

Coronavirus Update – Wednesday 29 April 2020

The Government has announced that [coronavirus \(COVID-19\) testing](#) has been **extended** to anyone who goes into work because they cannot work from home and is showing symptoms of coronavirus. This includes construction workers, as well as people they live with who have symptoms, and there are two ways to arrange a test:

- Self-referral – enables workers and members of their households who have symptoms to book a test directly using the [online system](#)
- Employer referral – allows employers to refer workers for a test via a secure portal. Employers will need to obtain a login by emailing portalservicedesk@dhsc.gov.uk with their organisation name, nature of their business, region, and names and email addresses for two users. Contractors may find it more efficient for clients already registered for their essential workers to request the test on their behalf.

Build UK Contractor members are **continuing to reopen sites** and reported this week that almost 70% of their sites are open in England and Wales. The majority are construction (81%) and infrastructure (78%) sites, with members that include housing in their portfolios confirming that less than half of their housing sites (46%) are open for business. Productivity on construction and infrastructure sites is averaging 67%, with London construction sites proving to be a particular challenge at just 56% output being achieved.

Information from Build UK Partner, [Builders' Conference](#), which collects data on construction contracts across the UK, is showing the impact of coronavirus on the number and value of contracts awarded.

During the five weeks since the lockdown started, a total of **613 contracts** have been awarded, which is a 22% reduction on the previous five-week period (789 contracts) and a 31% reduction on the same period last year (884 contracts).

The value of contracts during lockdown has actually increased, with a total of **£10.4 billion** being awarded compared to £8.4 billion in the five weeks prior to that. However, the lockdown period included a single contract award for a £2.2 billion infrastructure project, which is one of the largest ever recorded by Builders' Conference.

We will be providing a more detailed overview of the impact on contracts in a future update when the full information for April is available.

Since the [Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme](#) opened for claims last week, more than 500,000 claims have been received to the value of £4.5 billion, protecting more than four million jobs. To help businesses submit a claim, HMRC has made available a recording of its [webinar](#) which sets out step by step what they need to do.

The Government has confirmed that [furloughed workers planning to take paid parental or adoption leave](#) will be entitled to pay based on their usual earnings, rather than the furloughed pay rate.

With Build UK Contractor members having furloughed an average of 30% of their staff, the Construction Leadership Council (CLC) is looking at measures that may be required to support the release of workers from furlough when the lockdown is lifted.

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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