

24 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.

Cabinet Office

Andy Mitchell, Chair of the Construction Leadership Council, has been in contact with the Cabinet Office since the Prime Minister's announcement last night on behalf of the cross-industry Covid-19 taskforce. We are seeking clarification from Government as to what extent the new measures will apply to the construction industry, but in the interim the task force's interpretation is that they don't mean that all activity must cease immediately. He has advised the Cabinet Office that the UK construction industry will come to work today, and prepare to shut down works safely whilst awaiting further information. At a minimum, industry must do whatever is necessary to leave works in a state that can be safely left for some while, and to secure plant, equipment and materials. This must also include the maintaining of site security, ensuring the stability of partially-constructed structures that could become unstable and potentially dangerous, and maintenance of systems that it would be unsafe to stop. CECA is seeking urgent clarification on the new measures and how they will apply to construction, and will brief members accordingly at the earliest opportunity.

Construction Leadership Council statement

"We are in exceptional circumstances and are doing our utmost to keep construction sites operational wherever it is practical and safe to do so. Whilst the guidance from Public Health England may change in future, for the time being construction sites of any size that are operating during the Coronavirus Covid-19 pandemic need to ensure they are protecting their workforce and minimising the risk of spread of infection.

"To implement the Government's social distancing recommendation the Construction Leadership Council has now published Site Operating Procedures. I would strongly recommend that these procedures are implemented by every operational construction site, with the aim of us having a standard approach across the industry that all firms and workers can adopt.

"It is also vital that the health and safety requirements of any construction activity must not be compromised at this time. If an activity cannot be undertaken safely due to a lack of suitably qualified personnel being available, or social distancing being implemented, it should not take place. We are aware that emergency services are also under great pressure and may not be in a position to respond as quickly as usual."

Andy Mitchell

Chair, Construction Leadership Council

Site Operating Procedures are available [here](#).

Covid-19 Construction Industry Taskforce

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy has established a taskforce to co-ordinate the industry's response to the Covid-19 crisis. Representatives from the Construction Leadership Council, Infrastructure Client Group and the sector's main trade federations are collaborating to develop guidance for industry, and to collect feedback

from industry to support Government actions. The group is focussing on the safe operation of existing sites, and how to ensure appropriate support for construction businesses of all sizes.

Scotland

The Scottish Government has confirmed that it is now [advising construction sites to close](#). It is currently developing guidance for business on how to respond, and how to confirm whether their activities are essential or non-essential.

Covid-19: Sentinel Extensions to Competence & Medical Certification

Click [here](#) to read a statement from Rupert Lown, Chief HSQE Officer, Network Rail (23 March 2020).

CITB update - Apprenticeships

CITB is helping SMEs with the funding of apprenticeships by bringing forward payment of some apprenticeship grants. Details will be announced shortly. In the meantime CITB urges all employers not to dismiss any apprentices without first speaking to its Apprenticeship team: Employer.ApprenticeshipQueries@citb.co.uk.

Apprenticeship Officers will continue to be employers' point of contact. A letter was sent to all apprentices on 19 March advising them that their Apprenticeship Officer will be in touch. Apprentice reviews and engagement will be delivered via phone or Skype.

CITB is working with Education and Skills Funding Agency to discuss the existing funding rules around breaks in learning for apprentices. Additionally we are working with IfATE to look at the impact that the Apprenticeships Frameworks switch off on July 31 2020 will have, in light of the inevitable delays to achievement. We will keep you updated on the outcomes of those discussions.

The CITB Levy

CITB is examining a range of options to help employers with the Levy. This is a complex issue and a top priority. CITB will do everything we can to support industry. The CITB Board is meeting this week to discuss its options.

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](#).

Your feedback is vital – [new survey 23 March](#)

The construction industry's federations are in regular dialogue with representatives from the UK Government to discuss the impact of Covid-19. To support this work we need feedback from businesses as to how they are affected by the pandemic. Please take 5 minutes to fill in this survey to ensure that this work is supported by the most up-to-date feedback from industry. The new survey can be found [here](#).

Government Advice

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

Welsh Government

First Minister of Wales' [statement](#) on new coronavirus measures.

The [latest advice](#) on access to schools from Education Minister Kirsty Williams.