

3rd April 2020

To all staff,

We are now a few weeks into what is an unprecedented situation across the world, which has brought challenges both in our work and personal lives. I thought it would be timely to update you on some key areas as we pull together to support each other through this time.

Firstly though, and most importantly, a very big thank you to each one of you for the critical work you are undertaking to maintain the strategic road network (SRN) on behalf of Highways England. Never has it been more critical to ensure the smooth running of the roads. This is directly supporting the movement of key workers and delivery of key goods around the country, which is in turn sustaining hospitals, supermarkets and other key industries in helping the country battle COVID-19.

We're listening and adapting

I want to reassure you that the Board are listening and discussing all concerns that are being raised, and we're reacting as quickly as possible to respond to these. Over the past few weeks, the Board have been holding daily conference calls to work through the challenges that have emerged. We have been able to make fast decisions around temporary office closures, key worker status, and hotel accommodation policy to name a few.

I want to protect all of us and we are continuing to follow government guidelines for keeping people safe from the unnecessary spread of infection. As you can appreciate, the situation is fast moving and we're constantly adapting to how we work and ensuring you have access to the latest information. If you have any questions in relation to COVID-19 please speak to your manager in the first instance, who can escalate concerns quickly, helping us maintain a consistent approach across the business.

Highways England's message

We have had a strong clear message from Highways England on maintaining delivery of schemes across the country, and critical importance of continuing to work.

"The Government have been clear; the construction industry should continue to operate in accordance with the Public Health England and industry guidance. They have also made it clear that travel is not restricted to just key workers and it is permitted where necessary (e.g.) for construction workers operating on sites. This fully supports our approach of continuing to operate as close to business as usual as possible, therefore please continue with all activities (not just safety critical activities) while observing the published guidance."

So while you may read lots in the media around construction sites closing down, our direction from Highways England is clear - we keep on going where safe to do so.

Key worker status

Highways England have confirmed our status as 'key workers' during the current crisis, recognising the vital role we are playing in maintaining the road network. A reminder that you need to carry the HE letter, the Carnell letter, and a photographic proof of identity to confirm your key worker status, to present to authorities if requested. There have been a few queries

around whether supporting roles within the business qualify for this status. All roles are vital in operating the business and therefore supporting the work we're doing for Highways England. So if you need to undertake occasional essential travel either to site offices or to visit our main offices, then you qualify as a key worker and can use the letters as required.

Operations

After a challenging few weeks reacting to rapidly evolving advice from the Government and clients across the country, we now have all but one site back up and operating. The last site to get back up and running is in the South West and is programmed to start up again after Easter. So for the time being all our sites continue to operate in line with Highways England direction.

It is of course vitally important that all sites continue to operate in a safe manner and comply with social distancing guidelines as far as is practical. We have prepared a detailed Operational Controls guidance document to help sites operate as safely as possible. This has been issued to our Operations teams this week and includes advice on travelling to site, how to conduct start of shift briefings, social distancing on site, D&A testing, and breaktimes - all to reduce the spread of the infection. If you need to, this can be accessed on the COVID-19 section of the company website [here](#).

Working from home

With the temporary closures of the offices at Penkridge, Leyland and Wakefield, we have some people now working from home where they can in line with Government guidelines. We recognise this can require significant adjustments to normal home life and understand it can feel both isolating and challenging as colleagues manage a new work/home life balance. Let's continue to stay in touch with each other and follow the advice provided in our remote working note. Again, this can be accessed from the COVID-19 section of the website [here](#). We also need to remain vigilant around IT security both at home and at work with a significant increase in spam messages, phishing emails and spoof websites emerging.

Supporting employees

We will all be affected by the current crisis in different ways and this may become tougher for many of us in the coming weeks as the country moves towards a peak in cases. So I'll take this opportunity to remind you that all employees have access to wide ranging free advice through our [EmployeeCare programme](#) with Canada Life. It is there to help you if you need.



The graphic features a central cluster of seven grey thought bubbles, each containing a question: "Debt Issues?", "Negative Thoughts?", "Addiction Problems?", "Mental Health?", "Legal Worries?", "Health Concerns?", and "Stress Issues?". Below the bubbles, the text reads: "Free, 24/7 confidential advice & counselling", "Tel: 0800 917 9330", and "MORE DETAILS AVAILABLE ONLINE AT WWW.CARNELLAGROUP.CO.UK/CANADALIFE". At the bottom, the Canada Life logo is shown next to the text "A totally independent organisation working with" and the Carnell logo.

Finally, thank you once again for your sustained efforts, understanding and patience. Let's continue to treat each other with respect, kindness and tolerance as we navigate the business and our families through challenging days and weeks ahead. Be safe.

Kind regards
Aidan Clarke
Managing Director

