

- ▶ CIPD @CIPD These companies blew millions on back to work plans. And for what? <https://wired.co.uk/article/return-to-work-office-cost> via @WiredUK with commentary from the @cipd's @dds180 #Homeworking #RemoteWorking

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- ▶ David Emanuel @davidfm RICS plans redundancies as pandemic bites, a consultation on 150-170 jobs. @IWFM\_UK #facman membership appears to be free falling and its revenues are also severely being affected by events unable to take place. FM is feeling the effects too.

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- ▶ Andy Erskine [linkedin.com/in/awerskine](https://www.linkedin.com/in/awerskine) It was always good to meet with clients (albeit socially distanced), but especially great to meet with a client that wants to tell you for an hour how great the team are, then presents you with a whole host of opportunities to look at for them. Well done Joanna Kennedy and the rest of your team. #facilitiesmanagement #team #socialdistancing #opportunities #teamwork #leadership

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- ▶ Bruce Daisley @brucedaisley Home working, the data is in.
  - Every age group prefers being at home
  - People feel better doing most tasks
  - Only bosses with private work offices find things worse
  - Many workers won't accept 5 days in the office again




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- ▶ Simon Jacobs [linkedin.com/in/simon-jacobs-0175831](https://www.linkedin.com/in/simon-jacobs-0175831) Marketing Director, EMEA at SoftBank Robotics EMEA - Whiz - Much like #healthandsocialcareworkers who have displayed incredible bravery and commitment throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, #cleaners have made a vital contribution to fighting COVID-19 and protecting the wider public over the past six months - to this I say thank you!

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- ▶ Living Wage Foundation @LivingWageUK "While we're all caught in the same storm, we're not in the same boat." LWF Director Katherine Chapman responds to @resfoundation's report that the wages of 2 million of Britain's lowest-paid workers will rise by just 15p next April.



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BLOG FROM RORY MURPHY, COMMERCIAL DIRECTOR, VINCI FACILITIES

# HARSH REALITIES



Rory Murphy, Commercial Director, VINCI Facilities

I look forward to the day when I can write a blog about anything other than the continued effect that the COVID pandemic is having on our economy and sector. The progress we have all made in getting our teams back into the office and rediscovering the importance of culture and personality in business have been sadly curtailed by the recent spike in infections and the resulting shift in Government guidance.

Counter to the multiple surveys about home working, and the huge body of academic research supporting the notion that the office is dead, the basic truth is that people have enjoyed seeing their colleagues in the working arena and talking in a human not digital environment. COVID compliant workspaces are now common place and many of us have simply adjusted to working with the restrictions and controls that these new environments create and to some degree learning to work alongside the virus.

A public health crisis is now manifesting itself as an economic crisis as businesses across the UK come to terms with the multiple components of furlough ending, increasing infection rates and the ramping up of both local and national restrictions. The social impact of this pandemic is now obvious with the number of redundancies in the UK accelerating at the fastest pace since the financial crisis despite more than half of furloughed workers returning to their jobs after lockdown ended.

As the furlough scheme comes to an end the Office for National Statistics (ONS) said 156,000 people were made redundant in the three months to July which is the largest quarterly rise since 2009, the 3rd quarter figures are likely to be no better. The ONS research indicated that 695,000 workers had been lost from company payrolls since March, with a disproportionate number of those jobs being lost affecting the young as the economy plunges into the deepest recession on record.

The FM sector is by no means immune to this bad news and as furlough finishes it is clear that sectors such as catering and events will be decimated and those cleaning and engineering teams that work in retail, hospitality, travel or commercial property will see a huge downturn in demand and therefore a requirement to reduce headcount. The impact is also being felt

by our institutions with the 150-year-old RICS announcing 170 redundancies only this week which equates to almost 20 per cent of their staff.

But how do we respond? Much of the economic pain of this pandemic is being borne by the lowest paid in our communities or the youngest generations and there is a very real risk that the social scars of this pandemic will long outlast the public health impacts.

Some elements of our sector are tackling these challenges head on with members of the food service sector for example coming together to launch 'Food Service Circle' (FSC) – a platform that offers support to those working in the food service sector, offering free training, counselling, advice and job opportunities. This collective effort may not be reciprocated across the industry so we need to react. The response though has to embrace the opportunities that this pandemic has presented and maybe concede that some roles in the medium term will just be lost... As Rishi Sunak has repeatedly said – we cannot protect every job.

Our response in the FM sector must be to embrace the digital reality of our new world, to create opportunities aligned to a green recovery, to upskill and realign some of the people in our sector to repurposing, rethinking and redeveloping the built environment. The retail, travel, events and commercial sectors will exist after this pandemic, they will just have been disrupted and altered in ways that we could never have imagined only 12 months ago.

Our FM sector is famed for its agility, we are flexible and innovative by our nature... We forecast over the last few years that our sector would be disrupted and we already knew that we faced huge environmental challenges to protect our planet. Little did we know that when that disruption came, it would be super-charged by a social and economic catastrophe which would change the landscape of our sector forever.