COVID-19 and Data Centres
Sector position statement: BULLETIN 5

6 April 2020

COVID-19 and data centres: Bulletin FIVE

This Bulletin pulls together developments since Monday 30th March.   Useful links are included in each point and at the bottom.

1   Updated URL for data centre related COVID-19 updates

You can find bulletins and updates related to data centres and COVID-19 on our dedicated data centre COVID-19 web page collected here: **https://www.techuk.org/covid-19-information-hub/data_centres**

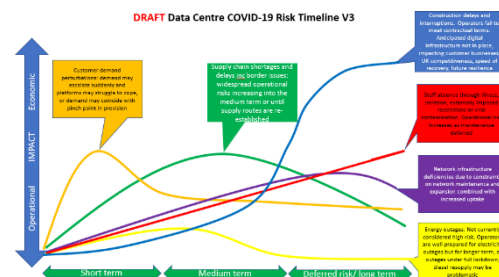## 2   Latest update from DCMS

DCMS joined us for our last catch up call on Friday 3rd April. DCMS has strengthened the Data Infrastructure Resilience Team and provided updates on key worker status, on construction and answered a variety of questions from members.   Operators discussed risks and reviewed the risk timeline. The summary notes of the call are here.

3   Footfall and travel data

We collated data from operators on footfall to sites and staff travel patterns, including those to construction sites. From this it was clear that footfall to data centres varies by business model. Footfall can be reduced significantly in the short term by limiting customer access and restricting activity to essential only, and many operators were already implementing such steps. Unsurprisingly those with multiple customers or with offices on site had higher footfall but also had greater capacity for reduction. The majority of operational staff do not use public transport operators are providing additional private transport for employees at this time. We will be sharing a more detailed overview in the next few days.

4   Risk timeline

We refined our risk timeline and reviewed it (see draft here, to be updated to accommodate comments). The timeline includes risks like energy supply, supply chain, staff absence, construction delay, network deficiency and perturbations in customer demand.   If you have comments, feedback or suggestions on how best we might represent risk to operators and to the economy at large related to COVID-19, then please get in touch.   In the meantime an updated edition will be available later this week.

5   Misinterpretation of Government guidance

We clarified the government guidance on staff movement and documentation following widespread reports of misinterpretation by police tasked with enforcement. See our update here:
https://www.techuk.org/insights/news/item/17185-restrictions-on-movement-clarification-for-data-centres

6   Childcare provision for key workers

We collected more data on key worker access and whether government policy for childcare and school provision was effective. For most it is working effectively. However, there are clearly issues with consistency. Some schools are insisting that both parents must be key workers. When one parent works for a non-critical business and cannot work from home (and must therefore travel to work) and the other is a key worker the inevitable result will be an increase in key worker absences and there are some instances of this in our sector already. See our summary of feedback here:
https://www.techuk.org/insights/news/item/17235-covid-19-childcare-and-key-worker-absences

7   DCMS questions

DCMS has submitted a list of questions for us to answer. These cover three main areas:

- Mapping the sector, where they need to understand more about how data centres fit into the infrastructure landscape and how things work in practice.
- Ensuring continuity – what is needed to keep data centres functional. How do things go wrong in data centres and what are the consequences? What are the impacts of COVID-19 on the sector and how can they be mitigated, and how can government best support?
- Future risk landscape – interdependencies, overseas, supply chain, etc.

We are liaising with DCMS to schedule and prioritise our responses and will be circulating specific questions on this shortly. Providing substantive responses will help them to make appropriate internal requests for government support and ensure that policy making relevant to our sector is properly informed.

8   Regular catch up calls

We held our regular sector catch up call on Friday 3rd April, kindly hosted by 4D Data Centres, where DCMS brought us up to date with policy development. Our next catch-up will be scheduled for THURSDAY 9th April to avoid Good Friday. Access details will be in the email circular the day before. Get in touch if you are not receiving these.

9   Useful links:

DCMS Data Infrastructure Resilience Team mailbox: COVID-data-resilience@culture.gov.uk for queries from data centre operators, customers and suppliers**.** They understand the critical role that data centres play and are ensuring that this is understood across government.

techUK information hub: Don't forget that we are trying to group as much information as possible into the data centre COVID page here: **https://www.techuk.org/covid-19-information-hub/data_centres**
This is a section of techUK's COVID-19 information hub. Which covers broader developments relevant to the tech sector at large.

Operator statements

Digital Realty: https://www.digitalrealty.com/coronavirus-statement
Equinix: https://www.equinix.com/lp/equinix-coronavirus-statement-to-customers-and-partners/

Equinix: https://blog.equinix.com/blog/2020/03/26/covid-19-protecting-our-critical-ibx-data-center-infrastructure/

4D Data Centres: https://www.4d-dc.com/insight/4d-data-centres-covid-19-latest-response-plan-statement

Useful URLs

WHO guidelines: https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public

Latest govt advice: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public

PHE: Decontaminating non healthcare environments: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings

For further information on techUK's data centres programme see our programme overview:
https://www.techuk.org/insights/news/item/272-data-centre-programme-overview

Or visit our website https://www.techuk.org/focus/programmes/data-centres

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