



To whom it may concern,

COVID-19 AND THE WOODLAND SUPPLY CHAIN

The purpose of this letter is to explain the definition of “essential work”, as defined by government guidance, which is being carried out by woodland managers, foresters and the related supply chain. Government has specifically clarified that:

“Those involved in the supply chain of wood for key goods (including, but not limited to pallets, heating, packaging, tissue paper, timber harvesting, sawmills) should be considered key workers. Only necessary workers, producing key goods, should continue to attend workplaces. Working from home should be encouraged for administrative staff.”

The intention of this definition is to ensure that the “the supply chain of wood for key goods” remains in operation as it is producing goods and services the government regards are essential at this time. That includes the wood fuel supply chain, on which many will still depend for their heating next winter. Without work now, these supplies will then run out. The advice on essential workers applies to all operators, regardless of size, it is not simply focused on larger operators.

UK Government has provided further guidance: **“with the exception of some non-essential shops and public venues, we are not asking any other businesses to close – indeed it is important for business to carry on.”** Where workers can work from home they should. Most woodland and small-scale forestry supply chain work simply cannot be done from home - including those growing young trees in nurseries, planting new forests and woods, harvesting & delivering essential woodfuel. It is therefore important that these workers are able to travel to work and to undertake their activities without harassment or obstruction.

Woodland owners, forestry, wood processing, woodfuel supplier and nurseries are all committed to working safely and responsibly in accordance with government guidelines for employers and businesses on coronavirus (COVID-19)*. Those working in the sector are already accustomed to operating to high levels of control through existing Health and Safety protocols, which largely already enforce social distancing for safety reasons.

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*<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/guidance-for-employers-and-businesses-on-coronavirus-covid-19>

Further information: office@smallwoods.org.uk & <http://smallwoods.org.uk/covid-19/>

Bringing woodlands to life

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