



# COVID19: News and Information for the local Construction Community

Issue 3: 8th April 2020

Our intention is to provide a united front to help support local construction and built environment businesses and individuals, through the ongoing repercussions of the COVID-19 coronavirus for our sector.

Through this bulletin, we plan to provide a regular centralised, factual, relevant and robust source of official information. We can share intelligence to help us both now and to plan for the future. We want to create a forum for feedback with Plymouth City Council. We must stay positive about our world post COVID-19 and we can help each other to do so through staying in touch.



## Welcome!

Hello, how are you in what is now our third week of lockdown? It has been great to hear from so many of you and although there is so much disruption to both our working and personal lives, there is certainly a huge feeling of camaraderie amongst our construction community. We welcome staying connected through our Bulletin news as well as the numerous calls and virtual meetings that we are sharing together.

Feel free to suggest content for future Bulletin issues and as you'll read, we have extended input for official updates from the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership. We are already thinking about our 'construction come back' reunion and we will keep you posted. #ewellmeetagain

Stay safe, stay in touch and Happy Easter!

Emma Hewitt  
Building Plymouth Skills Co-ordinator Plymouth City Council  
Lead Officer for Heart of the SW LEP Construction & Built Environment Skills

## Official Government Updates

Summary of support available from UK government

[CLICK HERE for more information](#)

FAQs on UK government support measures

[CLICK HERE for more information](#)

**03/04/20 - Chancellor strengthens support on offer for business as first government-backed loans reach firms in need**

Rishi Sunak is taking further action to support firms affected by coronavirus by bolstering business interruption loans and announcing a new scheme for larger companies.

[CLICK HERE for more information](#)

**30/03/20 - Coronavirus (COVID-19): right to work checks**

Advice for employers carrying out right to work checks during the coronavirus pandemic.

[CLICK HERE for more information](#)

**01/04/20 - National Minimum Wage and National Living Wage Rates**  
The National Living Wage increased on Wednesday 01 April to £8.72, giving a pay rise to thousands of workers at the frontline of the UK's response to Covid-19. The apprentice wage has also increased (the rate depends on the stage of apprenticeship and age of apprentice).

[CLICK HERE for more information](#)

**01/04/20 - BEIS's request for business intelligence**

The Government is closely monitoring developments in relation to potential economic impacts on the UK economy and individual businesses and supply chain. We welcome information from businesses on:

- The impacts across supply, demand and labour markets
- Actions being taken by firms to address these impacts
- Any gaps in the Government response from your perspective

BEIS are aware that individual company information may be commercially sensitive and it will be treated accordingly. Please note that this inbox is only for providing intelligence only and does not provide business advice.

[Please send your intelligence here](#)

**04/04/20 - Update: Claim for your employees' wages through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme**

[CLICK HERE for more information](#)

**03/04/20 - Innovate UK, as part of UK Research and Innovation, will invest up to £20 million in innovation projects**

The aim of this competition is to support UK businesses to focus on emerging or increasing needs of society and industries during and following the Covid-19 pandemic. By fast-tracking innovation, the UK will be better placed to maintain employment levels, a competitive position in global markets and make the UK more resilient to similar disruption.

[APPLY HERE for Innovation Funding](#)

**03/04/20 - HSE promises action on social distancing failures**

[CLICK HERE for more information](#)

**30/03/20 - LABC Warranty service update**

As of Monday 30th March 2020, LABC Warranty's national team of Risk Management Surveyors are not booking or undertaking any on-site inspections until further notice.

They will continue to review final inspections and will be communicating to clients new processes. To support sites where work continues, the surveying team are reviewing photographs and video evidence detailing construction progress around some key inspections that otherwise would have taken place on-site.

[Further details are available here](#)

**06/04/20 - Consultation outcome released - Building a safer future: proposals for reform of the building safety regulatory system**

The tragedy of the Grenfell Tower fire in June 2017 devastated the lives of countless people and represented the biggest loss of life from a single incident in the UK since the Hillsborough disaster. It is incumbent on all of us – building owners, the construction industry, local authorities, the fire service and the Government – to ensure that such a tragedy never happens again.

On the 6th April 2020, the consultation concluded and a document was released which sets out the Government's proposals for a reformed building safety system.

[Download the full outcome here](#)

**The Bank of England Assistance**

The Bank of England has put in place a package of measures to help keep firms in business and people in jobs and prevent Covid-19 from causing long-lasting economic harm.

