

INSIDE  
THIS  
ISSUE

PG. 2

Protecting Lone Workers

Coronavirus Resources

PG. 3

HSE issues new guidance  
on reporting coronavirus

PG. 4

Coronavirus Stress

PG.5

Tips for supporting  
employee wellbeing whilst  
they work from home

PG.6

AGA E-Learning Courses



## CORONAVIRUS LATEST

Major contractors are now working on nearly 70% of their sites as the return to work in construction continues.

An update from trade body Build UK on Wednesday revealed the number of operational sites for its contractor members.

Build UK's membership includes most of the industry's biggest names like Balfour Beatty, Laing O'Rourke, Kier, McAlpine, Skanska, Bouygues, Bam, Vinci, Wates, Mace and Morgan Sindall.

The trade body said: "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."

The Construction Leadership Council have updated their advice to Contractors working on site on 14.04.2020, please see link below for latest guidelines:

<https://www.constructionleadershipcouncil.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Site-Operating-Procedures-Version-3.pdf>

# PROTECTING LONE WORKERS

Due to social distancing, lone working has become far more common. The HSE has guidance for employers to keep lone workers healthy and safe.

Their recently revised leaflet “Protecting lone workers: How to control the risks of working alone” is for anyone who employs lone workers, or engages them as contractors etc, including self-employed people or those who work at home.

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg73.pdf>



It has been updated to include advice on work-related violence, keeping in touch, and the impact of lone working on stress and mental health.

# CORONAVIRUS RESOURCES

## Government loan scheme for small businesses

The Chancellor announced the government will back interest free loans allowing businesses to borrow between £2,000 and £50,000. Online applications will be open from Monday 4 May 2020. Loans from accredited lenders will be interest free and no repayments will be due for the first 12 months. More about the new Bounce Back Loans scheme can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/small-businesses-boosted-by-bounce-back-loans>

## Online platform for workplace skills

A new online learning platform to help boost skills while people are at home has been launched by Education Secretary Gavin Williamson. More can be found at: <https://theskillstoolkit.campaign.gov.uk/>

## Government support for individuals, families and businesses

The Debt Management Office has announced measures providing support through the economic disruption caused by COVID-19 for individuals, families and businesses. Find out more at: [https://www.gov.uk/government/news/hm-treasury-announces-revision-to-the-uk-debt-management-offices-financing-remit-2020-21?utm\\_source=3f06fc42-3142-483e-acc4-92fb1f77c744&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm\\_content=immediate](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/hm-treasury-announces-revision-to-the-uk-debt-management-offices-financing-remit-2020-21?utm_source=3f06fc42-3142-483e-acc4-92fb1f77c744&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate)

## HMRC Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme - how to make a claim

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Viq4AgwozMk&list=PL8EcnheDt1zhTsyhT9ak3xiXnmlvbHJJV&index=4>

## Health and Safety Executive latest information

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKHSE/bulletins/287058a>

## Furlough Scheme

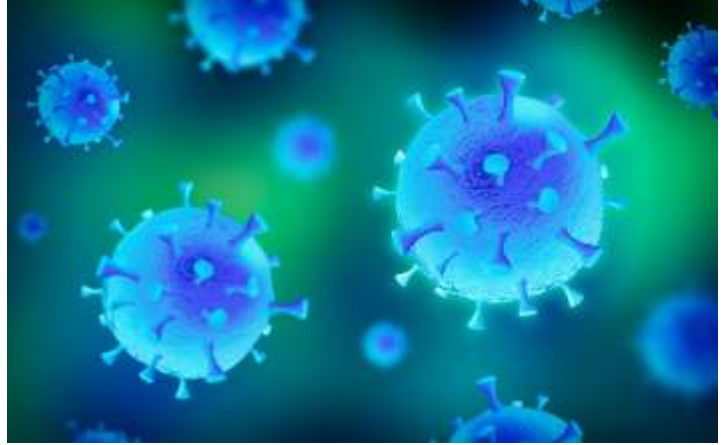
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/chancellor-extends-furlough-scheme-to-end-of-june>

# HSE ISSUES NEW GUIDANCE ON REPORTING CORONAVIRUS

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has set out new guidance where incidents of coronavirus may be reportable.

