

WEST END AIMS TO WIN BACK SHOPPERS WITH EXTENDED FESTIVE SEASON

- **New West End Company, representing over 600 retail and leisure businesses in London’s West End, reveals guidelines for safe shopping this Christmas**
- **24 hour cleaning and social distancing ambassadors to support safe and secure shopping to compensate for lower footfall and shorter opening hours**
- **Retailer leaders warn of a critical eight week period as research reveals just two in five shoppers are confident in visiting stores in person**

West End Businesses today unveiled safe shopping guidelines to provide a safe, covid-secure environment for shoppers, retail and leisure workers throughout the festive season.

The plans cover cleanliness, street security and ways to boost consumer confidence over the crucial eight week festive season when West End retailers traditionally record nearly a third of their annual sales.

Research¹ carried out on behalf of New West End Company reveals that customer confidence in shopping in person has declined. Only 40% feel confident shopping for non-essential items, with worries over travel being the main concern with just one in three people feeling confident in using public transport to reach central London destinations.

After an initial bounce back, footfall across the West End has stalled since the summer. The recent change in government advice to avoid unnecessary travel means that without its valued local workers and London customers, the district is receiving just 50% of its usual visitors. The West End was one of the first areas to reopen with robust safety measures and clear distancing guidelines praised by London Mayor, Sadiq Khan.

Jace Tyrrell, Chief Executive of New West End Company said: *“The West End normally records around a third of its annual sales in the eight week lead up to Christmas, trade that is essential to the survival of many retailers. We recognise that shoppers are frustrated and fearful, and that their usual shopping plans have been disrupted. We are within easy and safe reach of millions of shoppers, and I can promise that despite the restrictions there will be no place more magical in the world to experience Christmas than the West End this season.”*

The West End has brought forward its Christmas light switch-on across Oxford Street, Bond Street and Regent Street. Oxford Street’s lights will be lit on Monday 2 November, Bond Street on Thursday 12 November and the Spirit of Christmas will be returning to Regent Street in mid-November. This is the earliest scheduled Oxford Street light switch on since 2015, and the earliest district switch on ever, with all three streets lit by mid-November.

¹ Polling of 1,000 consumers by PWC carried out between XXX and XXX



Bond Street | Oxford Street | Regent Street

To prepare for the festive season, the West End has put in place a number of measures to ensure the public's safety, as well as improvements to travel information. These include:

- Security officers on patrol every day;
- Overnight dog patrols across the district;
- Fogging operatives disinfecting street furniture on a daily basis;
- Daily clean teams visible to the public;
- Social distancing ambassadors, operating across the district on a daily basis;
- Updated hand sanitisation totems that now include wayfinding QR code to provide West End district map for the public;
- Installation of additional cycle parking, in partnership with Westminster City Council;
- Partnership with the Metropolitan Police Service to provide free bike maintenance and marking sessions throughout November and December;
- QR code for the public to scan and access the West End map which includes details of where bike parking is available.

Tyrrell continues: *“One in ten Londoners work in the West End, and so it is absolutely vital that we not only instil customer confidence to support local jobs, but that we also remove barriers that may discourage the public from coming to the district. That’s why we are working closely with the government and Transport for London across a number of initiatives to promote confidence amongst shoppers this Christmas season.”*

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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.

It works in partnership delivering 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.