

Coronavirus Update – Wednesday 20 May 2020

Build UK Contractor members have reported this week that **86% of infrastructure and construction sites in England and Wales are now open**, up from 82% last week. Output has increased to 75% but there are still challenges in London where output remains slightly lower at 68%.

Members that include housing in their portfolios have reported that 67% of housing sites in England and Wales are open, with output improving significantly to 65%, up from only 29% four weeks ago.

The situation in Scotland remains very different, with only 19% of projects running and output at just 22%. The Scottish Government is due to publish its 'route map' out of lockdown tomorrow and the industry will be waiting to see if there is any change to the restriction on essential construction works only.

Contractor members are beginning to bring workers back from furlough, reporting this week that on average **22% of their workforce are now furloughed**, down from 30% four weeks ago. It was confirmed yesterday that the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme has seen 8 million people furloughed at a cost of £11.1 billion to date, and further information is expected shortly on the changes that will be introduced from August.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has released its latest [labour market statistics](#), which show that the number of people claiming unemployment benefit in the UK rose to 2.1 million in April 2020, up 69% from March.

The Government has announced that the [online service](#) for the **Coronavirus Statutory Sick Pay Rebate Scheme** will be launched next Tuesday 26 May 2020. This will allow small and medium-sized employers, with fewer than 250 employees, to apply to HMRC to recover the costs of paying coronavirus-related SSP to current or former employees for up to two weeks since 13 March 2020. To prepare to submit a claim, employers should make sure they have up to date records of all SSP payments that they wish to include.

From 26 May 2020, large businesses will be able to borrow up to £200 million through the **Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CLBILS)**, after the Government [increased the maximum loan size](#) from £50 million. Companies borrowing more than £50 million will be subject to restrictions on dividend payments, senior pay and share buy-backs during the period of the loan, including a ban on dividend payments and cash bonuses, except where they were previously agreed.

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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