They are:

- an unintended incident at work has led to someone's possible or actual exposure to coronavirus. This must be reported as a dangerous occurrence; or
- a worker has been diagnosed as having COVID-19 and there is reasonable evidence that it was caused by exposure at work. This must be reported as a case of disease.



'As prevalence of coronavirus increases in the general population, it will be very difficult for employers to establish whether or not any infection in an individual was contracted as a result of their work,' the HSE said in a statement. 'Therefore, diagnosed cases of COVID-19 are not reportable under RIDDOR unless there is reasonable evidence suggesting that a work-related exposure was the likely cause of the disease and this is supported by a registered medical practitioner's diagnosis.'

The regulator said: 'In these extraordinary times, the HSE is constantly reviewing the fast-moving situation with our partners across government to support the national effort to tackle Covid-19.'

It added that in some limited circumstances, where an individual has either been exposed to or contracted Covid-19 as a direct result of their work, those instances could be reportable under RIDDOR either as a Dangerous Occurrence (under Regulation 7 and Schedule 2, paragraph 10) or as a disease attributed to an occupational exposure to a biological agent (under Regulation 9 (b)) or as a death as a result of occupational exposure to a biological agent under Regulation 6 (2).

For an incident to be reportable as a dangerous occurrence, the incident must result (or could have resulted) in the release or escape of the coronavirus. An example could include a vial known to contain the coronavirus being smashed in a laboratory, leading to people being exposed.

For an incident to be reportable as a disease due to occupational exposure to a biological agent, there must be reasonable evidence suggesting that a work-related exposure was the likely cause of Covid-19. Such instances could include, for example, frontline health and social care workers (for example ambulance personnel, GPs, social care providers, hospital staff, etc) who have been involved in providing care/ treatment to known cases of Covid-19, who subsequently develop the disease and there is reasonable evidence suggesting that a work-related exposure was the likely cause of the disease.

A doctor may indicate the significance of any work-related factors when communicating their diagnosis. For an incident to be reportable as a death due to occupational exposure to a biological agent, there must be reasonable evidence suggesting that a work-related exposure to coronavirus was the likely cause of death. A doctor may indicate the significance of any work-related factors when communicating the cause of death.

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act, employers have a general duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of their employees at work. HSE considers that if an employer is following the relevant PHE guidance for their sector in terms of controlling the public health risks, they will be taking reasonably practicable precautions to control workplace risks.

# CORONAVIRUS STRESS

With the world in the grips of the coronavirus pandemic, it is more important than ever to look after ourselves and each other. And while we should all follow NHS and government guidance to protect our physical health, we cannot neglect our mental health.

Everyone is adapting as best they can to a rapidly changing situation—us included. So, we, as employers, should honour our duty of care to our staff and keep an eye on how they are coping.

## Coronavirus & common signs of stress

- Becoming quiet and withdrawn.
- Slipping work standards.
- Taking more sick days.
- Poor timekeeping.
- Becoming short-tempered or irritable.
- Physical complaints like headaches, nausea, tiredness or heart palpitations.

In person, the signs of stress should be quite easy to spot. But now, it's likely that your staff either work for home or are on lay-off or furlough.

Check in with them regularly to make sure they are okay. If you have the means to do so, set up video calls. If not, just call, text or email. You never know, it might do *you* good, too.

Talking about worries can help you work through them, and even overcome them. And there is more you can do, and it is worth sharing the methods with your staff as well...

## Combat coronavirus anxiety

First, accept that you are worried. It is completely natural at a time like this.

In fact, some experts even suggest setting aside time each day to *allow* yourself to worry. By letting your thoughts run wild for around half an hour, it helps to get the worry out of your system, so you feel better for the rest of the day.

You could try meditation and practice mindfulness, which is paying attention to the present moment and, according to the NHS, “can improve your mental wellbeing.”

