



Ministry
of Defence

SIR STEPHEN LOVEGROVE, KCB
PERMANENT SECRETARY

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
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27 March 2020

Chief Executives
Sent electronically

Dear Chief Executives,

COVID-19 GUIDANCE

On Monday, in his national address, the Prime Minister set out new measures to tackle the Coronavirus emergency. The full details can be found on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

As the Prime Minister set out, we and our families should stay at home, except to shop for necessities, to manage our own or others' medical needs, to take exercise once a day and to travel to and from work where we cannot work from home. By adopting these measures, we can limit transmission and reduce pressure on the NHS and other vital public services.

I thought it important to explain how I am applying these principles across the Ministry of Defence, and how I would expect them to apply to Defence contractors, given your vital role in supporting our critical outputs. I would appreciate you cascading these messages throughout your organisations, and hope that this guidance goes some way towards giving employees clarity during these otherwise uncertain times.

It is vital that critical Defence operations and programmes, on which our nation relies, continue uninterrupted. Like the Armed Forces and Defence civil servants, many of your employees can and should work from home. Wherever that is possible, we must work together to enable it. But, again like the Armed Forces and Defence civil servants, many of your employees cannot work from home if we are to maintain the vital activities to which we are all committed. Where that is the case, we must work together to ensure they are able to follow government guidelines, including where possible maintaining a two-metre distance from others and washing their hands with soap and water often for at least twenty seconds. We recognise that there will be some disruption to schedules and we will

work at a project level to understand the impact and to be pragmatic. But it is critical that on our key programmes and support, such as the essential maintenance of submarines for sustaining the Continuous At Sea Deterrent, we continue to support the Armed Forces and the defence of the nation.

I appreciate what difficult times these are for us all, and the difficult judgement calls you as senior executives are required to make in these circumstances. But I would like to reiterate that our work is of national importance and I hope we can continue to work together to maintain critical outputs throughout this crisis.

Finally, some Defence contractors will also qualify as key workers, entitled to send their children to school. Those that must go into the workplace to deliver defence outputs should be classed as key workers, and we will provide support where it is needed. Schools have been given guidance on how to ensure the children in their care minimise the risk of transmission. Similar guidance is being issued to employers to enable those who cannot always work from home to operate safely in the workplace and in transit, for example by varying working patterns to avoid the rush hours; and again we will provide support where needed.

I hugely value the dedication of the defence industry and am grateful that where possible industry is continuing to deliver defence outputs. Thank you for all that you are doing during these difficult times.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Stephen Lovegrove". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

STEPHEN LOVEGROVE