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Local Authority Chief Executives

cc Building Standards Managers

15 June 2020

## CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY RESTART IN THE PERIOD AFFECTED BY COVID-19

The First Minister last week announced the intention to allow the construction industry to progress to Phase 2 of its restart model. This will enable work on construction sites to resume as long as appropriate measures are in place and only if physical distancing is maintained, what is termed a 'soft start'. Any work on site should only be undertaken in accordance with Scottish Government advice and guidance from industry principally from Construction Scotland. The guidance can be found in the following links:

- Scottish Government: Coronavirus (COVID-19): construction sector guidance  
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-construction-sector-guidance/>
- Construction Scotland:  
<https://www.cs-ic.org/innovationcentre/innovation-support/i-con-covid-19-support/the-i-con-knowledge-hub/industry-guidance/>
- <https://www.cs-ic.org/media/4046/cs-re-start-model-commentary-28-05-20-2.pdf>.

I am aware from discussion with building standards managers that there has recently been an increased demand for site inspection work and it is likely that this demand will increase further as construction activity picks up.

Through the Building Standards Resilience Liaison Group we have connected Local Authority Building Standards Scotland with Construction Scotland on the guidance and its application. Indeed local authorities will have a role in helping to disseminate that guidance to contractors working on live sites in your area. I understand that building standards verifiers are updating their site inspection protocols and risks assessments to take account of the physical distancing and hygiene measures required. I also understand that LABSS are coordinating sharing of approaches and experience and I would encourage you to take part fully in that activity.

I would like to draw your attention again to the guidance letters on building standards that the Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning has sent since the lockdown period commenced and which cover the period affected by COVID-19. In particular, guidance on

the use of alternative evidence and remote inspections, which can be found in the following link:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-letter-from-the-planning-minister-about-guidance-on-the-verification-of-building-work/>

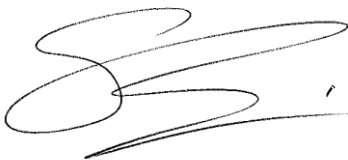
We would expect local authorities to use the options of remote inspection and/or alternative evidence first where it is appropriate as these routes can help to provide additional capacity as well as reducing health risks. Physical site inspections should be considered where other options are not available or where project risks dictate that they are necessary. We have tried within the guidance to define the scope of where these measures are appropriate.

In addition, the more that certifiers of construction can be involved, there is the potential to reduce site inspection needs in the areas of warrantable work that can be certified. Certification scheme providers have indicated that there is capacity amongst certifiers in the electrical, and the plumbing and drainage schemes.

I would stress that you will need to work with applicants so that they understand the options and provide the necessary support.

Finally I would like to thank everyone in your building standards teams for working with us constructively over the past few months. I would be pleased to discuss any matters of concern as we move forward and look forward to continuing to work in partnership.

Yours sincerely



**STEPHEN GARVIN**  
Head of Building Standards Division