

20 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](#).

Discussion Paper - Meeting the Covid-19 Cashflow Crisis

CECA has prepared a working paper on 'Meeting the Covid-19 Cashflow Crisis.' The draft paper calls on the Government to:

1. Suspend VAT, NICs, PAYE, and CIS payments for three months to avoid short term collapse of business due to cashflow.
2. Accelerate payments from public sector bodies to suppliers, with cascade down supply chain.
3. Ensure that all firms can access available loan funds, immediately and without unnecessary bureaucracy.
4. Put in place Government support to assist employers with salary payments
5. Encourage client to release £4.5 billion in retentions, to cascade down supply chain.
6. Ask local authorities to release £2.5 billion in section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy funds could help keep the housing sector viable.
7. Stop Apprenticeship Levy contributions and look to use unspent contributions to support employment of existing apprentices.
8. Use unspent Apprenticeship Levy funds to support continued apprentice employment rather than training.
9. Government to allow the equivalent SSP rate to the self-employed who fill 37% of industry jobs.
10. Extend the £25,000 cash grant currently only provided to retail and hospitality to construction firms to the construction sector.
11. Delay the implementation of Reverse Charge VAT by one year.

We are currently liaising with UK Government and industry contacts regarding these proposals. If you have comments please contact CECA Director of External Affairs Marie-Claude Hemming directly - tel. 07950 166331 or e-mail marieclaudhemming@ceca.co.uk.

CECA Survey – Your Input Is Vital

CECA has prepared a short survey for members which lets us know of the issues you are facing at the current time, and offers the opportunity to provide specific feedback on the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, which you can take [here](#).

Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS)

At Budget 2020 on Wednesday 11 March, the Chancellor announced a 'Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme', and that it would become available 'over the coming weeks'. This has been brought forward, and the British Business

Bank now expect the new scheme to become available in week commencing 23 March 2020 For more details click [here](#).

CECA is very keen to gather feedback from members as to whether they think they will be applying for the CBILS and whether they expect it will work for their businesses – if you would like to input your views, in addition to taking the survey above, please e-mail alasdairreisner@ceca.co.uk directly with the subject line 'CBILS.'

[CECA Employment Briefing - Coronavirus](#)

Read CECA's Employment Briefing on the impacts of Covid-19 [here](#).

[CECA Training & Development Update](#)

Read CECA's Training & Development Update in reference to coronavirus [here](#).

[Scottish Government](#)

The Scottish Government announced a £2.2bn business support package including:

- 10,000 grants for small businesses in receipt of the Small Business Bonus Scheme or Rural Relief;
- 1.6% relief for all properties, effectively freezing the poundage rate next year;
- First Minister to convene an emergency meeting of the Financial Services Advisory Board.

This supersedes the £350m of support previously outlined by the Scottish Government and includes the £1.9bn of support as outlined by the Chancellor. To read the announcement in full click [here](#).

[Welsh Government](#)

Yesterday the Welsh Government announced a £1.4bn business support package including a £10,000 grant to all businesses eligible for Small Business Rates Relief with a rateable value of £12,000 or less. To read the announcement in full click [here](#).

[HSE](#)

The HSE has published guidance for employers on protecting home workers – read it [here](#).

[CITB - Funding](#)

The Skills and Training Funds for both Small and Micro and Medium-sized businesses will be launched on 1st 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.

[CITB - Grants](#)

CITB understands that cashflow is an immediate issue for employers, with this in mind it has prioritised the processing of grant claims in order to pay grants as early as possible. In consideration of the current circumstances it 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](#)

[Independent Test Centres](#)

At present CITB are not closing the Independent Test Centre (ITC) network and will continue to work with these centres to ensure adequate precautionary measures are put in place to protect staff and candidates.

[Candidate support](#)

CITB are working closely with Pearson Vue to ensure support is in place to reschedule or refund a candidates test. In addition CITB continue to work alongside Pearson Vue to understand ways of maximising testing capacity for when the test centre network reopens.

CITB wish to take this opportunity to assure you that they are doing everything they can to ensure that Employers and candidates are supported through this difficult time, and the health and wellbeing of the British Construction Industry is of paramount importance. If you have any concerns, or queries, please email: HSEtestdev@citb.co.uk.

[CSCS – Covid-19 & Impact on CSCS Applications](#)

CSCS has updated its statement on Covid-19 – read it [here](#).

[CPCS](#)

CPCS is supporting extension of renewal of cards. CPCS has suggested to employers that their sites could be lenient on accepting cards that have expired from mid-March onwards until the Covid-19 situation has been brought more under control, although it has said that the final choice and decision is for employers.

[Key workers](#)

The Government has announced that, while schools will close to most pupils, there will be an exemption for the children of certain 'key workers'. Typically this will be medical, emergency, logistics and armed forces workers. However it also includes those working to ensure transport, gas, electricity and water infrastructure keeps operating. It should be noted that only roles required to keep these essential services running will be deemed key workers, not general employees in these sectors.

[ACAS Webinars for Employers](#)

Employers can join a free ACAS webinar 'Coronavirus – an advisory webinar for employers'. The webinar provides practical advice for employers to help manage the impact of coronavirus in the workplace. It includes:-

- Steps that can help reduce the spread of the virus
- Effective ways of communicating with employees
- Self-isolating, time off, sickness certification and sick pay
- Altering working hours, shift patterns, and working arrangements
- Remote working and the use of technology

Businesses can find out more and register [here](#).

[National Cyber Security Centre](#)

Further to yesterday's note regarding cybercrime linked to Covid-19, the NCSC has released guidance on how to make sure your organisation is prepared for an increase in home working and advice on spotting coronavirus-related scam emails. Read it [here](#).

[Insurance](#)

The FCA today set out their expectations to insurers and consumers on Coronavirus. Below are the relevant parts applicable to the industry.

- Renewing insurance policies;

"If your insurance is due for renewal, contact your insurer to discuss in good time. It may be that, after renewal, the policy will no longer cover claims due to coronavirus."

- Product suspension;

"We're aware that some insurance firms are considering or have stopped selling new insurance policies to customers. We are not able to prevent firms from removing or amending products from the market for new customers as it is a decision for individual insurers.

"If you are looking for insurance, we suggest you speak directly to an insurer or insurance broker and ensure you buy insurance that fits with your demands and needs."

For more information click [here](#).

London

The Mayor of London [has announced](#) the following measures on TfL estates:

- Small & medium-sized businesses on TfL's estate are to get 100% rent relief starting from 25th March for the next 3 months
- 100% rent relief for tenants in any closed London Underground station.

Transport Disruption for Workers

TfL services across the capital have already been reduced, along with rail services across the country. More rail services are expected to be cut next week along with bus services outside of London. For more information 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](#).

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