



## Air Pollution in China has risen above pre lockdown measure

According to the Helsinki-based Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA), levels of harmful PM2.5, NO2, SO2 and ozone have now exceeded those recorded at the same time last year. The Covid-19 lockdowns had a dramatic impact on China's fossil fuel consumption and air quality.

## CITB: Most apprentices spared lay-offs

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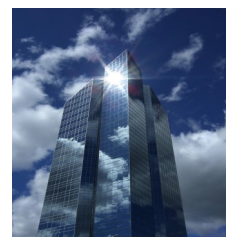
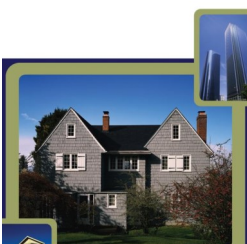
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Most firms in the sector have avoided making apprentices redundant so far, a survey by the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) has found.

The organisation said just 141 apprentices out of more than 10,800 had been laid off as a result of the crisis. CITB said it has been getting in touch with apprentices in England, Scotland and Wales to make them aware of the support available during the crisis.

Despite activity falling to its lowest level on record, few lay-offs have been made across the sector as a whole to date, as many companies make use of the government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and other measures.

But the training body added that it had conducted separate survey of employers, which found that 83 per cent are 'extremely or somewhat confident' that their apprentices will finish training programmes.



## HS2 'kept MPs in the dark' about project problems

MPs have accused HS2 bosses of keeping them “in the dark” about cost and delivery problems on the project, which has gone “badly off course”.

The Public Accounts Committee has heavily criticised the Department for Transport (DfT) and HS2 for trying to shield the project from scrutiny. In a new report out today, the committee said evidence provided by the DfT on the project's progress had been “less than clear” and accused it of withholding important information from MPs. It claimed the lack of transparency was a deliberate ploy to protect the project.

“The department and HS2 seemed to believe that a lack of transparency with parliament and the public on the problems facing the programme would in some way protect it,” it said.

The most senior civil servant attached to HS2, permanent secretary to the DfT Bernadette Kelly, also failed to disclose to the committee that the project was running late and over budget on multiple occasions. At two evidence sessions, in October 2018 and May 2019, Kelly was specifically asked about the rail project's delivery timeline and budget but she didn't flag serious problems.



## HVAC Systems Should Be Checked Before Buildings Reopen, Due to COVID-19

As commercial buildings begin to reopen, owners/operators should first have their HVAC systems evaluated to ensure they are operating safely and efficiently before re-opening.

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## Social distancing and hygiene in the workplace

The government advice is to minimise social interaction outside our homes. This includes advice to employers to enable staff to work from home wherever practicable.

If it is not practicable, other measures should be considered. One of the most important of these is the two-metre rule: keeping two metres between colleagues and any other staff they may work with.

Employers should provide additional pop-up handwashing stations or facilities if possible, providing preferably soap and hot running water which are the most effective and safest way of killing the virus. If that is not possible you can use hand gel but should ensure that you take care to rub it into your hands.



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### Teardown: UCL-Ventura CPAP breathing aid

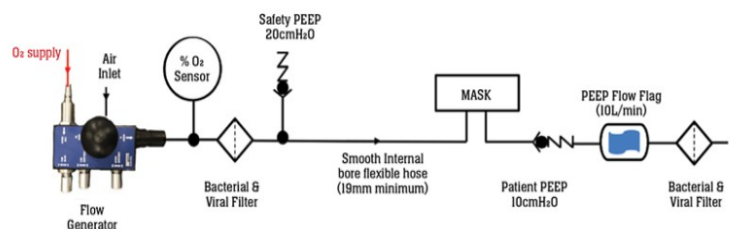
Inside the development of an important healthcare aid during the Covid-19 outbreak.

Covid-19 has launched many global engineering groups on projects that aim to reduce the impact of the pandemic. Among those that target healthcare, one of the most successful has been the UCL-Ventura, a continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) non-invasive breathing aid for hospital patients. At the time of writing, more than 1,100 units had been manufactured and delivered to 46 hospitals across the UK, and deliveries continue.

The Ventura project combines elements that show how this kind of device is best realised in an emergency. Those include skill clustering, product selection, rapid prototyping, data management and – particularly important for a medical device – close alignment with the needs of regulators.

The project was primarily a collaboration between the Mechanical Engineering department and the Institute of Healthcare Engineering at University College London (UCL), University College London Hospitals (UCLH) and Mercedes-AMG High Performance Powertrains. Other partners include Oxford Optronix, which provides oxygen monitors for the CPAP device, and Mashoom, an online data management software suite developed by UCL alumni.

The involvement of Mashoom illustrates the importance of connections. Within UCL itself, the natural links between its medical and engineering sides are strengthened by having a dedicated body for healthcare engineering. Beyond that, UCL's engineering teams have established connections to Formula 1 (and Mercedes specifically) both personally and through projects such as F1 in Schools. This initiative, where leading teams support UK education, has its central London base at MechSpace, UCL's recently opened engineering facility in Kings Cross where specification and prototyping of the Ventura took place.



## Working From Home



Many weeks have passed since the nation-wide lock down. Yet most of the essential services including manufacturing and transportation are working. IT is in the base of this service continuity of all such services and obviously so the IT services have been categorized as essential services.

What is more important to note that WFH was not a planned decision for many organizations and had to be forcefully executed country-wide within a notice of less than two-three days. The IT leaders who felt more secured in in-premise scenario, suddenly had to look at cloud and remote access of their critical applications. What was appearing to be an impossible thing to have majority of workforce working remotely and accessing critical applications, became a reality in just a couple of days.

Good news is that it is happening with a fairly high degree of success.

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