

22 April 2020

# Briefing Note

CECA Scotland Member Briefing:

## COVID-19 - CECA SCOTLAND UPDATE

### Introduction

CECA Scotland will be producing regular updates to keep member companies updated on new developments relating to the Covid-19 coronavirus and its impact on the Scottish civils sector. This briefing will be delivered daily and posted on our website. If you would like further information or to share your experiences about how COVID-19 is impacting on your business, contact Chief Executive Grahame Barn: 07976 199615 or [grahame@cecascotland.co.uk](mailto:grahame@cecascotland.co.uk).

### “Lifeline Support” for Businesses Confirmed

The Scottish Government announced yesterday (21<sup>st</sup> April) that grant funding for SME's in distress and newly self-employed people suffering hardship and SMEs in distress will be available in the coming days. The £100 million fund will be broken into three separate funds and of relevance to the construction sector will be the £34 million Newly Self-Employed Hardship Fund and the £45 million Pivotal Enterprise Resilience Fund.

The SME fund will be managed by the Enterprise Agencies and targeted at vulnerable SME firms who are vital to the local or national economic foundations of Scotland. Grant funding will be open for applications by the end of April, with recipients receiving funds in early May.

### Scottish Government Statement on Economic Restart, 21<sup>st</sup> April

Speaking in the Scottish Parliament yesterday, Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Finance and Fair Work highlighted the work underway to develop sector guidance to give assurance and confidence as closed businesses at some point re-open and restart economic activity when the scientific and health advice supports it.

Ms Hyslop highlighted the work of the Construction Leadership Forum (of which CECA Scotland is a member) in working to address the wider issues needed to get the industry started again following lockdown and emphasised the Government's commitment to infrastructure investment, saying “Public sector spending on infrastructure accounts for around 50% of all construction activity across Scotland, so our infrastructure investment will play a vital role in how we reset, restart and recover the economy”. Read her full statement [here](#).

### Construction Scotland/Scottish Government Leadership Forum

CECA Scotland participated in the second meeting of the Construction Scotland/ Scottish Government Leadership Forum on 22<sup>nd</sup> April, chaired by Kevin Stewart MSP, Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning, focused on COVID-19 Recovery Planning. The Scottish Government reported that as of 21st April, social distancing was now mandatory in the workplace in Scotland; guidance applicable to the construction industry is unlikely to change until 7th May at the earliest.

Contractors raised concerns over the length of the lockdown period and the financial stress that was being felt by the various contractors and suppliers in the supply chain and urged that the review of the construction guidance, a) provides a clearer definition on what an “essential project” is; b) provides clarity on what “resilience” means; c) defines what “capacity across the system” means and d) takes cognisance of the H&S steps that the industry has taken and broadens the definition of an “essential project”. Contractors also requested that the guidance consider civil engineering “Critical National Infrastructure” where work is done outside and is machine orientated as opposed to labour focussed.

In response to Contractor concern that there was a reduction in the pipeline of work coming through from the public sector (according to the Public Contracts Scotland web site in March 2020 the number of tenders was down by 46% compared to 2019. And 59% down compared to 2018), the Minister informed the meeting that he had written to all Local Authority Chief Executives last week to remind them of the importance of continuing with existing or planned construction procurement. For further details of issues discussed, please refer to CECA Scotland snippet No122.

### Coronavirus Business Support Blog

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy have created the [Coronavirus Business Support Blog](#) to help business get the support they need to help with the impact of coronavirus. The blog contains useful business information and resources, including case studies from businesses who have or will be accessing government support and posts from different people across government and business relating to COVID-19.

### Large Business Loan Interruption Scheme Now Open

The scheme to help large businesses affected by coronavirus (COVID-19) access loans of up to £25 million is now open. [Click here](#) to find out more and submit an application.

For more information please contact Grahame Barn on [grahame@cecascotland.co.uk](mailto:grahame@cecascotland.co.uk)

### Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme Calculator

Following feedback from businesses, HMRC are updating the [online calculator tool](#) this afternoon (22<sup>nd</sup> April), so that it covers more employment circumstances. The update will mean that it can be used to work out what employers can claim for most employees who are paid variable amounts each pay period, as well as those who are paid fixed amounts.

### Best Practice in Implementing Remote Working Webinar

Scottish Enterprise are running a webinar on webinar to share best practice in implementing remote working on 28<sup>th</sup> April, at 2pm. Sign up [here](#).

### CECA Scotland Webinar

Last chance to register for our “*Delivering Low Carbon Civil Engineering Projects for a 2045 Scotland*” Webinar on 30<sup>th</sup> April at 9.30am, delivered in partnership with Zero Waste Scotland and the Supply Chain Sustainability School. For more details and to sign up online, click [here](#).

### Scottish Government Advice

The Scottish Government’s latest COVID-19 advice for businesses can be read here: <https://findbusinesssupport.gov.scot/coronavirus-advice>. For issues not dealt with on the website, call the Scottish Government [Helpline](#) on 0300 303 0660.

**HMRC Tax Helpline:** 0800 024 1222, open 8am-4pm, Monday to Friday.

### UK Government Advice

UK wide guidance, detailing all Scottish and UK Government support for businesses operating here in Scotland can be read [here](#).

For more information please contact Grahame Barn on [grahame@cecascotland.co.uk](mailto:grahame@cecascotland.co.uk)