

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](#)

It is possible to use 'CTRL+F' to search for key words within this document.

For example, to find the company's position on social distancing, search "social distancing".

Index

1. [HEALTH](#)
 - a) [Prevention](#)
 - b) [Self-isolation, testing and reporting](#)
 - c) [Cleaning and consumables](#)
 - d) [Travel](#)
 - e) [Support and advice](#)

2. [POLICY](#)
 - a) [General guidance](#)
 - b) [Travel/ and annual holiday](#)
 - c) [Caring for dependants](#)
 - d) [Sick pay](#)
 - e) [Attendance process](#)
 - f) [Vulnerable employees](#)

3. [OPERATIONAL](#)
 - a) [General Ops Advice](#)
 - b) [NHS testing kits](#)
 - c) [Operational Processes and Reporting Changes](#)
 - d) [Delivering and collecting from customers](#)
 - e) [Fleet and vehicles](#)

4. [Advice for customers](#)

1. HEALTH

- a) **Prevention**
- b) **Self-isolation, testing and reporting**
- c) **Cleaning and consumables**
- d) **Travel**
- e) **Support and advice**

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?

There is still a lot that is unknown about COVID-19 and how it spreads. The primary preventative guidance is good hand hygiene and maintaining social distancing, disposable gloves can be obtained from your manager. Disposable gloves should be changed if they become soiled or torn and care should be taken not to touch your eyes or mouth when wearing gloves.

Coronaviruses are thought to be spread most often by respiratory droplets. Although the virus can survive for a short period on some surfaces, it is unlikely to be spread from domestic or international mail, products or packaging. However, it may be possible that people can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes.

In our everyday lives we are touching common shared items, products in shops, petrol stations, cash machines, public transport etc, the key message for all of us is to maintain social distancing, be meticulous in hand hygiene. Use hand sanitiser, sanitiser wipes, wear a face covering in indoor workplace places and the optional use of gloves.

A customer has asked a colleague in my office to have a temperature check before allowing them access to their delivery or collection point, what is our business position on this request?

We continue to follow the Government/Public Health guidelines and temperature checks have not been mandated. It would therefore not be appropriate to ask our employees to comply with these checks unless they wish to. Temperature checks can be an indicator of possible coronavirus however not everyone with coronavirus will have a temperature or develop symptoms. Where someone has a high temperature it could also be for other reasons. Having a temperature check can be stressful and if a temperature is raised this needs to be supported through clear signposting to a GP or NHS 111 who will advise next steps. Where temperature checks are being suggested managers need to engage locally with the company requesting the temperature check and come to a local arrangement.

Should we wear gloves?

The primary preventative guidance is good hand hygiene as Government guidance does not require the provision of gloves in our setting. However, a business decision has been made to issue gloves for use on an optional basis for their own person choice and comfort.

Gloves can be issued to staff on request or made available as mandatory for certain roles identified through risk assessment. The use of gloves is expected to average one or two pairs per day. To help maintain stock levels, please consider the amount of gloves you are using.

Gloves should be changed if they become soiled or torn.

Dispose of gloves in a bin. Never discard them on the floor/in the street/in a vehicle. When onsite use the designated bin for disposal of these items.

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?

It has been mandatory for all colleagues to wear a face covering in all Royal Mail Group indoor workplaces from Monday, 9th November 2020. We also support and actively encourage the use of face coverings in all outdoor settings to keep our colleagues and customers safe. Face coverings do not replace other preventative measures, i.e. increased hand hygiene, social distancing, increased cleaning, etc, which must remain in place.

A move to mandatory face coverings in all indoor workplaces strengthens the existing preventative measures already in place to protect you and others from coronavirus and supports our risk management strategy which we are responsible for under health and safety legislation. This is a view shared by regulatory bodies such as the Health and Safety Executive and many local authorities. We have already seen some excellent examples where indoor workplaces are wearing face coverings and uptake has been good.

Royal Mail is providing branded reusable face coverings for operational colleagues to reduce the impact on the environment and for colleague comfort. These are being delivered direct to operational units. Line managers should distribute them to each individual employee. Disposable masks will still be available for those who prefer to wear them and for our casual employees.

Full face mask and face covering guidance is available [here](#)

Posters to display this requirement are available on the [SHE Coronavirus Document Library -Posters](#)

While working outside of RMG premises in indoor places where social distancing may be difficult and where you will come into contact with people you do not normally meet e.g. public buildings, business receptions, blocks of flats it is recommended that face coverings are worn.

