

Coronavirus Update – Tuesday 14 April 2020

It is hard to believe that we have been dealing with the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic for four weeks now and we have issued a Build UK update every day since it started. The relentless pace and volume of change, along with the unprecedented level of information to be absorbed, has created significant challenges for many in the industry.

Following the Easter break, which offered the opportunity to re-group and look ahead, more sites are expected to re-open, implementing the new ways of working required for the ‘social distancing’ environment in which we now live. The calls from Build UK and the Construction Leadership Council (CLC) for collaboration across the industry have reminded everyone that there will be a post-coronavirus world and it is in all our interests to maintain and sustain the construction supply chain.

There will be more changes this week, starting with publication of the **Site Operating Procedures – Version 3** later today. These will include the latest Public Health England (PHE) guidance on [Social distancing in the workplace during coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) published last week, additional information on the hierarchy of control measures to reduce the risk of transmission, and the need to monitor implementation of the procedures.

The latest PHE guidelines include the following statements:

In the sector-specific [Construction](#) guidance:

“Where it is not possible to follow the social distancing guidelines in full in relation to a particular activity, you should consider whether that activity needs to continue for the site to continue to operate, and, if so, take all the mitigating actions possible to reduce the risk of transmission.”

In the [Transport Businesses](#) guidance under ‘Use of private vehicles and car pooling’:

“If the journey is essential, such as travel to work, and there is no option but to share a car with people who are not part of the same household, journeys should be shared with the same individuals and with the minimum number of people at any one time.”

Crown Commercial Service has confirmed that all public authorities should use [Policy Procurement Notice \(PPN\) 02/20](#) on supplier relief as the ‘first resort’. Those authorities that are clients of construction have now received the sector-specific [Guidance Notes for Construction Contracts](#) and should be working with their supply chains to implement the guidance as appropriate.

The **Competition and Markets Authority (CMA)** has issued [guidance outlining temporary measures to relax competition between businesses](#), in order to ensure that essential supplies are available and key workers can travel safely to their place of work. The CMA has stated that this “*does not give a ‘free pass’ to businesses to engage in conduct that could lead to harm to consumers in other ways*” and it “*will not tolerate unscrupulous businesses exploiting the crisis as a ‘cover’ for non-essential collusion*”.

The **Health & Safety Executive (HSE)** has published specific guidance on:

- [Reviewing First Aid arrangements](#) during the coronavirus pandemic, including:
 - A 3-month extension to First Aid at Work qualifications for those unable to re-qualify
 - Dealing with training that has been interrupted and cannot be completed at this time
- [Reporting cases of Covid-19](#) as a reportable disease under RIDDOR where there is reasonable evidence that it was caused by exposure at work. The guidance recognises that this is most likely to occur in health care environments where treating patients with Covid-19.

Businesses should continue to follow the most up-to-date [Government guidance](#) and for the latest updates please follow Build UK on [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#). If you have any construction-specific queries or feedback on what is happening within the industry, please contact [Build UK](#).

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