

29 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 our Chief Executive, Grahame Barn: 07976 199615 or [grahame@cecascotland.co.uk](mailto:grahame@cecascotland.co.uk).

### CICV Forum: Abuse of Key Workers

Following feedback that some key workers, engaged on essential construction projects, are being abused and harassed by the public, the CICV Forum, of which CECA Scotland is a member, has issued a press release, including a statement from Scottish Government Minister, Kevin Stewart MSP, to raise public awareness about essential works and highlight their importance to our daily lives e.g. keeping water supplies clean and broadband running. Read more [here](#).

### Behavioural Science tips for COVID-19 site set up and operation

Bob Cummins of [Sodak Ltd](#) has prepared a guidance note for those in charge of businesses and construction sites that may be operational or re-opening during the COVID-19 health restrictions. Download the guidance [here](#).

### Bounce Back Loan Scheme

CECA Scotland Auditors, Johnson Carmichael, have produced a useful guide to the new UK Government backed Bounce back Loan Scheme, which you can read [here](#).

### HMRC Update on Tax Policy

HM Treasury and HMRC have today (28 April) set out new timelines for tax policy consultations and other work in the light of the current Covid-19 crisis. This includes the current consultation on potential abuse of the Construction Industry Scheme tax system, which had been due to close on 28 May. It has now been held open until 28 August to allow businesses affected by the current crisis more time to respond. Read more [here](#).

### Economic Growth 2019 Q4

Scotland's economy grew by just 0.2% during the fourth quarter of 2019 (Oct-Dec 2019). Output in the construction sector was marginally higher, growing at 0.3%. Full details [here](#).

### Covid-19 Case Studies

The Construction Industry Coronavirus Task Force has published a new [website](#) to showcase industry's response to Covid-19. Case studies are in four categories - building NHS capacity; donating PPE; safeguarding workers; and helping communities.

### FMQs - Nicola Sturgeon response on Construction Restart (28.4.20)

Please see below a transcript from the exchange at FMQ yesterday in the Scottish parliament:

Bruce Crawford (Stirling) (SNP):

At the commencement of the lockdown in Scotland, we rightly took a different approach from that of the rest of the United Kingdom in respect of the construction industry. Major employers in my constituency, such as the Robertson Construction Group and other construction firms, therefore ceased operations. I know that the Scottish Government is thinking very carefully about how best to ease the lockdown restrictions. As part of that consideration, what is the Scottish Government's current thinking with regard to the construction industry?

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon):

We are considering all such matters carefully and will continue to do so, but the current position is unchanged. That position is that, in our view, all but essential construction sites should remain closed to help to save lives and protect the health service. I reiterate our

thanks to the construction workers who are continuing to work on essential projects and to all businesses that continue to act responsibly.

That said, we are very aware that the longer the lockdown continues in its present, very severe form, the greater the impact on industry will be. That is why we are providing unprecedented levels of support. Ministers certainly share the ambition to get businesses back to work as soon as possible, but that must be done with public health and safety as the first priority. To support that, the Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning is chairing meetings of the construction leadership forum, whose work includes the development of safe site operating procedures. As we go through the next process of looking at whether, when and how certain of the restrictions can be eased, the role of construction will form part of those considerations.

### CECA Scotland Webinar: "Ken Yer Bairns"

Bob Cummins of Sodak Ltd will be delivered a unique series of CECA Scotland Webinars, targeted as employees currently balancing working with home schooling and all who wish to gain a greater understanding of "Generation Z". The first seminar is on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> May at 11am. For further details, visit our website [here](#). To book your place, click [here](#).

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

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