

Priority Sectors during COVID-19

On 28 March 2020 the Northern Ireland Executive (the Executive) established the NI Engagement Forum (the Forum), a collaboration of business organisations, trade unions and key statutory bodies, to advise Government on how best to manage the challenge of COVID-19 as it applies to the NI Economy / Labour Market.

COVID-19 pandemic is primarily a public health crisis and in providing advice to the Executive, the Forum's number one priority has been the preservation of life.

The Executive has published a list of priority sectors and a practical guide to make workplaces safer, based on the advice of the Forum. The list of priority sectors is advisory and will continue to be a live document; and is intended to enable those businesses operating within the named sectors, and importantly those that form part of the extensive supply chain supporting the provision of priority goods and services, to continue to operate. Employers within a priority sector should assist their downstream supply chains by confirming in writing their importance to their continued operation.

The Executive has been clear that no one should leave home without a justifiable reason, and that includes the requirement to travel to work; and this message is re-affirmed in the safety guide developed by the Forum.

Employers and their workforce have a shared responsibility to ensure lives are not exposed to unnecessary risk while enabling priority sectors within the economy to continue to function, to allow for the provision of essential goods and services, avoid significant job losses and maintain incomes.

This guidance is for companies critical to local, national and global supply chains that are responding to the COVID-19 crisis, and other companies that perform critical global roles. Businesses, which supply priority sectors, including downstream suppliers and subcontractors, are also covered by this guidance.

Some sectors will not fall within the list of priority sectors but are able to continue to operate with staff working from home; and these business operations should continue. Similarly, priority sector businesses should facilitate remote working as far as possible.

Many firms have already successfully repurposed in response to the increasing demand from priority sectors and are playing a huge role in sustaining life. These initiatives are hugely welcomed and to be encouraged. Therefore, any business that does not immediately identify as part of the agreed priority sectors has the opportunity to repurpose, to provide goods or services critical to the fight against COVID 19.

The current list of priority sectors is a live and fluid document, which will be updated to reflect any Executive agreed changes to the Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020 and advice from the NI Engagement Forum.

Broad Sector	Sub Sector	Detail
Production	Mining and Quarrying	Extraction, processing and delivery of materials essential to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agricultural activities • Water filtration & purification • Construction / Maintenance of Health /Education related Infrastructure • Production and supply of high value aggregates • Emergency maintenance of highways as per Department of Transport list of essential activities
	Manufacturing	Manufacture of all food products, raw materials and ingredients Manufacture and supply of animal feed Processing of animal products Manufacture of beverages Manufacture of Personal Protective garments and other wearing apparel related to the delivery of health services. Manufacture of paper and paper products relating to packaging, human hygiene and medical services Printing and reproduction of recorded media relating to public information and public safety Manufacture of coke and refined petroleum products Manufacture of chemicals and chemical products Manufacture of aerospace components and maintenance required to ensure the certification of aircraft Manufacture of basic pharmaceutical products and pharmaceutical preparations Manufacture of rubber and plastic products where they intersect with life sustaining industries Manufacture of computer, electronic, optical products and imaging products

		<p>Manufacture of electrical equipment essential for life sustaining industries and sectors listed as priority areas</p> <p>Manufacture of security, cyber, cloud and data centre infrastructure products</p> <p>Manufacture of machinery and equipment essential for life sustaining industries including minerals, waste and supplying and servicing sectors listed as priority areas</p> <p>Manufacture of power generators and service parts</p> <p>Repair and installation of machinery and equipment</p> <p>Manufacture of construction materials for essential maintenance or remedial works to include Concrete, Cement and Stone Products and Bituminous Materials</p> <p>Manufacture of products critical to local, national global supply chains that are responding to the COVID-19 crisis</p> <p>Manufacture and servicing of marine products required to ensure the continued flag state approval of marine transport</p>
	Energy Generation and Supply	<p>Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply, distribution and servicing</p> <p>Works that are necessary for the short to medium term security of supply, essential connections and/or for the protection and safety of consumers and utility employees</p> <p>Fuel (including distribution)</p>
	Water and Waste	<p>Water collection, treatment and supply</p> <p>Sewerage</p> <p>Waste collection, (including animal waste), treatment and disposal activities; materials recovery</p> <p>Remediation activities and other waste management services</p>

Construction		<p>Any new builds/conversions/maintenance supporting, health service and related activities, other emergency and security services, food manufacture, supply & logistics and utilities</p> <p>Any new builds/conversions/maintenance supporting priority sectors identified by either local or national governments</p> <p>Emergency services to businesses and homes on an emergency call-out basis in areas such as electrical, heating, plumbing, glazing and roofing or emergency repair related to fire, theft and burglary</p> <p>Supply of construction materials and builders' merchants for the above</p>
Distribution	Wholesale and Retail	<p>Wholesale of agricultural raw materials and live animals</p> <p>Wholesale of food, beverages and tobacco</p> <p>Wholesale of household goods</p> <p>Retail sale of all food, beverages and tobacco in specialised and non-specialised stores</p> <p>Retail sale of agricultural supplies in specialised stores</p> <p>Retail of supplies for the health of animals, including animal feed</p> <p>Retail sale of automotive fuel in specialised stores</p> <p>Retail delivery of home heating fuels</p> <p>Dispensing chemist in specialised stores (including veterinary medicines)</p> <p>Retail sale of essential goods for household maintenance</p> <p>Retail delivery sale of office equipment to facilitate home working</p>