[CLICK HERE for more information](#)

## Official Plymouth City Council updates

# Government Support measures

Business Rates Holiday   Self-employed Income Support Scheme   Coronavirus Job Retention scheme   Business Grants   Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan scheme   VAT deferral and Tax support

## WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR SUPPORT?

### SELF EMPLOYED

Self Employment Income support scheme will provide 80% of salary for 3 months up to £2,500 per month.

### RETAIL, HOSPITALITY & LEISURE

Business Rates Holiday and Business Grant scheme for those with rateable values under £51,000 of up to £25,000 per property

### BUSINESSES WITH PREMISES

Small Business grant funding for businesses who receive small business rate relief or rural rate relief

### BUSINESSES WITH EMPLOYEES

Statutory Sick Pay Rebate for businesses with fewer than 250 employees as of 28 Feb 2020.

### ALL BUSINESSES:

Any business will be able to receive the following support measures:

- VAT Deferral
- Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme
- Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan scheme
- HMRC Helpline support: 0800 024 1222

#### BUSINESS RATES HOLIDAY

- All retail, leisure and hospitality businesses in England will receive a business rates holiday for the 2020-21 tax year
- All Nurseries in England will receive a business rates holiday for the 2020-21 tax year
- All Plymouth businesses will receive a 2 month rate deferral from Plymouth City Council

#### VAT DEFERRAL

- VAT payments due between 20 March 2020 and 30 June 2020 will be deferred. UK Registered businesses will not need to make VAT payments usually due with VAT returns during this time
- Customers who pay by direct debit should cancel their direct debit with their bank if unable to pay so that HMRC do not attempt to automatically collect on receipt of your VAT return

#### STATUTORY SICK PAY REBATE

- Rebate scheme in development
- Open for all UK based businesses employing less than 250 staff
- Ability to reclaim Statutory Sick Pay paid for staff sickness absence due to Coronavirus covering up to 12 weeks SSP per eligible employee
- The Government will work with employers over coming months to set up the repayment mechanism asap

#### BUSINESS GRANTS

- Eligible small businesses and retail, hospitality and leisure businesses in Plymouth have been notified by Plymouth City Council and asked to follow the online submission process
- Small businesses in receipt of Small Business Rate Relief or Rural Rate Relief eligible for £10k grant
- Retail, hospitality and leisure businesses with rateable value of less than £51k eligible for a grant of up to £25k per property

#### SELF-EMPLOYED SUPPORT

- HMRC will contact you
- An additional 4 weeks to provide a tax return for 2019-18
- The scheme provides a grant to self-employed individuals or partnerships worth 80% of profits up to a cap of £2,500 per month
- HMRC will use average profits from tax returns in 2016-17, 2017-18 and 2018-19 to calculate the size of grant
- Self-Assessment payments due to be paid to HMRC by 31 July 2020 may be deferred until January 2021. Automatic offer no application needed

#### JOB RETENTION SCHEME

- UPDATE STAFF AND SUBMIT INFO TO HMRC
- All UK employers with a PAYE scheme created before 28 Feb 2020 are eligible for support
- Applies to employees who have been asked to stop working but kept on the payroll aka 'furloughed'
- HMRC will pay a grant worth 80% of a furloughed employees usual wage costs up to £2500 per month + the associated Employers' National Insurance contribution and minimum automatic pension contributions

#### BUSINESS INTERRUPTION LOAN SCHEME

- APPLICATION TO COMMERCIAL LENDERS
- Available to small, medium and large businesses with access to loans, overdrafts, invoice finance and asset finance of up to £1million for six years
- Delivered through commercial lenders backed by Government-owned British Business Bank
- Scheme is open now for applications to 40 commercial lenders

## SUPPORT FOR THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY



### CITB SUPPORT

- 3 month suspension of the industry levy collection
- Advanced payment of apprenticeship attendance grants for 2nd and 3rd years
- Skills And Training Fund amended to be more flexible

[www.citb.co.uk/urgent-messages/](http://www.citb.co.uk/urgent-messages/)

**03/04/20 - Latest Plymouth News from Plymouth City Council**

[CLICK HERE for the latest information](#)

**03/04/20 - City Leader Cllr Tudor Evans update includes news that to date £18M of grants has already been paid to Plymouth businesses**

[CLICK HERE to read more](#)

**David Draffan, Service Director of Economic Development**

David Draffan, Service Director of Economic Development, Plymouth City Council has released his latest blog on LinkedIn which brings you up to speed with PCC action and response to the government announcements:

