



## COMMUNICATION TO ARC ACADEMY CUSTOMERS

Now we are in the 8<sup>th</sup> week of lockdown I'm back with our latest update to let you know how we're supporting all of you as best as we can as we all work through this new normal. It appears we have come through our first peak and central and devolved Governments are making tentative arrangements to get the economy back up and running. With the recent release of guidance and advice relating to returning to work post lockdown, we are also moving forward with our plans to reopen our various offices though out June but will only be led by the government and the confidence of our colleagues once we have completed adaptations. It is also likely we will maintain homeworking and distance learning for the foreseeable future, but as work sites open and our learners return to work we would appreciate you sharing your visitor protocols so we can consider and move forward with reintroducing workplace assessment.

All teams have key workers now working remotely and we are keeping up to date with all enquiries.

There are a couple of points I would ask you to be aware of:

- All apprenticeships are government supported or funded and we must follow their guidance in relation to continuing delivery and face to face meetings.
- Our phone lines are forwarded to Section Managers for the foreseeable future. Messages will be picked up immediately, however you might prefer to contact us via [info@thearcgroup.co.uk](mailto:info@thearcgroup.co.uk).
- Post is still being collected weekly and we also operate a weekly dispatch service.
- All face to face training is currently on hold until at least 1<sup>st</sup> June 2020. This includes Rail, Plant & Civils training and certification. This is following government guidance and to ensure minimal risk of infection. We are currently working on procedural changes that will be implemented to ensure training can continue when we are cleared by our funders to return to normal delivery.
- If you have any requests for specific information or advice or you can offer any advice to us on how training will be restarted within your organisation, or how you would like us to support your apprentices in line with your new procedures then please contact me directly at [paulnapier@thearcgroup.co.uk](mailto:paulnapier@thearcgroup.co.uk)

As a customer you may be concerned about how this may impact your day to day activities and the services that you expect from ARC.

Please be assured that the ARC Group have put a number of actions in place including the reviewing and updating of our business continuity plan. We are providing support, advice and guidance to our colleagues, employers and learners with regular updates. Briefings for our customers and partners, and operational planning with service delivery teams to ensure that we maintain the highest standards of service in delivery through this pandemic and beyond.

We are continuing to operate in line with Government policy and guidance and are therefore only delivering learning remotely. In some cases, we may utilise technology to hold meetings or undertake remote monitoring or assessment however we will of course communicate with you to advise of any changes. Our team are:

- Identifying vulnerable learners who may require additional support through the pandemic.
- Communicating regularly with all learners and keeping them informed of our activities including updates relating to accessing learning and wellbeing resources.
- We continue to set work and support all apprentices including those who are furloughed.
- We will be continuing to facilitate learning and assessment where possible using technology and if learners are required to take a break from learning for longer than 4 weeks through illness, isolation or redundancy we would expect employers to notify us as soon as possible.
- ARC Rail, ARC Plant, ARC Medicals have all temporarily shutdown, with all colleagues Furloughed. - ARC Academy our Apprenticeship Unit are operating from home bases while we continue to plan to reopen our premises and undertake all possible risk assessments and adaptations of our workplace to facilitate a safe return to work post lock down.

We expect that you will of course be carrying out your own risk assessment and identifying activities that may be potentially disruptive to your business activities. We therefore seek your collaboration to keep the communication lines open with us to proactively manage any potential disruption and avoid unnecessary travel. Please do not hesitate to contact us should you need to advise us of any potential disruption or restrictions that you experience.

We recognise that this is an evolving situation and will share updated information with you, if and when, arrangements change. We have been in touch with the regulatory bodies and will continue to take advice from our Funders, Government, HSE and Public Health Authorities.

#### Latest support to delivering apprenticeships during Covid-19

- Encouraging training providers to deliver training to apprentices remotely and via e-learning as far as is practicable.
- Allowing the modification of end-point assessment arrangements, including remote assessments wherever practicable and possible.

- Clarifying that apprentices ready for assessment but who cannot be assessed due to COVID-19 issues can have their End-point assessment rescheduled. Apprentices whose gateway is delayed can have an extension to the assessment timeframe.
- Enabling employers and training providers to report and initiate a break in learning where the interruption to learning due to COVID-19 is greater than four weeks.
- Clarification on how to record breaks in learning so that funding is not unnecessarily disrupted.
- Confirming that where apprentices are made redundant, it is our ambition to find them alternative employment and continue their apprenticeship as quickly as possible and within 12 weeks.

ESFA funded Apprenticeships – latest guidance and FAQ's

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-apprenticeship-programme-response/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-apprentices-employers-training-providers-end-point-assessment-organisations-and-external-quality-assurance-pro#overview>

Welsh Government funded Apprenticeships – latest guidance

<https://gov.wales/work-based-learning-and-apprenticeships-coronavirus>