

# Government Urged to Rethink Forced Factory Canteen Closures

Monday 23 March, 2020

The Government mandate for all cafes and restaurants to close makes perfect sense on the high street, but not when those cafes and restaurants are works canteens in critical industries like meat processing.

Current Government instructions to close such outlets include food service operations within factories and food processing plants.

We think they should be exempt.

Nick Allen, CEO of BMPA said: 'The effect of closing these canteens will be to drive thousands of key workers into the shops to organise their own meals. Apart from putting unnecessary pressure onto an already stretched workforce, it puts additional strain on the supermarkets to cater for a new group of consumers. It also makes social distancing that bit harder to achieve.'

While there are challenges to maintaining social distancing in works canteens, there *are* measures that can be implemented and enforced effectively. It's an environment that can be contained and controlled without too much disruption.

The British Meat Processors Association, along with a number of other industry bodies, is calling on Government to exempt all factory canteens, cafes and restaurants from enforced closure. If we're to designate certain employees as 'key workers' then we should be able to support them with 'key' food supplies at their places of work.

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