**04/04/20 [CLICK HERE for the blog](#)**

**30/03/20 [CLICK HERE for the blog](#)**

**27/03/20 [CLICK HERE for the blog](#)**

**25/03/20 [CLICK HERE for the blog](#)**

You can register directly for the PCC Economic Development newsletter here:

[CLICK HERE for the Economic Development Newsletter](#)

### Feedback

As part of Plymouth City Council's resilience work we are collating feedback from businesses within the city to share economic impacts of Covid-19 which we will feed into central Government to lobby for sector support for businesses in difficulty. If you have feedback to share on construction sector impact please can you email [emma.hewitt@plymouth.gov.uk](mailto:emma.hewitt@plymouth.gov.uk). Any information that is provided and shared with Plymouth City Council will only be used specifically for understanding the business impacts of COVID-19 and will not be used beyond this critical period.

[Building Plymouth COVID19 Bulletins are located on our website at:](#)

[www.buildingplymouth.co.uk/covid19-updates](http://www.buildingplymouth.co.uk/covid19-updates)

## News from the Heart of the South West LEP

Visit the website to find out more Covid19 business support

[CLICK HERE for more information](#)

[CLICK HERE for the newsletter](#)

HotSW LEP Digital Skills Partnership have recently published updated information including advice to business on remote working, useful tools and resources to support staff's digital competency to use digital solutions. This information will be updated regularly as new resources and webinars come online.

[CLICK HERE for more information](#)



## Construction Sector Updates

**01/04/20 - Construction Leadership Council write to the Prime Minister with Recovery Proposals**

This industry response has been shared with Plymouth City Council's Economic Development Team and the Devon & Plymouth Chamber of Commerce to support co-ordinated lobbying efforts.

[CLICK HERE for more information](#)

**01/04/20 - Construction Leadership Council Advice on Coronavirus Employment Schemes**  
The Construction Leadership Council (CLC) has produced new guidance on the employment issues raised by the coronavirus crisis. The document provides the industry with everything it needs to know on furloughing staff, the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and the Self-employed Income Support Scheme. A series of in-depth FAQs are also included in the guidance for the two major employment schemes designed to protect jobs whilst the economy is in a partial suspension.

[CLICK HERE for more information](#)

**06/04/20 - Government urged to extend all planning permissions**  
With work having ground to a halt on many sites across the UK, builders' representatives are urging the government to extend all planning permissions to prevent them lapsing during the lockdown.

[CLICK HERE for more information](#)

**Latest information from CITB**  
**01/04/20 - CITB Skills and Training Fund expanded**

CITB launches the newly expanded Skills and Training Fund which, in addition to the support for micro and small companies, includes a new fund for

Medium sized employers, and forthcoming Leadership and Management Development Fund for larger businesses.

[CLICK HERE for more information](#)

**Coronavirus - CITB A toolbox talk for construction workers**

[CLICK HERE for more information](#)

CITB's COVID-19 updates page is being refreshed daily and includes information on a range of subjects, including Grants, Funding and Apprenticeships

[CLICK HERE for Updates](#)

**Apprenticeships**  
**04/04/20 - Confirmation for apprenticeships**

The government has confirmed that apprentices can continue with funded training when employers use the job retention scheme, subject to being paid the apprenticeship minimum wage 'for all the time they spend training'. Apprentices can be furloughed in the same way as other employees and they can continue to train whilst furloughed.

