

2 April 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.

Support the fight against Coronavirus

The UK Government has asked industry to offer support to those fighting coronavirus. If your business can offer support in any of the following circumstances:

- Protective equipment for healthcare workers, such as masks, gowns, and sanitiser;
- Hotel rooms;
- Transport and logistics, for moving goods or people;
- Manufacturing equipment;
- Warehouse or office space, for medical use or storage;
- Expert advice or consultancy on IT, manufacturing, construction, project management, procurement, or engineering;
- Social care or childcare;
- Community support.

Please use [this link](#) to offer your help.

New industry survey (31 March 2020)

As part of our work to assess the impact of Covid-19 on the construction sector, we have been carrying out a series of surveys. Thank you to all firms that have taken part in the surveys. The latest version can be found [here](#). While the questions are similar to previous versions, please do fill in this version, as it allows us to assess changes in the industry over time.

Updated Site Operating Procedures

The Government has confirmed that construction sites should continue to operate during the current Coronavirus pandemic. Alok Sharma, the Secretary of State for Business Energy & Industrial Strategy, confirmed that the Site Operating Procedures published by the Construction Leadership Council are aligned with Public Health England (PHE) guidance that must be implemented in the workplace. In response to feedback, the Site Operating Procedures Version 2 has now been published to include:

- Clarification that where it is not possible or safe for workers to distance themselves from each other by 2 metres then work should not be carried out
- The request from Transport for London to avoid using the tube network during peak times
- Updates from Public Health England to reference:

- those living with someone who has shown signs of Covid-19 infection
 - those living with someone who is shielding
 - 60%+ alcohol-based hand sanitiser
 - keeping groups of workers together to minimise transfer of infection across the workforce.
- The need to monitor implementation of the procedures.

A copy of the updated Site Operating Procedures can be found [here](#).

CLC advice on employment

The Construction Leadership Council (CLC) has produced new guidance on the employment issues raised by the coronavirus crisis. The [document](#) provides the industry with everything it needs to know on furloughing staff, the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and the Self-employed Income Support Scheme.

A series of in-depth FAQs are also included in the guidance for the two major employment schemes designed to protect jobs whilst the economy is in partial suspension.

CLC Letter to Prime Minister

The Construction Leadership Council wrote to the Prime Minister yesterday (1 April) setting out essential actions to secure the future of the sector:

- Suspend PAYE and CIS tax due to HMRC in April and May
- Defer/cancel Apprenticeship Levy payments
- Government to advise all public sector clients, regulated utilities, and firms in the private sector to expedite cash flow throughout the supply chain
- Support the directors of micro-businesses
- Direct all Government bodies to release retention monies
- Extend the £25k SME business continuity grants scheme to the construction sector.

A copy of the letter is available [here](#).

CITB update - Skills and Training Fund

CITB's Skills and Training Fund has been refreshed and now has two strands supporting: micro and small companies (up to 100 employees), and medium-sized businesses (up to 250 employees) to become a wider offer for employers. CITB has adapted to the COVID-19 situation by amending the scope of activity that will be supported offering more flexibility on what businesses can apply for. The fund comprises of two streams:

- A Skills and Training Fund for small and micro-sized businesses where businesses can apply for a maximum of £10,000 (full details and how to apply) depending on the size of the employer
- A Skills and Training Fund for medium-sized businesses where employers with up to 250 employees are eligible to receive up to £25,000 (full details and how to apply).

Based on employer need, the fund will allow businesses to define then address their particular challenges. The focus has broadened from productivity and innovation, to helping employers with business sustainability and skill retention – key concerns for the construction industry in the extraordinary circumstances we find ourselves in at the moment. Employers are encouraged to contact their CITB advisor to discuss how they can access this support.

Mental health and wellbeing

Advice and information on how employees can look after their mental health and wellbeing during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak is available [here](#).

Covid-19 Webinars

ACE has announced a new online webinar series to help its members and the wider industry through the coronavirus crisis. Hosted by ACE chief executive Hannah Vickers, Navigating COVID-19 covers the major issues currently facing our industry including finance, people, communications and procurement.

Attendees will have the opportunity to ask virtual questions to the panel of experts on specific announcements, such as the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme or Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme. The webinars are open to anyone with an interest in the topics covered. Sign-up now to upcoming webinars through the links below:

Procurement (02.04.20, 12.00pm)

Sam Ulyatt and John Welch of Crown Commercial Service, part of the Cabinet Office, explore the recent procurement policy notices and what they mean for the construction sector. Alasdair Reisner of CECA joins to explore how contractors can support the supply chain during the crisis.

People in a Pandemic (07.04.20, 12.00pm)

Exploring the HR and people issues raised by the crisis such as remote working, staff morale and more. Panellists TBA soon.

Communicating in a Crisis (09.04.20, 1.30pm)

With special guest Andy Walker, editor of *Infrastructure Intelligence*, we will explore the steps you need to take to communicate effectively externally, internally and with stakeholders and clients. Stuart Young, BEIS joins us to help answer any questions.

Find out more and replay previous episodes [here](#).

CECA Employment Briefing - Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (Updated 31 March)

Read CECA's Employment Briefing on the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme [here](#). Please note this briefing will be updated as further information becomes available.

CECA Employment Briefing - Coronavirus

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

CECA Training & Development Update (20 March)

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

New CECA Guidance (30 March) - Temporary Suspension of Sites

CECA has published new guidance on the temporary suspension of sites. Read it [here](#).