

Wed 23/09/2020 14:34

Dear Colleagues,

This week's catch up is a little early as I am taking my daughter to start her course at university on Thursday. Like many of you, I too have had several months where the chaos of education policy has impacted on both home and work life. I am sure that if you did not see the Prime Minister's announcement yesterday you will by now have heard about it. There are of course variations amongst the devolved nations but in essence the theme is the same; Covid has not gone away, the risk of a second spike is going up and action must be taken now. So what does that mean for us at the FSC. The C-19 OPT has done some detailed analysis of the implications today which you can see below. My take on it is that this continues to conform to the 'roadmap' we presented to trustees on 2 July. At that time we said that we should "plan for the worst and hope for the best" and sadly our worst case planning seems to have been about right. We anticipated no residential business this autumn which despite our lobbying activity seems to be highly likely, and we planned for 10% income from schools and 20% from universities in the spring term which we continue to hope and plan for.

### **C-19 Update Operational Update**

Following the UK government and devolved nations statements yesterday, we need to once again revisit FSC guidance. It is important to note that much of this is now legal obligation, with fines in place if we don't get it right. Everyone has done a great job to date to ensure we are covid secure. It remains the case that all our actions should be about reducing the risk of transmission. The key areas we have identified as impacting on us are below. The changes will not be great as we have already got much of this in place.

- Working from home, where you can, has remained the FSC position. As we get busier more staff may be needed at locations. But to help everyone, only go to your workplace when you have to and as agreed with your manager.
- Staff and customers will need to wear face coverings more of the time. C-19 OPT will send out updated guidance soon. The FSC ones should be with locations by the end of the week.
- We may need to modify how our dining rooms operate to fit with new hospitality guidance which has a focus on table service and takeaway.
- We are confirming the finer details of the "rule of 6" and the exemptions to this, and how this impacts on our leisure customers.

### **Debate in Scottish Parliament**

Last week I alerted you to the Scottish 'save our centres campaign' and highly successful petition. Yesterday the situation was debated in the Scottish Parliament. For those interested it can be seen here <https://www.scottishparliament.tv/meeting/members-business-residential-outdoor-centres-september-22-2020>

### **Business Interruption Insurance**

We have a Business interruption (BI) insurance policy in place but to date, like many others, we have received no settlement from our insurers. You may have seen the news last week that the High Court handed down its judgment in a test case brought by the UK's Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) on whether a sample of BI insurance policies provide cover in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. [The court found](#) that some, but not all, of the 'disease' and 'denial of access' clauses in 21 sample insurance extensions provided cover, depending on the detailed wording in each case and

the effect on the insured business. It also ruled that the Covid-19 pandemic and the government and public response to it were a single cause of covered loss, required in order for claims for which the policy provides cover to be paid. All of this would seem to suggest that there may be some hope that our claim may be successful however, the case may yet be appealed. For those interested more detail can be found here <https://www.fca.org.uk/news/press-releases/result-fca-business-interruption-test-case>

### **School Travel Insurance**

As some of you may know we offer travel insurance to schools coming on visits to our centres. Last week we received feedback from Zurich, our insurer, that they have received School Journey Claims valued at £1.1m and have settled £495K. Can I thank the staff who have helped our customers recoup their losses. I know that it has been a difficult and at times frustrating and repetitive task but it has clearly been worth it and really demonstrates to our customers that we care.

### **Furlough**

You may have seen in the news that the chancellor is weighing up plans to replace the furlough scheme with German-style wage subsidies as part of a wider emergency support package to help businesses through a second wave of Covid-19. We will be following this closely as, at the moment, the scheme is due to finish on 31 Oct. The SLT will be considering our options for the end of the furlough scheme at the SLT meeting next week and I will communicate our plans soon after that.

### **Geographical Association**

In keeping with letting you know what our partners are up to I have attached the GA's new strategic plan, for the period 2020-25.

### **Natural England Report**

Rob Cooke, one of our trustees, drew my attention to the recently published Natural England report:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-people-and-nature-survey-for-england-monthly-interim-indicators-for-july-2020-experimental-statistics/the-people-and-nature-survey-for-england-monthly-interim-indicators-for-july-2020-experimental-statistics>

The following statistics are particularly relevant to us at the FSC:

- There has been an increase in the percentage of adults who think that learning outside or about nature is especially important for their child at this time (28% of adults with children, up from 19% in June and May).
- Nearly half of adults with children believe their child seems happier when they have spent time outside (46%, up from 36% in June and 40% in May).

### **Covid-19 –Staff Health, Safety and Wellbeing Survey**

An initial report on the staff survey has been produced and is attached to this catch up. This report along with the full text from the comments will be discussed at SLT next week. We have not shared the full comments with everyone as many are quite specific and personal. The comments can be

grouped into very clear themes which are picked up in the attached report. Thank you to those who provided clear and useful suggestions on how we can improve what we are doing. Members of SLT and C-19 OPT will be asked to respond to these themes with specific actions to ensure we learn from the survey and the comments.

### **Green Recovery Fund**

Some of you may be aware of the governments green recovery fund <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/governments-40-million-green-recovery-challenge-fund-opens-for-applications> A great deal of work has been going on to get our bids together and I would like to thank all of those involved for the work over last few days. A top level draft of the bid is with the project team and they are working on it today to take into account feedback from DEFRA. We are submitting four applications to the DEFRA Green Recovery Fund over the coming days, including two partnership bids with national charities and coalitions. We are also applying for external funding during 2021 to deliver training courses and related resources/publications to school groups, young people and adults. The focus is connecting people to nature and upskilling people to take on green jobs and volunteer roles that help the natural environment. This work will also equip FSC with projects ready to discuss with other funders over coming months.

Stay well and keep safe

Mark