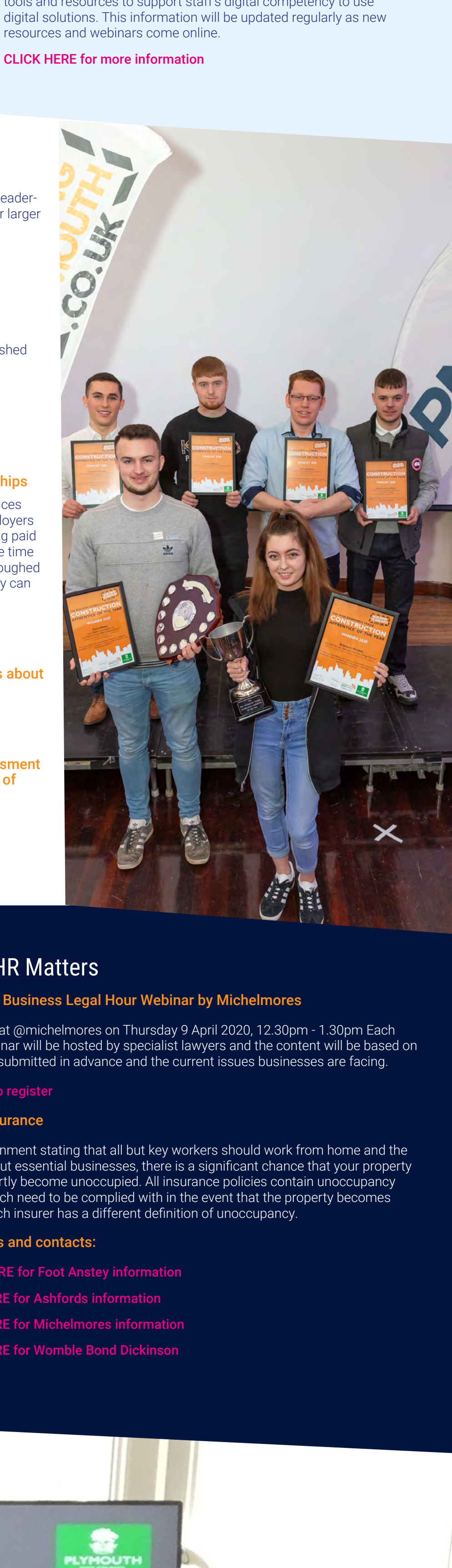
[CLICK HERE for more information](#)

**02/04/20 - Make UK has put together guidance for employers and apprentices about furlough leave.**

[CLICK HERE for more information](#)

**23/03/20 - Guidance for apprentices, employers, training providers and assessment organisations in response to the impact of COVID-19.**

[CLICK HERE for more information](#)



## Legal & HR Matters

**Construction Business Legal Hour Webinar by Michelmores**

Join the team at @michelmores on Thursday 9 April 2020, 12.30pm - 1.30pm Each hour webinar will be hosted by specialist lawyers and the content will be based on the questions submitted in advance and the current issues businesses are facing.

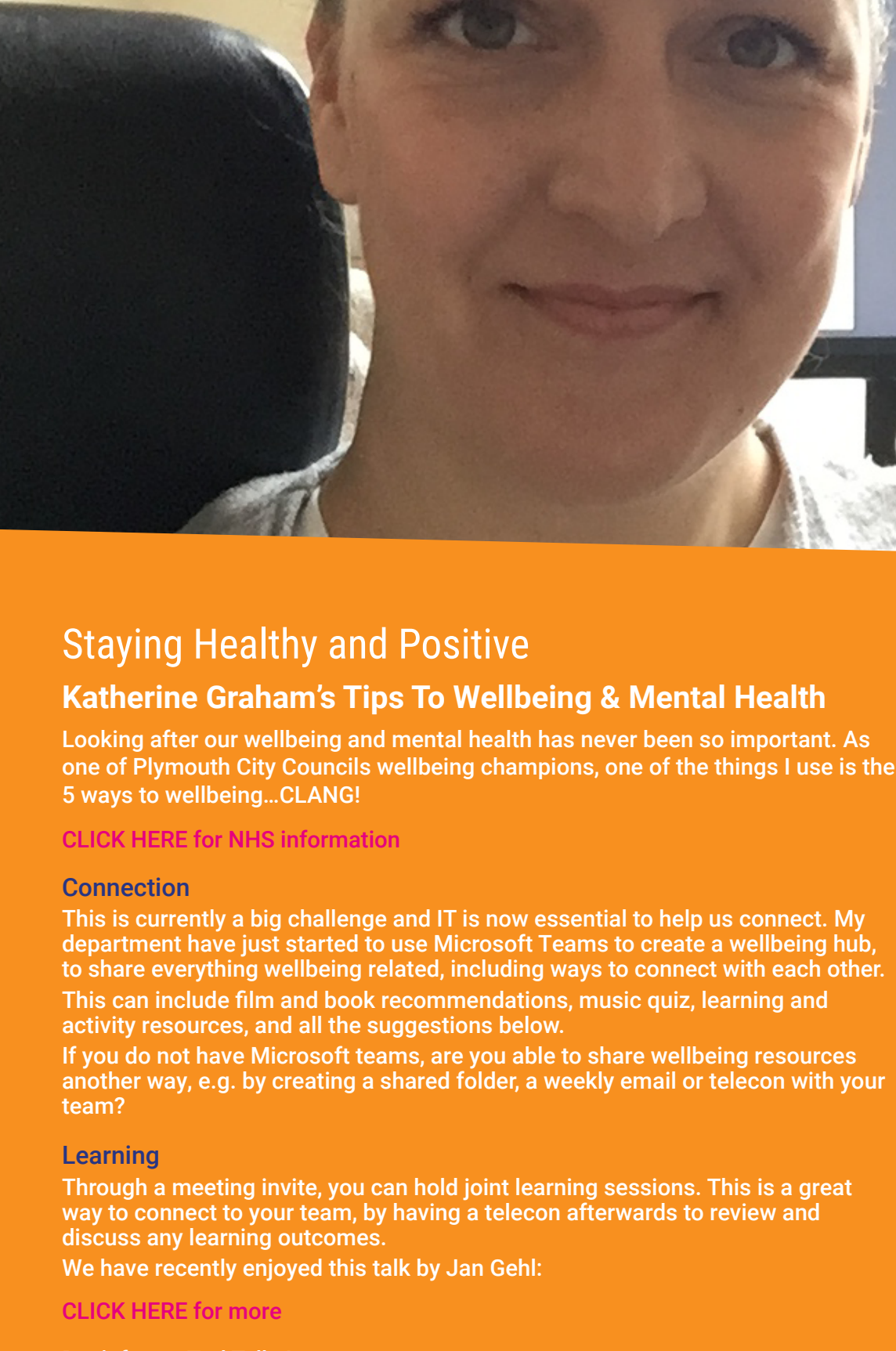
[CLICK HERE to register](#)