Meanwhile, limit the amount of news you take in. Rather than watching and reading rolling news coverage, try just a daily roundup. Avoiding the news can be tough, especially as you need to stay informed about anything that affects you, your staff and your business.

But it is better to focus on the things you *can* control.



# TIPS FOR SUPPORTING EMPLOYEE WELLBEING WHILST THEY WORK FROM HOME

## 1. BE FLEXIBLE AND COMPASSIONATE

These are unique and extraordinary times which will be challenging for all of us in different ways. Examples such as having children who would ordinarily be at school or elderly relatives who require assistance will add to the stresses and strains of everyday life. Encouraging flexible working hours and paying extra attention to workload management will help people balance their 'work' and 'home' lives.

## 2. ENCOURAGE BEST PRACTICE FOR STAFF WORKING FROM HOME

Not everyone will be used to remote working. Simple things like properly setting up a workspace that is separate from 'home' space, taking regular screen breaks, and clearing away at the end of the day can help people switch off their 'work mode' and decompress. Exercise, eating well, and practicing self-care can also have a big impact on mental and physical wellbeing.

## 3. CONNECT AUTHENTICALLY

Remember that with most of us working remotely, there is less room to bump into each other, chat organically, or discuss concerns we might have. Arranging more informal sessions such as a remote team coffee every morning can help teams stay connected and reduce feelings of isolation. These activities can even include any staff who may have been furloughed.

## 4. MAKE TIME FOR SUPPORTIVE CONVERSATIONS

We must also think about ways to adapt giving support for people who may be struggling with their mental health in a remote setting. Start by applying the same principles of having a supportive conversation as you would in person – set enough time aside, minimise distractions around you, and give the person your full focus by turning off your notifications and other devices. This applies whether you are a Mental Health First Aider or just someone who wants to ensure they are supporting colleagues effectively during this period.

## 5. DON'T POUR FROM AN EMPTY CUP

When supporting your staff's wellbeing it is important to remember to prioritise your own wellbeing. This will give you the best possible chance of providing effective support. Consider the support measures you have around you, whether that is your family, friends, a peer support network, or Mental Health First Aiders, and encourage others to do the same.



TALK & LISTEN,  
BE THERE,  
FEEL CONNECTED



DO WHAT YOU CAN,  
ENJOY WHAT YOU DO,  
MOVE YOUR MOOD



REMEMBER  
THE SIMPLE  
THINGS THAT  
GIVE YOU JOY



EMBRACE NEW  
EXPERIENCES,  
SEE OPPORTUNITIES,  
SURPRISE YOURSELF



Your time,  
your words,  
your presence

# AGA E-LEARNING COURSES

Whether you are looking to improve your own knowledge or provide training to employees, our E-Learning courses will guide you through the regulations, your legal duties, identifying hazards in your workplace and suitable control measures. Each course is followed by a short test to clarify your understanding regarding that topic, upon which after completion, you will be issued a certificate.

Each course costs £15+vat unless otherwise stated. The courses we currently offer training in are:

- Asbestos Awareness \*Course cost is £20+vat\*
- Abrasive Wheels
- Basic First Aid
- COSHH
- Display Screen Equipment (DSE)
- Falls Prevention – Working at height
- Fire Safety
- Fire Warden \*Course cost is £20+vat\*
- Health and Safety Level 2 \*Course cost is £20+vat\*
- Legionella Awareness
- Local Exhaust Ventilation (LEV)
- Lone and Remote Workers (Personal Security)
- Manual Handling
- Office Safety
- Risk Assessment
- Slips and Trips
- The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations (Overview)



For more information or to book our courses visit [www.aga-ltd.co.uk/e-learning-courses](http://www.aga-ltd.co.uk/e-learning-courses).



Prepared By:

Andrew Goddard Associates Limited  
Avon House  
82 Wellington Street  
Thame  
Oxfordshire  
OX9 3BN

Tel: 03300 886 585  
Email: [info@aga-ltd.co.uk](mailto:info@aga-ltd.co.uk)  
Web: [www.aga-ltd.co.uk](http://www.aga-ltd.co.uk)

