



Chartered
Institute for
Archaeologists



Statement on COVID-19 and archaeology in the planning system

ALGAO UK and CIFA are aware that measures to deal with the coronavirus will affect the undertaking of planning-related archaeology. Across the sector we are adapting to these challenges and working to ensure that planning-led archaeology work can be undertaken where necessary, meeting government advice on safety standards and planning regulations. Every local authority has a robust business continuity plan in the event of staff shortages and/or changing work circumstances. These plans will be updated in response to new guidance as it is issued during this period of uncertainty.

Archaeological businesses should follow Government advice and instructions. This advice currently varies across the UK, eg with greater restrictions in Scotland on what construction work can be undertaken. Advice is, however, being regularly updated. For all parts of the UK, the health and safety of workers remains paramount. [Links to the latest advice from around the UK and information about site working safety can be found on the CIFA Coronavirus information page](#) and the [latest statements from ALGAO can be found here](#).

Most local authorities have implemented agile working arrangements, with many staff working from home. This is allowing them to follow the government advice for social distancing for their own staff while also continuing to provide planning services where appropriate.

Contractors and clients may need to adjust expectations as to whether work is possible at the current time. We encourage you to closely consult with your local authority archaeologist and to consider what alternative options could be appropriate, for example delaying the work or changing methodology/approach for the best project outcome. [Further advice on Coronavirus and meeting CIFA standards can be found here](#).

Archaeology remains a necessary part of planning. Pre-application evaluation requirements and on-site mitigation works necessary for the fulfilment of planning conditions are still expected to be completed as they would with any other planning requirements. Where works cannot be undertaken safely, in accordance with professional standards, and to the level necessary to satisfy planning rules these works may need to be delayed.

If you have questions about impacts on any specific site, please bring them to the attention of your local authority, [contact details can be found here](#).