

15th May 2020

To all staff,

It is now around two months since we all had to make changes to our personal and working lives to deal with the challenges that have arisen resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. With the Government having recently set out a roadmap for exiting lockdown, myself and the Board thought it would be a good time to update you on some key areas as we continue to support each other through this period.

Thank you

Again, let me first start by thanking each one of you for the continued critical role you are undertaking to maintain the strategic road network (SRN) on behalf of Highways England. It has been reassuring to see our role being recognised publicly and at the highest levels of Government. As a team we have collectively risen to the challenges presented by COVID-19 which has enabled us to continue operating as close to 'business as usual' as we can. This has enabled us to maintain the business in a sustainable position and avoided the need for us to furlough any of our staff.

Latest Government guidance

As part of the Government's plan for exiting lockdown, they have this week issued guidance documents for outdoor works and offices, to help us understand how to work safely during the weeks and months ahead. The Board have reviewed both these documents and they reflect the guidance that has previously been issued by the Government, Public Health England (PHE) and the NHS, which we are already complying with. Therefore, there are no new or additional control measures that we need to implement that aren't already covered in our [Operating Guidance Document](#) which you can continue to access on CMS and the website.

Highways England's message

We continue to have a strong clear message from Highways England on maintaining delivery of schemes across the country, and the critical importance of continuing to work. Highways England continues with increased engagement activities with the wider supply chain to ensure ongoing support for businesses operating through this time. In the past week, Highways England have re-iterated to the supply chain that *"We are continuing to operate in a business as usual way, in line with PHE guidelines, to keep the Strategic Road Network (SRN) operating to support the country, the economy and to flow cash to all tiers of the supply chain."*

Operations

We continue to operate on all sites and start new programmes of work as these become available. Our teams are working hard with Highways England colleagues around the country to ensure new schemes come online as planned and therefore provide continuity of work in the medium term.

The controls we have developed and put in place, and your commitment and support in implementing these, has helped us keep our sites safe and maintain the health of our workforce. This provides re-assurance for both us and our families that our working environment continues to be as practically safe as possible. It is of course vitally important that all sites continue to operate in a safe manner and comply with the Operating Guidance Document to ensure we maintain this strong position moving forward.

Working from home

The temporary closures of the offices at Penkridge, Leyland and Wakefield, remain in place for the time being. A number of us therefore continue to work from home in line with Government guidelines, to afford maximum protection for others. Whilst we have adapted well to this new type of normal, we need to continue to be mindful of the strain this can place on work/life balance and the continued challenge many have around childcare and home schooling. Remember to stay in touch and support each other through this period. Looking to the future, we have started exploring ways of how we can make our offices safe for people when we phase a return back to office working.

IT security

There continues to be a significant increase in spam messages, phishing emails and spoof websites. There have also been some high-profile cyber-attacks on companies in our industry over the past few weeks. We must therefore continue to remain vigilant around IT security at home and at work to reduce the likelihood of being affected by these. If you are in any doubt about a suspicious message, e-mail or website, contact our IT team immediately for advice.

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. Also as reminder, we all have access to wide ranging free advice through our [EmployeeCare programme](#) with Canada Life.

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 the weeks and months ahead. Be safe.

Kind regards
Aidan Clarke
Managing Director

