**Restrictions on Movement: Clarification for data centres**

**Misinterpretation of government guidance is creating confusion among operators about travel to work and documentation.**

**Note: the situation is fluid and may change at short notice. We will issue regular updates but check the government websites if in doubt.**

**What documentation do I need to travel to work?**

In theory you need none as of 31 March 2020. Government has confirmed that no formal ID requirements have been imposed and that they do not plan to introduce authorisation letters at the moment. However there is clearly confusion among those responsible for policing our movements, not all of whom seem to have familiarised themselves with government guidance. In practice, therefore, you should carry a letter from your employer stating that you cannot work from home, plus ID. See below for a list of suggested inclusions for this letter for operators.

**Are people being stopped from going to work? Why?**

While we have no reports of data centre staff being turned back, although many have been stopped and questioned, there are plenty of substantiated reports in other sectors. It looks as though in some cases police are confusing personal and business activity. Personal movements are restricted to shopping for basic necessities, exercise, access to health services or work. Business movements are not restricted to essential activity. People are allowed to travel to work but only if they cannot work from home and if they and their household are symptom-free and not self-isolating. Employers are strongly urged to facilitate home working wherever possible and to ensure social distancing measures are applied in the workspace. The Government has already provided a list of the [types of business that must close](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/further-businesses-and-premises-to-close?utm_source=66290dff-baf0-4323-adfd-2147dd67a3e3&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate) on the basis of the need for social distancing.

This is not a grey area: it is written in black and white. This issue is that the guidance is being misinterpreted. See these government web pages:

**Corona Virus FAQs for business**: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do>

Here are two useful extracts from that guidance, as of 31 March 2020:

## ***5. I’m not a critical worker and I can’t work from home. What should I do?***

*If you cannot work from home then you can still travel to work. This is consistent with the Chief Medical Officer’s advice.*

[*Critical workers*](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision)*are those who can still take their children to school or childcare. This critical worker definition does not affect whether or not you can travel to work – if you are not a critical worker, you may still travel to work provided you cannot work from home.*

*Anyone who has symptoms or is in a household where someone has symptoms should not go to work and should self-isolate.*

## ***6. How can I find out if my work is essential or not?***

*The government is not saying only people doing “essential” work can go to work. Anyone who cannot work from home can still go to work.*

*Separately, there is a*[*list of critical workers*](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision)*who can still take their children to school or childcare. Provision has been prioritised for these workers.*

*Every worker – whether critical or not – should work from home if they can but may otherwise travel to work.*

*We have also asked certain businesses where people gather, such as pubs and most shops, to close.*[*Separate guidance*](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/further-businesses-and-premises-to-close/further-businesses-and-premises-to-close-guidance)*has been published on this.*

**What should operators and contractors include in their letters for employees?**

Operators have already issued their own letters of authority to staff and key contractors. Those who haven’t should do so because people are already being stopped and questioned. It makes sense to include the kind of information that is likely to be needed in the event of a tighter lockdown, such as:

* Full company header
* Contact details in case confirmation is needed
* A statement saying that they cannot perform their duties from home
* A sentence saying that you provide **data infrastructure** and as such your staff are critical and included on the government list of key workers
* Something to link the person holding the letter of authority to their ID, such as name or NI number

Staff are advised to carry government issued ID, especially if their corporate pass is blank.

Please do report any issues you encounter regarding restrictions on movement.

And do get in touch if you have further questions.