**Buildings Insurance**

With the government stating that all but key workers should work from home and the closure of all but essential businesses, there is a significant chance that your property has or will shortly become unoccupied. All insurance policies contain unoccupancy conditions which need to be complied with in the event that the property becomes vacant, but each insurer has a different definition of unoccupancy.

**Useful guides and contacts:**

- [CLICK HERE for Foot Anstey information](#)
- [CLICK HERE for Ashford's information](#)
- [CLICK HERE for Michelmores information](#)
- [CLICK HERE for Womble Bond Dickinson](#)



## Staying Healthy and Positive

**Katherine Graham's Tips To Wellbeing & Mental Health**

Looking after your wellbeing and mental health has never been so important. As one of Plymouth City Council's wellbeing champions, one of the things I use is the way to wellbeing...CLANG!

[CLICK HERE for NHS information](#)

### Connection

This is currently a big challenge and IT is now essential to help us connect. My department have just started to use Microsoft Teams to create a wellbeing hub, to share everything wellbeing related, including ways to connect with each other. This can include film and book recommendations, music quiz, learning and activity resources, and all the suggestions below.

If you do not have Microsoft teams, are you able to share wellbeing resources another way, e.g. by creating a shared folder, a weekly email or telecon with your team?

### Learning

Through a meeting invite, you can hold joint learning sessions. This is a great way to connect to your team, by having a telecon afterwards to review and discuss any learning outcomes.

We have recently enjoyed this talk by Jan Gehl:

[CLICK HERE for more](#)

**Don't forget Ted Talks!**

Do you or any of your colleagues have an skill they can share and do their own informal webinar?

Do you need to refresh your skills in an area, such as PowerPoint, Excel? Being creative is another form of learning. Outside of work I have been joining in with a daily creativity challenge 'Create to Connect', and sharing it with friends who are also doing the challenge.

[CLICK HERE to join](#)

This is something you could do with kids if home-schooling.

### Active

---Joe Wicks, do I need to say anymore? There are so many exercise videos out there. I have been enjoying getting into a routine and doing Yoga every morning.

[CLICK HERE to join](#)

### Notice

This really is Mindfulness and Meditation, but can be very simple. You may have heard of the Headspace app, which you can try for free. They also have a YouTube channel with a lot of free content and short meditations if your new to mindfulness.

[CLICK HERE for more information](#)

**Spotify is another great resource for guided meditations.**

We've had lovely weather recently and gardening is another great way of being mindful and can help to boost your mood.

### Giving

This can be as simple as connecting with someone who is isolated. Plymouth City Council has also set up a Plymouth Good Neighbours Scheme if you wanted to do more for others.

[CLICK HERE for more information](#)

The One You website (link below) also has a section on how to help others. For other wellbeing resources, the NHS One You website is also brilliant and covers mental and physical health.

[CLICK HERE for One You](#)

Finally if you're interested in introducing wellbeing champions within your workplace, you can find more info at the link below:

[CLICK HERE for more information](#)

It is something I find really rewarding and highly recommend.

Enjoy and Be Safe!

