

Suspension of War Pensions and Armed Forces Compensation Scheme Medical Examinations and Assessments

We have been advised by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), who arrange our War Pension Scheme/Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS) medical examinations for us, that they have taken the decision to cancel all planned examinations for a period of up to 3 months from 17 March 2020. This is because of action being taken to limit the spread of the Coronavirus. All veterans with dates for medical examinations during this period will be contacted direct by the DWP's Centre for Health and Disability Assessments (CHDA).

Veterans UK is now reviewing the impact of this decision on how individual War Pension and AFCS claims can be progressed when a medical examination is not possible and more information will be issued to those affected in due course. There is no need to contact the Veterans UK helpline at the moment.

It is always our aim to reach decisions on claims as quickly as possible. However, we must also balance this with the risks of spreading the Coronavirus to veterans, many of whom may be in groups at higher risk from the virus.

We would like to thank everyone for their understanding during this unprecedented time.

Routine Ofsted inspections suspended in response to coronavirus

Ofsted is to temporarily suspend routine inspections of schools, colleges, early years settings, children's social care providers and local authorities to reduce the burden on staff who are providing vital services to the nation in response to coronavirus.

The current medical and scientific advice is for schools and other educational establishments to stay open. If this changes and the Chief Medical Officer and the Chief Scientific Adviser say closing schools, colleges, and early years settings is in the best interests of children and teachers the Department will take that step.

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

I recognise that teachers are doing everything they can to support the children in their care and help make sure that key workers can continue going to work. Teachers are on the frontline of our national effort.

We are following the advice of our medical and scientific community every step of the way. The Chief Medical Officer has said the impact of closing schools on children's education will be substantial, but the benefit to public health may not be.

Given the pressures on our school leaders and their staff, it is only right that Ofsted temporarily suspends its routine inspection timetable. This will help schools to focus on their core functions at a difficult time.

The Secretary of State will write to Her Majesty's Chief Inspector Amanda Spielman to allow her to suspend routine inspections, although urgent inspections where specific concerns have been raised can still go ahead.

The Secretary of State is working with representatives of school leaders to develop a range of measures to help them stay open, and this is an important part of that plan.

[Homes England Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Updates](#)

This page will be updated regularly when more information becomes available. Please check back regularly and follow us on [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#) for more updates.

12/5/2020 update

The Housing Secretary set out the government's plan to re-start housing market.

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government Housing Secretary, [Robert Jenrick announced](#) that the government has launched a 'Safe Working Charter' with The Home Builders Federation, enabling home builders to return to work safely.

1/5/2020 update

Our Chief Executive Nick Walkley told Estates Gazette about how we are engaging with the industry to inform our strategic response to COVID-19.

[You can read the article here via LinkedIn.](#)

The piece was originally published by Estates Gazette online on 24th April 2020 and in print on 30th April 2020.

We have released information for Help to Buy: Equity Loan customers during Coronavirus (COVID-19)

We understand that coronavirus (COVID-19) is worrying and that things still feel very uncertain. There are many questions about what coronavirus means for Help to Buy: Equity Loan customers and we aim to answer some of these on our [Information for Help to Buy: Equity Loan customers during Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Frequently Asked Questions Page](#)

15/4/20 update

Homes England ramps up development pipeline to support the housing market

We have acquired 19 sites in the last financial year worth £180 million, with the capacity for 5,000 new homes across the country.

We're taking a long-term view of housing demand to develop a strong pipeline of projects to support the recovery of the housebuilding sector from COVID-19.

[You can read our full press release here](#)

8/4/20 update

Homes England End of Year Statement from Nick Walkley

At this unusual and challenging time for us all, our Chief Executive, Nick Walkley has made a statement on the end of the financial year 2019/2020.

For Homes England, it's a moment to reflect on what we have achieved with partners across the housing sector and remember how much can be achieved by working creatively in partnership.

[You can read Nick's full statement here](#)

17/3/20 update

Changes to Homes England's ways of working

Following guidance from the Prime Minister to avoid non-essential travel, from 17th March 2020 we will be working remotely as an organisation with staff working from home until further notice.

As part of business continuity protocols, we have been thoroughly testing our technology & are confident we can continue to operate fully. We have also withdrawn from upcoming conferences & other business engagements.

As an outward-facing national agency, we are taking these steps to protect both our staff & partners & are grateful for everybody's continued support.

We are determined to support the government at this time. The most important contribution we can make is to continue working with our partners to complete transactions & continue building the pipeline to support housebuilding.

Contact information

Colleagues will be contacting partners regards current business priorities. If you need to speak to us, contact us on:

Email: enquiries@homesengland.gov.uk

Phone: 0300 1234 500

We will be providing updates on any further operational changes but our clear message at this time is Homes England is fully operational & determined to continue doing business.

We wish you and your organisation well. Please do get in touch if we can be of assistance.

Goods exports in all 4 UK nations increased in 2019

Goods exports from England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland increased in 2019, according to new figures published today (Tuesday 17 March) by [HMRC](#).

- England grew 2.0% to £254.0bn
- Scotland grew 4.4% to £33.6bn
- Wales grew 3.0% to £17.7bn
- Northern Ireland grew 2.2% to £9.1bn

Demand for UK goods is increasingly coming from countries outside the EU bloc.

In 2019, the number of businesses exporting goods from the UK to the world totalled 160,400, an increase of 2.6% on 2018.

Notes to editors: All figures quoted are for 2019. [Source: HMRC Regional

Coronavirus update

The Parole Board is continuing to carry out planned hearings at this time. Members of the Parole Board have been provided with updated guidance to ensure the wellbeing of everyone in the parole system is the top priority.

We are continuing to keep a close eye on government advice and are looking into ways to continue to fulfil our workload.