The law provides discretion to people who have a health condition, a disability and other groups. These will not always be visible, so staff should continue to serve all who enter CSPs, including those not wearing face coverings.

There is someone in my office who cannot wear a face covering for medical or other reasons what should they do?

We recognise that some employees are unable to wear face coverings for medical or other reasons, and that they are not practical to wear for some activities in certain job roles, e.g. in a call centre where full social distancing measures are in place.

Managers should request evidence of an exemption and can keep records that employees have met the criteria for the exemption but should not record the specific reason as this is not necessary, even if the employee shares this with the manager. Ideally a letter from the GP confirming the employee has a valid exemption reason is sufficient. Employees with an exemption certificate which can be printed off from various online sites or employees wearing a sunflower lanyard still need to present evidence for managers to review.

Speak to your line manager if you have questions or concerns.

Wearing the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower lanyard discreetly indicates to people around you including staff, colleagues and health professionals that you may need additional support, help or a little more time. Not all disabilities are visible – some are hidden and not immediately obvious, such as learning difficulties, mental health as well as mobility, speech, visual or hearing impairments. Living with a hidden disability can make daily life more demanding for many people, but it can be difficult for others to identify, acknowledge or understand the challenges you face.

The sunflower lanyard is only intended for people with a hidden disability or an underpinning health condition. It is not for just general use if you cannot wear a face covering.

For those people with a hidden disability or underpinning health condition wearing the Sunflower is entirely a choice.

The Sunflower lanyard can be requested via line managers who can order via the an excel form [here](#) and then e-mailing it to uniform@royalmail.com. Requests will be collated daily and despatched via our network. Please note there is a seven working day lead time, therefore lanyards will be available from w/c 30 November. These lanyards will include an auto release safety clip, employees wearing their own versions will need to ensure they meet the same standard.

Employees may wear similar identification to make it clear they are subject to medical or other exemption to wearing a face covering. The web page gives further detail on this. <https://hiddendisabilitiesstore.com/>, other options are available.

Can I wear a visor instead of a face covering?

Existing [PHE guidance](#) has been updated with additional guidance on use of face visors, which advises that a face visor or shield may be worn in addition to a face covering but not instead of one. This is because face visors or shields do not adequately cover the nose and mouth.

For those with an exemption to wearing a face covering and who can/are currently wearing a face visor or shield, you should continue to wear the face visor as this offers more protection than wearing nothing.

What are the washing requirements for the reusable face coverings issued?

Face coverings can be hand washed or washed in a washing machine at 60 degrees (not 30 degrees as per packaging) for up to 30 washes. Do not dry clean the face coverings or use fabric conditioner as these can leave residues on the materials which should not be breathed in. It is important to wear a clean face covering each day and to change it during the day if it becomes wet.

Where can I order extra Royal Mail reusable face coverings?

Units can order extra face coverings from the web site: <https://store.paragon-cc.co.uk/rm-stationery>. There is a limited supply of additional face coverings available and they will be prioritised to operational units. Any non-operational employees can request a face covering via the above link (subject to availability) or at the unit they are attending if they are unable to work from home.

How has Royal Mail selected the branded reusable face covering?

Face coverings alone will not protect people from contracting the virus. They can help to reduce the risk of infection and are an additional tool that will help to control the spread of it. The face coverings provided by the business are sufficient to help reduce the spread of the virus within the workplace but they must not lead to a relaxed attitude to hand washing and social distancing. The government guidance has been clear throughout the pandemic that PPE should be reserved for medical use and for work tasks where protection from dust, chemicals and other contaminants is necessary. Face coverings, whilst not expected to meet PPE standards, play a valuable role in reducing transmission of coronavirus in the community.

The face coverings comply with UK's General Products Safety Regulations 2005 and they have certification for suitability of the fabric for wearing over the nose and mouth. As they have not been supplied as medical grade the manufacturer has used their standard non-medical description on some of the documentation. They have three layers of fabric. Two layers are tightly knitted cotton and a further layer contains SilvaDur antimicrobial treatment. Two or three layers of tightly woven fabric have been shown in studies to be highly effective at filtering out the virus, equivalent to surgical mask standards. When wearing the face coverings it is easy to feel the resistance to air flow through them when compared to many other face coverings.

What examples of evidence will employees have as proof of exemption for not wearing a mask?

