

# DRS helping to keep the country rolling



DRS' distinctive locomotives are moving thousands of shipping containers every week

Image credit: David Clough – Golborne Jn 2017 8 26 88005 0640 Daventry – Mossend Euroterminal

The specialist rail freight company, a subsidiary of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority, provides rail transport to a range of vital sectors, including nuclear power stations, logistics and distribution for supermarkets, passenger rail as well as helping maintain the UK's rail network.

The Carlisle-based firm has enacted its business continuity plans and put in place extra layers of safety and protection for all its staff working across the UK – from train crew to engineering and maintenance teams through to train planners and the essential office-based staff that keep the trains running on time.

Chris Connelly, Managing Director, said:

We have an important role to play to help keep the country going during these difficult times. DRS' services make sure the country's nuclear power stations can keep working, food and other goods are available on supermarket shelves, key workers can get to their place of work, and the rail infrastructure can be maintained.

Everyone at DRS is doing an absolutely fantastic job – all our colleagues have pulled together to ensure we can carry on working at the same time as helping protect each other.

DRS' intermodal work has been crucial, delivering vital supplies for supermarkets up and down the country. Their distinctive locomotives are

moving thousands of shipping containers every week – with DRS initially running some of its longest trains to keep up with demand.

NDA Chief Executive, David Peattie, added:

DRS plays a crucial role in the NDA's mission – safely transporting materials across the UK to support nuclear decommissioning and EDF Energy's operating power stations. Their non-nuclear work, keeping the supermarket shelves full and helping keep the rail network running for key workers, has never been more important.

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## [Biometrics Commissioner statement on the use of symptom tracking applications](#)

I have been approached by a number of journalists asking for my comments on the possible use of symptom tracking applications, digital contact tracing applications and digital immunity certificates. Strictly speaking this is not part of my responsibility since my role is limited to the police use of biometrics both for criminal investigation and national security. However, the possible use of phone applications to track coronavirus (COVID-19) is a form of surveillance more normally associated with policing and could have a policing purpose, albeit one connected to controlling a pandemic. In that sense the way in which the police use of biometrics has been regulated may hold some lessons.

The first question about any public use of biometrics for surveillance is: is there a public interest in doing so? That is, not a private interest but one that benefits the society and its citizens to such an extent as to outweigh any intrusion into an individual's general right to privacy. Such questions are of such significance that they should be decided by Parliament and enshrined in law, as was the case for the police use of DNA and fingerprints in the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 (PoFA).

Given the general and public threat from coronavirus such a public interest test may well be accepted in this case. However, unless we believe that the

coronavirus threat is permanent (and at present we do not know) then it may be that the public interest test is only passed for so long as the threat remains. That means that public surveillance to try and control coronavirus probably should be regarded as time limited and should be included in emergency legislation. Parliament certainly acted in this manner when it passed the Coronavirus Act 2020 which, in part, suspended some aspects of PoFA in response to the health emergency. It did so by insisting that the emergency provision had to be limited initially to 6 months and the relevant regulations made in consultation with the Biometrics Commissioner.

If surveillance of coronavirus is regarded as valid only during the pandemic then it is important that public trust in such a process is encouraged by regulation approved by Parliament as to the limitations of that surveillance. A group of university lawyers have produced a [suggested Coronavirus \(Safeguards\) Bill](#) that they believe would be necessary in order to protect an individual's right not to participate, their anonymity, to limit the period for which it could be done and to regulate what use could be made of any data which was collected and who it could be shared with.

The [Ada Lovelace Institute](#), an independent research body, have also carried out some initial analysis of the evidence and made some recommendations about accountability and the need for legislation. Such protections would go some way to limit use to the emergency period and to balance the immediate public interest against citizen's longer-term interest in privacy and to ensure that such surveillance is not extended beyond the coronavirus emergency or into other areas of public life without further consideration by Parliament and further legislation. The coronavirus emergency has highlighted the very rapid development of new biometric technology in general and its possible use by the State but also by private interests and why that is something that needs a new framework of governance backed by legislation.

For more on this latter point see my forthcoming Annual Report 2019.

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## [UK set to bring home hundreds more British travellers from across the Philippines](#)

- Only go outside for food, health reasons or work (but only if you cannot work from home)
- If you go out, stay 2 metres (6ft) away from other people at all times
- Wash your hands as soon as you get home

Do not meet others, even friends or family.

You can spread the virus even if you don't have symptoms.

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## Grant funding provided to businesses by local authorities in England



As part of the government's coronavirus business support package, the UK government has distributed £12.3 billion to local authorities in England.

As of 19 April 2020, £6 billion has been paid out to 484,166 business properties, approximately half of the grant funding allocated (48.65%).

The Small Business Grants Fund is a £10,000 grant per eligible business, originally announced at Budget. Businesses included in this scheme are those which on 11 March were eligible for relief under the Small Business Rate Relief Scheme (including those with a rateable value between £12,000 and £15,000 which receive tapered relief) or the Rural Rate Relief Scheme.

The Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Business Grants Fund was announced by the Chancellor on 17 March. Businesses in scope will be those that were eligible on 11 March for a discount under the Expanded Retail Discount scheme and with a rateable value of less than £51,000:

- eligible businesses in these sectors with a property that has a rateable value of up to and including £15,000 will receive a grant of £10,000
- eligible businesses with a property that has a rateable value of over £15,000 and less than £51,000 will receive a grant of £25,000

Grants will be provided in respect of each property (hereditament); therefore, businesses with multiple outlets would receive more than one grant and may receive grants from separate local authorities.

Figures for delivered grants are accurate as of 19 April 2020.

Businesses with multiple outlets can receive more than one grant and may receive grants from separate local authorities, if their different outlets are in different local authority areas. Only one grant can be paid per business premise.

Local authorities are contacting eligible businesses. It is important that

businesses who have been contacted respond quickly and that any businesses who believe they are eligible check the arrangements in their area on their local authority website if they have yet to be contacted.

Businesses should refer in the first instance to the [grant funding schemes guidance](#).

Further information on support for business is available: [Financial support for businesses](#).

[Find out what support may be available to you and your business.](#)

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## [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): Letter from the Local Government Minister to councils setting out further details of additional funding](#)

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