

The Federation of Window Cleaners are lobbying the Government for the benefit of the industry through the British Cleaning Council, and we are represented by FWC Executive Member Paul Thrupp - the BCC Chairman.

BSA This Week

- The BSA continues to liaise with Cabinet Office and BEIS Ministers over the Government's response to the COVID-19 outbreak.
- Security and Home Affairs Committee, conference call on Monday.
- National Minimum Wage briefing with PWC, on Tuesday.
- Western Gateway conference call, on Wednesday.

Coronavirus

Coronavirus (COVID-19) guidance for employees, employers and businesses

Gov.uk: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-employees-employers-and-businesses#history>

Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance for UK businesses

Gov.uk: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-uk-businesses#history>

UK to add 35,000 NHS staff to fight coronavirus

The UK is to pour 35,000 extra staff into the National Health Service and launch a national volunteer army to cope with the surge in coronavirus infections. The Excel London centre will be converted into an NHS-run field hospital for 4000 coronavirus patients and the government has ordered 3.5 million tests for those recovered from Covid-19.

Financial Times: <https://www.ft.com/content/46baab28-6def-11ea-89df-41bea055720b>

The Times: <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/coronavirus-londons-excel-to-be-turned-into-field-hospital-with-4-000-beds-s2ml82m8q>

The Times: <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/game-changing-indicator-tells-if-you-have-recovered-from-coronavirus-vchd88h02>

Gove tries to clarify confusion over coronavirus rules

Ministers have attempted to clarify the rules around Boris Johnson's lockdown, amid confusion over who is allowed to travel to work and what counts as exercise.

Guardian: <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2020/mar/24/uk-lockdown-gove-tries-to-clarify-confusion-over-rules>

Guidance: Further businesses and premises to close

Gov.uk: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/further-businesses-and-premises-to-close#history>

Departments get green light to bypass regular procurement processes

Cabinet Office says Covid-19 outbreak triggers "extreme urgency" clauses in Public Contract Regulations.

Civil Service World: <https://www.civilserviceworld.com/articles/news/departments-get-green-light-bypass-regular-procurement-processes>

Procurement Policy Note 02/20: Supplier relief due to COVID-19 is available here:

The note sets out information and guidance for public bodies on payment of their suppliers to ensure service continuity during and after the current coronavirus, COVID-19, outbreak.

Gov.uk: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/procurement-policy-note-0220-supplier-relief-due-to-covid-19>

COVID-19: Changes to DBS ID checking guidelines

Temporary changes to ID checking guidelines are being made as a result of the coronavirus outbreak.

Gov.uk: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/covid-19-changes-to-dbs-id-checking-guidelines>

Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance on business support grant funding

Gov.uk: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-business-support-grant-funding>

Government toolkits

Government toolkit focussed on **business support**: <https://bit.ly/2UISFHJ>

Government toolkit focussed on **protecting against the spread of the virus**: <https://bit.ly/3acuEiJ>

UK chancellor: 'We won't be able to save every business'

Rishi Sunak told MPs on Tuesday that the government would not be able to save all businesses in the weeks ahead as the UK chancellor comes under growing pressure to announce a rescue scheme for self-employed workers.

Financial Times: <https://www.ft.com/content/e964fdc0-6dda-11ea-89df-41bea055720b>

Companies could wait weeks for rescue loans

Emergency loans for companies hit by the Covid-19 pandemic could take more than a month to process, experts have warned, after frontline staff told customers that they were not ready to process applications.

The Times: <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/companies-could-wait-weeks-for-rescue-loans-w0g9mv8c9>

Sunak set to follow Scandinavian lead with help for 5m self-employed workers

The Chancellor is weighing up an unprecedented rescue package for Britain's 5 million self-employed workers that could follow measures introduced in Denmark and Norway.

Daily Telegraph: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2020/03/24/storm-mounts-delays-sunaks-rescue-scheme-self-employed/>

Employers do not have to report gender pay gaps

Enforcement of the gender pay gap reporting deadlines suspended for this year.

Gov.uk: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/employers-do-not-have-to-report-gender-pay-gaps>

Government offers three month extension for firms to file accounts

Late filing normally results in an automatic penalty but under the new regime agreed between the Government and Companies House, up to 4.3 million firms will be able to apply for an extension.

Daily Telegraph: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2020/03/25/government-offers-three-month-extension-firms-file-accounts/>

Gov.uk: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/companies-to-receive-3-month-extension-period-to-file-accounts-during-covid-19>

Comment by BEIS Secretary: Businesses should not need to lay off staff with all the help they have

Daily Telegraph: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2020/03/25/businesses-should-not-need-lay-staff-help-have/>

Coronavirus: 'Symptoms' at three immigration removal centres

Three immigration removal centres in the UK are housing people with symptoms of coronavirus, the BBC has been told. A High Court case later will decide if detainees should be temporarily released while the coronavirus crisis is ongoing.

BBC News: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-52017311>

Prison visits cancelled

Following instructions for people to stay at home, protect the NHS and save lives, introduced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, prison visits are temporarily cancelled.

