

14 April 2020

COVID-19 and data centres: Bulletin SIX

This Bulletin pulls together developments since Monday 6th April. Useful links are included in each point and at the bottom.

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1 Latest update from DCMS

DCMS joined us for our last catch up call on Friday 9th April. They updated us on key workers, where current policy is likely to be unchanged for the moment, and on construction where they will continue to work closely with us to ensure that projects providing core digital infrastructure can continue where possible. Operators discussed the risk timeline (see below) but most of the call was taken up with discussion over the best way to answer the list of questions that had been received from DCMS (see separate item below). The summary notes of the call are [here](#) (direct link to doc) or available via the insight here: <https://www.techuk.org/insights/news/item/17292-data-centres-covid-19-call-with-dcms>.

2 Questions for the sector from DCMS

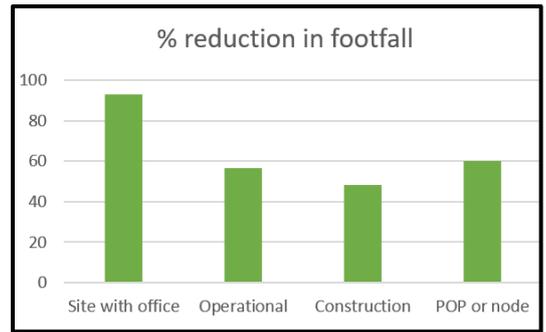
Our dedicated team at DCMS – the Data Infrastructure Resilience Team - is building a picture of the sector so they can advocate effectively on our behalf across government and ensure that policy decisions are properly informed. The current status of questions and how we plan to respond is [here](#) (direct link to document) or accessible via the insight here: <https://www.techuk.org/insights/news/item/17279-covid-19-and-data-centres-questions-from-dcms>

Dealing with questions on typical failures and how risks to business continuity from COVID-19 can best be mitigated will be our priority. Therefore, providing substantive answers will be our primary occupation over the next few weeks. Please have a look at this list. Do you have existing collateral to hand that could help answer any of the questions? If so do share it and we will include it in our dossier. In the meantime look out for more structured questions from us. They will be coming thick and fast.

techUK data centre programme		techUK			
QUESTIONS FROM DCMS FOR REVIEW, 9 th APRIL 2020					
Task / Issue	What is needed	How can we help? (Solutions...)	Who will do it?	Priority	Status / Next steps
Provide indicative footprint for sector	Date on footfall and travel maps to aid policy making	Collat / maps to assist data	Deput with operator input	!	DCMS: exit for review
Explain DC customer layers	Show how data centres support multiple layers of customer activity	Bulletin infographic, annotated, other collateral	Deput with operator input	!	
Explain how the internet works	Explain how data flows through the internet and where the DC fits in	Forum infographic with annotations	Deput with member input	!	Final up needs for review
Explain core data infrastructure	Provide simple analogy for relationship between data centre, telco, comms and power	Video man infographic DC Comms, Power	Deput with member input	!	
Developer case studies	Case studies specific transactions in practice: e.g. payment, healthcare	Annotated infographic, existing collateral	Deput with member input	!	
How inter-dependencies	Explain which sectors data centres depend on, and vice versa?	Infographic & explanatory notes, existing collateral	Deput with member input	!	
What does a DC look like?	Explain the kinds of things that can go wrong and the consequences	Identify typical issues rather than attempt a complete list	Iterative conversation with members	!	
... and how is it resolved?	In principle, explain how are DC faults detected, resolved, prevented?	Identify in principle how faults are mapped and resolved	Deput with member input	!	
Explain DC role to mitigate external risks	Explain how data centres mitigate external risks to economic activity from other tech DCs	Use examples to explain how DCs mitigate risks	Deput with member input	!	

3 Footfall and travel data

As reported last week, we collated data from operators on footfall to sites and staff travel patterns, including those to construction sites. Footfall varies by business model and operators have already reduced numbers significantly in the short term by limiting customer access and restricting activity to essential only. How long this can be sustained for is less clear, however. We promised to share a more detailed overview, and you can find that [here](#) (direct link to document) or via the insight here.

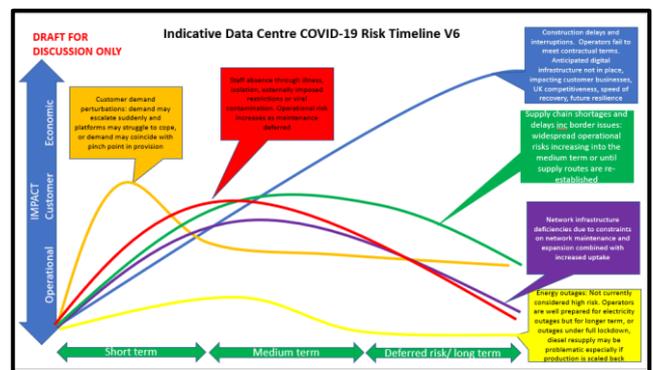


<https://www.techuk.org/insights/news/item/17269-covid-19-and-data-centres>

4 Risk timeline

We have been developing an indicative risk timeline. Our colleagues in DCMS are keen for us to expedite this work. They also need us to help them understand where government can provide support. The timeline has been updated to reflect member feedback: see updated indicative risk timeline [here](#) (direct link to document) or via the insight here:

<https://www.techuk.org/insights/news/item/17298-data-centres-and-covid-19-indicative-risk-timeline-latest-version>.



