

Robert Jenrick MP
Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
2 Marsham St
London
SW1P 4DF

24 March 2020

Dear Secretary of State,

I am writing on behalf of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists to seek urgent clarity on the government advice issued by the Prime Minister on 23 March 2020. This advice requires people to stay at home, only to go outside for food, health reasons, or essential work. We are asking you to publish specific guidance on whether construction-related work is considered essential and for advice as to whether companies in our sector should continue to work on site.

Our members are understandably confused and concerned this morning, as different companies interpret the official guidance differently. Many have taken a cautious approach, and have closed sites, at least for the time being. Others are continuing to work.

In the last few days we have been collecting evidence from members as to whether Public Health England advice on social distancing guidance is being effectively followed on some construction sites. We will be doing everything we can to reinforce to our members the need to maintain a safe working environment in line with Government advice, and to remind them of their existing responsibility not to work in conditions they consider unsafe. We would welcome assurances that archaeological companies working on construction sites will not be held liable if they decide that they cannot continue to work safely.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,



Rob Lennox

BSc (Econ) MA PhD ACIfA MCIPR

Senior Advocacy Coordinator, CIfA

About the institute:

The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) is the leading professional body representing archaeologists working in the UK and overseas. We promote high professional standards and strong ethics in archaeological practice, to maximise the benefits that archaeologists bring to society. CIfA has over 3800 members who study and care for the past through its physical remains. These remains whether built, buried, on land or underwater, extraordinary or everyday, magnificent or mundane all contribute to our historic environment. The resources of the historic environment, like those of the natural environment, are for the benefit of everyone in society, today and in the future, and need to be treated with care and expertise.