

Covid-19 Joint Statement Welsh HAUC and Welsh Government, No 5
(this statement updates and supersedes Statement No 2)
Date Friday 5th June 2020

Dear Colleagues,

The Government's advice in Wales has been updated and new guidance has been published, including a request for the construction sector to return to work where it is possible and safe to do so. The UK Government's guidance can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/construction-and-other-outdoor-work> (this is issued by UK Government with input from Welsh Government)

Welsh Government's guidance can be found here:

<https://gov.wales/workplace-guidance-employers-and-employees-covid19>
<https://gov.wales/taking-all-reasonable-measures-maintain-physical-distancing-workplace>

Following this recent update about controlling the spread of the Covid-19 virus as the country moves slowly back to a 'new normal', it is clear that we remain and will continue to operate in unprecedented times. The need to be agile in our approach to work and our respective street activities is still key. As the recovery is underway, it is a good time to start to deal with those defects previously set aside as low priority. Remember though, the safety of both the work force and public is paramount.

Whilst practitioners are under pressure to resume their normal operational processes, a gradual catch-up period will be needed and we will all need to be reasonable and flexible in managing this transition.

It is therefore recommended that;

- All defects assessed as "Causing Danger" - business as usual as per the Inspections CoP where possible. Please note in some cases, normal landlines used for the logged phone call will not be working. Therefore, log these on your EToN system as normal ensuring photographic evidence of the defect is attached or e-mailed and utilise existing utility/highway authority contact lists as appropriate. The defect can then be discussed over the phone rather than a joint site meeting (JSM), and the shortcomings noted on the failed inspection. It is vital that the works promoter acknowledges acceptance or rejection of the defect.
- All defects assessed as "Non-Dangerous" - serve via EToN as normal BUT state that "NO JSM is needed. However, where possible, rectifications should begin to take place. Utilities should continue to acknowledge and provide feedback upon agreeing the defect and monitor its condition and, if deterioration occurs, contact the highway authority to advise of any essential remedial works.

- Those non-dangerous defects previously set aside should now, where possible and safe to do so, be rectified, with of course the associated notice.

Communication and agreement with the highway authority is essential in tackling the outstanding defects during this period, in an orderly and proportionate manner. We should also be aware that not all aggregate and other facilities may have fully reopened. Consequently, alternative but suitable re-instatement materials may be required as like-for-like material matching remains temporarily impractical. In these circumstances, we suggest an interim registration is submitted stating "interim due to covid19 plant shutdowns" and that the need for a future site meeting is noted, to decide if remedial works are necessary or if the alternative material used is fit for purpose and can remain in-situ.

SROH considerations.

Procurement of both bound and unbound material may temporarily remain an issue and this is likely to mean that we will see an increase in interim materials. It will be difficult for blanket agreements to be implemented as supplies will vary region by region. What is important is communication and coming to a common-sense view where correct material cannot be sourced. Texture depth and skid resistance are still as important in making such considerations. If available, for example, HRA can be used in most carriageway scenarios other than SMA, this is something that could be relaxed as the material used is of a higher quality than that expected within the SROH. If no 6mm AC is available for footways then other materials should be agreed, as an interim or permanent solution, to be decided on a case by case basis.

Social Distancing

It is important that all operatives follow Public Health Wales' guidelines when working on site and that their employers continue to ensure that the advice is followed. This is not only in the best interest of the operatives but also the general public.

Reasonable consideration should also be given to how pedestrians can walk past sites and observe the social distancing rules.