Katherine Graham - Planning Officer - Plymouth City Council

## Bringing the World to You

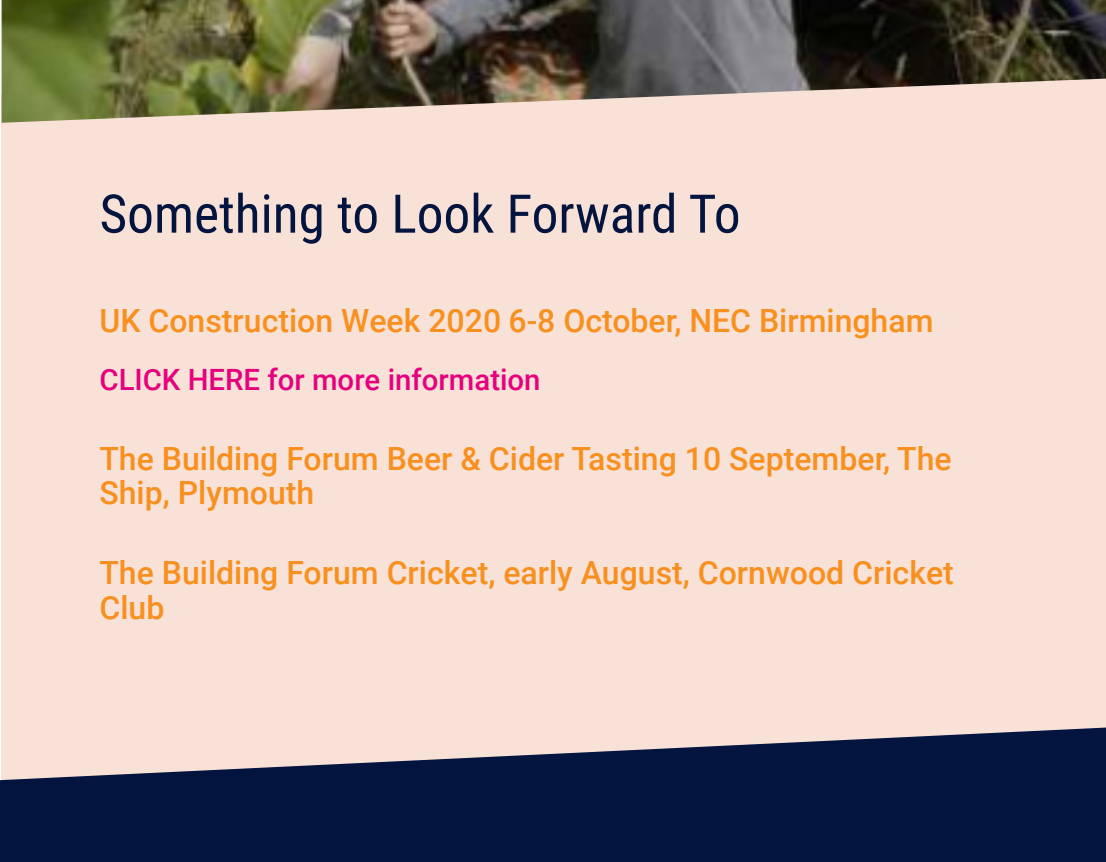
Check out the list of things you can do at home for free or at very low cost to help transport you beyond your sofa. From virtual tours of national parks, zoos and museums around the world, to online apps to help you exercise your mind and your body, these are great ideas to keep you and your family entertained.

[CLICK HERE for more inspiration](#)

**Eden at Home - some ideas for the Easter Break**

Create Eden wherever you are with their free resources and ideas for everyone at home.

[CLICK HERE for more information](#)



## Something to Look Forward To

**UK Construction Week 2020 6-8 October, NEC Birmingham**

[CLICK HERE for more information](#)

**The Building Forum Beer & Cider Tasting 10 September, The Ship, Plymouth**

**The Building Forum Cricket, early August, Cornwood Cricket Club**



## Contact Us

For any queries, feedback and support:

[CLICK HERE to contact Building Plymouth](#)

Other key contacts include:

Emma Hewitt, Building Plymouth  
Kate Mills, The Building Forum Devon & Cornwall  
Glayne Price, South West Women in Construction  
Plester Everett, Constructing Excellence Plymouth Club  
Mike Borkowski, Constructing Excellence Exeter Club  
David Bayliss, First Thursting Club Plymouth

## About Us

Building Plymouth is a council-led partnership with the local construction and built environment industry that drives skills and employment with the aim of increasing the number of local skilled people joining the industry. During this unprecedented and challenging time, we are very keen to support the local construction community and would be pleased to hear from employers and individuals about how we can best help.



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