



British
Association
of Landscape
Industries

An open letter to members - COVID-19 (coronavirus)

Issued 1st April 2020

Wayne Grills, BALI Chief Executive

Dear member,

I trust that you and your teams are safe and well.

In a previous statement I promised to share more information with you all regarding COVID-19 as and when it became available, in particular, any response received from Government or the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. For five days BALI has been seeking clarity on a number of industry-specific issues related to the coronavirus, including but not limited to, what type(s) of work can continue.

On 30 March, we received a response. I was disappointed to see there was no direct guidance for the landscape industry, but instead, a standard reply that mirrored guidance already issued by Government.

The response I received, in full;

Dear Wayne

Thank you for your enquiry regarding essential businesses – Covid-19. The Government has issued the following Going to work guidance, which sets out which businesses must close, and states ‘Other businesses can remain open and their employees can travel to work, provided they cannot work from home’:

[gov.uk/government/publications/full-guidance-on-staying-at-home-and-away-from-others/full-guidance-on-staying-at-home-and-away-from-others](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/full-guidance-on-staying-at-home-and-away-from-others/full-guidance-on-staying-at-home-and-away-from-others)

[gov.uk/government/publications/further-businesses-and-premises-to-close/further-businesses-and-premises-to-close-guidance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/further-businesses-and-premises-to-close/further-businesses-and-premises-to-close-guidance)

Following the advice issued, we can only advise the Government has placed no restrictions on landscaping works continuing in England, Wales and Northern Ireland providing works can be carried out in accordance with Public Health England's (PHE) guidelines.

It is understandable that many companies have chosen to continue operating, particularly as the guidance does not prevent them from doing so and many of these services are classed as priority infrastructure or 'front-line'.

If you are still trading, I urge you to follow PHE advice, continue to maintain the highest health & safety standards and implement new measures to protect yourself and your workforce from the virus, including social distancing. If you're able to work from home and complete some tasks in preparation for your business' re-opening, do so, as this is the best solution to keep the business operating.

In Scotland, it's a different story. The majority of sites have already closed, and Ministers have advised businesses to cease works and down tools, unless the landscaping is essentially required for front-line services, such as hospitals. Many members who work across borders are finding this mixed messaging difficult to manage. I have already reached out to my contact in Holyrood in Scotland for clarity and am awaiting a reply.

Our recommendation is, where you can close, to close, for the safety of yourself, your employees and those at home. With the help of the Government's financial support packages, if you are able to furlough staff and temporarily cease activity, this is the right thing to do. By doing so, you will help public services cope with the pandemic, including the NHS and police force, and protect our most vulnerable. This is absolutely critical; stay home, save lives.

In the meantime, I will continue to push the government for more comprehensive answers to our questions and the current and future impacts on our industry. The team at Landscape House will continue to serve all members, including those that have temporarily closed or for those out in the field, with supporting documents, templates and online events, with further details on what has been published so far, including the links through, below.

END

The following documents are available for BALI members only and can be found on the BALI COVID-19 portal [here](#). You will need to log in using your BALI website username and password to access.

- Work Authorisation Letter Template
- BALI RAMS-051 Rev O Coronavirus
- Furlough Employer to Employee Letter Template
- BALI Furloughed Worker Legal Guidance
- BALI Business Impact Survey Results

Useful links:

- [BALI Landscape Site Operating Procedures - Protecting your Workforce](#)
- [COVID-19 Guidance for the Self-Employed](#)
- [BALI COVID-19 FAQ \(updated 30/03/20\)](#)
- [BALI COVID-19 Guide to Apprenticeships](#)
- [LISS/CSCS COVID-19 Impact on Applications](#)
- [Claim back wages with the Government Job Retention Scheme](#)
- [BALI Webinars](#)
- [BALI Closed Members-Only Facebook Group](#)
- [Perennial Support and Advice](#)
- [Government Guidance](#)
- [Public Health England Guidance](#)