1.5m for this scheme, compared to nearly £30m received for the current business grants scheme benefiting over 1,800 local businesses. Their expectation is that the vast majority of grants made in the new scheme will be up to £5,000. This would allow the Council to support in the region of 300 local small and micro businesses.

The Council advise they want to be able to help as many small and micro businesses as possible but to provide this level of grant to all the borough's 9,000 small and micro businesses would require a budget of around £44m.

The Council are working to ensure the system is fair and reaches those that need it the most, alongside responding to the evolving guidance and the priority areas the government wants the Council to support first.

SECTOR SUPPORT

CALL TO OPEN HAIRDRESSERS IN LINE WITH ALL NON-ESSENTIAL RETAILERS

The Hair and Barber Council this week urged the government to consider lifting restrictions for opening of hairdressing salons in line with non-essential retailers. The body which represents over 1,000 salons has stated that the industry is ready to open now, however this was refuted by the Department of Health who confirmed that 4 July would be the earliest possible date for re-opening and that businesses need to adhere to the guidelines.

News Story: The story is featured in full on the BBC website, click [here](#) to read.

INSIGHT AND EVENTS

KINGSTON TOWN CENTRE FOOTFALL

Footfall in Kingston for w/c 17 May was -80.7% compared to the same week in 2019. UK footfall was -80% and Greater London -78%.