

COVID-19 lockdown hits coastal communities the hardest

April 27 2020



Credit: CC0 Public Domain

A new study by the University of Southampton and the Centre for

Towns has shown that coastal communities are likely to be most affected economically by the lockdown measures brought in as a result of the COVID19 pandemic, with former industrial towns also at risk from longer-term effects of the crisis.

Of the top 20 most at risk towns in the UK, the study showed that nine were coastal and 10 were ex-industrial.

The researchers looked at the distribution of workers in four sectors that are most impacted by the economic [shutdown](#): Non-food retail, Accommodation, Pubs & Restaurants and Arts & Leisure. Their findings revealed that over a quarter of employees in coastal towns in England and Wales work in these sectors. The towns with the highest proportions working in this sector are Newquay in Cornwall (56%) and Skegness on the East Midlands coast (54.7%).

The closure of hotels, campsites and caravan parks has had a major impact on coastal towns but they are also disproportionately affected by the shutdown of pubs, restaurants and shops which has also hit former industrial towns where a large proportions of the population work in these sectors.

As well as looking at the current economic risks, the study also considered how resilient towns could be to the impact of the COVID19 shutdown by looking their socio-economic characteristics. Whilst the UK population is getting older across the whole country, places are aging at different rates. University towns and large cities continue to attract younger people whilst ex-industrial and coastal towns are seeing a steady aging of their populations. This is already impacting local economies which will make recovery more difficult.

Furthermore, the researchers found that many coastal and ex-industrial towns already suffer from economic decline, social isolation, a lack of

investment, under-employment and low levels of social wellbeing. These challenges are likely to be further exacerbated by the impact of the COVID19 pandemic.

John Houghton, a Ph.D. Student at the University of Southampton who co-authored the report said:

"Our research shows that coastal and ex-industrial [towns](#) are most economically vulnerable due to the shutdown. These areas have the highest proportion of workers in the industries most affected by closures such as tourism and retail."

The full report is available on the [Centre for Towns](#) website.

Provided by University of Southampton

Citation: COVID-19 lockdown hits coastal communities the hardest (2020, April 27) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2020-04-covid-lockdown-coastal-hardest.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--