In considering the approach for exemptions. In many cases, employees with an existing health condition will have appropriate medical correspondence, such as hospital letters, consultant letters, NHS letters or appointment cards, OH reports, documented conversations with managers about their condition, e.g. welcome back meetings, rehabilitation plans, attendance reviews, which can be provided as evidence, with the specific condition hidden/redacted (e.g. by an appropriately placed post-it note or using a marker-pen) if the employee chooses. Given the many examples of evidence an employee will likely have, we do not foresee that many employees will be unable to share evidence. In many cases the manager will already be aware of an employee's condition.

Will Royal Mail be paying employees for proof of their exemption for wearing a mask and any time off incurred to attend doctor's appointments?

If employees do not have any current or existing evidence (see above examples) of their exemption and an employee advises that a GP fee is going to be involved, then the manager should contact Advice & Support on 0345 6043657. Our aim is to avoid any incurred charges for employees and identify other options. GPs are conducting consultations via phone or web-based option, letters are routinely emailed to patients or are posted if an employee does not have an email address. We do not foresee an employee being offered a face to face appointment and requiring time off and, more importantly, as stated we are looking to identify options of evidence that do not involve the GP or any charges.

Will Royal Mail be offering an Occupational Health referral for anyone who is exempt from wearing a face covering?

Employees can discuss any concerns with their line manager. Managers should contact Advice & Support for advice. If Advice & Support believe that an OH referral is appropriate, they will advise the manager.

When should I use antiseptic wipes?

Although government guidance is clear about the increased level of cleaning required, sanitising wipes are not specifically required. A business decision has been taken to provide sanitising wipes in addition to general cleaning products for use where it is not easy or pragmatic to use regular cleaning products, e.g. in cleaning some forms of equipment for example Shared trolleys, PDA's, touch points in vans, etc. To help maintain stock levels, please consider usage of wipes.

Dispose of used wipes (or tissues) in a bin. Never discard them on the floor/in the street/in a vehicle. When onsite use the designated bin for disposal of these items.

Can we allow our employees to share small vehicles?

Throughout the pandemic we have carefully followed public health guidelines in order to keep our colleagues and customers safe – this will remain the case going forwards.

In all areas across the UK following changes to restrictions the use of shared vans must cease. We will continue to review the situation in line with guidance.

If you were the partner in a van and your partner has tested positive for Coronavirus what should you do?

All employees with coronavirus symptoms (high temperature, new continuous cough, loss or change to your taste or smell) should self-isolate immediately and seek a test.

If you shared a van with an employee who has now tested positive for coronavirus, consider when you last shared a van with them. If you shared a van and had close contact during the 2 days before they developed symptoms and self-isolated, then you should self-isolate for 10 days from the last date of close contact with the confirmed case (you are very likely to be contacted by NHS test and trace). Your manager will record your absence on PSP as 'SCU070 Coronavirus – self-isolation' and normal Royal Mail sick pay policy will apply. You should not take a test if you don't have symptoms as this could generate a false negative test result and you may then go on to develop symptoms in the following days.

Any other shared van duty or rest day cover duty members who help to form a shared van 'pod' with the confirmed case individual are not required to self-isolate unless they are contacted by Test & Trace and should take extra care, particularly to social distancing and hand hygiene. Should they develop symptoms, they must self-isolate immediately and arrange a test.

As a reminder, van sharing is voluntary for our employees and we have ensured a number of measures are in place to minimise any risk of infection whilst sharing a van including face coverings, the use of hand sanitiser and cleaning of common van touchpoints. Employees with any concerns should speak to their line manager for more information.

Anyone who develops symptoms of coronavirus should self-isolate and request a test immediately. You can access up to date guidance on what steps to take whilst self-isolating on the NHS website. Employees should fully comply with instructions provided by the NHS and keep their line manager informed.

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 staggered shift times and no requirement for PDA signatures remain in place. It will be mandatory for all colleagues to wear a face covering in all Royal Mail Group indoor workplaces from Monday, 9th November 2020.

In addition to the preventative measure outlined and in situations where there are tasks that mean the 2 metre social distancing cannot be achieved, employees 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.
5. Make available requested documents (e.g. risk assessments) relevant to the inspection / investigation when asked.
6. Inform your SHEBP immediately of the visit, the Site Safety Representative, and Area CWU/CMA Unite Representative of any visit or approach without delay – they are able to support as required (and the Site Safety Representative may wish to accompany you throughout any visit).

Where access to toilet facilities is limited what should we do?

If in rare cases this is difficult, a [letter](#) has been produced by the Department for Transport and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) to reassure drivers and to remind businesses of their obligations under the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992, to provide suitable toilet and hand washing facilities to drivers visiting their premises.

