

Coronavirus Guidance - Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

This is a 'live' document that will be updated as and when circumstances, policies or processes need to be changed.

Click here to visit the [Royal Mail Coronavirus Information page](#)

1. Health

- a) Prevention
- b) Self-isolation, testing and reporting
- c) Cleaning and consumables
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Any employee with concerns should visit the appropriate health authority website if you think you have symptoms, or may have been exposed to the virus and are unsure what to do:

- England: [NHS 111 online](#)
- Scotland: [NHS Inform](#)
- Wales: [NHS Direct Wales](#)
- Northern Ireland: [Public Health Agency](#)

a) Prevention

What is the key preventative advice to reduce the risk of coronavirus?

The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to the virus. You can access the latest NHS guidance to help avoid catching or spreading coronavirus [here](#). Please [click here](#) to access posters on the SHE Coronavirus Document Library for more information about promoting good hygiene.

Is it safe to handle mail?

Yes. Public Health England (PHE), the key health authority, has advised that people handling letters and parcels are not at risk of contracting the coronavirus.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has also advised that coronaviruses do not survive long on objects, such as letters or packages.

Should we wear gloves?

No. PHE guidance is that you do not need to wear gloves. However, gloves are available, if you choose to wear them. If you want gloves, please speak to your manager.

Do we have enough gloves?

There may be cases, as currently, when stocks reduce due to high demand for gloves. Procurement are doing everything possible to buy new stocks of gloves urgently. In the meantime, the primary preventative guidance is hand hygiene, which means regular hand washing.

Is it safe to handle mail without hand sanitiser?

Yes. PHE has advised that people receiving parcels are not at risk of contracting the coronavirus. They should continue to wash their hands more often than usual using soap and hot water. The hand soap that we provide is effective for hand washing and good hand hygiene.

How do I use hand sanitiser properly?

If you have been issued with hand sanitiser, please ensure that you follow the safe use guidance set out below:

- All alcohol-based products are potentially flammable and must therefore be stored away from high temperatures and flames.
- Allow the sanitiser on your hands to dry and the vapours to disperse, this is of particular importance if you smoke or your work involves going near a naked flame.
- Avoid contact with eyes, in case of contact with eyes, rinse thoroughly with water.
- If swallowed, seek medical advice immediately.
- Do not use on broken or irritated skin.
- Care should be taken when carrying personal containers/bottles to avoid spillage onto clothing, in pockets, bags or vehicles by ensuring the lid/top is secured.
- Used containers/bottles may contain gel residues and flammable vapours, therefore containers/bottles should be rinsed out with cold water and then re-cycled or disposed of in general waste.
- Always read and follow the information on the back of the container/bottle.

This information is in line with the World Health Organisation guidance on the use of hand sanitiser.

Will Royal Mail be providing face masks?

Current guidance is aligned to [Public Health England advice](#) on the use of face masks outside of clinical or care settings. **Masks are not recommended outside of clinical settings.**

Where we have identified specific roles for whom observing the 2m physical distancing is at times difficult, masks are being provided. However, in those cases the 2m physical distancing must be observed when possible and hand hygiene rules, including not touching the mouth, nose and eyes or before eating must continue to be observed.

Masks are on order and will be made available for those employees who wish to use them from their managers. The World Health Organization guidance on when to use a mask states that they are only beneficial to stop the spread of the virus for:

- People who are ill, coughing and sneezing to reduce them from spreading the virus to others.
- People who are caring for, or in close contact with someone who is infected. People who are healthy only need to wear a mask if they are taking care of a person with suspected 2019-nCoV infection.

Coronavirus disease advice for the public: When and how to use masks:

- If you are healthy, you only need to wear a mask if you are taking care of a person with suspected coronavirus infection.

- Wear a mask if you are coughing or sneezing.
- Masks are effective only when used in combination with frequent hand-cleaning with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water.
- If you wear a mask, you must know how to use it and dispose of it properly.

People often touch masks, frequently adjusting them and ‘checking’ them and risk potentially picking up the virus from the mask onto their hands when they remove it. The primary preventative guidance is hand hygiene supported by the 2m social physical distancing.

Who should be using facemasks?

We have published a response to the use of face masks. Public Health England does not currently advise the use of face masks in public places as there is very little evidence of widespread benefit. In Royal Mail, face masks are provided where we have identified specific roles or tasks where observing the two-metre physical distancing may be difficult. For the full guidelines, [click here](#).

What is the company’s position on social distancing?

Royal Mail supports Public Health England’s social distancing guidance. We have introduced and communicated temporary changes to operational processes. They include staggered meal breaks, cancellation of WTLLs and changes to doorstep deliveries. You can get more detail at PHE and NHS websites. Further information will be provided next week. Social distancing is everyone’s responsibility so please do all you can to follow the PHE guidance.

Regulations issued in Wales and effective 7th April 2020 mean the 2m social distancing rule will apply to any workplace, including homes, where work and repairs are being undertaken, and outdoor spaces. Communications are being shared with affected units.

Is there any advice for people who cannot avoid working within 2 metres of each other?

The current guidelines for social distancing form part of wider measures to minimise risk by following preventative guidance including hand hygiene, and the use of wipes and disposal gloves. Temporary changes to some operations processes include one person per van, staggered shift times and no requirement for PDA signatures remain in place. For specific roles where the 2 metre distancing is challenging masks are being issued. More generally if employees choose to wear a mask they are available and guidance on use and disposal has been shared.

In addition to the preventative measure outlined and in situations where there are tasks that mean the 2 metre social distancing can’t be achieved, employee should consider the guidance recently issued by the UK Government which guides employees to work side by side or facing away from each other rather than face-to-face if possible. This guidance does not change other preventative measures in place but is an additional measure relevant to identified specific tasks only where the two metre distancing can’t be achieved and should not be used as a means to have more employees working together in limited spaces.

At this very difficult time and putting health first it’s important managers, employees and unions work through local solutions together in line with the guidance issued as unit challenges will vary.

What do we do if we are visited by an Enforcement Officer? (e.g Health and Safety Executive (HSE), Officers, EHO (Environmental Health Officers), Police, Fire Authority, Trading Standards Officers)

As a reminder, here are the key actions in the event of a scheduled or unscheduled visit.

1. Ask the officer to provide their warrant/ ID pass to confirm their position.

2. Invite them to enter the premises and undertake the normal site induction and messaging.
3. Explain the requirement to achieve the 2m social distancing.
4. Escort the officer around the premises and answer their specific questions.

If you are requested to provide documentation e.g. risk assessments or other safe working materials:

5. Request the officer to provide in writing or email of the request
6. Inform your SHEBP immediately of the visit and share the contact details of the officer so the SHEBP can provide them with relevant documentation.

With the closure of most high street outlets, including pubs and shops where toilet facilities were available to use, where can we now go to use toilet facilities?

Consider some of the following whilst maintaining the 2m social distancing at all times when possible:

- Use the toilet facilities before leaving the office.
- Request to use the facilities of a business customer that is still operating (they are legally required to provide toilet facilities). Supermarkets are the most obvious place to find toilets that will be open to the public.
- Make use of any public toilets.
- If there is an urgent requirement to wash hands e.g. a first aid incident, consider stopping your delivery/collection and visit the nearest public convenience or drive back to your office.
- Takeaways and garages may have toilets available for use.

