

## COVID-19: CMA approach to essential business cooperation

That's why the CMA welcomes the Government's announcement today to relax some elements of competition law to help supermarkets work together.

Where agreements are not covered by that legal relaxation, the CMA can offer the following reassurance: the CMA has no intention of taking competition law enforcement action against cooperation between businesses or rationing of products to the extent that this is necessary to protect consumers – for example, by ensuring security of supplies.

At the same time, the CMA will not tolerate unscrupulous businesses exploiting the crisis as a 'cover' for non-essential collusion. This includes exchanging information on longer-term pricing or business strategies, where this is not necessary to meet the needs of the current situation. More guidance on this will follow from the CMA in due course.

The CMA trusts that these announcements will reassure businesses, which it knows are doing their best in difficult circumstances to meet the needs of the public. Businesses must still be aware that any assurance given by the CMA cannot protect against competition litigation by private parties, but wants to offer comfort on its own approach.

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## COVID-19: update on changes to Veterans UK Services

Please be reassured that all Armed Forces Pensions, War Pensions and Armed Forces Compensation Scheme regular payments will continue to be made as usual into your nominated account. We are also maintaining urgent welfare support for Service leavers, veterans and their families via the Veterans Welfare Service (VWS), Defence Transition Services (DTS) and Integrated Personal Commissioning for Veterans (IPC4V).

The latest position on changes to our services as restrictions begin to ease are as follows:

### **Veterans UK Helpline: 0808 1914 218**

Our teams are working hard taking calls from in the office and at home, Mon – Fri 8am to 4pm, so this may mean you hear some background noise. Thank you for your patience and apologies for any inconvenience this may cause.

We are currently able to provide the following services over the phone:

- reporting a bereavement
- Veterans Welfare Service (VWS), Defence Transition Services (DTS) and Integrated Personal Commissioning for Veterans (IPC4V) assistance
- updating bank account details or address for War Pension Scheme or Armed Forces Compensation Scheme payments.

If your call is not for one of these reasons, please continue to use our email service via [Veterans-UK@mod.gov.uk](mailto:Veterans-UK@mod.gov.uk).

If you require to speak to someone because you are in need of urgent emotional support then please call the Samaritans directly on 116123, alternatively you can call 0808 1914 218 and listen to the options to be transferred where a Samaritan adviser may be able to assist you.

We have now re-commenced office-based processing and we are doing all we can to move cases forward as quickly as we can. General enquiries are taking a little longer than normal, please bear with us. However, should your enquiry be urgent please contact us on our Helpline number above.

## **Re-joining the Armed Forces**

Veterans seeking information about re-joining the Armed Forces during this period can find details on the [Royal Navy Rejoiner page](#), [Regular Army Rejoiner page](#) and the [RAF Rejoiner Page](#).

## **Veterans Welfare Service Support (VWS), Defence Transition Services(DTS) and Integrated Personal Commissioning For Veterans (IPC4V)**

To protect our staff and the veterans, Service leavers and families we support we have decided to suspend, except in the most exceptional circumstances, all face-to-face meetings with clients whilst national COVID restrictions are in place. This will be reviewed in due course, once all national COVID restrictions are lifted and a decision will be made about how we can continue to provide a quality service to our clients while protecting our staff. Urgent advice, information and support is still available via our helpline service (see above) and, for less urgent enquiries, via email to [Veterans-UK@mod.gov.uk](mailto:Veterans-UK@mod.gov.uk). Please quote your name, national insurance or reference number and contact details and we will be in touch as quickly as we can. See also "Guidance for Service Personnel with imminent discharge dates" below.

VWS/DTS customers can also reach us by emailing the welfare centre nearest to where you live:

Centurion (London, SE and SW England): [veterans-uk-vws-south@mod.gov.uk](mailto:veterans-uk-vws-south@mod.gov.uk)

Kidderminster (South and Central Wales, Midlands and East England): [veterans-](#)

[uk-vws-wales-mid@mod.gov.uk](mailto:uk-vws-wales-mid@mod.gov.uk)

Norcross VWC (NW England, Yorkshire and Humber, North Wales and IOM):  
[veterans-uk-vws-north@mod.gov.uk](mailto:veterans-uk-vws-north@mod.gov.uk)

Glasgow (Scotland, NE England, NI and ROI): [veterans-uk-vws-scot-ni@mod.gov.uk](mailto:veterans-uk-vws-scot-ni@mod.gov.uk)

DTS customers can also reach us by emailing [DBSVets-DTS-Central@mod.gov.uk](mailto:DBSVets-DTS-Central@mod.gov.uk).

## **War Pension Scheme and Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS)**

Please be reassured that all War Pension, War Widows Pension and Armed Forces Compensation Scheme payments will continue to be made as usual into your nominated account.

Although in March 2020, we had to pause casework, including new claims and appeals against previous claim decisions, because such work cannot be delivered remotely, we are now back in the office at full capacity processing all of our case load. Staff are working hard on the recovery of our service delivery that was unfortunately impacted by COVID-19. We wish to reassure those still affected that we are doing all we can to continue to move cases forward as soon as possible. We continue to ensure that no-one will fall out of payment during this time. If you experience a problem with your payments or have an urgent question, please call our helpline service or email [Veterans-UK@mod.gov.uk](mailto:Veterans-UK@mod.gov.uk) and we will reply as quickly as possible.

## **War Pension Scheme: Mesothelioma**

To protect our staff and veterans, we have decided to suspend, except in the most exceptional circumstances, all face-to-face meetings with clients. However, advice, information and support is still available via our helpline service and email.

Every effort will be made to ensure that procedures are followed to ensure that timely informed choice discussions about [lump sum payments](#) are held with those who have been diagnosed with Mesothelioma, where an intention to claim is made.

