



HM Government

# **Equality analysis of social distancing measures, including restrictions on movement and restrictions on gatherings, in response to severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) in England**

8 June 2020



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# Introduction

This document records the analysis undertaken by departments to enable Ministers to fulfil the requirements placed on them by the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. This is a summary of the full analysis as to the impacts of the easements to be introduced on 13 and 15 June on groups with protected characteristics. Ministers should consider the equality impact outlined in this PSED when making respective decisions.

The PSED is made up of 3 limbs; it requires the Minister to pay due regard to the need to:

- limb 1: eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- limb 2: advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- limb 3: foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

The protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010 are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership (only relevant to the first limb of the test), pregnancy and maternity, race or ethnicity, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. No impacts related to marriage and civil partnership, under the first limb of the PSED, have been identified and so this protected characteristic is not addressed in detail in this document.

## Social Distancing measures

On 23 March the government introduced Non-pharmaceutical Interventions (NPIs) to curb the spread of the coronavirus, protect the NHS and save lives. These included restrictions on people leaving the house and gathering, as well as obligations on businesses and other public facilities to close. Previous PSED assessments considered the impact of these measures.

The government is considering easements to be introduced under the second phase of step 2 of the government's [Roadmap](#); included in this assessment are:

- the reopening of non-essential retail
- the reopening of places of worship for private prayer

- the reopening of certain outdoor attractions, including those that can be accessed by vehicle (safari parks and outdoor cinema)
- allowing more social interaction, without social distancing, by introducing “support” bubbles for particular households (single occupancy and single parents)

This assessment presents the identified impacts of these policy changes.

# Reopening Non-Essential Retail

The retail sector employs approximately 3m people in the UK and contributes 5% of GVA. While some retail (food, pharmacy, homeware etc) has been permitted to remain open throughout, much of the sector has remained closed. Employment and GA for the non-essential retail sector is estimated at around 1,3m (40% of retail) employees and £38.4bn (43% of retail).

The easements to be introduced on 15 June will allow all retail businesses to open. This assessment considers the impact of the reopening of the retail sector on people of protected characteristics in a broad sense, and where possible, the specific impacts of reopening non-essential retail.

Re-opening the sector will have economic benefits for those it employs, which are in the large part lower-paid workers. We know that lower-paid and lower-skilled workers have been worse affected by the crisis and are losing their jobs in greater numbers than high earners. For instance, [nearly one-third of lower-paid employees have lost jobs or been furloughed, compared to less than one-in-ten top earners](#)<sup>1</sup>. Reopening the NER sector will therefore have important benefits for this group.

## Age

We have identified impacts under limb 1 of the PSED, as set out below. We have not identified any impacts for this protected characteristic under limbs 2 and 3.

The opening of non-essential retail is expected to benefit younger people: 24.6% of workers in non-food retail are aged 18 to 24<sup>2</sup> (the highest proportion by age category), and sales assistants & cashiers was one of the top job categories in which 22 to 29 year olds worked, as [reported by the ONS](#). Looking at the split between essential and non-essential retail, shows that more young people (16 to 24) are employed in non-essential retail than other age groups, 28%, and more than essential, 20% and higher than the national average of 11% of that age-group workforce. This would suggest that young people account for a particularly high proportion of retail employment but even more so in

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<sup>1</sup> Resolution Foundation evidence

<sup>2</sup> From the 2019 January-December APS, collated by the Labour Markets Team in Business Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS)

non-essential retail which suggests that re-opening would be beneficial for this age group. However, as shops will be allowed to open, it isn't clear that all will decide to open and due to suppressed demand, the need for labour may be less as reopening may be staggered according to demand.

There is a risk that older people, who are more likely to be shielding or following advice for the clinically vulnerable, may experience difficulties if their workplace re-opens, but they wish to continue limiting their social contact. Employees who have been advised to shield are eligible to receive Statutory Sick Pay and the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme can be used to support those advised to shield in professions where they are unable to work from home.

## **Disability**

We have identified impacts under limb 1 of the PSED, as set out below. We have not identified any impacts for this protected characteristic under limbs 2 and 3.

The re-opening of non-essential retail may particularly impact disabled people, who make up 16.8% of workers in non-food retail<sup>3</sup> (using the Equality Act 2010's definition of disability).