Should we use vending machines?

We are closely following advice from Public Health England regarding COVID-19 to ensure our policies and procedures reflect current Government guidelines. At present, there have been no Government communications to restrict the use of food and drink vending machines in relation to COVID-19. Vending machines must therefore, remain in use for our employees to use.

Please maintain social distancing guidelines while queuing to use vending machines, remember not to touch your mouth, nose or eyes, wash your hands after use and before eating.

Is it safe to use shared water fountains and water dispensers at this time?

There is a risk of contracting coronavirus from shared water dispensers via cross contamination. Good hygiene practices need to be followed at all times in communal rest facilities. You should never allow your mouth to come into contact with the dispensing tap of a water fountain, so in this current pandemic, we are requesting all units cordon off the use of these drinking fountain facilities.

We encourage all employees to stay hydrated and advise that they purchase or bring from home enough bottled water/drinks to last the length of their delivery rather than refilling at work. For unit-based employees, we recommend that sites purchase disposable cups to use in conjunction with water coolers. Plastic cups should be disposed of as general waste and are not recyclable. Re-useable bottles should not be refilled using any water dispensers.

Can fans be used in the work place?

If fans are used for machine cooling or general air movement purposes e.g. (pointing at the machine) not pointing at persons that would be fine. However, if fans are being used to cool people, then their use should be stopped.

How do we clean the PDAs where alcohol wipes aren't available

PDA's can be cleaned with a damp cloth if alcohol wipes aren't available. Here is some guidance to share with your team:

- Do not apply liquid directly to the device
- Dampen a soft cloth with warm water, mixed with a small amount of hand soap. Wring the cloth out thoroughly
- Do not wrap the device in the cloth but gently wipe the unit, taking care to ensure no liquid pools around the display window or other places
- Allow the unit to air dry before use.

What advice is available for first aider's who may need to respond to a patient with/without coronavirus symptoms?

As advice may change based on increasing experience in the care of patients with coronavirus, first aiders should consult the [latest Public Health England guidance](#) for support when responding to first aid incidents related to the coronavirus. General advice is also available from [St John Ambulance](#).

What is the key preventative advice for 'vulnerable' employees?

[Guidance to protect extremely vulnerable people](#) has been issued by the NHS who are writing, emailing or texting people deemed to be extremely vulnerable due to certain medical conditions or the treatment they are undergoing. **Employees who receive this contact from the NHS should fully comply with the instructions in the letter and keep their line manager informed.**

The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to the virus. You can access the latest NHS guidance to help avoid catching or spreading coronavirus [here](#). Please [click here](#) to access posters on the SHE Coronavirus Document Library for more information about promoting good hygiene.

New advice for the public and those who may be more at risk than others is being shared regularly. Look out for changes to advice that may affect you. Current guidance on the NHS website is available [here](#).

Employees should continue to be disciplined with hand hygiene advice and must contact their GP with concerns. An employee's GP will have the medical information on which to advise the employee on any recommendations specific to them.

Should we close faith/prayer rooms?

Wherever possible faith/prayer rooms should remain open, but only where social distancing measures can be implemented. Please discuss this with members of your team who use the room and agree the best way forward. Ideas include limiting the number of individuals permitted to enter the room at any one time, or considering flexible arrangements to avoid any queuing and overcrowding. Please remind visitors to the room to always wash their hands before and after use. These rooms will be cleaned in line with the enhanced cleaning protocols.

Will our canteens be closing?

Following government advice, restaurants, pubs and eating facilities around the country have closed. The Quadrant canteen facilities in our units will still be available but at a reduced level. A takeaway food option will be available in line with the Quadrant retail grab and go menu plan. All consumables will be served in food grade takeaway containers with disposable cutlery. Drinks will be served in disposable cups only.

It is vital that good hygiene is followed in canteen and self-messing facilities, washing hands before eating and maintaining social distancing wherever possible. Units should consider ways that they can do this by

limiting the number of people at a table to one person. If possible, identifying and advising other places to eat, e.g. outside, in vans, own cars, meeting rooms or other open areas with appropriate social distancing. Where possible stagger the timing of breaks to avoid any queuing and overcrowding. If you are able to pay for any services using contactless payment please do so where these facilities are available.

What's happening with our on-site gyms?

We have several on-site gyms for use by employees. In order to minimise risk and as a preventative measure we are temporarily closing the gyms. We encourage employees to continue with exercise in another way and in line with 'social distancing' guidelines. Please visit [Feeling First Class](#) or [NHS](#) for suggestions and ideas to maintain your wellbeing during this time.

Can we get head thermometers to units?

No, these are used by clinically trained people who can then advise and signpost the person accordingly.

Do we need to take any different approaches to the Public Health England advice in [Scotland / Wales / Northern Ireland]?

No, we will continue to be led by the Government and Public Health England.

What do we do with tissues that have unfortunately been disposed of in post boxes?

If an employee accidentally touches a soiled tissue clean your hands immediately with hand wipes/sanitiser. If you notice a tissue put on gloves (disposable impermeable gloves, (if you are allergic to latex check that the gloves are latex free)) Place soiled tissues into a polythene bag and put any customer mail that may have been contaminated into damaged customer mail bags. Take the gloves off carefully avoiding touching the outside of the glove with your bare hands, clean hands immediately with wipes/sanitiser and place the gloves and used wipes in the rubbish bag and dispose of in a suitable rubbish bin. Wash your hands with soap and water at the first opportunity. You should wash your hands every time you finish handling mail, and especially before you eat or drink or touch your face. Any cuts and grazes must be covered with waterproof dressings.

Do we still have access to Occupational Health Services and absence management support?

Most services continue as normal, there are some temporary changes to the services that are normally face to face.

First Class Support remains available for employees to call whether they are at work or absent from work.

The helpline can be accessed by calling **0800 6888777**. For more information please visit www.rmgfirstclasssupport.co.uk. The helpline offers employees self-service **direct access to counselling treatment** as well as legal, relationship and lifestyle support.

Typically (& taking into account many current NHS services being on hold), for absences over 28 days it is expected that a referral is made:

- Counselling referral for mental health absences (unless the employee is receiving treatment/ support already, in which case an attendance support appointment may be appropriate)
- Physio referral for musculoskeletal absences (unless the employee is receiving treatment/ support already, in which case an attendance support appointment may be appropriate). Physio will be delivered via an initial telephone assessment and remote practical guidance with a follow up call.
- Attendance support referral for most other absences

As well as providing support to line managers, the appointment can give clinical guidance to employees in respect of their medical conditions where treatment or diagnosis may be affected by current NHS service provision.

Manager referrals are completed over the phone with HR Services 0345 60 60 60 3. To submit a referral please follow the steps below.

1. **Register for an OH account** – [CLICK HERE](#) to register (this only needs to be done once so if you have registered for another referral recently you won't need to do this)
2. **Obtain employee consent & availability** – an employee must consent to being referred and know the reasons for the referral - HRS can't proceed if this isn't in place
3. **Call the OH Referrals helpline** with PSP open at the employee's record, or email to AdviceCentreOH@royalmail.com confirming that the above steps are completed & you will receive a call back. The referring manager should have a good understanding of the case history to complete the referral.

b) Self-isolation, testing and reporting

What is the latest government advice re self-isolation for employees?