Gov.uk: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/prison-visits-cancelled>

Updated: Coronavirus (COVID-19) guidance for schools and other educational settings

Added 'Coronavirus (COVID-19): implementing social distancing in education and childcare settings'.

Gov.uk: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-schools-and-other-educational-settings#history>

Jobcentres limit access and benefit reviews and reassessments suspended

People are being urged to use online services before turning to the telephone for help with their benefit claim. Reviews and reassessments for disability benefits are being suspended for the next three months.

Gov.uk: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/claimants-are-asked-to-apply-online-as-jobcentres-limit-access>

Gov.uk: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/coronavirus-update-benefit-reviews-and-reassessments-suspended>

Council procurement innovates around Covid-19 restrictions

Paul Meigh, Head of Procurement at Central Bedfordshire Council spoke to PSE about the additional challenges this virus has posed on public procurement.

PHE: <http://www.publicsectorexecutive.com/Public-Sector-News/council-procurement-innovates-around-covid-19-restrictions->

Multinationals offer services free of charge

Some of the world's largest companies have lined up to offer their services and products to national public and health bodies without asking payment.

The Times: <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/the-good-multinationals-offer-services-free-of-charge-kjpbfgkbz>

NHS anger as only 5,000 are tested for coronavirus

NHS chiefs are pressing to start testing key staff for coronavirus as they see no sign that the mass checks promised by the government are imminent. Doctors and nurses are also threatening to quit over fears of inadequate protective equipment.

The Times: <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/nhs-anger-as-only-5-000-are-tested-for-coronavirus-lhwn88xx7>

Guardian: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/mar/24/doctors-threaten-to-quit-over-protective-equipment-shortage>

Economy

Economy suffered record collapse in activity even before virus lockdown

Economists said the downturn has only just begun after the purchasing managers index (PMI) for March pointed to a complete collapse in activity across virus-stricken Europe and the US.

Daily Telegraph: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2020/03/24/economy-suffered-record-collapse-activity-even-virus-lockdown/>

Factory and shop closures 'will push UK into deep recession'

Factory and high street store closures after the coronavirus outbreak will push the UK into a deep recession this year, a study of the economy has concluded.

Guardian: <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2020/mar/22/factory-and-shop-closures-will-push-uk-into-deep-recession>

Industry

Construction sector slams Government's confused strategy

Building work is being allowed to continue despite Boris Johnson ordering people to stay in their homes on Monday night. It has fuelled anger from workers who fear their safety is at risk. The Times reports construction workers flouted social distancing rules at sites.

Daily Telegraph: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2020/03/24/construction-sector-slams-governments-confused-strategy/>

The Times: <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/builders-and-commuters-make-mockery-of-staying-2m-apart-amid-coronavirus-lockdown-tj3t3jnq2>

Crossrail and HS2 put on hold amid safety fears

Work on some of Britain's biggest infrastructure projects was halted or scaled back yesterday. Transport for London and Crossrail said they were suspending all work and would continue essential maintenance of the transport network only.

The Times: <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/crossrail-and-hs2-put-on-hold-amid-safety-fears-ch78cf20v>

UK housebuilders close sites despite lockdown exemption

Britain's largest housebuilders are shutting their construction sites despite the government exempting them from a lockdown designed to combat the spread of coronavirus.

Financial Times: <https://www.ft.com/content/4cd145a8-6dc7-11ea-89df-41bea055720b>

Small building firms fear going to the wall if work is halted

Confusion around government guidance on whether construction sites can stay open has heaped additional anxiety on smaller builders whose companies could "go to the wall" if sites close, an industry body warned yesterday.

The Times: <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/small-building-firms-fear-going-to-the-wall-if-work-is-halted-smdhqk0nd>

Food service groups enlisted to assist the vulnerable

The government is set to hire food service companies to produce boxes of groceries for vulnerable people who are self isolating because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Financial Times: <https://www.ft.com/content/94fbd544-6df6-11ea-89df-41bea055720b>

Global food prices will come under pressure, experts warn

Farmers in the UK have started to raise concerns about some of their workforce returning to their home countries, typically on the Continent, in the wake of the outbreak.

Daily Telegraph: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2020/03/24/global-food-prices-will-come-pressure-massive-shortages-seasonal/>

Broadband users face switching barriers under UK lockdown

BT said its Openreach engineers would prioritise essential fault repairs and upgrades to avoid unnecessary home visits.

Financial Times: <https://www.ft.com/content/54c60438-6df4-11ea-89df-41bea055720b>

BT makes call to sell French unit to Computacenter

Days it sold its operations and infrastructure in 16 Latin American countries, it has emerged that BT is in talks to offload its French IT services business.

The Times: <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/bt-makes-call-to-sell-french-unit-to-computacenter-zzm35vckp>

Brexit

Coronavirus crisis demands extended Brexit transition

Coronavirus pandemic is testing British and EU national administrative systems to the limit.

