



Wetherspoon boss suggests staff could take jobs at Tesco Free 231224

## Description



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## **The boss of the Wetherspoon pub chain has said its staff can take jobs with supermarkets amid the uncertainty caused by the coronavirus pandemic.**

Tim Martin told 40,000 workers in a video that they should feel free to take jobs at retailers such as Tesco while Wetherspoon pubs remain closed.

He said: "If you're offered a job... if you think it's a good idea, do it."

The government has said it will pay 80% of salary for workers at firms such as Wetherspoon affected by Covid-19.

In the video, he called the government proposals "great, because we currently have no money coming in through the tills. That's not something we had ever planned for."

All of Wetherspoon's 850 UK pubs were closed over the weekend after the government introduced new measures to try to stop the spread of Covid-19.

However, Mr Martin cited concerns that there could be some delay to the payment of any wage subsidy.

In the video, he said he would therefore "completely understand" if workers did not want "to wait around".

He added that any former workers for the pub chain would receive first priority on future applications to rejoin the company.

Mr Martin said that "almost all of our trade has now gone to supermarkets", as demand for food surges as a result of the coronavirus crisis.

"We've had lots of calls from supermarkets, Tesco alone want to recruit more than 20,000 people – more than half the number of people who work at our pubs," he added.

Mr Martin was previously resistant to government advice to consumers on avoiding pubs before more formal measures on closures were introduced.

Last week, he branded a shutdown in the face of coronavirus "over the top".

Many major supermarkets have been recruiting thousands of staff to cope with the huge surge in demand from shoppers.

Tesco, the UK's biggest supermarket, said it wanted to take on 20,000 temporary workers to "help feed the nation".

Other firms that have launched a recruitment drive in recent weeks include Aldi, which is creating 5,000 new temporary posts, Lidl with 2,500 temporary posts, and Morrisons, which is creating 3,500 new jobs including pickers, drivers and staff for its distribution centres.

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