

Issues with our services have been resolved

News story

We will continue to monitor the services closely.



The issues we experienced earlier today with the services below have been resolved.

- Business e-services portal
- Business Gateway
- MapSearch
- Local Land Charges (search function on e-services)
- Find a property
- Property Alert

We do not expect any further issues but will continue to monitor the services closely.

We are sorry for any inconvenience caused by these issues and thank you for your patience while we resolved them.

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First construction site to come safely back online

The facility – more commonly known as BEPPS-DIF – is the first of our construction sites to come back online after we paused all but essential

projects construction work in March.

Today around 29 people will join the handful of those who started last week on the site. The first group have mainly involved in getting the site ready for a restart of work.

Those who are starting today, and the others who will follow them, will see a very different place to the one they left in March.

We spoke to 2 members of the BEPPS-DIF team who have been working on the site to find out what their views are.

Chris Whitaker is an electrician for Balfour Beatty and has been making sure the emergency lighting is set up and that there's power in the building.

He said:

I was extremely nervous when first got told I was coming in. My wife is pregnant and I don't want to bring anything home. Getting to see all the physical changes people had put in made me feel a lot better.

It looks a lot different, and because it looks different it makes you feel and act differently.

It's a well thought-through process. You are directed to a parking bay, which has the same number as your designated table in the canteen.

In the canteen, there's plenty of space. It can take 150 people, but there will only be about 28 now, and when you sit at a table you have 2.1 metres space around you. I thought that places like the canteen might cause problems for social distancing, but it felt really good and I felt safe.

There are lines sprayed on the floor to help you keep 2.1 metres apart. I've been working on my own but I feel confident that today I'll be okay because I have seen what has been done.

We'll be working in a 4m² working area. Some rooms are obviously less than that, I know that, but in a big room having this much space will give us plenty of room to move about and do our job. I've not yet seen it in effect, but it sounds like a great idea. Giving that much more space to people while they are working. I know I'll be able to move about and not feel trapped or stifled.

The key thing I'd say to people returning today is come in with an open mind. What has been done is really good but ultimately the people that are working here are the key to making it work.

I'm not dreading coming in.

Matt Ritson works for SPIRE, which is handling logistics and one of his roles will be to check people coming onto site.

Matt said:

I came back a couple of weeks ago. It's very different coming in now compared to back in March.

There are one-way systems for walking around the buildings and the site itself, 2.1 metre floor markings, and everyone gets a designated table for meals and a car parking space.

I was nervous about coming back onto site but it's clear our safety has been taken very seriously. Everyone wants to protect our colleagues and their families.

It's easy to keep the social distancing using the lines so I can't see it being a problem when more people are on the site.

My general worries about Covid-19 are still there, but what I would say is that being on the construction site feels safer than shopping in our local supermarket. The processes in place are a lot stricter.

When working I don't feel separate from my colleagues because we've been issued radios to keep in touch. There are hand sanitisers and wipes everywhere.

I also know that if I have any concerns there are people around who are willing to listen and make changes if required.

I think people coming back this week will be surprised – it's like a military operation, designed to keep us safe.

The facility is the first of our project construction sites to restart after the pause, and as such is acting as a pilot for other projects.

We will be regularly reviewing all measures put in place, including those on BEPPS-DIF and other projects and other areas of site and our offsite offices.

Any measures brought in will depend on what is appropriate, practical and possible in differing spaces, but the overriding driver will be to keep the workforce safe.

You can read more about the changes we have made to the site [here](#).

Statement from the Lord Chancellor on the resumption of jury trials

A well-functioning justice system with the Rule of Law at its heart is one of the hallmarks of a healthy democracy like ours. Throughout the coronavirus outbreak court staff and the judiciary have worked incredibly hard to uphold the delivery of justice. This is not least to ensure the safety of those who most need our courts – among others the vulnerable women and men protected by Domestic Abuse Protection Orders and children removed from dangerous situations through Child Protection Orders.

Keeping these vital services running has necessarily meant huge changes to ways of working right across the wider courts and tribunals system, including a significant increase in the take-up of remote technology.

Despite the considerable challenges, many thousands of hearings across all jurisdictions were heard over the last month.

Around 90% of those hearings utilised audio and video equipment by the end of April and 159 priority courts and tribunals have remained open for physical hearings. This was achieved at locations from Tyneside to Truro and Cardiff to Kent by following strict public safety advice, but to date has not included jury trials.

I am pleased that the courts are now in a position, with approval from Public Health England and Public Health Wales, to take some first steps towards the resumption of jury trials. A limited number of trials will take place, conducted safely and observing social distancing rules, at courts including the Old Bailey in London and at Cardiff Crown Court. These will also help us to understand how it might be possible to conduct trials more widely as the situation with coronavirus develops.

Any person who plays a part in a criminal trial – including victims, witnesses, jurors, and legal professionals – is making a huge contribution to society that is rightly recognised as an essential reason to leave their home. They have our gratitude and they deserve our protection – and measures are being put in place to support everyone who comes to court, in whatever capacity, to do so without putting themselves at unnecessary risk.

I am extremely grateful to the Lord Chief Justice, the wider judiciary, legal professions, court staff and colleagues from across the Criminal Justice System for their determination and resolve in the discussions to get us to this point. Coming together in that spirit of collaboration will ensure that justice can continue to be done in a way that is safe for all court users.

Matthew Salter is the new UK trade attaché to Israel

World news story

Mr Matthew Salter has been appointed UK's trade attaché to Israel in succession to Mr Barry Grossman OBE, who has recently retired. Mr Salter took up his appointment in February 2020.



Matthew began his career as an economist at the UK Finance Ministry (HM Treasury) in London, working in the European policy and trade teams, before being seconded to the European Commission in Brussels. On moving to Israel in 2003, Matthew worked for the Bank of Israel in Jerusalem where he was head of Dollar investments and also served as the Bank's Chief Representative in New York for 2 years.

Before joining the British Embassy, Matthew had spent the previous 8 years working in an independent global consulting and training role at the world's leading investment banks (Goldman Sachs, Morgan Stanley, BNP Paribas, etc), hedge funds and private equity companies.

Matthew holds an MSc. in Economics from UCL, London and is President of CFA Society Israel.

On his appointment, Mr Salter has said:

I am excited to be taking up this position at a time when UK-Israel trade is on an all-time high, and keen to keep raising the bar even higher, strengthening our ties.

The UK will continue to be Israel's number 1 trade partner in Europe, and I am positive the bilateral trade and overall relations will keep growing deeper and stronger as the UK reshapes its trade relations worldwide.

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