

# New skills for Peter during covid-19

News story

One of the few people to continue working in the Warrington Offices through the coronavirus pandemic is OneFM security officer Peter Houghton.



Peter, taking on new tasks during the pandemic

Peter, a familiar face in Hinton House at Warrington having worked on the loading area checking deliveries to the building for the past 15 years, is now learning new skills during the pandemic.

He said:

When we announced the reduction in numbers allowed into the building in March, I was given a different role of patrolling the buildings and more recently checking passes at one of our turnstiles as we slowly re-introduce staff into Hinton and Allday House.

Even though the building, that can normally house about 2,000 people, was virtually empty in late March and April apart from security, cleaners and occasional visitors, it didn't feel strange because it's just like working weekends when it's also very quiet.

I've enjoyed taking on new tasks and learning new skills such as using a work's computer as my job on the loading bay involves paperwork. However, guidance on computer use has probably not been as straight forward as normal given social distancing rules.

I've found that staff coming back into work have fully respected and followed the new instructions that relate to the building and their work area. The noticeable change in Hinton for me is there's no canteen, and the booth areas are not available for use.

We are slowly re-introducing more people into the building but it's

still very quiet, and I do wonder what will happen further down the line with certain activities – such as deliveries to the loading bay...

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## [M42 Junction 6 Improvement granted development consent](#)

Development consent has been given for improvements to junction 6 of the M42 to allow better movement of traffic on and off the A45, supporting access to Birmingham Airport and preparing capacity for the new HS2 station.

The key components of the scheme include:

- A new dual carriageway link between the Clock Interchange and a new junction on the M42 north of the Solihull Road allowing traffic travelling northbound to exit the M42 and traffic travelling southbound to join the M42.
- The new dual carriageway would be to the west of Bickenhill and would generally be below ground level and pass beneath the B4438 (Catherine de Barnes Lane), at both the north west and south west corners of Bickenhill.
- Improvements will be made to the Clock Interchange and the A45 between the Clock Interchange and the M42, including potential improvements to non-motorised user routes.
- Free flow links will be provided around the north west and the north east of the M42 junction 6.
- Improvements will also be included on the south east side of the M42 junction 6, the A45 westbound (east of the M42 junction 6) and the M42 junction 6 southbound slip roads to improve the performance around this quadrant of the junction.

The application was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for consideration by Highways England on the 02 January 2019 and accepted for examination on 30 January 2019. Following an examination during which the public, statutory consultees and interested parties were given the opportunity to give evidence to the Examining Authority, a recommendation was made to the Secretary of State on 21 February 2020.

The Planning Inspectorate's Chief Executive, Sarah Richards said:

"This is the 85th nationally significant infrastructure project to have been examined and decided within the timescales laid down in the Planning Act

2008. The Planning Inspectorate is committed to giving local communities the opportunity of being involved in the examination of projects that may affect them. Local people, the local authority and other interested parties were able to participate in a 6-month long examination. The Examining Authority listened and gave full consideration to local views before making their recommendation.”

Highways England senior project manager, Jonathan Pizzey said: “We’re delighted to receive the Secretary of State’s decision, which represents a major step forward in developing a scheme to unlock congestion and promote economic growth in the West Midlands.

“The M42 is an important strategic route. Upgrading junction 6 will increase capacity, enhance safety and support planned development, improving access to HS2, the National Exhibition Centre (NEC), Birmingham Airport and future developments such as UK Central Solihull.”

The decision, the recommendation made by the Examining Authority to the Secretary of State and the evidence considered by the Examining Authority in reaching its recommendation is publicly available on the [National Infrastructure Planning website](#).

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Journalists wanting further information should contact the Planning Inspectorate Press Office, on: 0303 444 5004 or 0303 444 5005 or email: [Press.office@planninginspectorate.gov.uk](mailto:Press.office@planninginspectorate.gov.uk)

Background information

Following the granting of planning consent, main construction work on the M42 junction 6 scheme is scheduled to start later this year.

The scheme will see a new 2.4km dual carriageway link road – aligned to the west of Bickenhill – between the A45 Clock Interchange and a new junction on the M42 south of junction 6 located north of Solihull Road.

Further information and updates will be available at the web page: <https://highwaysengland.co.uk/projects/m42-junction-6-improvement/>

Notes to editors:

The Planning Inspectorate, [National Infrastructure Programme of Projects](#) details the proposals which are anticipated to be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate as applications in the coming months.

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# Welsh Secretary commends Armed Forces' contribution to the fight against coronavirus in Wales

The Welsh Secretary has written to the head of the Army in Wales to thank him for the support provided by the UK Armed Forces across the country in the continued fight against coronavirus.

Simon Hart MP wrote to Brigadier Andrew Dawes CBE, Commander of 160th (Welsh) Brigade this week to commend the Armed Forces for their work in tackling the pandemic. Full-time soldiers and Reservists have been deployed in a variety of roles across Wales at the request of the civilian authorities to support different parts of the response to the coronavirus emergency.

The deployments have included driving and decontaminating ambulances for the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust (WAST), building beds in Ysbyty Calon Y Ddraig (the Dragon's Heart Hospital) and advising and assisting NHS Wales to distribute essential PPE to frontline staff.

The Armed Forces have also helped set up dozens of testing centres across Great Britain, including in Llandudno. Soldiers are now collecting swabs for critical workers in Mobile Testing Units across Wales, helping to rapidly expand the UK's testing capability.