The situation is constantly changing and you should check [this guidance](#) for the latest advice on this area.

Our understanding of the current position is that employees could be isolating for between 7 and 14 days and this could be extended by around a week if they develop symptoms during self-isolation.

All absences should be treated as sickness absence. Managers should choose "Coronavirus with Symptoms" if the employee has symptoms and "Coronavirus Self Isolation" if they do not have symptoms. Please update the absence if the reason for absence changes.

You can access up to date guidance on what steps to take whilst self-isolating on the NHS website, available [here](#).

[Guidance to protect extremely vulnerable people](#) has been issued by the NHS who are writing, emailing or texting people that are extremely vulnerable due to certain medical conditions or the treatment they are undergoing. **Employees that receive this contact from the NHS should fully comply with the instructions in the letter and keep their line manager informed.**

What should I do if an employee receives a positive coronavirus test result?

Should an employee receive a positive test result then the manager will immediately notify Central Postal Control (as usual for a notifiable infectious disease) and the Safety, Health and Environment Business Partner who will immediately notify the Health & Wellbeing Team. The Safety, Health and Environment Business Partner will support and guide the manager through required processes in line with Public Health guidelines.

The Local Public Health Protection Teams, are responsible for controlling infectious diseases. They will trace contacts, instruct, advise and provide communications on what action needs to be taken to prevent further spread. RMG will need to follow the instructions provided by the Local Public Health Protection Team in the same way as we would if there was an employee who had been affected by another notifiable infectious disease like TB.

If we have an employee who tests positive but has *not* been into work for some time (Public Health would advise re timescales) and not been in contact with any colleagues there would not be a risk of infection and so no action would need to be taken and we would not hear from the infection control teams.

A managers' guidance pack has been produced for units in this position. Your SHE Business Partner will discuss the content of this with you. This is available on the [SHE Coronavirus Document Library](#).

I have been self-isolating for seven days due to a cough, but I still have a cough what should I do?

After self-isolating for seven days, if you do not have a high temperature you do not need to continue to self-isolate. If you still have a high temperature, you need to keep self-isolating until your temperature returns to normal. You do not need to continue to self-isolate if you just have a cough after seven days. A cough can last for several weeks after the infection has gone. More details are available [here](#).

c) Cleaning and consumables

Should we use a hand dryer or paper towels when we are drying our hands?

All the guidance suggests that use of hand dryers is still appropriate, however handtowels will continue to be provided where dispensers exist. The use of one is not preferred over the other.

Do we have enough soap?

Yes. We have enough soap. If you need more soap, please speak to your manager, who can contact the PFS Helpdesk. It will coordinate a replenishment service via the local Cleaning Team.

When we are cleaning items in Royal Mail (non-health care setting) do we need to use a product that contains 70% Alcohol?

Our suppliers have confirmed that our cleaning products are suitably effective for cleaning in a non-healthcare setting as per the guidance issued by PHE. Where there has been a confirmed case, then a viricidal product is used to disinfect touch points and potentially contaminated surfaces.

What new cleaning processes have Royal Mail put in place?

RMG PFS have enhanced the normal cleaning regimes through increased frequencies and additional cleaning of high contact touchpoints. Two new cleaning responsive standards on top of the normal workplace cleans have also been implemented:

- Precautionary Clean – this is a responsive disinfection standard that is carried out at the request of the CPC Team and is an enhanced service to the normal standard clean. Focusing on the areas identified by the local management team as locations that the identified person has occupied within the building
- Intense Clean – this is a further enhanced and intense disinfection standard that is carried out at the request of the CPC Team. Using a 2 stage cleaning process focusing on the areas identified by the local management team as locations that the identified person has occupied within the building

Are we likely to run out of cleaning products e.g. soap, toilet rolls etc?

Cleaning stock (soap, toilet rolls, cleaning chemicals etc) is in high demand not just in the UK but across the World by Governments and Industry. PFS FM Teams have taken some supportive measures to try and ensure cleaning standards are maintained:

- a) Local Cleaning Stock – all local FM Cleaning Managers have been requested to order two months of stock at a time to ensure there is always a supply of stock held on site. This stock may well be locked away in a secure location on site. If additional stock is required to replenish specific areas, the Site Manager can contact the PFS Cleaning Manager for replenishment
- b) National Cleaning Stock – in addition to the above local site stock provisions PFS have managed to secure two months of bulk stock from the RMG national supplier. This is being delivered to specific locations in the UK and a logistics plan is being developed to support distribution to local sites.

** Please note that cleaning consumable stock levels (soaps, toilet rolls etc) at sites may fall be below normal levels due to increased hygiene controls implemented at sites. If stock has run out before the normal replenishment timescale please contact the PFS Helpdesk who can coordinate a replenishment service via the local Cleaning Team.

Will our normal cleaning routine continue as usual?

In the event of reduced internal cleaning staff levels our management team will update site managers with local contingency plans. These may include cleaning at different times to the normal clean, cleaners attending from other sites, relief cleaner attendance and focusing on key areas/tasks. Priorities will be discussed and agreed with the PIC/Mgrs. on site.

Will the self mess areas and other eating areas be cleaned before I use them?

These areas are cleaned regularly throughout the day by P&FS cleaning teams. However we advise people should wash their hands and disinfect the area they use before eating with a sanitising wipe. If managers are able to purchase sanitising wipes and sanitiser locally (where there stores order has not been fulfilled) they can do this and speak to their manager about claiming back payment.

d) Travel

What is the current advice for returning travellers?

Please see [Advice for returning travellers](#)

What do we do if an employee has attended work after returning from a high risk affected areas?

If an employee has been advised to self-isolate for any reason, colleagues in the workplace should continue with business as usual, maintaining good hand hygiene.

Should anyone have concerns they should visit the appropriate public health authority website:

- England: [NHS 111 online](#)
- Scotland: [NHS Inform](#)
- Wales: [NHS Direct Wales](#)
- Northern Ireland: [Public Health Agency](#)

e) Support and advice

If I have any questions relating to an employee absence, leave or other policy question where do I go for advice?

Please contact Advice and Support on 0345 604 3657.

Where do managers or employees go for First Class Support?

We understand there is concern and anxiety about coronavirus. If you or a member of your team would like to speak to a counsellor they can contact First Class Support available 24/7 to provide emotional (not medical) support on 0800 6888 777.

Any enquiries relating to self-isolation and absence should contact Advice and Support on 0345 604 3657.

Click here to visit the [Royal Mail Coronavirus Information page](#) for latest information and guidance.

2. POLICY

- **Sick pay**
- **Absence**
- **Attendance procedure**
- **Annual Leave**

Managers with any enquiries relating to self-isolation and absence should contact Advice and Support on 0345 604 3657

Performance management

Please see this [guidance](#) on the performance management process for this year.

How do I stop my purchase of SIP Partnership and Matching shares? I can't afford to continue

You can reduce, stop and restart your weekly or monthly pay deduction by logging on to the Employee Share Plan portal at www.royalmailemployeeeshares.co.uk or by ringing the Employee Shares Helpline on 0800 012 12 13. Calls are free from a BT landline.

When will we find out more about the performance management process?

