

# Morrisons tells its 111,000 workers they can have Boxing Day off as reward for pandemic work

Morrisons has told its 111,000 workers they will have Boxing Day off as a reward for their hard work during the coronavirus pandemic.

It will be the first time in living memory that the supermarket chain has closed its stores on 26 December.

It comes after a difficult 18 months for the often-unsung people who have helped to keep the nation fed during the pandemic.

On a number of occasions, they have seen panic buying to such an extent that shelves have been stripped bare.

They have also faced a rising amount of abuse from shoppers angry at being asked to adhere to social distancing guidelines brought in last year to limit the spread of [COVID-19](#).

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In August last year Sky News reported that, in the week after face masks were made mandatory in shops, the Co-op – another supermarket chain – [reported 990 incidents of anti-social behaviour and verbal abuse](#) in its stores.

In July this year, executives at Tesco and Sainsbury's were among those who [wrote to Prime Minister Boris Johnson](#) asking for policing laws to be amended to help stop the violence and abuse experienced by shop workers.

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Last year, Asda, Marks & Spencer, Aldi and Lidl all said staff could have Boxing Day off.

Morrisons, Tesco and Sainsbury's were open but some offered extra incentives for staff who were working.

Joanne McGuinness, national officer at shop workers' union Usdaw, said: "The last year-and-a-half has been unlike any other.

"The pandemic meant shop workers stepped up and kept essential services running.

"We welcome Morrisons doing the right thing by their staff with the closure of supermarkets on Boxing Day.

"Key workers have done so much this year and we are asking retailers to give their staff the longest possible break over the festive season to provide them with a well-deserved breather.

"We don't think this is too much to ask for."