Financial Times: <https://www.ft.com/content/267d8562-ef86-4a04-83ea-37bd97812d36>

Politics

'Covid coalition' government considered by senior Conservatives

Senior Conservatives are questioning whether Boris Johnson will need a national unity government or emergency cross-party council to share responsibility for the coronavirus crisis if the situation worsens.

Guardian: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/mar/24/covid-coalition-government-considered-by-senior-conservatives>

Labour's long leadership battle 'hampering coronavirus response'

Labour's four-month leadership election to replace Jeremy Corbyn has hampered the party's response to the coronavirus pandemic, according to some of its MPs.

Guardian: <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2020/mar/24/labours-long-leadership-battle-hampering-coronavirus-response>

Scotland

Covid-19 advice for Scottish Businesses

The latest guidance for businesses operating in Scotland.

Scottish Government: <https://findbusinesssupport.gov.scot/coronavirus-advice>

Coronavirus - procurement regulations during outbreak: SPPN 4/2020

Scottish Government's latest procurement advice.

Scottish Government: <https://blogs.gov.scot/public-procurement/2020/03/24/coronavirus-procurement-regulations-during-outbreak-sppn-4-2020/>

Construction bodies form coronavirus forum to call for urgent help for firms

A group of respected construction industry bodies has issued a joint call for a number of simple actions which it claims the Scottish Government could introduce immediately to help with cashflow and protect jobs against the "crippling" background of coronavirus.

Scottish Construction Now: <https://scottishconstructionnow.com/article/construction-bodies-form-coronavirus-forum-to-call-for-urgent-help-for-firms>

Nicola Sturgeon warns building sites should close

Scottish first minister calls for Scottish sites to shut to "save lives".

Building: <https://www.building.co.uk/news/nicola-sturgeon-warns-building-sites-should-close/5105111.article>

Ministry of Justice

Covid-19 Stakeholder Update - 24.3.20

This is the Ministry of Justice's regular stakeholder communications update service. This is intended to signpost the latest Covid-19 guidance and central government updates.

We would find it helpful to know about your own communications plans and any intel that will help inform our communications moving forwards. If you know an organisation which should to be added to the list please do get in touch at samantha.abrahams@justice.gov.uk or thomas.cracknell@justice.gov.uk.

We have robust and well-established plans to ensure we can continue to deliver key services across the justice system. Legislation is being sought through an emergency bill in response to the virus that could extend the circumstances in which a court can direct the use of audio or video links. Prisons are well prepared to take immediate action wherever cases or suspected cases are identified, including the isolation of individuals where necessary.

HMPPS

NEW: Following instructions for people to stay at home, protect the NHS and save lives, introduced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, prison visits are temporarily cancelled. This is to ensure prisons are complying with social distancing rules and to protect staff and prisoners. We are advising people who have booked visits today not to attend and to stay at home. We will continue to provide updates on the [GOV.UK coronavirus and prisons page](#).

To help maintain vital family contact at this time, we have announced today that prisons will receive 900 secure phone handsets. Ministers have approved use of 900 locked SIM card handsets, allowing risk-assessed prisoners to speak to a small number of pre-authorised contacts. A full press release can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/prison-visits-cancelled>

In addition, there are a number of other ways to contact someone in prison if you are unable to visit them:

Leave a voice message using the [Prison Voicemail Service](#) Send them an email using the [Email a prisoner service](#). [Write to them](#).

Find out more here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-and-prisons>.

The National Probation Service continues to operate as an essential public service and will continue to supervise offenders in the community. The methods of supervision may be carried out differently to accommodate the Government's advice on social distancing but public protection will remain the priority.

Individual pages on the [Prison Finder](#) are being updated with confirmed cases of COVID-19. Where cases are confirmed, prisons are following public health guidelines and local contingency plans, including measures to minimise the risk of further infection.

HMPPS has been working closely with Public Health and NHS services, as well as criminal justice partners, to put robust contingency plans in place. The plans prioritise the safety of staff, prisoners, visitors and offenders under supervision in the community, whilst seeking to minimise disruption to normal services and ensure public protection. The following page will continue to be updated when new advice is available: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-and-prisons>

HMCTS

NEW: Magistrates' Courts will only hear urgent cases today (overnight custody & prisoner production). Parties involved in all other hearings should not attend court unless contacted directly. Updates will be posted on Twitter:
<https://twitter.com/HMCTSGovuk/status/1242372339767050240>

HMCTS have updated guidance following the Lord Chief Justice's announcement on jury trials. Following the Lord Chief Justice announcement on 23 March on jury trials, all new trials will be postponed for a short time. Full guidance is available here:
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-courts-and-tribunals-planning-and-preparation#jury-service>

*During this unprecedented public health emergency, we are adjusting practices and taking steps to minimise the risk to the judiciary, court staff and users. Any changes to individual hearings will be communicated directly to those affected in the usual way, by email and/or phone. The following page will continue to be updated when new advice is available:
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-courts-and-tribunals-planning-and-preparation>*