Performance management is important however we recognise how much recent activities have impacted on managers. There will be a further communication on this year's performance management review in the coming days. This will confirm you now have until the end April to upload your own appraisal information. Line managers reviews are now due to be completed by the end May. Please make sure that you make the time to complete your self-appraisal and for line managers to provide feedback to their team members.

How do I replace / renew ID badges?

ID renewals are automatic and should be received approx. one month before expiry. They will be sent to the unit addressed to their line-manager tagged to PSP. To replace or obtain a damaged, lost or stolen ID card, the manager (or person authorised for the unit) should complete an application via Order Photo ID. Have the person's full PSP name, date of birth and pay number available. Take a colour passport-style photograph of the person against a light background and have it ready to upload on the application (except if applying for Driving ID). You cannot apply for your own ID badge – ask your line manager.

I am worried I will be stopped when travelling to or from work or when performing my role?

Your manager has been sent a Key Worker letter to print off for you. Please carry this with you, along with your company ID.

I have a reservist in my team, and they have been told they may be required very soon and without the 28 days' notice. Can I decline this request?

Our reservists play an important role and they can be asked to support the country in times of need without providing the normal notice. We can only request to delay or cancel a mobilisation if allowing the employee to undertake their duties as a reservist would seriously harm our business. In most cases we would expect managers to support reservists. Record the time as "Special Leave unpaid – reserve forces" and keep in contact with them while they are away.

Are all Royal Mail employees classified as key workers? How do I let the school/nursery know?

We know that childcare is a significant challenge for many of you, especially now the schools have closed. We understand that childcare is always your key priority. We want to support you and your teams to manage this.

The Government has said that Royal Mail Group workers are included in the list of those whose work is critical to the covid-19 response. We are connecting customers and communities, which is more important now than ever. This means that if you have school-age children who cannot be cared for at home, they will be able to continue to attend school, even though it has been announced that most schools are now closed.

Please ask your manager to for the letter which confirms you are a key worker for Royal Mail – sent to them on Friday 20 March. Together with your identification card, you will need to take this letter to your child/ren's school. The letter applies for both Royal Mail and Parcelforce colleagues.

You should only send your child(ren) to school or nursery if you really need to and do not have anyone who could look after them.

My school/nursery have stated that they cannot accommodate my children?

Do make sure that your school/nursery know that Royal Mail employees are classified as key workers. If your school/nursery cannot accommodate your child(ren) please work with your manager to see if you can work flexibly for example on a different shift or a different day, alternatively you can take holiday or unpaid time off. You should agree any arrangements with your manager.

An employee in my office wants to cancel their holiday and take it another time what should I do?

The expectation is that employee's will still take the time off for their holiday. Having a rest is important for everyone especially at this time. Employee's should only carry forward 5 days holiday at the end of the year. If due to operational reasons the local manager needs the employee to attend work then in exceptional circumstances they can agree for employee to return to work earlier and take their holiday at another time. I need to change my shift times to be able to accommodate the care of a dependant.

Will my shift payment change?

We all need to work flexibly at this time to support the overall approach. Managers will work with people to try and accommodate requests to work flexibly and we want to support this approach. We don't envisage these

requests would result in a change in shift payment. We will keep this under review depending on how long the changes remain in place.

A colleague has less than a year's service and is worried about losing pay if they go off with symptoms of coronavirus.

Exceptionally, to support employees who should not be attending work, Royal Mail has temporarily changed the sick pay for employees with less than a year's service.

Where the absence is related to coronavirus, these employees will receive the same sick pay as employees with over a year's service. This will be in place until mid April 2020, although we will continue to monitor the situation and may change this.

Will absences due to coronavirus be counted within the attendance procedure?

We would expect the vast majority of coronavirus absences to be discounted from the normal attendance procedure. However, in the event coronavirus absences are for an excessive duration or repeat in nature further investigation may be required.

I have an employee who is unable to get back to the UK because their flights have been cancelled. What should I do?

Discuss the situation with the employee. If additional time off is required this should be provided through agreeing holiday or other time off unpaid.

I have an employee who does not want to attend work because they are concerned about a family member at home. They or anyone within their household do not have symptoms of coronavirus. What should I do?

Find out the employees concerns and reaffirm the processes that we have in place to ensure the protection of our employees. If the employee continues to have concerns and wants to stay away from the office work with them to agree how they can take time away from work. There are a range of options which can be considered including annual holiday, flexible working and Special Leave. If any time is provided as unpaid special leave, the manager should record this through "Other time Off – Special Leave unpaid". When entering the absence, the manager should select 'Special Leave unpaid' and then choose 'Personal Commitments'.

I have a pregnant employee in my team and they want to socially distance themselves following the latest Public Health England (PHE) advice. How should I respond?

The current PHE advice is that individuals who are pregnant should limit their social contact where possible, including using less public transport, working at home where possible and considering not going to pubs, restaurants, theatres and bars. They are also being strongly advised to significantly limit face-to-face interaction with friends and family (social distancing) if possible.

The approach below will be in place until mid April 2020, when it will be reviewed and may be extended or changed.

The employee should provide you with evidence of their pregnancy. This could be a MAT B1 form or a medical letter/certificate from their GP or Midwife. If they are not able to provide this immediately please give them time to provide this at a later date.

If they can, the employee can work from home following the advice and guidance on working from home.

If an employee is not able to work from home the absence will be treated as a pregnancy related sickness absence and you should choose Coronavirus self-isolation as the absence reason.

If an employee is absent from work due to her pregnancy (including as a result of social distancing due to her being pregnant) after the beginning of the fourth week before her Expected Week of Childbirth then her maternity leave will begin automatically on the first day of the absence.

I have an employee who is over 70 in my team and they want to socially distance themselves following the latest Public Health England (PHE) advice. How should I respond?

The current PHE advice is that individuals who are over 70 should limit their social contact where possible, including using less public transport, working at home where possible and considering not going to pubs, restaurants, theatres and bars. They are also being strongly advised to significantly limit face-to-face interaction with friends and family (social distancing) if possible.

The approach below will be in place until mid April 2020, when it will be reviewed and may be extended or changed.

Managers will need to check that the employee is over 70. They can do this through PSP.

If they can the employee can work from home following the advice and guidance on working from home.

If an employee is not able to work from home the absence will be treated as a sickness absence and you should choose Coronavirus self-isolation as the absence reason.

I have an employee who has an underlying health condition in my team and they want to socially distance themselves following the latest Public Health England (PHE) advice. How should I respond?

The current PHE advice is that individuals who have an underlying health condition should limit their social contact where possible, including using less public transport, working at home where possible and considering not going to pubs, restaurants, theatres and bars. They are also being strongly advised to significantly limit face-to-face interaction with friends and family (social distancing) if possible.

The approach below will be in place until mid April 2020, when it will be reviewed and may be extended or changed.

The employee should provide you a medical certificate to cover the absence. If they are not able to provide this immediately please give them time to provide this at a later date.

The employee can work from home following the advice and guidance on working from home.

If an employee is not able to work from home the absence will be treated as a sickness absence and you should choose Coronavirus self-isolation as the absence reason.

I have an employee in my team who is in a vulnerable group and they have stated that they want to come to work? What should I do?