		<p>Retail delivery sale of essential home items such as beds, mattresses, ovens, and other household equipment</p> <p>Retail business to consumer deliveries from businesses who don't ordinarily engage directly with consumers i.e. farm shops or restaurants etc. now providing home delivery</p> <p>Pet shops</p> <p>Newsagents</p> <p>Off licences and licensed shops selling alcohol (including breweries)</p> <p>Bicycle shops</p> <p>Post offices</p> <p>Storage and distribution facilities</p> <p>Car parks</p>
	Motor Vehicles	<p>Maintenance and repair of motor vehicles</p> <p>Supply, maintenance and repair and repair of commercial and agricultural vehicles and refrigeration units</p>
Service Industries	Transport and Storage	<p>Land transport and transport via pipelines – all HGV, Bus, train, van drivers and Taxis</p> <p>Water transport – all Port staff, stevedores and crews</p> <p>Air transport – all operations staff associated with the continued operation of Airports that handle NI air freight</p> <p>Warehousing, self-storage and support activities for transportation – forklift truck drivers, general warehouse operatives and load planners</p>

		Transport managers and transport planners who manage drivers, routes, deliveries and collections
	Food Service	<p>Food delivery and takeaway can remain operational. This covers the provision of hot or cold food that has been prepared for consumers for collection or delivery to be consumed, reheated or cooked by consumers off the premises</p> <p>Cafes or canteens at a hospital, care home or school and in any priority business</p> <p>Canteens at a prison or an establishment intended for use for naval, military or air force purposes or for the purposes of the Department of the Secretary of State responsible for defence</p> <p>Services providing food or drink to the homeless</p> <p>Food or drink sold by a hotel or other accommodation as part of room service is not to be treated as being sold for consumption on the premises</p> <p>Where there are no practical alternatives, other workplace canteens can remain open to provide food for their staff and/or provide a space for breaks. However, where possible, staff should be encouraged to bring their own food, and distributors should move to takeaway. Measures should be taken to minimise the number of people in the canteen / break space at any one given time, for example by using a rota.</p>
	Accommodation	<p>Accommodation:</p> <p>(a) for any person, who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is unable to return to their main residence • uses that accommodation as their main residence • needs accommodation while moving house • needs accommodation to attend a funeral • is homeless <p>(b) To host blood donation sessions</p> <p>(c) For any purpose requested by any Northern Ireland department, the Regional Agency, a health and social care trust or a district council</p>

	Real Estate	Conveyancing – essential services which cannot be postponed
	Information and Communication	<p>Print media – Newspapers</p> <p>Programming, production and broadcasting activities</p> <p>Telecommunications and postal service</p> <p>Information technology and data infrastructure sector required to support priority services</p>
	Professional, Scientific and Technical	<p>Scientific research and development</p> <p>Legal Services necessary for the functioning of the judicial system</p> <p>Food testing and certification</p> <p>Agency labour providers for priority services</p> <p>Veterinary activities</p> <p>Professional services required to support priority services and/or vulnerable people</p> <p>Professional services required to providing services or equipment to support home working</p> <p>Laboratory and analytical service</p> <p>Professional services to satisfy legislative and statutory consultee requirements, in the areas of health and safety, land use planning and reserve replenishment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surveyors (Land, Air Quality, Noise and Ecological) • Geotechnical Engineers • Blasting Engineers and explosive suppliers <p>Dental services, opticians, audiology services, chiropody, chiropractors, osteopaths and other medical or health services, including services relating to mental health</p>

	Administration and Support Services	<p>Security and investigation activities</p> <p>Private security to priority services</p> <p>Cleaning for priority service building</p> <p>Emergency and remedial landscape service activities</p>
	Other Service activities	<p>Funeral Directors and the provision of goods (e.g. flowers, headstones) insofar as they can be ordered remotely</p> <p>Laundrette and dry-cleaning facilities</p> <p>Childcare for keyworkers and vulnerable children (as defined by the Department of Health)All other services required to maintain the health and social care sector (including sub-contractors)</p> <p>Third sector organisations providing support priority services and/or vulnerable people</p> <p>A cinema, theatre or concert Hall can broadcast a performance to people outside the premises over the internet, or on radio or television</p> <p>Library services in response to orders received:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) through a website, or otherwise by on-line communication, (ii) by telephone, including orders by text message, or (iii) by post; <p>may continue</p>

Financial and Insurance		<p>Banking (including banks, building societies, credit unions, trade and credit agents short-term loan providers and cash points)</p> <p>Insurance</p> <p>Pension funding</p> <p>Monetary intermediation</p>
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing		<p>Crop and animal production, including essential contractors (e.g. slurry spreading), artificial insemination, animal feed</p> <p>Machinery manufacturing, suppliers, service mechanics and engineers</p> <p>Fishing and aquaculture</p> <p>Pest Control</p> <p>Aquaculture</p>
Public Administration and Health	Administration of the State and the economic and social policy of the community	<p>Regulation of the activities of providing health care, education, cultural services and other social services, excluding social security</p> <p>Social security activities</p>
	Provision of services to the community as a whole	<p>Defence activities</p> <p>Justice and judicial activities</p> <p>Public order and safety activities</p> <p>Fire service activities</p> <p>Any private provider assisting the public sector in delivery of these services</p>

	Health	Human health activities Residential care activities Social Workers and social care activities Any private provider assisting the public sector in delivery of these services
	Education	Teaching, non-teaching and support staff necessary to provide supervised learning for the children of key workers and vulnerable children (as defined by the Department of Education)