## **Medical Examinations: War Pensions and AFCS**

With effect from 17 March 2020, all planned medical examinations in relation to compensation scheme claims were cancelled. We are currently unable to recommence examinations, but an ongoing [pilot scheme](#) launched in August 2020 which changes the way we gather medical evidence for War Pensions Scheme claims and reviews is enabling us to continue our processing of cases.

We won't be issuing requests for medical board examinations or Hospital Case notes, instead we will be issuing a Primary Care Factual report and a supplementary Self-Assessment Form directly to the claimant. A letter will explain everything and provide instructions to follow so the claimant can complete the relevant forms before returning them to us.

## Appeal Tribunal Hearings

With effect from 26 May 2020 the tribunals across the UK began to conduct some appeal hearings remotely. This involved all parties joining using the telephone or a video connection. For the most up to date information regarding your appeal hearing and how it may take place now and, in the future, please visit the relevant tribunal services website from the links below.

[HMCTS weekly operational summary on courts and tribunals during coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak.](#)

[Scottish Courts and Tribunals Coronavirus \(COVID-19\).](#)

[Department of Justice Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Continuity Arrangements.](#)

## Armed Forces Pensions

Please be reassured that all Armed Forces Pensions payments will continue to be made as usual into your nominated account.

Pension enquiries can still be answered by calling the JPA Enquiry Centre on 0800 085 3600 during the hours of 7am to 7pm Monday to Friday.

All other work is being maintained, although our timescales may be longer than usual.

## Guidance for service personnel with imminent discharge dates:

Service personnel and their families who expect to face significant challenges as they prepare to leave the military should seek guidance and support from their Chain of Command in the first instance. Defence Transition Services may also be able to help. Please visit [Help for service leavers from Defence Transition Services](#) for how you may be able to get more support and extra help from Defence Transition Services when leaving the Armed Forces.

## Medals

The MOD Medal Office has resumed operations. Regrettably, due to COVID-19 restrictions, there are delays in accessing pre-1980 hardcopy Service documents across MOD sites, which is impacting our normal timescales for processing applications. However, we continue to prioritize cases involving death in service and for veterans over 90 or who are terminally ill. If you are wanting to apply to obtain a medal entitlement or a physical medal(s) for either yourself, or a relative please follow the guidance on the [medals GOV.UK page](#). We will then deal with your application as soon as possible. We acknowledge that this may be frustrating. Please be assured that our officials are endeavouring to action all enquiries and applications as soon as feasible. Your patience and understanding during this challenging time are appreciated.

General information on medals can still be obtained by calling the JPA

Enquiry Centre on 0800 085 3600 during the hours of 7am to 7pm Monday to Friday, or via [DBS-Medals@mod.gov.uk](mailto:DBS-Medals@mod.gov.uk).

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## [Contingent liability arising from the Covid-19 Corporate Financing Facility](#)

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## [LLWR awards 4 year contract to Cumbrian company](#)

LLW Repository Ltd (LLWR) have awarded a four year Project Controls contract to Prima Uno, the specialist project controls, risk, programme and project management consultancy based in Cumbria.

Prima Uno have worked on the LLWR Portfolio for five years and have been awarded the first contract issued by LLWR to provide Project Controls (Planning, Cost Management, Risk Management and Analysis, Change Management, Earned Value Management (EVM), upskilling and skill transfer) under the new Business and Technical Services (BATS) Marketplace.

LLWR has established BATS Marketplace, on behalf of the NDA group, to deliver professional services across 13 business categories.

Four years ago Prima Uno was the first organisation to be awarded a contract under LLWR's Dynamic Purchasing System known as Business Services Marketplace, now replaced by BATS Marketplace, which offers a simple and efficient procurement route for both buyers and suppliers.

Georgina Wilson, Head of Project Controls at LLWR, said: "I am delighted that

we are able to continue our successful collaboration with Prima Uno and maintain the provision of an exceptional project controls service across the LLWR organisation.”

Sarah Purdham, Managing Director of Prima Uno, said: “Winning this contract means so much to me and the people of Prima Uno. We can continue our relationship with LLWR on a journey to deliver its long term goal and mission.

“We want to improve our current service and continue to deliver an exceptional service. We have been given another chance to make a difference.

“We have an exceptional relationship with LLWR and have always been a fully integrated team. Our demonstrable experience helping blue chip clients achieve sector leading performance puts us in a wonderful position to deliver value to LLWR.

“Through our programme delivery and performance improvement approaches we support clients to achieve increased levels of efficiency, cost savings, assurance and predictability to contribute to our client’s goals and targets.”

In addition to its Cumbrian head office, Prima Uno has offices in Warrington and in Hanover Square, Westminster.

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## **UKHO response to COVID-19**

In line with the UK government’s recommendations and advice on containing the outbreak of COVID-19, we would like to reassure our customers, distributors, and wider stakeholders that UKHO is working hard to minimise disruption to products and services.

We have a comprehensive business continuity plan in place, which will allow our staff to continue to deliver and we will be enacting these measures in line with government advice.

Restricting the spread of COVID-19 is an issue we take extremely seriously. Through our dedicated UKHO COVID-19 working group, we are continuing to monitor the situation and will implement the latest advice from the UK government and the NHS.

We have stopped all travel to affected areas, in line with the latest guidelines received from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and we will continue to review our travel activities accordingly.

Our priority is to continue to meet our key safety and defence obligations and fully support our customers and distributors.

We are keeping our distributors fully informed of any developments. If you are user of ADMIRALTY Maritime Data Solutions and have a query or concern, please contact your ADMIRALTY Distributor in the first instance.