Currently the advice from PHE is to strongly advise that individuals who are pregnant, over 70 or with an underlying health condition should be particularly stringent in following social distancing measures. If an employee decides that they want to come to work, you should discuss the reasons and encourage the employee to read the advice on Public Health England, however it is their decision if they wish to attend work. Where the employee is in the **extremely vulnerable** group (they should have received a letter/confirmation from NHS in this regard). These employees are strongly advised to stay at home at all times and avoid face to face contact for a period of at least 12 weeks from the date they received their letter.

Please note that the advice could change so always check the Public Health website for the very latest position.

I have an employee who has had a lot of absence in the last year and if they are absent again will be on half-pay. Will there be any different arrangements for them if they have to self-isolate?

Royal Mail's Sick Pay and Sick Pay Conditions policy will continue to apply. The sick pay an employee will receive will be determined by the sick pay and sick pay policy conditions. Exceptionally, Royal Mail has temporarily changed the sick pay for employees with less than a year's service. We will pay Royal Mail sick pay to employees who have less than a year's service and who do not qualify for Royal Mail Sick Pay when their absence is due to coronavirus. This will be in place until mid April 2020, when it will be reviewed and may be extended. We will continue to monitor the situation and may change this.

I am concerned that our agency employees are different every day. Can we try and have a group of employees who support us?

We are working with our agency suppliers to provide the support that we need. If you have any particular concerns or issues in this area then please contact coronavirus.support@royalmail.com or Advice and Support on 0345 604 2787.

What do managers need to do if a coronavirus related absence prompts an Attendance Review 1 or 2 or Consideration of Dismissal?

Where an Attendance Review 1 or 2 or Consideration of Dismissal has been prompted due to coronavirus related sick absence, managers should consider if there is a need to meet with the employee, given the advice that in most cases coronavirus absences are discounted from the normal attendance procedure. If a manager decides they do not need to meet with the employee, they do not have to send the invitation letter. Instead managers should let the employee know and update the case on PSP to state 'Not issued'. [Click here](#) for guidance on how to do this.

If a manager decides they do need to meet with the employee, for example the absence was excessive in nature or there were repeat absences, they should invite the employee to the relevant attendance meeting using the available invitation letters and ensuring that when meeting they follow the social distancing guidelines that have been communicated.

Do managers still need to hold welcome back meetings when employees return from coronavirus related sick absence?

Managers should continue to hold welcome back meetings, but ensure they follow the current advice on increasing social distancing if they are meeting with the employee.

Is there any guidance for those working from home?

A guidance document has been produced to give advice and guidance for those who are working from home. Click [here](#) to open the document - Coronavirus Temporary Working from Home Guidance.

3. POST & PARCELS

a) General Ops Advice

b) NHS testing kits

c) Operational Processes and Reporting Changes

d) Delivering and collecting from customers

e) Fleet and vehicles

Any manager needing to contact CPC with a COVID 19 message should now use this number: 0345 266 8040

a) General Ops Advice

Contractor is due on site, should they still be allowed on site?

We have reviewed all construction and maintenance activities in light of Government and PHE advice. We have decided that these activities can continue where: -

- there is a serious and imminent threat to the safety of people and/or the environment;
- there is or may be a risk of personal injury or harm to the environment if the work is not undertaken;
- there will or may be a significant impact on Royal Mail Group operational activity or business continuity if the work is not undertaken.

We have taken steps to ensure that our own workforce and our supply chain follow Public Health Authority advice and on this basis contractors should be allowed to continue working on Royal Mail sites where authorised.

Can we request for our sorting frames to be moved?

There have been a number of requests for Sorting Frame moves within the business. This task is considered a **non-essential** task as detailed within PFS2_200 Coronavirus (COVID-19) PFS Operating Instruction (issued 27.03.20).

Royal Mail Group Operations must explore all operational changes to ensure the Government issued, social distancing guidelines (COVID-19) are adhered to. Consequently, the movement of frames will **only** be considered by the COVID-19 Authorisation Team where an operational change is not possible and the physical movement of the frames is the only way the office can ensure social distancing'.

Can we continue with driving training and driver coaching through Pertemps and Advanced Driver Coaches?

All the details on our revised driver training requirements are available by clicking on the [Link](#)

I am a cover manager, should I still be moving around units?

Yes it is okay to move round units, you can help protect yourself by observing the social distancing measures and maintaining good hygiene by washing your hands regularly.

Do we need to maintain re-delivery for parcels?

We should aim to re-deliver items on the day selected, but if that's not possible we should re-deliver as soon as possible.

How do I enforce separation in the Customer Service Point?

Print off and display the [CSP social distancing poster](#) so that it is visible for customers to see.

Can staff use cars to drive to start points so they don't need to share a van?

Yes, provided they follow the policy as sent to managers, and have business insurance for their vehicle.

If I work with my partner/housemate can we share a van to our delivery point or for other business?

No, in line with 'social distancing' guidelines from Public Health, the business has moved to one person in a vehicle during work/shifts until further notice.

Do we still need to continue with standard reporting on MCDR & DODR?

No the systems have been streamlined to reduce questions.

How are we implementing social distancing practices in the operation?

Guidance has been sent to managers on how to introduce social distancing in our operations, including moving to one person per van. Practices will need to meet the specific requirements of each unit and we are therefore giving managers a number of options.

Staff in my unit are sick with symptoms of Covid-19 / self-isolating which has created a resourcing shortfall and I have failed service. How should I report this?

- Delivery USO - If as a direct result of staff being unable to attend due to sick/self-isolation the Route Report in DODR should be recorded with "Emergency – Other".
- Delivery Workplan - If as a direct result of staff being unable to attend due to sick/self-isolation the End of Day Report in DODR should be recorded with "Code 6B "Emergency".
- Mail Centres - If as a direct result of staff being unable to attend due to sick/self-isolation the End of Shift Report in MCDR should be recorded with "Code 10 "Emergency".
- RDCs - If as a direct result of staff being unable to attend due to sick/self-isolation the End of Shift Report in PPMS should be recorded as '8Q - Emergency Other'

Please note that this should only be for the volume/collections failed as a direct result of any sick or self-isolation absence directly related to COVID-19. If there are other failures they should be reported with their appropriate reason.

A customer is blocking their letterbox until the threat is over. What is the guidance on delivering mail?

Where we are physically unable to access a customer's property and/or they have blocked up their letterbox to prevent delivery then this should be treated as a Delivery USO suspension. In this circumstance, the Delivery Office Manager should create a case for the addressee(s) on the USO Sharepoint to request the suspension. The manager can then download the standard letter from the Sharepoint site that explains that we will hold all mail (for up to 18 days) for someone to collect (with the appropriate identification) or we can deliver to an alternative address in the Delivery Office catchment area. If this letter cannot be handed to the customer and there are no other contact details available for the customer (e.g. telephone number, email address) then the letter should be left on the customer premises in a place where the occupier can clearly see it.