This may therefore have economic benefits for some disabled people. However disabled people are also more likely to fall into the "extremely vulnerable" group being asked to shield; this group is expected to continue shielding and therefore wouldn't benefit. As noted above they would be eligible for support under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

We recognise that some people who have a disability or health condition who require adjustments could be at a disadvantage compared to those who do not have a disability and are returning to work from home as a result of the opening of non-essential retail. Employers are legally obliged to make reasonable adjustments to make sure workers with disabilities aren't substantially disadvantaged when doing their jobs. Alternative or additional reasonable adjustments agreed for the standard workplace may need to be made to make homeworking possible for disabled people, or in order for workplaces to be made suitable for disabled people as well as comply with social distancing measures. The Access to Work scheme can assist in the process and with associated costs for employers and has additionally taken steps to put in place easements to enable disabled people to work more flexibly during the pandemic.

## **Gender reassignment**

We have not identified specific impacts from the opening of non-essential retail on trans people.

It should be noted however that data on gender reassignment, or more broadly, gender identity or trans status is not collected in major employment or labour market surveys. This

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<sup>3</sup> January-December 2019 APS, collated by the Labour Markets Team in BEIS

limits our ability to assess the impact of measures on transgender people in the workplace and from the closure of businesses.

## **Pregnancy and maternity**

We have not identified specific impacts from the opening of non-essential retail on women who are pregnant, though anecdotally there could be improved access to essential goods for pregnant women or new mothers.

Employers have particular responsibilities towards those who are new or expectant mothers. Guidance asks that employers understand the particular needs of these workers and asks that employers make reasonable adjustments to avoid new or expectant mothers being put at a disadvantage.

## **Race**

We have identified impacts under limb 1 of the PSED, as set out below. We have not identified any impacts for this protected characteristic under limbs 2 and 3.

With regards to ethnicity, approximately 13.5% of workers in the wholesale and retail sector are from BAME compared to the national average of 12.4%.

While in the population as a whole, young people are more likely to be affected by the shutdown, BAME groups working in non-essential retail tend to be older, especially those of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin. Only 14% of White British 30 to 44 year olds work in this sector compared to 40% of Bangladeshi 30 to 44 year olds.

The ONS has produced new data showing that people from BAME communities are at greater risk of severe adverse health outcomes from COVID-19<sup>4</sup>. PHE has also conducted a review analysing how different factors, including ethnicity, [impact on COVID-19 outcomes](#). The review found that “Risk of dying among those diagnosed with COVID-19 was higher in those in Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups than in White ethnic groups.

Relaxing restrictions in the retail sector may therefore be met by hesitation from ethnic minority groups. For those returning to work in the NER sector, there may be an increased risk of exposure to COVID-19, for example when using public transport for their journey. Data shows that a higher percentage of people from ethnic minority groups use public transport - in particular the bus.

Employers have the responsibility to communicate appropriately with those with workers whose protected characteristics, such as race, may expose them to a higher degree of

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<sup>4</sup> Coronavirus (COVID-19) related deaths by ethnic group, England and Wales: 2 March 2020 to 10 April 2020 which can be found here:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/articles/coronavirusrelateddeathsbyethnicgroupenglandandwales/2march2020to10april2020>

risk. They should consider whether any particular measures of adjustments are needed to take account of their duties under the equalities legislation.

Caring responsibilities may also disproportionately prevent some people from ethnic minority groups from taking up the opportunity to return to work. For example, we know that [18.9% of Black households were made up of a single parent with dependent children](#)<sup>5</sup> (the highest percentage out of all ethnic groups for this type of household).

### **Religion or belief**

We have identified impacts under limb 1 of the PSED, as set out below. We have not identified any impacts for this protected characteristic under limbs 2 and 3.

Religious groups may be impacted if changes to shift patterns in the retail sector have an impact on individuals' ability to express their religious beliefs, although it should be possible for employers to mitigate this when developing rotas. Opening of all retail business addresses the concerns regarding those with dietary restrictions as a result of their faith, who may have faced increased difficulty obtaining food that adheres to religious dietary restrictions, due to business closures (although we have not found robust evidence to support this).