Businesses which make or receive deliveries, should ensure that drivers have easy and safe access to toilets and hand washing facilities to support their health and wellbeing whilst carrying out their important work, which supports the economy.

Preventing access is against the law. Regulations 20 and 21 state that suitable and sufficient sanitary conveniences and washing facilities shall be provided at readily accessible places and that hot and cold running water and soap must be available to use.

While this obligation for businesses is not new, ensuring that hygiene facilities are made available to colleagues is especially important during the current Covid-19 crisis, to help tackle the spread of the virus, at a time when there are fewer locations operating with facilities for colleagues to use.

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 (they are legally required to provide toilet facilities).
- 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.

Can we share food or hold a buffet?

Do not share food in work, there is a high risk of spreading Coronavirus. Units must not engage, encourage or support activity which promotes sharing of food such as cake, sweets, home baked food, or organised buffets. Employees should be encouraged to bring in their own food for their own use or use the take away food option available through our canteens.

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 duty rather than refilling at work. If you do refill a bottle at work the neck of the bottle must not touch the dispenser or tap. Sanitising wipes must be used to wipe the bottle and dispenser or tap if that happens. [Staying Hydrated Huddle](#)

Can we switch our heating systems on in winter?

There are various types of heating systems in use across the RMG Estate and their method of operation are considered to present a low risk of Covid-19 air borne transmission. Systems that tend to re-circulate the internal air (e.g gas fired warm air unit heaters & local split air conditioning systems) have been separately assessed and can be used in well ventilated areas.

The current recommendation of providing additional fresh air into the workspace by means of openable windows and doors to outside where reasonably practicable should continue. Opening windows can result in draughts that can cause occupant discomfort. Where possible discomfort should be mitigated by ensuring building users are not located directly in a draught for long periods, for example moving personnel/desks/room furniture. Relaxing dress codes so that warmer fleeces can be worn is advisable.

Where thermal comfort cannot be achieved, the unit ventilation assessment should be reviewed, and assets that require supplementary ventilation (e.g desk fans, pedestal fans, local air conditioning units and ceiling fans) should be switched off and windows and doors creating draughts can be closed. Any queries should be directed to the PFS Helpdesk: 0844 800 9191.

Can fans be used in the work place?

Pedestal, floor fans and desk top fans could be used provided there is adequate outdoor fresh air and extract within the space. i.e. mechanical ventilation or openable windows and/or external doors. An assessment PFS2_211_Workplace Ventilation Assessment MUST be carried out (by PiC) to determine suitability for use. A copy of the [ventilation assessment form](#) should be used for assessing the use of ventilation systems on site. When completed it must be retained on site for future reference and an electronic copy forwarded to property.records@royalmail.com

Where possible fans shall be located at least 2M from the nearest person i.e. person should not stand or be positioned directly in front of fan for prolonged periods.

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

PDAs 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, First Aiders should consult the advice of St John Ambulance, Public Health England and the Resuscitation Council for advice on how to administer treatment. If maintaining 2m distancing is not possible and/or First Aiders want to wear a mask, these should be requested through their line manager. Managers should ensure that all First Aiders have been informed and, where required, given access to the resources above.

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

[Guidance to protect extremely vulnerable people](#) has been issued by the NHS who have contacted people deemed to be extremely vulnerable due to certain medical conditions or the treatment they are undergoing. Employees should fully comply with any instructions provided by the NHS 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.

Is there any specific guidance for pregnant women?

The general guidance for pregnant women is the same as everyone else e.g. regular hand washing, use of face coverings and social distancing however all pregnant women should have a New and Expectant Mothers Risk Assessment completed which will need to be regularly reviewed and if there are any changes in risk then the controls should be updated accordingly.

Pregnant women have been included in the list of people at moderate risk (clinically vulnerable) as a precaution because they can sometimes be more at risk from viruses like flu - It's not clear if this happens with coronavirus but because it's a new virus, it's safer to include pregnant women in the moderate-risk group. According to the NHS there is no evidence that pregnant women are more likely to get seriously ill from coronavirus. Any concerns should be reported to a midwife or maternity team immediately – full NHS guidance is available [here](#).

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. The government has issued specific guidance on safe use of places of worship during the pandemic which can be reviewed via the [link](#).

Will our canteens remain closed?

