

Coronavirus Update – Tuesday 17 March 2020

The impact of the Coronavirus or COVID-19 has accelerated significantly, with the Prime Minister asking everyone to avoid non-essential contact with others and unnecessary travel. We know that actions so far and the potential for a 'lockdown' are causing serious concern for everyone in construction.

Our members are telling us that the majority of their sites are operating and they will continue to do so until told otherwise.

We have agreed with the CLC, CITB, CECA and FMB that we will share all information and use our resources effectively to avoid duplication. Collectively we are:

1. Writing to the Government to ask for construction sites to remain operational as long as possible, on the basis that the infrastructure being built is essential to the recovery of the UK economy. This may require us to agree to some form of operating procedures to protect the workforce and minimise the spread of the virus.
2. Asking for public sector clients to continue to pay their contractors in accordance with agreed payment schedules, on the basis that if businesses in the supply chain fail there will be insufficient capacity to meet the country's infrastructure needs going forward.
3. Talking to private sector clients, while in the meantime suggesting that you contact your clients directly to understand their position with regards to each of your projects - both in terms of their continuation but also their intentions regarding payment during any suspension of work.

We know that maintaining cash flow is crucial and that remote working is not an option for the majority of the industry. We will be making that point wherever we can.

4. Assisting CITB as they prepare a plan to ensure we hold on to our apprentices throughout the crisis, which will be shared with you as soon as possible.
5. Preparing guidance on key issues affecting businesses, including Statutory Sick Pay and contractual terms.
6. Setting up a dedicated webpage later today to host all of the information produced for the industry, which will be routinely updated and freely available to everyone.

We are listening across our collective membership to ensure we are responding to the concerns you have. We don't have all the answers and, with Government responding to an ever-increasing emergency situation affecting every business sector, we will need to prioritise.

Like many of our members, Build UK staff will now be working from home and all external meetings and engagements are being rearranged. Our priority is now



supporting the industry with advice, guidance and information on construction-specific issues.

Businesses should continue to follow the most up-to-date [Government guidance](#) and members can contact [Build UK](#) via email with any construction-specific queries. We cannot guarantee to respond to every message; however, if we are aware of sector-specific issues we may have the opportunity to address them collectively.

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