



23rd December 2020

Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy  
1 Victoria Street  
London  
SW1H 0ET

Dear Fergus,

Once again we thank you for your support and understanding, it is most appreciated.

It is good to hear that there is an understanding from BEIS regarding the situation tile retailers/distributors face in operating their businesses when compared to those businesses such as DIY multiple stores selling the same construction products for tiling and thank you for confirming the review on 30th December.

I'm sure that you appreciate a "one case fits all approach" is difficult for the tiling sector as our distributor/retail member businesses operate various different trading models.

TTA's understanding from the amendment to the legislation and the updated guidance relating to Tier 4, is that businesses are allowed to remain open to supply products used in building work and repairs ((f) building merchants and suppliers of products and tools used in building work and repairs); and for some of our members, for example those operating a warehouse and trade counter model, they have a business layout that will require no change in the way they operate to supply trade customers.

However, noting too that in Tier 4, kitchen, bathroom, tile and glazing showrooms must close, for some of our members whose operations includes a showroom, we recognise that the showrooms operations must close, with, (r) kitchen, bathroom, tile and glazing showrooms, being restricted. For some of our members this may mean closing altogether and moving to click and collect. However, taking into account Regulation 10 (2), some of our members would be able to close off their showroom and operate a more restricted model, e.g. warehouse with trade-counter, from their premises. This would be consistent with what we are seeing from some of the large multiple DIY chains (which include tiles within the product ranges), where they remain open, but have closed off showroom areas to the public; and ensure both a level playing field for business and adherence to the aims of the Tier 4 regulations.



TTA wish to support our members, and the Government, to continue on the one hand, supplying much needed products, especially to tradespeople, who require them in order to continue to work, whilst on the other hand reducing the risk of transmission by halting public “browsing” in Tier 4 areas.

Providing our members are informed with the updated legislation and guidance and are operating Covid Safe environments and understand the key principles above, we assume our members would need to consider all factors based on their individual business models and take a sensible approach when considering whether and how they qualify to open under the regulations. If this interpretation is correct, it would be extremely helpful to our sector if the OPSS could consider this if called upon to advise enforcement officers rather than taking a “one size fits all” approach; I wonder whether BEIS may help open communications with OPSS for our sector moving forward?

Thank you in advance for your help and support.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Kay Porter  
Chief Executive Officer