

Coronavirus Update – Wednesday 25 March 2020

We know the industry is looking for clarity on whether construction sites should continue to operate. Whilst the Government is increasing its calls for everyone to stay at home and avoid all non-essential travel, it is also stating that construction sites can continue to operate. This has left the construction sector caught between the Government's advice and the overwhelming need to protect its workforce.

On a call with the majority of our Contractor members yesterday, Build UK discussed a collective decision for sites to shut. Following that call, a number of members went back to their Boards and have now confirmed that they are closing their sites.

Build UK is not a regulatory or enforcement body and neither is the Construction Leadership Council (CLC). We have done our utmost to support members in implementing the Government's advice on social distancing where they have chosen to keep their sites open. Alongside the CLC, we have also called strongly for Government support for the whole workforce that will be affected by the closure of construction sites.

We firmly believe that the industry needs to pull together at this time; we can do nothing about the situation we find ourselves in, but we can do something about how we respond and that will continue to be our focus over the coming days.

The message from Government continues to be that construction sites can continue to operate but must implement the [Site Operating Procedures](#), developed by Build UK and published by the Construction Leadership Council (CLC).

The CLC has confirmed that all construction sites should assess their situation and **those sites that cannot implement the Site Operating Procedures published by the CLC should not remain open.**

Reduced services on public transport, particularly in London, are presenting a specific challenge for workers travelling to and from sites due to overcrowding. The CLC has stated that *"if people cannot get to site whilst complying with the Government's guidance, then they should not do so"*. Matt Hancock, Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, confirmed this afternoon that people need to maintain two metres social distancing when using public transport and has called for an increased tube service to be provided.

Transport for London has confirmed that the public transport network is under pressure and has urged people to avoid travelling during the busiest times which are 05:45 - 7:30 and 16:00 - 17:30.

Chancellor Rishi Sunak confirmed yesterday that he would be making a further announcement in the coming days on **support for self-employed workers**, which is expected to include income support.

CITB has provided more information on [support for employers](#):

- From 6 April 2020, it will pay second and third year apprenticeship attendance grants in advance, aimed at supporting employers to retain their apprentices
- The [ESFA](#) has adjusted its requirements to facilitate remote training, online assessments and breaks in learning
- A new free Health, Safety and Environment test which can be used to help employers determine if workers are safe to work on their sites:
 - [For operatives and specialists](#)
 - [For managers and professionals](#)

The situation continues to develop rapidly and businesses should make sure they are following the most up-to-date [Government guidance](#). For the latest information as soon as it becomes available, please follow Build UK on [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

If you have any construction-specific queries, please contact [Build UK](#). We cannot guarantee to respond to every message; however, if we are aware of sector-specific issues we have the opportunity to address them collectively.