



## **Important information regarding the relaxation of shop opening hours previously restricted by planning condition**

Following a [Ministerial Statement](#) issued on the 30<sup>th</sup> November 2020, the Government has advised that from the 2<sup>nd</sup> December, across all Covid tiers, all shops should be allowed to reopen, with extended hours from Monday to Saturday. This will help to spread footfall, ease transport pressures, and make shopping in a socially distanced way easier by giving shoppers greater flexibility to choose when they shop and avoid peak times.

Restrictions on shop opening hours on weekday and Saturdays were removed by section 23 of the Deregulation and Contracting Out Act 1994. However, many retailers are subject to local controls through planning conditions which restrict opening times, particularly in the early morning, evening and at night, to make the development acceptable to local residents who might otherwise suffer from noise and other local amenity issues.

A balanced approach has been taken to ensure that there is a safe retail environment during the run up to Christmas and throughout January along with supporting the commercial viability of local shops during this challenging period.

Given the exceptional circumstances as a result of the coronavirus the Government has made clear that, as a matter of urgency, local planning authorities should take a positive approach to their engagement with retailers to ensure planning controls are not a barrier to the temporary extension of retail opening times in December and January.

The Statement notes that local planning authorities, having regard to their legal obligations, should not seek to undertake

planning enforcement action which would result in the unnecessary restriction of retail hours during this period. The National Planning Policy Framework already emphasises that planning enforcement is a discretionary activity, and local planning authorities should act proportionately in responding to suspected breaches of planning control.

**If you are a retailer and would like to register your intention to increase your opening hours please [email the planning team](#). We will retain correspondence on file and confirm receipt.**

**Please include the business name, the full postal address of the property along with details of the proposed opening hours - Monday to Saturday.**