Once the Manager has logged the address point as a Delivery USO suspension then they are not required to report this as either a workplan or delivery USO part walk failure in DODR. Use this link to access the USO Sharepoint Site: [USO Delivery Exceptions SharePoint site](#)

With absence levels increasing, some units are now seeing a shortfall in the recommended number of fire wardens. Until normal levels resume, the following guidance should be followed:

- If there is a shortfall in the required number of fire wardens, employees will need to be trained to replace them

- Please communicate the Fire Evacuation Plan to all employees and anyone visiting the premises (e.g. cleaning staff, contractors and engineers) to refresh them on the process to follow in the event of an emergency
- Please ensure a copy of the Evacuation Plan is displayed on your SHE noticeboard and is highly visible
- Not everyone will be working in their usual area(s) so please ensure all fire evacuation routes are pointed out to employees and remind everyone to familiarise themselves with the evacuation routes
- In multi-floored units, fire wardens should not look to extend their responsibility to other floors, this will delay their own safe evacuation
- Everyone has a responsibility for their own safety and in the event of a fire/alarm, they should leave the building immediately via the nearest available safe exit.

What are the current Mail Integrity Standards for Vehicles and Trolleys?

The standards have not changed during the Covid period. A summary of the key points that your staff must adhere to are below:

- Always remove keys from ignition, keep the key on your person and secure vehicles when not attended (lock all doors & set alarms where fitted). Keep PDAs & collection keys out of site. Never leave mail in view in an unattended van. Close windows fully but providing no mail is in a cab, the drivers' window may be left partially open (no more than 2cm's) for ventilation.
- Do not leave HCT unattended for more than 10 minutes but ideally move the HCT from delivery point to delivery point. If unattended, other than for the immediate delivery point, lock it to an immovable object. Lock compartment lids and ensure all mail is locked in compartments when unattended. Remove keys when unattended.

Do not leave Light Weight Trolleys (LWT) unattended for more than 1 minute (but may be extended if making an attendance call. Keep all mail in the bags/panniers which must be clipped shut. Move the LWT from delivery point to delivery point.

b) NHS testing kits

Is the packaging for test kits secure?

The packaging meets UN standards for this type of sample and so consists of several layers of packaging and absorbent material to soak up any fluid. The package contains a throat swab with only about 3ml of fluid within it to fix the sample. Should there be any damage to the package standard procedures apply whether in relation to mech or manual.

If there is damage, contamination, or leakage put on latex-free impermeable gloves (these can be found in the First Aid Box); pick up the item and place it in the customer service re-sealable bag and then wash your hands thoroughly. The item can then be safely processed and delivered.

Is there any risk to me from completing the NHS test kit activity?

If you follow the procedures there is no risk from you carrying out this activity and the package will be just as safe as the other parcels in the network so you will be giving the benefit of the extra level of protection to your colleagues.

If I am putting the NHS test kit into a further plastic re-sealable envelope, aren't I increasing the amount of handling I'm doing? Wouldn't it be easier to just 'throw' it into a separate sack?

The packaging is specially designed with several layers so that the specimen cannot leak. Putting the kit into a further envelope is an additional precaution just in case the sender has contaminated the outer packaging by handling it. You should put the specimen into the additional bag without touching it, in the same way as if you were serving at a fish counter, into a polythene bag. If you find this difficult, wear gloves to put it into the bag.

Can the virus live on the NHS test kit packaging and if so, am I at risk when I handle it?

Like any surface, the virus can live for a while, which is why we are taking the additional precaution, and why good hand hygiene is so important. Additionally, there is an instruction in the testing kits for people to wipe the package with an antibacterial wipe before it is posted in the pillar box. The medical advice is the risk to our frontline colleagues is low.

c) Delivery, Collection & Customer Service Points - Operational Processes & Reporting instructions

What are the changes made to the Special Delivery Guarantees?

New guaranteed times for by 1pm and 9am services

Special Delivery by 1pm - the new guaranteed delivery time will be by 9pm.

Special Delivery by 9am - the new guaranteed delivery time will be 12pm (noon).

Are we changing the Customer Service Points opening hours?

Yes, the change take effect from Monday 6th April 2020. The largest 100 CSPs will be open for a 4-hour window between 07:00-11:00 ([list available here](#)). All other CSPs will be open for a 2-hour window between 07:00-09:00. All CSPs will be closed on Wednesdays and Sundays.

What do I need to do to prepare for the changes to CSP opening hours?

- Ensure your CSP representatives and local CWU representative are briefed about the new opening times.
- Print off and display the new opening hours information outside of CSP – [very large unit poster](#) / [all other units poster](#).
- Make sure there are [Safety posters printed and displayed](#) as well as the social distancing visual floor markers/tape in place. To further ensure safety, you may wish to operate a 'one in, one out' system – poster available [here](#).
- **Print the letters** for customers who attend CSPs to collect mail using one of our specified services. This includes those with [PO Boxes](#) (customers will present a pink card to collect PO Box items) and [Mail Collect/USO Suspensions](#) (customers will present a white card to collect Mail Collect items). Customers are being advised to only attend for essential items.
- **Labels to stick over the P739 cards** will be arriving to place over the address section of the P739 ([highlighted here](#)). As soon as these labels arrive, please start using them on all P739 cards going forward. There will be updated P739 cards arriving shortly, the labels are to be used as an interim measure. We need to ensure all P739s currently stored in vans and pouches have stickers applied.

What is the impact on individuals' contracted hours particularly with the closing of units on Wednesday and Sunday?

For individuals resourcing the CSP as a duty, discussions should take place locally with adjustments made to provide alternative workload and where required, adjustments to times of attendance to reflect the amended opening hours of the CSP.

What happens to individuals who aren't able to do other tasks like delivery?

We envisage there will be the opportunity for individuals to do any alternative indoor work that is necessary and again will need to be supported with employees being flexible to support this arrangement. This will need to be assessed locally on an individual basis.

What will happen to the current SA and earnings for individuals?

Closing CSPs and/or reducing opening hours will mean that the planned workload is no longer there to support Scheduled Attendance(SA). If an employee is due to carry out SA at a time when the CSP is no longer open, discussions should take locally and individual contract holders can work the contracted hours at a different time or on a different day as workload requires and the existing SA arrangements and pay rates will apply. The employee also has the choice not to carry out the SA at an alternative day/time and in this instance the SA would not be paid. This should be continually reviewed depending on the continuing impact of the Coronavirus pandemic.

Are we still collecting money for surcharges?

The **surcharge process will temporarily cease** with Fee to Pay P4605 cards no longer being issued for surcharge items and they should not be delivered to customers. There may be some surcharge items currently in your CSP, please treat these as you usually would, but from today there are no further surcharge Fee to Pay cards to be issued. Items that would ordinarily be surcharged should now be delivered. This will be reviewed over the coming weeks.

And what about Customs charges?

We will be encouraging our customers to pay **Custom charges** online to ensure customers only make essential journeys to CSPs. Please note that Fee to Pay P4605 cards **still need to be completed for customs items** as normal. Please highlight or circle the online option on the card to make this clear to customers.

Are we changing how long we keep parcels for collection at CSPs?

To enable customers time to arrange redelivery or make arrangements for collection of essential items, the **retention period** has been extended from 18 days for Domestic/International and 21 days for Custom Charge items to **30 days for both** before returning to sender.

Are we changing the Ready For Delivery (RFD) Scanning in Deliveries?

When scanning the RFD scan on our Tracked products, this sends a message the customer letting them know the item is in the Delivery office and will be expected to be delivered on that day. Unfortunately, due to the current limitations and absence levels in our operation, some parcels receiving the RFD scan are not being delivered on the day they are scanned.

