

28.04.2020

**Update on the Openreach approach to new sites during the Covid-19 pandemic**

Dear Developer Partner,

Firstly, I hope that you are well and managing to cope with the many challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. Because many of you have announced recommencement of construction activities, I wanted to update you on the Openreach approach to working on new sites.

The Openreach network is critical to maintaining the fabric of UK society – connecting people has never been more important – so for now, we're prioritising essential work.

Following the start of the lockdown, Openreach previously advised that we would be adjusting our approach to new sites. This meant scaling back the amount of onsite work carried out in a proactive manner whilst continuing to proactively build the offsite spine network. This was to safeguard both our work force and yours. This approach aligned with the position most of you took to quickly limit or stop construction activity.

However, with the news that a high number of developers are now restarting sites and construction again, we're revising our approach with immediate effect. Please note that our Openreach Covid-19 working practices are aligned with the latest guidance from government and Public Health Bodies, the CLC (Construction Leadership Council), Construction Scotland and industry bodies.

- We'll continue to proactively build the spine fibre cable (the main cable which links your site back to our network) – to sites and will leave it at the boundary of your site ready for onsite build at a later stage. All this work is carried out within the public highway where our engineers can observe social distance guidelines.
- We'll return to a fully proactive onsite build approach with the target that all plots are connected to our network ahead of customer occupancy. This includes all work both outside and inside the plot where the site is open, or we have safe access. Please see the associated Openreach brief for our engineers which outlines social distancing and hygiene measures whilst working on a new site.
- We're adding an additional requirement for work within MDU (Multi Dwelling Unit) type build i.e. flats/apartments. This is because of the increased risk of working in an internal environment. For MDU sites, we will seek to arrange locally at site level for our Openreach engineers to be granted sole access for the floor we are working on or the building area. Where this is not possible, we will require a minimum safe working zone for our engineers. If neither sole access nor a working zone is possible, Openreach will not be able to carry out some or all of the work at that time.
- If for any reason we are unable to connect the plot ahead of new homeowner occupancy, any work which subsequently requires Openreach to enter the plot will require additional safeguards. Before entering an occupied plot, our engineers will ask the homeowner the following questions to decide if it is safe to carry out the work:
  1. Have you or anyone else living here been diagnosed with COVID-19 or been asked to self-isolate?
  2. Do you or anyone else here have flu-like symptoms?
  3. Have you or anyone else living here received an NHS letter confirming you're classified as an extremely vulnerable person and should stay inside (known as shielding) for 12 weeks

- Our office-based teams who deal with the registrations of brand-new sites, or with planning/escalation support, continue to work from home. Therefore, this means normal service with no disruptions in these key areas.

Please note that as a national supplier, who works with thousands of house builders, Openreach is unable to proactively update or sign any Covid-19 working practices or safety RAMs presented to us at an individual developer-by-developer level. This includes any ad-hoc requirements for online training for our engineers. Instead, we will refer you back to our attached guidance.

Locally at site level, our FBCs (Field Based Co-ordinators) will be visiting to check the Covid-19 safety practices ahead of us sending out any of our engineering build teams. Our FBC will then signoff with the respective site agent that Openreach can safely start attending site. At a site level, Openreach will present your site manager with our Covid-19 safety brief and, as per usual, participate in any site induction as required.

As you appreciate, the Covid-19 pandemic is fast-moving and ever-changing. Please be reassured that Openreach will continue to closely monitor the guidance available from both government and the statutory health bodies in UK nations, the CLC, Construction Scotland and the leading industry bodies to ensure our own working practices remain aligned.

Please review the attached Openreach Covid-19 safety brief. If you have any concerns, please raise this with your Developer Relations Manager as soon as practically possible.

For now we are continuing with the following approach for our Network Rearrangement programme:

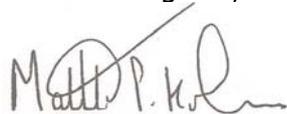
- We're limiting physical site meetings to be by exception only and, when held, will follow social distancing protocols (this will include critical sites and customers.)
- To limit face to face interactions, a significant amount of our work will be carried out remotely, including virtual meetings.
- Our Network Rearrangement Engineers have been moved from office to home working.
- We'll prioritise our field delivery around the most critical or vulnerable sites.

We will continue to assess the situation all the time regarding government guidelines, and we'll keep you abreast of things every step of the way. We know that what Openreach does is vital and connecting people has never been more important. We're also keeping our website up to date with related announcements and advice during the Covid-19 pandemic. Please see [openreach.com/covid-19-coronavirus](https://openreach.com/covid-19-coronavirus).

As ever, if you need to speak to us, we're always here. Just contact your Openreach Developer Relations Manager in the first instance and if they're unavailable for any reason, please e-mail Andy Neilson [aneilson@openreach.co.uk](mailto:aneilson@openreach.co.uk) for further assistance.

Thank you for your understanding during this unprecedented time.

With kind regards,



Matthew Kirkman

**Director, Infrastructure Solutions**