Our canteen facilities in units are available but may be at a reduced level – this is under constant review based on updated government guidance. Food can be served on plates and metal cutlery can be used where a working dishwasher is available. Canteens without access to a dishwasher will supply a takeaway food option in line with the Compass retail grab and go menu plan and 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.

In line with government guidance, there is no requirement for QR codes to be displayed in workplaces which means we do not need to display QR codes in our units, offices or canteens.

What is our position on Face-to-Face meetings?

Unit manager must advise potential visitors that they are only permitted on site if their attendance is business critical. It is anticipated that the vast majority of meetings can and should be undertaken remotely.

If on site meetings cannot be undertaken remotely and are business critical, allowance must be made for

those who cannot or do not wish to attend in person. This may be for personal health or shielding reasons and they should attend via Skype or conference call. The needs of all team members must be respected and their participation welcomed. It is vital that managers and senior leaders in particular set the standard with social distancing and working from home wherever possible, while balancing the importance of visibility, leadership and support for the health and wellbeing of all our colleagues.

The Local Area Health and Safety Representative has requested to visit my office to complete an inspection, can I allow them to visit?

Yes, the CWU and Unite officers have a legal right to visit any premises where their members are working. CWU and Unite/CMA Area Health and Safety Reps have a statutory entitlement to carry out Health and safety inspections and investigations and it is a legal requirement that the company facilitates such visits to Units. These visits can and will continue during Covid-19 T4/T5 Lockdown with 'Covid-Secure' protocols and standards (Hands-Face-Space) followed at all times. Units may also receive unannounced visits from HSE and Local Authority EHO. The SHE team have developed a joint inspection form with the union that reps will follow when on site to help ensure we are maintaining the same standards across our estate.

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]?

We take a consistent approach across the UK, which is compliant with relevant legislation and takes account of UK and devolved government guidance.

Country specific guidance to protect yourself and others outside of work is available:

Scotland: [click here](#)

Wales: [click here](#)

Northern Ireland: [click here](#)

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. registered for another referral recently you won't need to do this)
3. **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](#)
4. **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

Are Royal Mail employees able to be tested for Covid-19?

The Royal Mail Group National Workforce Testing Programme commenced on 10 May 2021 and all employees are encouraged to participate in Lateral Flow Device Testing even if they don't have any symptoms.

Twice weekly testing is available and those opting to take part will be provided with the test kits at their workplace for their convenience and support, enabling them to test in the privacy and comfort of their own homes. A poster to help promote the service is available [here](#).

Alternatively, kits can be obtained through an online home ordering and delivery service, by 'Pharmacy-Collect', collection from test centre sites, by community testing offered by all local authorities and through testing at on-site at schools and colleges. A poster to help promote the service is available [here](#).

[Click here](#) for more information or visit the [GOV.UK website](#). A video on how to perform a rapid self-test is available [here](#) and you can review a recent RMTv feature [here](#).

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. The current position is that employees could be isolating for 10 days and this could be extended if they develop symptoms during self-isolation.

If employees are not able to work from home during self-isolation, absences should be treated as sickness absence, "Sick Coronavirus" absence type on PSP. Managers should then choose the relevant absent code:

S A U 0 7 1	Coronavirus Confirmed Case
S B U 0 7 0	Coronavirus Symptoms
S C U 0 7 0	Coronavirus Self Isolation

You can access up to date guidance on what steps to take whilst self-isolating on the NHS website, available [here](#). Employees should fully comply with instructions provided by the NHS and keep their line manager informed.

I have been self-isolating for 10 days due to a continuous cough, but I still have a cough what should I do?

After self-isolating for 10 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 10 days. A cough can last for several weeks after the infection has gone. More details are available [here](#).

Mass Coronavirus testing programmes - do I need to self-isolate following a test?

The UK Government are increasingly using mass Covid testing programmes in communities and in parts of the country where there are higher infection rates.

Employees may be tested as part of these programmes or as part of ongoing studies being completed by universities and health organisations. Participation is voluntary and **employees do not have to self-isolate following a test if they do not have symptoms of Coronavirus.**

If you receive a positive test result then you must self-isolate for 10 days.

If you have been identified as a close contact of a confirmed case and do not have symptoms you will need to self-isolate for 10 days and access a test if you develop symptoms.

If I have had a positive coronavirus test before do I need to self-isolate if I get symptoms again or someone I live with gets symptoms?

If you get symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) again, you must self-isolate immediately and get a test. You can [get a test to check if you have coronavirus on GOV.UK](#).

