

UK employee communication



Today we face a national crisis which, just months ago, no one saw coming. No one knows how long it will last, how bad it could get. Everyone is frightened and worried.

Shining like a beacon in this darkness, our NHS doctors and nurses are doing heroic work. Their selflessness, putting themselves at risk to care for us, will not be forgotten. As with the teachers, keeping schools open for parents who are key workers; the emergency services, delivery drivers - all those keeping us safe, supermarkets open, vital goods flowing.

Suddenly, we see what makes our world work: how very much we rely on these people.

But behind them stands another silent army - **you**. The engineers, technicians, craftsmen, all of our industry professionals, providing the secure platform that lets everyone do their jobs, the bedrock we are all relying on to manage our way - personally, professionally - through this crisis.

Building new power stations, hospitals, transport and educational facilities, upgrading roads, working with our customers to make sure roads and rail run smoothly for medical supplies, fuel, food and other freight. Keeping vital power stations, water and gas facilities, the internet running - even public spaces open, so everyone has somewhere to escape lockdown. Our daily life relies on this intricate web working like clockwork. **Very few industries have our impact, unseen and almost taken for granted.**

That's why so many of you have been designated 'key workers'. This - and the critical fact that our whole supply chain must be supported, for the recovery - is why the UK Government has allowed the construction and infrastructure industry to continue operating, not just those designated as key workers, provided it follows Public Health England and industry requirements.

You, too, are heroes in this crisis - doing a vital job that is least visible when it is done right. **Never has it been more important to continue to do it - and do it well.**

I know this week we have come under pressure from public or media opinion and I am grateful not just for your hard work, but your resilience, commitment and professionalism in the face of adversity, when many of you are yourselves feeling anxious. There is no doubt that our job - across the sector - is made harder when trucks delivering materials are turned back, or our workers are incorrectly told to go home. It makes us feel we are doing the wrong thing; but we are not. The solution is not to give up, but to sort these issues out. **I cannot emphasise enough that nothing is more important than your health, safety and wellbeing.** If you cannot travel to work safely around your usual routine, we will make changes so you can. If you cannot do your work without observing appropriate social distancing, and where possible the two metre rule, then you must stop and we will fix it - and if we can't, the site will close: it is as simple as that. **Our priority has to be to protect health and stem the tide of COVID-19.**

But remember - in that fight, across all sectors and local communities, you are keeping the lights on and the wheels turning. What you do goes beyond underpinning daily life: it is the backbone of our economy, and will be a key part of our future. For, once the COVID-19 crisis is finally over, our industry will be central to helping rebuild prosperity for all.

I am not sure that life will ever quite "go back to normal", as if COVID-19 never happened. I believe none of us will ever forget it, and I hope each of you will look back with pride at the part you played to overcome it. Thank you for everything that you have done and continue to do.

Leo Quinn
Balfour Beatty Group Chief Executive

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