In order to make sure our customers receive the correct messages the following changes should be made to the usual indoor scanning process for Delivery Offices:

- Do not RFD scan your Tracked Parcels as they arrive in the DO
- Only Scan Tracked Parcels that you can commit to deliver the same day
- It is advised to do the RFD Scan on Tracked Parcels once you have prepared your delivery and are sure the item will be delivered that day

Royal Mail is changing Operational Delivery processes for the delivery of any parcels which cannot be posted through a letter box or that requires a signature, what do I need to do differently?

For non-signature parcels that aren't letterboxable (1C/2C, RM24/48, T24/48, International import)

1. Scan the parcel as delivered but do not press submit.
2. Leave the parcel on the doorstep, knock on the door and step back 2 metres
3. When the customer comes to the door tell them they have a parcel there.
4. Witness the customer taking the parcel inside.
5. If the customer takes the parcel inside the Delivery Officer should press submit.
6. If the Customer refuses to take the parcel inside, then the Delivery Officer should retrieve the parcel, update the PDA status to "Undelivered - No Answer" and leave a "Something For You" card so that the parcel can be collected at a later point. Do not show the parcel as "Refused".

For signature parcels, including letter formats (Signed For, T24/48 with signature, International with signature)

1. Scan the parcel as delivered and press continue but do not enter the customer's name yet.
2. Leave the parcel on the doorstep, knock on the door and step back 2 metres
3. When the customer comes to the door tell them they have a parcel there and inform them that we will not be collecting the usual signature, but we will require the customer's name and must witness the customer taking the parcel in.
4. Input the customer's name as normal and press proceed. When the signature box appears, input "XP1" but do not press done until the customer picks up the parcel.
5. If the customer takes the parcel inside the Delivery Officer should press done.
6. If the Customer refuses to take the parcel inside, then the Delivery Officer should retrieve the parcel, update the PDA status to "Not Delivered - No Answer" and leave a "Something For You" card so that the parcel can be collected at a later point. Do not show the parcel as "Refused".

For Special Delivery Guaranteed parcels, including letter formats

1. Scan the parcel as delivered and press continue but do not enter the customer's name yet.
2. Leave the parcel on the doorstep, knock on the door and step back 2 metres
3. When the customer comes to the door tell them they have a parcel there and inform them that we will not be collecting the usual signature, but we will require the customer's name and must witness the customer taking the parcel in.
4. Input the customer's name as normal and press proceed. When the signature box appears, input "XP1" but do not press done until the customer picks up the parcel.
5. If the customer takes the parcel inside the Delivery Officer should press done.
6. If the Customer refuses to take the parcel inside, then the Delivery Officer should retrieve the parcel, update the PDA status to "Not Delivered - No Answer" and leave a "Something For You" card so that the parcel can be collected at a later point. Do not show the parcel as "Refused".

For Age Verification Tracked parcels

1. Knock on the customers door and walk back 2 metres and scan the parcel
2. Advise the customer that they have an "Age Verification" parcel that we can leave on the doorstep without the usual signature, but must still verify the persons age and witness them taking the parcel inside.
3. Ask the customer to open the door or stand in a window and undertake the "Challenge 25" check.

4. If the customer does not look over 25 the Delivery Officer should ask the customer to provide ID that proves their age. The customer can either show this to the Delivery Officer at a safe but visible distance or as an alternative through a window.
5. If the customer looks over 25 or produces the relevant ID, the Delivery Officer should ask the customer for their name and advise them to step back.
6. They should then input the customer's name into the PDA, when the signature box appears the Delivery Officer should input "XP1" without pressing done and should place the parcel on the doorstep.
7. When the customer takes the parcel indoors the Delivery Officer should press done.

If the customer does not provide the relevant ID/proof of age then the OPG should refuse to deliver the parcel, update the PDA status to "Undelivered – Failure to Produce ID" and leave a "Something For You Card" so that the parcel can be collected at a later point.

What about the process for Customer Service Points?

Handing over "Non- Signed For" Parcels (1c/2c, RM24/48, TR24/48) to customers.

1. Ask the customer to show their P739/E739 without the CSP team member having to handle it. If necessary, they should ask the customer for any information that is hard to read.
2. The CSP team member should make a note of the customer's address and any other details that they will need to locate the parcel.
3. Having located the Parcel, they should ask the customer to show the relevant ID without the need for the CSP team member having to handle it (ID requirements remain in line with current procedures – i.e. they should show the ID of the person to whom the parcel is addressed).
4. If the customer has provided the appropriate ID the CSP team member should ask the customer to place their P739 card into the bin (if provided) or if it is not possible to provide a bin, they should ask the customer to dispose of the card when they leave the CSP.
5. The CSP team member should then scan the barcode on the parcel and follow the Item Collected process on the PDA (and SPS process in an SPS enabled office) before placing the parcel onto the service counter for the customer to retrieve.

Handing over "Signed For" Parcels (Special Delivery, Recorded, International, T24/48, Age Verification) to customers

1. Ask the customer to show their P739/E739 without the CSP team member having to handle it. If necessary they should ask the customer for any information that is hard to read.
2. The CSP team member should make a note of the customer's address and any other details that they will need to locate the parcel.
3. Having located the Parcel, they should ask the customer to show the relevant ID without the need for the CSP team member having to handle it (ID requirements remain in line with current procedures – i.e. they should show the ID of the person to whom the parcel is addressed and, for Age Verification only, also their own ID proving they are over 18 if they fail the Challenge 25 check).
4. If the customer has provided the relevant ID the CSP team member should inform the customer that they will hand over the parcel without collecting the normal signature. In addition, they will ask the customer to place their P739 card into the bin if provided or if it is not possible to provide a bin, they should ask the customer to dispose of the card when they leave the CSP.
5. The CSP team member should then scan the barcode on the parcel and follow the Item Collected process on the PDA (and SPS process in an SPS enabled office). When the CSP team member gets to the relevant screens they should input the customer's name into the PDA as normal but when the signature screen is displayed they should input "XP1" themselves and press Done.

They should then place the customer's parcel onto the service counter so that the customer can then take their parcel.

How can I safely uplift from a collection point?

Ask the customer to leave the items for collection and the mandatory paperwork in a convenient place, and then to step back 2 metres. When the customer retreats pick up the collection, scan the paperwork and return the collection to the vehicle in the normal way.

Do we still have to do the 2020 USO Annual Review for Delivery and Collections?

It is not appropriate for this activity to be undertaken now, and as such we are pausing this activity until further notice. Further communications will be cascaded when appropriate.

d) Delivering and Collecting from customers

What process should be followed if a business customer who is currently closed has a parcel or attendance call item for them?

There should be an attempt to deliver the parcel, if this is not possible then the usual P739 process should be followed. Business customers who are closed may still be checking to see if they have mail. By leaving the P739, this means the customer will be able to collect or redeliver at a time they are available.

What happens to customers wanting to drop of collections now Customer Service Points are closing?

We're asking customers to only visit Customer Service Points when absolutely necessary. We have prepared a letter for you to hand over to **business customers who are attempting to collect or drop off their mail** – [click here](#). This letter should be handed out when a business customer attends the CSP to collect or drop off mail, providing them with a list of options for making alternate arrangements.

What sort of things can I do locally to take in those collections?