You should also self-isolate again if:

- someone you live with gets symptoms
- someone in your support bubble gets symptoms and you were in close contact with them since their symptoms started or during the 48 hours before they started

The person with symptoms should get a test.

You must self-isolate again even if you've had a positive test result for coronavirus before. You probably have some immunity to coronavirus but it's not clear how long it lasts.

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

Cases should now be managed locally via PSP with support from SHE and HR Business Partners. If an individual has just started an absence you should enter it on PSP in 'create absence' select 'Sick Coronavirus' from the absence type drop-down box, then, for the reason code select SAU071 - Coronavirus Confirmed Case. If you have previously recorded absence as sick absence or special leave, you will need to amend this retrospectively and update on PSP. Where the individual has been off work for more than 5 days, there is no requirement to arrange for an additional office clean. If they have been off for less than 5 days, then an additional clean should be arranged via the P&FS Helpdesk by calling 0844 800 9191. The two options are:

1. If the individual has been off work between 4 and 5 days, then a Precautionary Clean should be requested.
2. If the individual has been off work for less than 3 days, an Intense Disinfectant Clean should be requested.

If a vehicle cab clean is required, the vehicle should be quarantined for 72 hours (from the time the individual last used the vehicle) and you should call RM Fleet on 0345 2660005 to arrange for the vehicle to be cleaned.

If there are any operational implications, please contact CPC as usual. 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](#).

Lateral Flow Devices are sterilised using ethylene oxide. What tests have been completed to check that they are safe for regular use?

Lateral flow tests have been rigorously tested and are safe to use on a regular basis. LFD tests are approved for use by the MHRA, the UK's regulator of medicines and medical devices, responsible for ensuring their safety, quality and effectiveness. Ethylene oxide is only used in the sterilisation of swabs and it is one of the most commonly used sterilisation tools in the healthcare industry, principally applied by manufacturers to keep medical devices safe. Sterilisation using ethylene oxide in healthcare is governed by ISO 11135, Sterilization of health care products – Ethylene oxide – Requirements for development, validation, and routine control of a sterilization process for medical devices. This international standard outlines the requirement for the validation of an ethylene oxide process to ensure that products processed through the validated process meet the required sterility assurance level. Also, any medical device (in this instance a swab) used within NHS must comply with the international standards on residual ethylene oxide, ISO 10993-7: Biological evaluation of medical devices — Part 7: Ethylene oxide sterilization residuals. The manufacturers have confirmed any traces of ethylene oxide remaining in the lateral flow device or packaging after sterilisation are below limits that would be considered hazardous for health and comply with national and international safety standards. These limits are significantly lower than the occupational levels (those who work with ethylene oxide) as defined by WHO. As outlined by WHO, the occupational acceptable levels of exposure identify that there is only inconclusive evidence of carcinogenicity. There is a wide barrier between levels where any risk has been identified and the actual residual levels accepted as safe for end users.

Is ethylene oxide used in the sterilisation of LFD tests and is this safe?

Lateral flow tests have been certified safe to use both in the EU and UK. Ethylene oxide is used in the sterilisation of swabs only. Ethylene oxide is one of the most commonly used sterilisation methods in the healthcare industry – it is an important sterilisation method that manufacturers widely use to keep medical devices safe. The types of devices that are sterilised with ethylene oxide range from devices used in general health care practices (for example, wound dressings) to more specialised devices that are used inside the body. Any traces of ethylene oxide remaining in the lateral flow device or packaging after sterilisation are below limits that would be considered hazardous for health and comply with international standards.

I have completed the self-isolation period, but I still have a cough what should I do?

After completing the required self-isolating period, 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 as a cough can last for several weeks after the infection has gone. More details are available [here](#).

Do we need to display a QR code in our premises so that employees and visitors can scan and confirm their presence?

Royal Mail is supporting the use of the NHS Covid-19 App. We want to encourage everyone to download the NHS Covid-19 app on their phone. Guidance on how you can do this is available through the [link](#). There is no requirement for QR codes to be displayed in workplaces which means we do not need to display QR codes in our units, offices or canteens. If you are in contact with someone who later tests positive for coronavirus, the app will be able to alert you and provide instructions on what to do if applicable. Some of the guidance you will receive is advisory only.

If you develop symptoms and test positive, the app can be used to alert others you might have been in contact with and potentially share advice with them. Similar apps are live in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

For the purpose of collecting or delivering goods, colleagues are exempt from requiring to scan an NHS QR code and participation is through personal choice. Using the NHS Tracing App is voluntary. If a venue will not permit entry without using the NHS Tracing App, the delivery staff could offer, on a voluntary basis, to leave their office details. If this is not acceptable, and there is no immediate solution, the mail should be returned to the unit and the manager should follow the USO suspension process.

