

Mayor of London and West End Businesses Urge Customers to Return to Central London As Footfall Remains Low

- Footfall in London's West End is down 63% two months on from retail reopening
- Research has shown that only 23% of UK consumers are confident using public transport, such as the underground
- Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan visits West End businesses to hear more on the impact of Covid-19 and the measures needed to boost consumer confidence over the last few weeks of Summer

The latest data from New West End Company, which represents 600 businesses across Oxford Street, Bond Street, Regent Street and Mayfair, reveals that eight weeks on from non-essential retail reopening, visitors to London's West End are down 63% year on year for the same period.

On Thursday (13 August) the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan and Deputy Mayor, Rajesh Agrawal, met with London's West End businesses, including Selfridges, Hackett, Uniqlo, Arcadia and Schuh to hear from them directly on the significant impact of COVID-19 on the Capital's retail and hospitality trade.

Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan commented: *"For decades central London has been the economic engine of the UK, a cultural powerhouse, and a gateway for global tourism to the UK. But it now faces a real existential threat from the COVID-19 pandemic.*

"Until we have an operational vaccine in place social distancing will have to continue to protect people's health, and with employers planning to continue home-working well into next year, the numbers of people visiting the West End will be reduced for many months ahead.

"As Mayor I'm doing all within my powers to help. This includes providing loans and funding directly to small businesses and ensuring TfL's unprecedented range of safety and hygiene measures mean more passengers are now able to travel on London public's transport network."

Footfall has been rising slowly in London's West End since the reopening of non-essential retail on June 15, but has plateaued at less than half of usual levels. Research carried out on behalf of New West End Company further reveals that customers still lack confidence in visiting central London.

With the announcement of initiatives such as the Government's Eat Out to Help Out scheme, and the compulsory use of facemasks, research has shown that 43% of consumers polled by New West End Company are confident in visiting retail stores.



Bond Street | Oxford Street | Regent Street

However, the research also showed that only 23% are confident using public transport such as the underground. While this figure has increased slightly by 5% since the easing of lockdown in May, 74% of UK consumers surveyed claim that they are unlikely to visit Central London in the next month.

This suggests that while central London businesses are prepared to safely welcome visitors, footfall is being hindered by a lack of consumer confidence in transport, and further work is needed to encourage people to get back on public transport, and back into the city centre over the final summer weeks.

One in ten Londoners are employed in the West End, and without a boost to consumer confidence and an increase in the use in public transport by London and domestic visitors, the West End is facing job losses of 50,000 and over £5 billion in annual sales.

Jace Tyrrell, Chief Executive at New West End Company commented: *“While we have seen a slow increase in footfall, our retail and hospitality businesses require further support in light of shoppers' concerns. With few international visitors, the next couple of months will be a defining moment for hundreds of West End businesses and protection of jobs is our top priority. Instilling confidence in our valued local and domestic customers to come to central London will make a huge change to the hard-hit businesses across our district. We would call on the Government to keep retail and hospitality front of mind and not forget the beating heart of the British economy as lockdown is eased.”*

Notes to Editors

About New West End Company

New West End Company is a partnership of 600 retail, restaurant, hotel and property owners across the world's top shopping and leisure destination anchored by Bond Street, Oxford Street and Regent Street representing 150,000 employees.

Working in partnership to deliver transformational projects, sustainable place management, destination marketing, advocacy, inward investment and commercial insights. It is an influential business voice, active in the wider community and a key partner in delivering a new West End.

www.newwestend.com