

The Rt Hon. Boris Johnson MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AA

12 November 2020

Dear Prime Minister

Re: Reopening of the hair and beauty sector on 3 December

We are writing to you as a united sector to make a clear and evidence-based case for reopening the hair and beauty sector once the national lockdown ends on 2 December.

Personal care services consistently fall within the 3 least likely types of exposure or activity to result in contact by NHS Test and Trace within Public Health England's Weekly Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) surveillance reports.

This is supported by our sectors' own data, which indicates that the number of businesses contacted by NHS Test and Trace prior to the most recent national lockdown was very low¹, and our dialogue with officials within the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) who have confirmed that there is little evidence of transmission within our industry.

Furthermore, an analysis of potential scenarios for lockdowns by the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) on 21 September outlined that close-contact personal services (hairdressing, beauty therapy, spa and wellness centres etc.) only contribute "up to 0.05" to the R rate with evidence suggesting that in these premises "masks were effective at stopping transmission" and "many places are already careful with hygiene".

As a sector operating in semi-clinical environments, with rigorous hygiene practices, frequent hand washing and widespread use of PPE as standard practice, we were already operating with higher hygiene and safety standards than most other industries. However, we have worked tirelessly to support BEIS in the development of robust guidelines for the hair, beauty, spa and wellness sector to further ensure that the industry can operate in a COVID secure way.

As organisations representing many thousands of hair, beauty and wellness businesses across the UK, we are all too aware that furloughing staff, whilst a welcome expedient, does not save a business. Financial commitments such as invoices, rent, PAYE, pensions, insurance, utilities, loans etc. remain ever present. With the current mandated closure, businesses within our sector are hugely anxious about how they will meet such commitments without the ability to generate funds, and most likely no safety buffer of surplus or savings to fall back on second time around. It is therefore imperative that these businesses are able to reopen and begin generating income as soon as possible, and once again be the financially viable sector it was prior to the pandemic, contributing £28.4 billion to Britain's GDP and £27.2 billion in consumer spending in 2018.

Based on this information, we seek your assurance that you will continue to advocate for the sector in discussions regarding the Government's strategy for reopening, including:

- The full and immediate reopening of the hair and beauty sector, including saunas and steam rooms on 3 December
- For 'personal care' to remain out of base line Tier 3 measures
- To operate under the existing COVID secure guidance framework for close contact services

¹ NHBF data of 12,324 respondents indicated only 1,540 had been contacted in any capacity by NHS Test and Trace

As you will be aware, personal care is not included in the base line Tier 3 closures set by central government. Despite this, and with no evidence to substantiate their decision, Nottinghamshire County Council took the hugely damaging decision to close the beauty sector prior to the national lockdown. We would very much appreciate your support in working with Nottinghamshire Council to reverse this judgement and also ensure no further councils take this unnecessary action upon reopening in December.

As we saw during the national lockdown in March, the hair and beauty sector has a significant role to play in maintaining the overall health and wellbeing of the public. With it highly likely that the country will be living with Coronavirus for some time, it is absolutely essential that services such as ours remain operational to support the mental, physical and emotional wellbeing of the general public through this crisis.

We very much hope we can rely on your support in relation to the reopening of our sector and look forward to your response to the points raised.

Yours sincerely,



Beauty Industry Group



National Hair & Beauty Federation



BABTAC & CIBTAC



British Beauty Council



UK Spa Association



The Men's Hairdressing Federation



British Barbers Association



Federation of Holistic Therapists



CEW UK



Hairdressing Council



CTPA



Hair and Beauty Industry Authority



Freelance Hairdressers' Association



Barber Council



Fellowship for British Hairdressing