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 the relevant health authorities. 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:

- 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
- 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.

When using a vehicle which parts of the vehicle do I need to Sanitise?

The vehicle touchpoints poster details the parts of the vehicle for all drivers to wipe down before and after use. This is a requirement regardless of whether they share vehicles. There is also a requirement to record “touchpoints cleaned” in the vehicle log book to provide a record that this has taken place.

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 and maintain good hand hygiene unless they are contacted by the NHS Test and Trace service and instructed to self-isolate themselves.

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

- a) General guidance**
- b) Travel/ and annual holiday**
- c) Caring for dependants**
- d) Sick pay**
- e) Attendance process**
- f) Vulnerable employees**

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

a) General guidance

What happens with My Bundle+ flexible benefits if my finances are impacted by COVID-19?

If you are on zero pay because you are off work on ‘special leave unpaid’ or have exhausted your sick pay entitlement due to a covid-19 related absence, we do not want you to lose your benefits. Please send an email

to: RMG.Benefits@royalmail.com and include 'Covid-19' in the subject header. Include your full name and pay number and we'll ensure your benefits are not cancelled and access to your My Bundle+ account is maintained. If you are on covid-19 related sick leave and your pay has reduced, your salary sacrifice benefits will continue.

However, payroll is designed to hold any payments it is unable to take from your pay until you return to work and your pay returns to normal. Once your pay has returned to normal, the payroll system will attempt to recover any arrears from you up to National Minimum Wage limits.

If COVID-19 has had a wider impact on your financial situation (not just your RM pay), and this is impacting your ability to afford the payments for benefits, help and support is available on the My Bundle+ home page at <https://mybundle.rewardgateway.co.uk/>.

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.royalmailemployeeshares.co.uk or by ringing the Employee Shares Helpline on 0800 012 12 13. Calls are free from a BT landline.

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.

Is there any guidance for those working from home?

All colleagues working at home should complete the [DSE risk assessment](#), which identifies appropriate equipment to support you to work safely at home.

b) Travel/annual holiday

I have an employee who has recently travelled abroad, after the initial lockdown period. Do they need to self-isolate on return to the UK? How should this absence be recorded on PSP?

The Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) have a list of countries exempt from advice against 'all but essential' international travel. Countries and territories that no longer pose a high risk for British travellers can be travelled to, providing there are no local/regional/national restrictions or lockdowns in place that disallow all travel. No travel is risk-free, and disruption is still possible. If you plan to travel you should be aware of the travel advice for your destination on current entry requirements and any local coronavirus measures that you will need to follow to make sure you are prepared for your travel.

We therefore continue to advise against non-essential international travel to any countries and territories that are not included in the [exempted list](#) of destinations and we should reaffirm and communicate this to employees.

For the most up to date travel advice, see the relevant link below:

England's travel restrictions - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-travel-corridors#national-restrictions>

Scotland's travel restrictions - <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-travel-and-transport/>.

Northern Ireland travel restrictions - <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-travel-advice>

Wales - <https://gov.wales/coronavirus-travel>

Following the Government's updated and changed travel advice, all employees who have travelled abroad to an exemption listed destination will no longer need to self-isolate on return to the UK. All employees who have travelled

abroad to countries not included in the exemption destination list must self-isolate ('quarantine') for a full 10 days on return to the UK. In England, the quarantine period starts from the day after they leave a non-exempt country or territory. In Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales, the quarantine period will start from the date they re-entered the UK. The employee's absence should be covered by taking additional annual holiday, unpaid other time off or where possible, working from home.

Due to these exceptional circumstances, we support the need for colleagues to follow Government rules and quarantine for the required period, so our normal policy applies, i.e. the absence should be covered by taking additional annual holiday, unpaid other time off or where possible, working from home.

If colleagues choose to travel, they should do so knowing that quarantine when they return is a possibility and they will need to work from home where possible, take annual leave or unpaid leave remains. Our current approach to annual leave continues to apply – all pre-booked leave must be taken.

If they do not have any coronavirus symptoms after the 10 days, they can stop self-isolating and return to work.

I have an employee who wants to change their holiday plans. What should I do?

