

23 March 2020

Rt Hon George Eustice MP
Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Seacole Building 2 Marsham Street
LONDON
SW1P 4DF

Dear Secretary of State

Re maintenance of key transport networks and amenities during potential lockdown periods.

In anticipation of potential measures to minimise further spread of COVID-19 by closing businesses and limiting business travel, we ask for your consideration of the importance of maintaining amenity weed and pest control during such a period.

While we understand that there are currently no such measures in place, we urge you to ensure that any such restrictions give due regard to the importance of the offices, stores and operations (including mobile operatives and mobile stores) of amenity weed and pest controllers, including invasive weed control specialists.

The key contributions of amenity weed and pest control to essential functions include:

- Keep the public safe – works to maintain public spaces and access routes are important for the safety of key workers and essential facilities like the NHS estate, essential retail outlets and schools.
- Keep Britain moving – weed sprays and other treatments are essential for maintaining safe transport networks, including road and rail.
- Keep food, from farm to fork, free from pest contamination – amenity pest control plays an important part in keeping the food supply chain safe to the point of sale and keeping essential retail outlets and storage pest-free.
- Keep Britain building – invasive weed remediation and site clearance are often a necessary first step in construction projects, from HS2 to house building. It is crucial that civil engineers and housebuilders, amongst others, have access to specialists in order to facilitate these projects.
- Keep conveyancing moving – while there may be evidence suggesting that lenders are currently overly risk-averse, the situation as it stands is that house sales effectively can't proceed if Japanese knotweed is recorded on a property without intervention from a specialist.
- Maintain amenity assets – restricting local authorities' NHS's and other landowners' ability to maintain their estates would multiply the costs of remediation at a later date (even just a few months down the line) and a longer shutdown will likely result in significant costs for restoration or reinstatement of paths, facilities and public open spaces.
- Keep the virus contained - most of these works can be done by a solo worker or team of two, and by their nature require the exclusion of the public from the working area; this should minimise any potential for virus transmission or cross contamination. Most of these works can also be managed remotely, requiring minimal interactions between members of staff within the business.

The undersigned, and the organisations we head, are strongly-positioned to disseminate government advice to a large proportion of companies in the sector and our members and the public at large already rely on our organisations for best practice, updates and useful information.

We are confident that any restrictions on activities and any conditions applied to exemptions will be followed by our members.

Yours sincerely,



Stephen Jacob
Chief Executive Officer, BASIS



Steve Hodgson
Chief Executive Officer, Property Care Association



Ian Andrew
Chief Executive, BPCA



John Moverley
Chairman, Amenity Forum



David Layland
Chairman, INNSA



Wayne Grills
Chief Executive, BALI