## **Secretary of State for Wales Simon Hart said:**

The UK's Armed Forces are providing crucial support to our NHS, Welsh Ambulance Service and social care workers, helping critical care to continue across Wales.

Their continued efforts, alongside that of our extraordinary key workers, is testament to their selfless commitment to our country. I would like to extend my thanks to the Armed Forces personnel, and those they are working alongside, who are doing incredible work to keep our country going during these difficult times.

The support our soldiers and Reservists have provided in Wales shows, once again, that we are better tackling the coronavirus united across the four nations of the UK and making the best use of our shared resources.

## **Minister for the Armed Forces James Heapey:**

Our Armed Forces are proud to continue to work alongside the emergency services, local councils and the NHS to support communities across Wales.

From testing, to distributing PPE to driving ambulances, our Armed Forces are demonstrating their versatility, expertise and willingness to assist in whatever way the people of Wales need.

Armed forces support to tackle COVID-19 in Wales includes:

### **Welsh Ambulance Service**

The Army has boosted its support to the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust (WAST). A deployment of 30 soldiers have been trained in ambulance decontamination, in addition to the initial 60 tasked with driving ambulances at the beginning of April.

### **British Army provides logistics advice to NHS Wales**

A logistics specialist supply team from The 4th Regiment, Royal Logistics Corp of the British Army has been deployed to assist NHS Wales in PPE distribution. The 30-person strong team has helped refine the essential equipment's distribution over 16 hospitals across seven regional health boards by providing logistical advice and training additional staff. A military mentoring and advisory team has also been deployed to assist with distribution of medical equipment across the country in order to best match demand.

### **Military unload PPE flown into Cardiff airport**

Around 30 Reservists from 3 Royal Welsh unloaded vital supplies of PPE that was flown into Cardiff airport from Cambodia and China. The Reservists were on hand to unload 2 million pieces of PPE for use by frontline health and care workers in Wales.

### **Oxygen distribution**

A military assistance team to assess vacuum insulated evaporator systems across NHS Wales to ensure oxygen supplies are where they are needed. Soldiers from each of the three services were trained to drive oxygen tankers at the Air Products facility in Port Talbot in order to support the NHS.

### **Planning**

Military planning and liaison personnel have deployed across Wales, including at the Welsh Government's Emergency Coordination Centre in Cardiff, the four Local Resilience Fora and the seven Local Health Boards.

### **Development of field hospitals and testing sites**

Military Assessment Teams have supported the NHS in Wales' development of field hospitals, including at the Principality Stadium in Cardiff. There are also a total of seven testing centres across Wales involving military personnel as well as an increasing number of Mobile Testing Units.

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# Mental health – our employees’ stories

Following this, we also want to share some of our employees’ experiences and their tips for wellbeing during lockdown.

Some of our employee mental health champions have recorded videos.

[Tips from employees on wellbeing during lockdown](#)

Below are some of their tips, taken from these videos.

Lisa Doran, Sellafield Ltd Remediation Team Leader says:

My tip is to do things to keep your mind occupied. I take daily exercise. I also stay connected to friends and family and give myself little treats.

Some days we all have little slumps, and that’s fine. Be kind to yourself and stay safe.

Stuart Buchanan, Sellafield Ltd Control Systems says:

Like lots of you, my mental health has been up and down, but thankfully with no real problems. I find that getting out and doing a bit of exercise really does help.

I also do a bit of charity work and I think that helping others have a positive impact on your mental health.

Kay Mulhatton, Sellafield Ltd Waste Vitrification Plant says:

I try to stop overthinking. I also crochet, knit and do any DIY. All these are things to fill your head, so you don’t overthink things.

It’s not always easy, but it helps to keep your feet on the ground.

Kindness is important too – I think we need more of that. DO help each other and keep each other going strong.

We finish with an insight to a particular mental health challenge from Michael Wright who is the co-founder and co-chair of the Nuclear Stammering Network. This aims to raise awareness of stammering as well as coach those who suffer within the industry, helping them gain control over their speech.

Michael Wright, Site Integration and Outage Management Team has talked about his experiences of lockdown with a stammer, and how the daily conference calls can be a challenge.

Since working from home, we have seen a huge increase in the use of technology to enable us to communicate effectively, with the use of conference call dial ins, and with apps such as Skype and Zoom.

For those who suffer from a stammer this can inflict additional stress and anxiety and can bring additional complexity when trying to perform their job.

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## [Readout of Secretary of State for Defence Ben Wallace's phone call with US Secretary of Defense Dr. Mark T. Esper](#)

News story

The Defence Secretary has had a phone call with his US counterpart to discuss ongoing collaboration and shared challenges



The Defence Secretary and US Secretary of Defense Dr. Mark T. Esper earlier in the year at the Pentagon

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace conducted a phone call with U.S. Secretary of Defense Dr. Mark T. Esper today and underlined the continued importance of the two nations' respective contributions to NATO.

Both defence leaders discussed strengthening NATO through mutual support to,

and collaboration with, allies and maintaining military readiness in the era of constant competition, despite the global COVID-19 pandemic.

They discussed the ongoing operations and conflicts in Afghanistan, against Daesh in Iraq and Syria and the situation in Libya. They also discussed concerns about Russian and Chinese disinformation and agreed to continue to work together to mitigate the effects of this malign activity.

Mr Wallace also expressed his gratitude for the United States' continued partnership, and the vital friendship of one of our staunchest Allies.

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