

Continuing to work safely during COVID-19

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As governments across the United Kingdom and Ireland begin to unveil roadmaps for easing lockdown restrictions, the energy network companies have reaffirmed their commitments to keeping colleagues and customers safe.

Over 36,000 people work in energy networks companies. Now more than ever, millions of people are relying on those people to keep the energy flowing to our homes and vital community services like hospitals, care homes and supermarkets.

From the outset of COVID-19, energy network companies have developed and adopted safe working practices in consultation with colleagues, contractors and trades unions to keep staff and customers safe.

As lockdown restrictions begin to ease, the companies have reaffirmed their commitment to the health and wellbeing of colleagues and customers.

- New COVID-19 risk assessments are being completed in consultation with trade union health and safety representatives and will be shared with our staff, contractors and electricity industry colleagues, demonstrating transparency and ensuring they are easily accessible
- Where colleagues can work from home they will continue to do so. However, companies are also using this time to suitably plan for how colleagues can safely come back into offices when the time is right
- Companies are identifying the best ways of communicating and supporting home working colleagues to ensure their individual needs are being met and they are able to maintain a safe and healthy lifestyle
- Where colleagues need to leave their homes to keep the country's energy flowing, social distancing rules apply. This is being maintained through, for example, the use of physical barriers, a one person per vehicle rule whenever possible and creating workplace shift patterns or fixed teams to minimise the number of people in contact with one another
- Work is being planned to ensure the number of colleagues required to work at project and construction sites is minimised while ensuring it is safe to do so

David Smith, Chief Executive of Energy Networks Association, said:

“The energy networks have truly put colleagues and customers at the heart of their COVID-19 plans from the outset. Arguably, the most challenging times lie ahead as the country gradually eases lockdown measures, to varying degrees and in differing timescales. Continuing to work with our colleagues directly and through their trades unions and put them and customers first will be paramount to getting this right.”

Sue Ferns, Senior Deputy General Secretary of Prospect stated:

“Ensuring the health and safety of colleagues is key to a successful transition that maintains service to customers. Consistent and constructive engagement at company and national level has ensured that energy network companies have been able to complete essential work with high standards of health and safety. We must continue this throughout the transition to new normal as well as making sure that the same high standards are followed by all contractors and suppliers. Companies, customers and trade unions have a shared interest in ensuring a safe, resilient and reliable network.”