Continued restrictions on gatherings and the closure of places of worship will have an adverse impact on many people of faith, particularly those with religious festivals during the period. These restrictions may be experienced more acutely given that restrictions on retail are being lifted and people will spend time inside shops but will not be allowed to collectively gather in a place of worship. These restrictions apply across all faiths. A series of ministerial-led Taskforces (including on places of worship) have been set up to develop plans for how and when closed sectors can reopen safely including one on places of worship.

### **Sexual orientation**

We have not identified specific impacts from the opening of non-essential retail on LGBT groups.

It should be noted that as sexual orientation information is not generally collected by major employment surveys, there may be issues that LGBT groups are adversely affected by that we are currently unable to capture.

### **Sex**

We have identified impacts under limb 1 of the PSED, as set out below. We have not identified any impacts for this protected characteristic under limbs 2 and 3.

The re-opening on non-essential retail is likely to impact women - who make up 58.7% of workers in non-food retail<sup>6</sup> - more than men. Estimates suggest 61% of employees in non-

<sup>5</sup> Census data for England and Wales

<sup>6</sup> January-December 2019 APS, collated by the Labour Markets Team in BEIS

essential retail are women compared to 54% for Essential and 47% for national average. As a proportion of total women workforce, retail accounts for 10% and non-essential retail, 4%. This shows that re-opening retail will have an important impact on women.

However, women may be less able to benefit from the opening of non-essential retail as a source of employment unless they can also benefit from access to childcare. Only 57% of schools have opened more widely to date, with an average of 38% attendance for year 6, 32% for reception and 26% for year 1. A majority of families are therefore still dealing with childcare challenges and [evidence suggests that women have been taking on a larger share of childcare and home-schooling responsibilities than men](#), which may limit their ability to return to work in the retail sector.

The reopening of non-essential on 15 June does not stretch to the 'personal care' sector, including hairdressers and nail salons. Women tend to dominate employment within beauty and leisure industries occupations ([83% of hairdressing staff and 93% of beauty treatment staff](#)<sup>7</sup>), so will be disproportionately disadvantaged by the continued closure of this section of high street. This may contrast unfavourably with e.g. the opening of betting shops, [which are more likely to attract male customers](#)<sup>8</sup>. However, the personal care sector inevitably involves closer contact between individuals. The government is keeping the personal care sector in review with a view to realise the ambition set out in the [roadmap](#) for these sectors to be reopened from 4 July.

Auction houses, along with commercial art galleries and dealerships and antique shops make up the 'art market'. The UK has the second biggest art market in the world by value, with 7,500 specialist businesses. Globally, in top tier auction houses (Christie's, Sotheby's) 66% of employees are female (Art Market 2020, Clare McAndrew, Art Economics). This levels to just under 50% for mid-tier businesses.

A likely area lockdown will have a permanent impact will be in the role online plays in retail. Online had already seen significant growth between 2007 and 2019 from 3% of total retail sales to 19% of total retail sales. In April, online sales increased to a record level of 30.7% of sales, a level some predicted would be reached in 2030. Consequently, we are likely to see sustained reduced footfall in the high-street, a trend that was already underway before COVID-19 but likely now to have accelerated. It is therefore likely there may be fewer jobs in the retail sector, potentially replaced by jobs in warehouses and distribution. This could negatively affect women who are employed in higher numbers in retail while men are more substantially represented in warehousing and distribution jobs. Already, job vacancies in retail have declined by 28% in the 3 months to April compared to the same period the previous year bringing it down to levels last seen in 2011/2012.

### Lower socio-economic groups

Re-opening the sector will have economic benefits for those it employs, which are in the large part lower-paid workers. We know that lower-paid and lower-skilled workers have been worse affected by the crisis and are losing their jobs in greater numbers than high earners. For instance, [nearly one-third of lower-paid employees have lost jobs or been](#)

<sup>7</sup> National Hair and Beauty Federation (2019)

<sup>8</sup> 51% of men have gambled compared to 41% of women (gambling commission 2018)

[furloughed, compared to less than one-in-ten top earners](#)<sup>9</sup>. Reopening the NER sector will therefore have important benefits for this group.