Here are some options you may wish to consider when making local arrangements to accept business customer mail. Please be mindful of safety and security when accepting customer mail:

- Ring bell/use side door (similar to British gas box process)
- Advise of a time window that will be made available for customers to attend to drop off at a designated location on site
- Have a vehicle and collections driver available on site during a specified time window to receive business customer mail
- Where there are LAT duties, advise of a window at the start of the LAT duty customers can drop mail off on site for the LAT drivers to collect.
- Direct to nearest open site or collection hub, mail centre or POL
- Provide a phone number of the office for the customer to call to alert when they are on site to drop off

Remember, in the first instance, advise customers to bring mail to drop off at the revised opening times of your CSP. To ensure that we are following the process around social distancing, make sure that the two metre distance is kept at all times and minimise contact.

Business customers had closed their premises but are starting to reopen as staff return to work. Should I just start re-delivering and collecting?

Yes, we should keep an eye out when out and about and re-commence delivery and collections as soon as businesses reopen, provided they haven't organised a keep safe or other alternative arrangements. Ensure that your manager is advised of Collections recommencing so that the collection point can be unsuspending in CMD. This will ensure that going forward the collection point is displayed on the downloaded route on the PDA.

What is the advice on delivering to care homes?

Where the current practice is to deliver to each door in a care home, the DOM should contact those care homes to agree to leave the mail at a central point. If the care home does not agree, then deliveries should be made in the normal way.

Deliveries to Concierge / Halls of Residence – I am being told that they will only accept letters and not parcels, what should I do?

If the residence has individual delivery points, ask if you are allowed access to deliver individually. If this is permissible then proceed to do so and follow normal delivery procedures, taking into account the special instructions around signature items.

If we have no access to deliver to individual addresses, or permission is refused then on the first instance leave a P739 "Something for You Card" for each address you have a parcel for and scan as you would normally when there is no answer.

On return to the office, using the USO SharePoint create a single USO exception case for the whole building selecting the reason "COVID 19" and letter type "COVID 19 - concierge/reception refusal to accept attendance items". Once approved, print a copy for each resident, and deliver to the pigeon holes/lockers. (You may also consider displaying a copy of the letter somewhere near to the boxes at the site).

For future deliveries you no longer need to take the parcels, just leave a P739 for each address that has a parcel so customers know we have an item for them, until such time the concierge/reception accept parcels or the customer arranges an alternative delivery point. This mail should be held for 30 days from the date the delivery was first attempted and then after 30 days returned to sender. We need to allow customers time to come to collect or set up a redirection/keepsafe as they may be important/necessary/essential items.

A Post Office where P739 items are left for collection is closed, what do we do with P739 items?

Where a Post Office is closed, use the parent delivery office "When You Were Out" cards until the Post Office re-opens. Items should be returned to the main office Customer Service Point for collection

If when I got to a collection point such as a Post Offices/Businesses and it is closed upon arrival (many with notices up stating due to Coronavirus), how do I report this on my collection scanner?

Use Code 20 – Emergency for all cases where the premises are advising they are closed due to Coronavirus – for other collections use normal business as usual codes.

e) Fleet and vehicles

Temporary changes to vehicle maintenance policy are as follows:

Light Commercial Vehicles (LCVs)

- All LCV Inspections, Servicing and MOTs have been deferred for 90 days. The deferral of MOTs is in line with Driver Vehicle Standard Agency (DVSA) guidelines.
- All LCV scheduled work overdue up to 22 March will remain overdue and will still need to be completed.

- All customers that use M5 have received an email informing them that their booking calendar has changed; and their Homepage on M5 has an instruction to check their booking calendar.

Large Goods Vehicles (LGVs) & Trailers

- All LGV & trailer annual tests (MOTs) have been suspended by DVSA from 21 March 2020 for 3 months.

It is vital during this period that vehicle daily checks are undertaken, and that all defects are booked into the Royal Mail Fleet Customer Service Centre on 0345 266 w0005.

Tyres

If during a daily check you identify the need for a tyre, contact the Royal Mail Fleet Customer Service Centre who will make a booking either with your location fleet workshop, or via our emergency tyre supplier through a drop-in centre.

We will only use a Drop-in Tyre Centre for an operator if the drive distance is more than 10 miles from a Royal Mail Fleet workshop,

External Hire

- The commercial vehicle hire market is experiencing great demand, with many suppliers not providing a collection and delivery service. There has also been high demand for small vans. Additionally, our steer from the Executive Board is to keep hire to a minimum.
- To preserve cash, SDLs and ADMs must critically consider all requests for external hire. We must ensure every reasonable option is explored before requesting an additional external hire vehicle.

Breakdown/Recovery

Royal Mail has been working closely with our key supplier (RAC) to ensure that we adhere to the Government guidelines and keep all our colleagues and RAC staff safe if a vehicle breaks down while a driver is on duty. Here's how:

- When calling jobs in to RAC, you will now be asked additional questions regarding the health of the driver to allow RAC to triage the call and allow the patrols to carry out dynamic risk assessments.
- The driver and RAC patrol technician must always maintain a 2m distance for effective social distancing.
- RAC patrol mechanics will use protective products to clean the surfaces they touch in vehicles.
- If RAC cannot fix the vehicle at the side of the road, they will endeavour to transport the driver back to their office as follows:
- Customers are no longer allowed inside any RAC vehicle type, regardless of whether or not they are displaying symptoms.
- RAC will triage the safest way for both our people and theirs to get our driver to a place of safety using industry best practice and Public Health guidance. This process will be reviewed at regular intervals.
- Amongst these options RAC can, if they deem it necessary arrange and pay for a taxi for the onward journey. We suggest that if a taxi is used the Royal Mail colleague sits in the nearside rear seat ensuring good ventilation by partially opening the nearest window.

Vehicle Cleaning

Where a confirmed case of Coronavirus infection is identified (i.e. Covid-19 Positive), Public health England will provide advice on the affected employee's case and the need for cleaning specific areas within their workplace, including equipment and any vehicle use. Report the case to Central Postal Control (CPC) on 0345 266 1060.

Where vehicle cleaning is identified (only undertaken against a Covid-19 Positive diagnosis, following testing), Royal Mail Fleet will arrange for the vehicle(s) in which the affected colleagues have driven or been a passenger to be cleaned.

The vehicle must be left in quarantine for a period of 72 hours from the time the vehicle was last used by an employee diagnosed as Covid-19 Positive (this is the period beyond which the virus would be unable to survive).

After contacting CPC, call the Royal Mail Fleet Customer Service Centre on 0345 266 0005 at the earliest opportunity to advise of a vehicle that requires cleaning.

A specialist sub-contractor will attend the Royal Mail location and undertake a disinfectant clean of the vehicle (undertaken by a two-man team wearing enhanced PPE).

Operating hours

The Royal Mail Fleet Customer Service Centre will reduce its operating hours:

- Monday to Friday: 06:00 to 16:00 (with effect from 20 April).
- Saturday: closed (with effect from 18 April).

These operating hour reductions mean that it may take longer for the team to answer the phone – please be patient. Outside of these hours, calls will be answered by RAC. Local workshop hours are subject to change on a daily basis, depending on the people available to cover shift patterns.

Advice for customers

You can access the latest advice for customers on the Royal Mail website here:

www.royalmail.com/coronavirus

To check the latest international advice, check here:

https://personal.help.royalmail.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/5317/~/-international-incident-bulletin