

## **CONFOR COVID-19 AND KEY WORKERS IN THE FORESTRY AND WOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRY - GUIDANCE**

Following on from the guidance issued by UK Government (18th March 2020), the industry, through Confor, has sought further clarification on the definition of 'Key Worker' in relation to those employed in the forestry and wood processing industry.

The Government through DEFRA has recognised the importance of our industry in supplying wood for key goods stating:

“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.”

Most if not all of UK industry relies on wood-based products to keep the economy moving, as almost all goods, equipment and machines are packed and transported on wooden pallets or in wooden boxes. Pallets and wooden packaging are essential to ensure the security of food supply, pharmaceuticals and medical equipment and to maintain supply chain integrity.

Biomass energy provides electricity for the grid and heat for hospitals, care-homes, communities and much more.

Wood fibre also provides packaging for food and medicines.

All roles within the forestry and wood processing sector which are critical to supplying these key goods have an important role to play at this stage.

Based on Government guidelines, and if alternative childcare arrangements cannot be made, Key Workers should be given access to a school place for their children, assuming the Key Worker is happy to do so.

Equally, the decision to give a school place is at the discretion of the school, but Confor advises its member companies to provide all assistance necessary e.g. a formal letter, to confirm with the school that a Key Workers specific role is necessary for the continuation of an essential service.

Please also use this document to reinforce your worker's case and refer schools to the Confor website for further information.

Confor continues to lobby the government to maintain this Key Worker status in the coming months and monitor daily developments in this regard.

Finally, it is important to continue to mitigate the risk of infection by observing hygiene and sanitation guidelines, and reduce physical interaction wherever possible between

Key Workers. Any Key Workers should carefully consider whether their children really do need to attend school to help minimise the spread of the virus.

(This information is correct as of 27 March 2020 and readers are advised to continue to look at other government and media sources in addition to Confor to ensure a full picture and gain possession of the latest information)