Betting shops are spread throughout the country, mainly on high streets in most towns and cities. Outside of London, most employees of these businesses will be local people living relatively nearby. We know from the Gambling Review that on the whole, they tend to be in areas lower in the socio-demographic scale. The percentage by region is here:

Region	Percentage of Shops
East Midlands	6
East of England	7
London	20
North East	5
North West	14
South East	10
South West	6
West Midlands	8
Yorkshire and the Humber	8
Scotland	11
Wales	4

Betting shops are at a particular risk of losing the employment that they provide permanently, were they not permitted to reopen at a time when sport is resuming, and they lose their business to online competitors which are often based offshore. The latest Gambling Commission statistics for October 2018 to September 2019 say the industry employs over 46,000 people in the UK, compared to less than 10,000 for online betting, bingo and casino operators combined.

Anecdotally, betting shops can perform a social role for some elderly male customers.

<sup>9</sup> Resolution Foundation evidence

## Individual prayer

As part of the easing of the regulations, from Monday 15 June places of worship will be permitted to open for individual prayer in line with social distancing guidelines.

Individual prayer within a place of worship will be defined as a person or household entering the venue to pray on their own and not as part of a group, led prayer or communal act. They should be socially distanced from other individuals or households.

New guidance will be published shortly to ensure the limited reopening of places of worship for this purpose can be done safely and in line with social distancing guidelines

We have identified impacts under limbs 1, 2 and 3 of the PSED, as set out below.

The closure of places of worship (POW) is a highly sensitive issue. It is clear that there is an adverse impact on people of faith if their place of worship is closed (including an impact on all those who follow a faith that practices communal prayer).

Moves to open up retail and opportunities for social interaction without reopening places of worship may exacerbate the impacts felt by religious groups.

There has been some challenge that the closure of places of worship is an unjustifiable infringement against Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights, which provides a right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This includes the right to manifest in public or in private, one's religion or belief. This is however a qualified right. It is subject to necessary limitations in the interest of public safety, such as for the protection of health in order to protect the fundamental Article 2 right to life of the population. Article 2 remains the overriding concern for the protection of the Nation's health as a whole. The restriction on places of worship to open for individual prayer only as opposed to communal prayer does not stop people manifesting their religious beliefs or celebrating religious festivals at home with members of the same household. However, there will be impacts to those faiths where communal worship is a requirement for particular ceremonies.

Individual prayer will be permitted from 15 June, but communally led prayer, worship or devotion such as services, evensong, informal prayer meetings, Mass, Jumma or Kirtan will not be possible at this stage. The government will continue to work with the Places of Worship Taskforce towards the full reopening of places of worship as soon as the scientific advice allows.

This may invite challenge around bringing forward permission for practices such as individual prayer, which are of disproportionate significance to certain faiths while others, such as socially distanced communal worship, are not yet permitted. Guidance will make clear that restrictions are consistent with public health guidance and aligned with the wider government approach in Step 2 of the Roadmap.

The distinction between individual and communal prayer is that numbers within the building can be controlled and spread across the day and individual prayer typically involves short periods in a place of worship with people coming and going more frequently and spending less time in the place, rather than people congregating or gathering at one time in led worship typically for a longer period together, potentially reducing the spread of infection. Guidance and messaging will be clear that communal activity is not permitted, and it will be incumbent on the place of worship to ensure measures are in place to comply with opening only for private prayer by individuals and other expressly permitted reasons, e.g. shutting during traditional times of corporate and communal worship.

To communicate the guidance once published, MHCLG communications will clearly outline the difference between individual prayer and communal worship gatherings. This will include stakeholder communications to key faith leaders, proactive press and social media activities and may also involve providing digital assets with relevant messages for hard-to-reach communities.

The announcement for permitting individual prayer set out the government's rationale for the phased reopening of places of worship. We will continue to work with the Taskforce towards the full reopening of places of worship as soon as the scientific advice allows.

## Outdoor attractions

From the 15 June, several additional outdoor attractions will be allowed to open. This includes drive-in cinemas, safari parks, outdoor zoos and other animal-based attractions.

We have identified impacts under limbs 2 and 3 of the PSED, as set out below.

This change will have a limited impact on the population, given the limited availability of such facilities across the country.