The timeline includes risks like energy supply, supply chain, staff absence, construction delay, network deficiency and perturbations in customer demand. However this is only an indicative picture based on anecdotal input from operators. We now need to start the real work of identifying when, where and why these risks may be realised based on the most likely things to go wrong - and of course working out what we can do to mitigate them. You will be hearing more about that piece of work imminently, but if you have relevant information or data don't wait for us - please get in touch.

5 International comparisons on CNI status

We have been working with data centre trade associations across Europe and beyond to compare notes on the relative status of data centres. We asked whether data centres were designated as Critical National Infrastructure by default and if not, whether individual data centres were singled out for CNI status on the basis of their function. We also asked whether data centre staff were given key worker status, either formally or informally. We also noted whether or not countries had been under some form of lockdown or restriction on movement. In some cases this varied by region or was non obligatory. Sometimes operators weren't sure whether they were CNI or not. Anecdotal comments were also summarised. Thanks to the DDA and EUDCA for coordinating responses.

Location	DC mkt size	CNI by default?	Some are CNI	Key worker status?	Comments	Lock down
AT	S	N	N	N	Anecdotal issues reported of DC outages and impact on service provision due to lack of access.	Y
BE	S	N	N	N	DCs not CNI but digital infrastructure is on key workers list.	Y
DK	S	N	Y	Y	Some data centres listed as CNI depending on function. No issues reported regarding access.	N
FI	S	Y	N/A	Y	Data centres have been CNI since covid war. No changes needed to status.	Y
FR	L	N	Y	N	Some data centres designated CNI based on function. Staff not yet classed as key workers.	Y
DE	L	Y	Y	Y	Data centres over BMW designated CNI relatively recently.	P
GR	S	N	N	N	DCs not classed as CNI and not on key workers list. Negotiations ongoing with government.	Y
IE	L	N	N	Y	DCs are considered infrastructure but not formally classed CNI. Construction projects stopped.	Y
IT	M	N	N	N	DCs not classed as CNI but staff able to access sites provided they have letter of authority.	Y
NL	L	N	Y	Y	Some DCs designated CNI depending on function. Staff informally recognised as key workers.	P
NO	M	N	Y	Y	Some data centres designated CNI depending on function. Dialogue ongoing.	P
PL	S	N	N	?	Data centres not CNI unless they include telecoms exchange.	Y
PT	S	N	Y	Y	Situation fluid - CNI currently only extends to telecoms but scope being expanded.	?
ES	M	N	N	?	Activities related to telecoms allowed to continue operating. CNI status unclear.	Y
SE	M	N	Y	Y	Data centres not CNI by default but digital infrastructure included in key worker list.	N
CH	M	N	?	?	Data centres can request CNI status from government. Unclear how many have CNI status.	Y
UK	L	N	Y	Y	Some data centres designated CNI depending on function. On key workers list. Dialogue ongoing. Federal declaration that ICT is critical, but significant variation in approach by state. Largest cluster in N Virginia: see Leadsour page. In dialogue.	Y
US	L	Y	N/A	Y		Y
Location	DC mkt size	CNI by default?	Some are CNI	Key worker status?	Comments	Lock down

<https://www.techuk.org/insights/news/item/17286-data-centres-international-comparisons-on-cni-status>

6 PPE: What are you doing?

There is no legal requirement to issue PPE in the UK at the moment but operators want to compare notes. We have circulated questions to our operators to get a feel for current common practice. This will help understand our state of readiness should the government position change. This is not restricted to medical grade PPE – for instance some operators are issuing cloth masks just in case people are infected but asymptomatic as this is thought to help prevent them infecting others. If you haven't seen the questions but can help please get in touch: emma.fryer@techuk.org or lucas.banach@techuk.org

7 Construction: Government guidance

Operators have reported that they have struggled to locate updated government guidance on construction. The last we saw was published on 8th april and is here: See latest govt guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/social-distancing-in-the-workplace-during-coronavirus-covid-19-sector-guidance> (look for construction, logistics and manufacturing)

It is also worth tracking the outputs from the CLC- Construction Leadership Council, the emergency task force set up: <http://www.constructionleadershipcouncil.co.uk/>

8 Where do YOU sit in the DC service landscape?

We are finalising our UK data centre sector overview – a snapshot of the sector explaining what data centres are, where they are, what they do and why they matter. As there is currently increased interest in the sector from external stakeholders, we want to include a schematic overview of data centre runners and riders in the UK. This will comprise an indicative mapping slide (showing who does what, from wholesale colocation to system integration), complemented by explanatory notes and by a list of operators with links to websites. Look out for the request for input which will be circulated later this week.

9 Regular catch up calls

We held our regular sector catch up call on Thursday 9th 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 Friday 17th 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.

10 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](https://www.techuk.org/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>

UKCloud: <https://ukcloud.com/hub/news/ukcloud-confirms-readiness-to-support-public-services-in-responding-to-the-coronavirus-outbreak/>

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>

11 Contacts



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