



Department
for Business
Innovation & Skills

Enterprise Bill: Devolving Powers to extend Sunday Trading hours

Issue:

The current Sunday trading rules are restrictive, stifling business' efficiency and competitiveness and inhibiting consumer choice and reducing the ability of our major cities to compete for international tourism. The government is committed to increasing the UK's productivity. To realise this Government believes that powers should be devolved to local leaders and communities as they are best placed to make decisions which affect them. This includes ensuring that the rules on how and when businesses can trade in order to meet the needs of the local area.

Devolving the power to extend Sunday trading hours to local areas to decide for themselves the approach to Sunday opening hours will help drive competition, productivity and local economic growth, as well as helping our towns and cities compete for international tourism.

Measure:

We propose:

- Giving local authorities across England and Wales, the Mayors of London, and Greater Manchester (when elected) and Mayors established through any future devolution deals the power to extend Sunday trading hours.
- Giving local authorities the option to zone relaxed hours, meaning they can help boost local high streets and shopping areas to the benefit of both larger and smaller stores and consumers.
- Reducing the notice period for shop workers at large shops to opt out of Sunday working altogether, from the current 3 months to 1 month.
- Giving shop workers a new right to opt out of working longer than their normal Sunday hours – also by giving 1 month's notice at large shops or 3 months' notice at small shops.

- Guaranteeing a minimum award (usually two weeks' pay) where a related claim is brought and an employment tribunal finds that the employer failed to notify the shop worker of their opt out rights.

Aims and Impact:

The measures will:

- Empower local areas to decide for themselves the right approach to extended Sunday trading hours, reflecting local preferences, shopping habits and economic conditions.
- Help local areas to support local traders and independent shops in their high streets and town centres, helping bricks and mortar stores to compete against internet retailers which operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Online sales continue to grow at a significant rate: 15% this year.
- Offer consumers more choice about when and where they shop locally by giving them access to a wide range of products and enabling them to shop earlier or later in the day. Some polls show 60% of consumers would welcome greater choice as to when they can shop on Sundays.
- Offer businesses more flexibility on opening hours, and offer shop workers more opportunity to work on Sundays should they wish, whilst protecting and strengthening the rights of those who do not.
- Improve productivity by freeing retailers to make better use of their shops, allowing them to sell more without a proportionate increase in costs, thus reducing prices and greater convenience for consumers.
- Generate potentially significant benefits for the economy. They could also lead to a significant boost in jobs. It has been estimated that a two hour extension to Sunday trading in the West End and Knightsbridge would lead to the creation of between 1,070 and 2,160 jobs.
- Ensure that our towns and cities are able to compete on the global market. Paris has recently extended Sunday trading opening hours in areas of international tourism, and Dubai and New York shops open into the evening seven days a week.