The principal equalities impact of this change is that it is more likely to benefit people with access to a vehicle than those without. Some 78% of households have access to a car or van, however the lowest 10% of earners are much less likely to have access (35%) than the top 10% of earners (93%) (ONS 2018). The opening of these facilities is therefore less likely to benefit low earners with less disposable income or access to vehicles. This includes people from ethnic minorities who typically earn less, live in urban areas and are more likely to rely on public transport than their own vehicle (as noted in paragraph 24). Ethnic minority groups are therefore less likely to benefit from the reopening of drive-in cinemas, safari parks and zoos. City farms may be more available, although we do not have evidence on the demographics of users of these services.

Men are more likely to be vehicle owners than women, the latter accounting for only 35% of registered car keepers (although this may not mean that women are less likely to access these services but that men are more likely to drive).

A high percentage of parties visiting zoos include children, so there may be more of a positive impact on **children** than adults, noting that children will be accompanied by adults during a visit.

Zoos are highly seasonal in nature and employ additional staff over the summer months to help with increased visitor numbers. This staff, which will either have been furloughed or not recruited in the first place, is likely to be made up of younger members of the workforce. In a survey by Britain Thinks, respondents aged 18 to 24 were the age group most likely to report being furloughed, on reduced hours or taking obligatory temporary leave (35%).

Zoos, outdoor aquariums, animal attractions and safari parks constitute well managed and controlled outdoor spaces. Their reopening is expected to benefit disabled people who might otherwise struggle to access other unmanaged public spaces for reasons related to mental or physical health.

## Increasing social contact - household bubbling

The easements being considered for introduction on 13 June would allow households with only one adult member to extend their household 'bubble', so that they are able to increase their social contact with one other household without social distancing.

We have identified impacts under limbs 2 and 3 of the PSED, as set out below.

Some disabled people who are more at risk of anxiety and social isolation could be expected to benefit substantially from the 'bubbling' policy if introduced. However, disabled people may not feel they have a real "choice" to decide who to bubble with, as they may choose people who are able to best support their needs rather than provide the social interaction needed. This could also increase the exposure of COVID-19 to disabled people who are already increasingly anxious about letting people in their homes. However, given the bubbling model will only apply where one of the households contains a single adult, it will not benefit households where a disabled child lives with 2 adults or where a disabled adult lives with another adult (unless they bubble with another single adult household). It is acknowledged that whilst this bubbling policy is aimed at helping those in society who may be the most lonely and isolated, an adult who lives with and cares for another adult with disabilities could be in that category of persons but will not necessarily be able to benefit from the policy. This may also have a detrimental impact on the adult with the disability too – for example, a person with dementia may benefit from seeing other familiar faces but may not be so easily able to leave the house. The bubbling policy is limited to balance the risk of transmission of the COVID-19 as further social contact is allowed and in order to ensure it can be easily understood and applied in practice. This means that for now a bubble must include a single adult household, but the policy and the regulations are kept under review and the impact of policies are considered carefully.

Individuals at the highest risk of isolation within their households, such as Lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people, could be expected to benefit substantially from social 'bubbling' if introduced, if able to bubble with a household of their choice. However, it is important to note that the bubbling which would be introduced with these amendment regulations is not available to all households and so people with these protected characteristics will only be

able to benefit from it if they, or the household they bubble with, are single adult households. This therefore limits the potential positive impact to a certain extent.

Similarly, domestic abuse victims may be better able to seek help with the expansion of social contact, though there is a risk that their abuser takes control of the bubbling privilege in a way that further disadvantages the victim. In addition, a domestic abuse victim will often not be in a single adult household (unless the victim or abuser is a child). Therefore, they may not necessarily be able to benefit from the bubbling concept proposed with these amendment regulations.

Pregnant women and new mothers, who are at a heightened risk of mental health complications such as postnatal depression, would benefit from access to support from friends and family through social 'bubbling', if introduced, where this could be established either (i) with another single adult household; or (ii) if the woman herself is in a single adult household. However, there is evidence to suggest a higher risk for those in their third trimester of pregnancy, or with underlying conditions, and therefore bubbling could increase their exposure to the virus. In addition, there may not be a single adult household available to bubble with, and pregnant and new mothers are more likely not to be in a single adult household themselves. However, if they are in a single adult household, they are likely to be in particular need of further social contact and assistance and so the introduction of bubbling for this category of persons would be of particular benefit.

