

27 March 2020

Dear Developer Members of Homes for Scotland,

Firstly, I hope that you are well and managing to cope with the many challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the UK and Devolved Governments announced strict new curbs on life in the UK to tackle the spread of coronavirus, I wanted to write to you in connection with the services we provide.

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

That means we're focussing on the repair and maintenance of connections that support critical national infrastructure, essential public services, vulnerable customers and those without service. We've also advised our engineers to avoid entering customer premises.

New network build will be restricted to low risk locations as the safety of our people, our customers and the public comes first. In addition to this, we are aware that a high number of developers have already scaled back or stopped entirely construction activity. Therefore, in step with all of the above, we're introducing the following approach to delivering Full Fibre broadband to new sites with immediate effect:

- 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 of this work is carried out within the public highway where our engineers can observe the Social Distance guidelines laid out by Public Health bodies.
- To safeguard both our workforce and yours, we'll stop working onsite to proactively connect individual plots. Instead, we'll only connect plots once people have moved in. At this point, we'll either be notified directly by the new home owner themselves or via a Service Provider. At that time, we'll call off the plot and all associated onsite fibre equipment to provide service. During this difficult period we want to minimise impact on new home owners so it's key we continue to work closely together to ensure nobody moving into a new homes is without a connection. At these uncertain times it's more important than ever that we maintain our close working relationship with you. Together we'll do the right thing to ensure service is delivered to those who need it whilst keeping people safe. Please be reassured that any onsite work we carry out will adhere to social distancing guidelines.
- Our Field Based Coordinators will continue to support sites as normal, working remotely as much as possible, and not entering plots. We'll prioritise our field delivery
- Our office based teams who deal with registrations of brand new sites, or with escalation support, have moved to home working. This means normal service for registering brand new sites or needing help with escalations.

During this time, we'll ensure new home owners are connected as a matter of priority and we encourage developers who are continuing to build, to complete the 'Developer Self Install' of our ONT. This makes the subsequent reactive connection journey much simpler and smoother.

We'll return to a fully proactive build approach as soon as we can, and have also seen many developers stop building, hence our approach aligns.

Whilst writing to you, I also wanted to outline the current operation of our Network Rearrangement program.

- We're limiting physical site meetings to be by exception only, and when held, will follow social distancing protocol. (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.

As ever, if you need to speak to us we're always happy to help. Just contact your Openreach new sites relationship manager in the first instance and if they're unavailable for any reason, please email Andy Neilson aneilson@openreach.co.uk for further assistance.

We'll stay in touch over the coming weeks, as we're committed to working with you to help as many of your new home owners benefit from a gigabit capable infrastructure so we'll share our future plans and support your developments as far as we can. We're reassessing the current situation all the time to see if we can do anything safely, and if we can, we will. Our engineering work will resume as soon possible via 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, please see openreach.com/covid-19-coronavirus.

Thank you for your understanding during this unprecedented time.

With kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matthew Kirkman', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Matthew Kirkman
Director, Infrastructure Solutions