



England's Prime Minister Boris Johnson has broken casino industry hearts by announcing that, due to spikes in COVID-19 infection across the country, lockdown easing would not be going ahead as planned on 1st August. The PM revealed in a press briefing that casinos, bowling alleys, skating rinks and other 'close contact' services must remain closed until at least 15th August.

Indoor performances will also not resume, nor gatherings in sports venues and conference centres; wedding receptions will also have to stay very small under the law.

Kay Buxton, chief executive for Marble Arch London BID, said of the statement: "It is devastating to hear at the eleventh hour that the date for reopening casinos has been pushed back, after substantial investment by our members to create a safe gaming environment. The Grosvenor Victoria Casino in Edgware Road, one of the longest established casinos in the country, has worked closely with the Betting and Gaming Council to implement stringent anti-Covid safety measures such as an infrared temperature systems, wrap-around screens at card tables, a one-way system and signage throughout the building to ensure the casino is safe for their members, guest and staff. The safety of the general public remains the most important factor and we will be working closely with the Grosvenor Victoria Casino, one of our biggest members, to support their reopening later this month. Opening the doors to the Grosvenor Casino will provide a massive boost to the local economy of Edgware Road and Marble Arch. The casino is a big part of the local hospitality supply chain."

Casinos in England had been working hard toward the August 1st re-opening date, and the sense of disappointment, while understandable, carries with it some deflation over how casinos have been handled so badly during the crisis; similar venues with fewer staff and security have been able to operate with relative normalcy.

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