

Councillor Kay Cutts
Nottinghamshire County Council
cllr.kathrine.cutts@nottscc.gov.uk

29th October 2020

Dear Councillor Cutts,

Re: Closure of the personal care sector, and saunas and steam rooms

Further to the announcement of Tier 3 plus measures that Nottinghamshire are to enter from 00:01 on 30th October, and the unnecessary closure to parts of the personal care sector, we are writing to implore you reverse this decision immediately, allowing all personal care businesses in your area, in addition to hair and barbering to remain operational.

As you will be aware, personal care is not included in the base line Tier 3 closures set by central government. Furthermore, no other counties operating under Tier 3 restrictions have included any part of our COVID secure sector. It seems that Nottinghamshire County Council have made an economic decision, which fragments the sector, not one based on risk.

We are not aware of any SAGE papers or evidence from Public Health England or Test and Trace to suggest that this is a decision based on transmission within the sector. We have liaised directly with central government who also stated there is little evidence of transmission. Therefore, if you do have access to counter evidence this then we would politely request this information to be shared.

As there are 2,980¹ salons in Nottinghamshire plus various other personal care businesses, we feel this is a huge mistake, likely due to a distinct lack of understanding of our sector. Therefore, we urge you to review this unnecessary decision and retract the closure of all personal services, saunas and steam rooms.

It will prevent significant embarrassment, and economic damage, such as we have witnessed with the gym closures in Liverpool which later had to be reversed, if you make this decision now. Central government are supportive of this and can update the regulations by Monday, removing the lines relating to beauty following local instruction.

Financial support from the council will be required for the duration of the closure period whilst this is reviewed and reversed.

The reopening of personal care services such as those within beauty, spa and wellness has not contributed to the current rise in Coronavirus cases. This is supported by wider evidence from the UK's 'Weekly Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) surveillance report' showing track and trace reports from 'personal services' as one of the least prevalent areas.

Additionally the NI Department of Health report on 24th September also highlighted that the closure of close-contact personal services (hairdressing, beauty therapy etc.) would only potentially reduce the rate of transmission by "up to 0.05" with evidence suggesting that in these premises "masks were effective at stopping transmission" and "many places are already careful with hygiene".

¹ ONS data September 2020

As a collective group of the key beauty organisations we have worked tirelessly to support the department of business, energy and industrial strategy in the development of robust guidelines for the hair, beauty, spa and wellness sector to ensure the industry reopened in a COVID secure way,

Arguably as a sector operating in semi-clinical environments, with rigorous hygiene practices, frequent hand washing and widespread use of PPE as standard practice, we already had increased hygiene and safety standards than most other industries.

This economically valuable sector has been hit hard by the pandemic, with both jobs and previously successful businesses lost and many still in jeopardy. Further unnecessary closure will cause irreversible damage to the public perception and reputation of the safety of our sector, albeit with no justification what-so-ever.

As we saw during the national lockdown, the beauty, spa and wellness sector has a significant role to play in maintaining the overall health and wellbeing of the public. 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 are writing to you today to urge you to instruct the changes to central government to allow businesses across the personal care sector to remain open in the responsible and COVID secure way in which they have been operating.

Yours Sincerely,

Helena Grzesk - General Manager, UK Spa Association

Lesley Blair - Chair, BABTAC & CIBTAC

Millie Kendall MBE- CEO, British Beauty Council

Caroline Larissey - Director of Quality and Standards, NHBF

