

19 March 2020

Briefing Note

CECA Member Briefing:

Covid-19: CECA update

Introduction

This short briefing has been prepared on behalf of the UK construction sector to brief companies and individuals on the ongoing repercussions of the Covid-19 coronavirus for our sector. This briefing will be delivered daily by CECA over the coming weeks – if you would like further information, or to input your views, contact CECA chief executive Alasdair Reisner on 07977151912 or e-mail alasdairreisner@ceca.co.uk.

Government Advice

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy has updated its guidance for employers, employees and businesses during the pandemic – to read it, click [here](#).

Covid-19: Cross-Industry Response

The Association for Consultancy & Engineering, Build UK, Chartered Institute of Building, CITB, Civil Engineering Contractors Association, Construction Plant-Hire Association, Construction Products Association, Federation of Master Builders, and Institution of Civil Engineers are working together to respond to Covid-19. Initial priorities for the group include:

- Guidance on responsibly maintaining site operations
- Guidance on employment issues including statutory and industry sick pay
- Guidance on commercial and contractual issues where work is suspended
- Publication of regular newsletters for the industry to brief on Covid-19 issues.

Procurement

The Cabinet Office has confirmed that it is preparing guidance to public sector customers about how to deal with delay and disruption under public contracts, including force majeure claims. Industry will liaise with Cabinet Office to offer support in this work.

CITB

CITB has confirmed it will support the industry to protect skills for when the Covid-19 pandemic subsides, so that UK construction can play a full role in the UK bouncing back from this crisis.

- Support for apprentices - CITB is assessing what support is needed to ensure it secures the future for any impacted apprentices.
- Signposting for employers - CITB is working with federations and employer bodies to compile a list of support agencies that will advise on staff issues, and other business support, including sick pay.
- Guidance for keeping sites working – CITB will publish Toolbox Talks and other learning materials to help keeping sites running during this pandemic.
- Time-bound qualifications and cards – card schemes are urging site managers to show appropriate lenience to those with cards expired from mid-March, and have relaxed renewal windows. CITB has waived some of the fees for rescheduling or cancelling HS&E tests and for the duration of the crisis will accept SSSTS and SMSTS renewals beyond expiry.

- **Funds** - The Skills and Training Funds for both Small and Micro and Medium-sized businesses will still be launched on 1 April and assessed at the end of April. Support to develop applications will be available from the CITB Partnerships Team over the phone or skype in addition to written guidance available on the web site.

CITB will offer increased flexibility to those businesses with current Skills and Training Fund Projects; recognising that changing business need will result in requests for different training, or a change to delivery time scales.

CITB is also reviewing how the funds can be used to help businesses retain essential skills and support managers to provide the right leadership through a challenging period.

- **Grants** - CITB understand that cashflow is an immediate issue for employers, with this in mind has prioritised the processing of grant claims in order to pay grants as early as possible. In consideration of the current circumstances CITB has also suspended the 20 week claiming rule, this will allow employers to claim grants later as a result of the disruption caused by this pandemic.

CITB will provide regular updates and details of supporting activities via its specific Coronavirus-related webpage which you can access [here](#).

Covid-19 & Cybercrime

There has been a spike in email scams linked to coronavirus, including fraudulent offers of a vaccine, specific measures that claim to help businesses, or fraudulent claims of available funds or tax breaks. Companies should be aware of this phenomenon and be vigilant online. For more details click [here](#).

CECA Events

All CECA events are cancelled until further notice and will be rescheduled for later in the year where possible. This includes:

- CECA Scotland Dinner & Awards – rescheduled for 25 August 2020 – all existing bookings will be rolled over to the new date;
- CECA Yorkshire & The Humber Dinner – event postponed, rescheduled date tbc;
- Inspiring Change Conference & Awards – rescheduled for 10 December 2020. Entry date to be extended until 23 October 2020 – for more info click [here](#).

Pinsent Masons

Law firm Pinsent Masons have published an article on “UK lay-off and short-time working provisions” which may be of interest to members. Read it [here](#).

Your feedback is vital

To help us to continue to support you, we welcome feedback from members. [Please take five minutes to fill in this survey](#) which lets us know of the issues you face, and offers opportunity to provide specific feedback on Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme.

For further information, please contact CECA Chief Executive Alasdair Reisner on 07977 151 912 or by e-mail: alasdairreisner@ceca.co.uk.