

Rail supply chain urged to 'have your say' on best way to bounce back from coronavirus

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The Rail Supply Group (RSG) is launching a survey to get the views of businesses supplying the rail industry on the impact of COVID-19 on their operations.

These are extraordinary times, affecting every business in the rail supply chain. So RSG has been invited by Government to form a Coronavirus Taskforce to set out a clear path from the current crisis to the fullest, fastest and best recovery for the rail supply chain.

The starting point is a survey to collect the views of relevant businesses – to build a clear picture of the current situation and the areas of activity needed to support a bounce back.

The survey aims to improve understanding about how the COVID-19 crisis is impacting on the rail sector's supply chain:

- determining the outlook and how business certainty, sustainability and survivability is being impacted;
- providing tangible and specific evidence, actions and steps needed to aid and speed the best possible recovery;
- suggesting potential barriers that might risk recovery or hinder progress.

The survey is being sent to key decision makers within businesses across the UK's rail supply chain. It will

also be promoted via social media to encourage as wide a range of supply chain businesses to take part as possible – including design contractors, those in professional services, construction and maintenance, signalling, telecoms, rolling stock, original equipment manufacturers, IT systems and services, technology systems and services and communications.

The results of the survey will inform RSG's future plans and actions – specifically, in charting a clear way forward for the rail supply chain, including adapting the Rail Sector Deal to the impact of COVID-19.

Philip Hoare, Chair of the Rail Supply Group and President of Atkins, said: "Like every sector of the economy, the rail supply chain has been hit hard by the impact of Coronavirus. The government's openness to working with the sector to understand how we can achieve the fullest, fastest and best recovery is most welcome. Key is understanding what the sector needs, so we would encourage everyone with a view to take part in this important piece of research."

Nadhim Zahawi MP, Minister for Business and Industry at the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, said: "The government is committed to working with businesses across the whole of the economy to secure the best possible recovery following the pandemic.

"I commend the Rail Supply Group for undertaking this survey on the difficulties the rail sector is facing and would encourage companies in the industry to seize this opportunity to have their voices heard."

Bill Free, UK Rail Director of the Civil Engineering Contractors Association, said: "Civil Engineering Contractors Association members are very involved in the renewal and enhancement of the railway. The RSG survey will help identify how our members can get back to work speedily and hopefully, identify efficiencies in the process."

Alex Burrows, Managing Director, Rail Alliance, said: "This survey is a hugely important initiative for the rail supply industry in responding to the impact of this pandemic. It is absolutely right that organisations like the Rail Alliance, the Rail Supply Group and RIA work together for the good of the whole rail industry to understand what needs to be done to bring the industry back strongly. Rail will remain critical to the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the country and we fully support this initiative to understand the needs and future requirements of businesses in the rail industry."

Elaine Clark, Chief Executive Officer at Rail Forum Midlands, said: "The RSG Coronavirus Taskforce has been charged with developing actions to support the medium to longer term recovery of the rail supply chain following the immediate COVID-19 crisis. We would encourage suppliers to complete the survey to ensure their issues and ideas are captured."

Darren Caplan, Chief Executive of the Railway Industry Association, said: "The Rail Supply Group is doing important work with Government to develop a medium-term strategic plan that supports the best possible recovery from this Coronavirus crisis for the rail supply chain. So the Railway Industry Association urges all in the supply sector to complete the RSG survey, to help inform its development of a recovery plan with Government."

Visit <https://rsgtaskforce.org/> to complete the survey.

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