Single parents, who are more likely to be women (86%), could experience significant benefits from the bubbling policy as it would enable some of them to access informal childcare from family members, which could also enable them to return to work. This could disproportionately impact certain ethnic minorities, [for example](#) we know that 18.9% of Black households are made up of a single parent with dependent children, the highest percentage out of all ethnic groups for this type of household. Single parents with both adult and younger children living with them may be unable to benefit from bubbling, although they may face similar challenges to single parents with just younger children.

Enabling greater social contact via household bubbling, if introduced, may be met by hesitation from ethnic minority groups concerned about the apparent increased health risks of the virus for BAME individuals (explored in paragraphs 14 and 15).

Some ethnic minorities are more likely to live in larger households (i.e. with more children, multi-generational, or both - a feature of many Bangladeshi households for example) and so are less likely to be single adult households and so will not always be able to benefit from the bubbling option (as it would rely on finding a single adult household to bubble with). However, if they are in a large household, they will already have social contact with others and so they may have less acute need for further social contact.

Young people, who report high levels of loneliness and concerns about coping during the lockdown could strongly benefit from expanding household bubbles. (In a survey by Britain Thinks, younger respondents were more likely to report that they are not coping as well as usual (42% among 18 to 24 year olds), with this decreasing gradually by age bracket (among 65+ year olds only 20% reported the same). However, young people are more likely to live in a flat share, which creates a challenging dynamic for bubbling – for example if more than one member of the household has a single household that they want to bubble with.

Older people living alone could benefit from bubbling and re-establish contact with another household of friends or family. However, people who are shielding, which includes older people, have been advised to not bubble and so may not be able to benefit from this policy at this stage. If someone who is shielding decides that they want to bubble they may not be able to find a household that they can bubble with or this may increase the risk to their health.

As a result of bubbling being limited to being between a single adult household and one other household it means that for all groups apart from those living alone there is reduction in the number of households that they could potentially bubble with which increases the risk that they will not benefit from the proposal. In addition, for single households there may be stress and anxiety if they either have difficulty determining which household to bubble with or are unable to find a household willing to bubble with them. By limiting the policy so that a bubble needs to include a single adult household this may increase the likelihood that a single household can find a house to bubble with, but may increase the stress in determining which household to bubble with as they may be the only option for more than one household.

The proposal to limit bubbles to require one household to be a single adult, will limit the risk the policy poses to transmission of the disease. This will provide particular benefit to ethnic minorities, older people and people with disability whom the disease poses a higher risk to.

## Conclusions

Moves to open up non-essential retail will have some positive impacts for people with protected characteristics and there is evidence that women, disabled people, ethnic minority groups and young people in particular, work in the retail sector. However, continued limits to childcare provision and uptake of school places may impact the ability of some women to return to work.

The government's introduction of provisions for private prayer will provide important benefits for some religious groups, although those faiths with a strong attachment to collective worship (e.g. Islam, Sikhism, Judaism) are less likely to experience benefits. Moves to open up non-essential retail to people may exacerbate these impacts. Overall, it is judged by the government that the difference in approach is justified by the more transient nature of interactions inside a shop than inside a place of worship. However, it will be important for the government to continue to engage these groups through the task forces to demonstrate its willingness to open collective worship as soon as it is safe to do so.

As people increasingly leave their homes and return to something resembling normal life, the differences between the population at large and the generally vulnerable and shielded communities (disproportionately older people and those with underlying health conditions, including disabled people) will become more pronounced. The government's policy to consider household bubbling for single adult households, could be a helpful mitigation to this in that it will enable the clinically vulnerable to bubble if they are single occupancy, or otherwise bubble with a single occupancy household. This will enable more isolated individuals to benefit from close contact with other adults. The policy would also have important benefits for single parent households (which are more likely to be women). The limitations to the policy will result in some households being less likely to benefit from the policy as they are unable to find a household to bubble with. It will also not have benefits for the shielded community whom the government is advising not to bubble. However, limiting the scope of the policy will reduce the infection risk which will have a benefit on individuals whom the disease poses a bigger risk (ethnic minorities, older individuals and people with disabilities).

The government continues to adapt its policy and is taking measures to mitigate the impacts on groups with protected characteristics where possible and appropriate.



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