The expectation is that employees take the time off that has been booked. Having a rest is important for everyone, especially at this time. Employees should carry forward no more than 5 days annual leave at the end of the year (March 2021) in line with our normal policy. We do not expect plans to be changed.

What about annual leave for those employees on maternity leave or long-term sick absence?

Our normal policy will apply and those employees who are unable to take their holiday will be able to take their holiday at a later date when they return to work.

What about employees who have only been employed for part of the year?

Our normal policy will apply, and they will receive their annual leave entitlement on a pro rata basis. It will depend on when they joined Royal Mail what annual leave should be taken.

c) Caring for dependants

If I need to take time off to care for a dependant, how will this absence be covered?

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact us, there may still be times when parents or carers have to be at home to care for their dependants, e.g. a school closure during national lockdown, children have to self-isolate due to close contact at school.

Royal Mail Group continues to provide a vital service during this pandemic, so it is of paramount importance as critical workers we try to be as flexible as possible. During the current lockdowns, schools are providing support for children of critical workers and we have a letter colleagues can use. Colleagues may also be able to be part of "childcare" or "support bubbles". Alongside this, managers should fully explore how colleagues can work flexibly, e.g. swapping from a day shift to night shift, changing start times or hours of work etc.

In these cases, our normal policy applies – colleagues should work with their manager to see if they can work flexibly; alternatively, they can take annual holiday, unpaid special leave or unpaid parental leave. To be eligible for parental leave an employee must:

- Have at least one year or more continuous service by the time parental leave is taken; and
- Confirm that the purpose of the requested period of leave is to only care for the child; and
- Be the parent or have parental responsibility for a child under 18 years of age
- For those taking parental leave for the first time, a copy of a birth or adoption certificate (or equivalent legal document such as the statutory matching letter from the adoption agency) will be required

There is normally a requirement to give 21 days' notice of the leave, but this will not apply in these cases.

The amount of parental leave available and when it may be taken:

- A maximum of four weeks for each child can be taken in any one year

- Time off must usually be taken in blocks of one week (except for where the child has a disability). However, exceptionally during this school closure period, parents can take the leave as individual or multiple days
- Employees have the right to take parental leave immediately after a child is born or placed with them for adoption

For full details, see the [Parental Leave Policy](#) and [Guide](#) on the [Policy and Information](#) site on PSP.

Periods of unpaid leave should be recorded on PSP as 'Special Leave unpaid' and then choose 'Care for a Child or Dependant'.

What guidance do I have to follow if one of my employee's children is sent home from school?

We are aware that some children are being sent home from school either because their child:

- is unwell and showing symptoms of COVID-19
- has no symptoms, but is part of a school class bubble that had children with symptoms or who have tested positive with COVID-19

A COVID-19 absence support tool is available on the SHE coronavirus intranet page. As guidance received from schools and public health authorities in areas where local restrictions are in place can vary, we advise managers to contact HR Advice and Support to discuss their particular situation. They will also be able to advise on how the absence is recorded.

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.

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?

Government guidance on social distancing has evolved since lockdown in March. We have carried out risk assessments and put numerous controls and measures in place to protect our people and customers. To support the employee to get back to work, talk to them to find out their concerns and reaffirm the measures 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, contact HR Services for help and support.

d) Sick pay

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?

As the number of people currently self-isolating due to COVID-19 has increased this month, we want to support colleagues who need to self-isolate, either because they have symptoms/tested positive or someone within their household has symptoms/tested positive.

We have already put in place financial support through offering Royal Mail Sick Pay for those colleagues with clinically extremely vulnerable status who are due to move on to half pay/nil pay or Statutory Sick Pay (SSP); including those who have less than a year's service.

For colleagues who are self-isolating due to COVID-19 from 11 January 2021, the following will apply:

- Our normal approach to sick pay will continue to apply to all Royal Mail Group Ltd employees with over a year's service
- As we did for the first lockdown, 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 the end of March 2021, when it will be reviewed and may be extended. We will continue to monitor the situation and may change this

A reminder of how to record absences on PSP:

SAU071	Coronavirus Confirmed Case
SBU070	Coronavirus Symptoms
SCU070	Coronavirus Self Isolation
SDU070	Shielding Self

For employees who have been advised to shield again to due to local/regional/national restrictions or lockdowns, will Royal Mail sick pay be provided?

For employees who have been advised by the NHS to shield themselves during periods of local/regional/national restrictions or lockdowns and provide the updated NHS/Government letter as appropriate medical evidence to support this, we will continue to pay entitlement to RMG sick pay.

The current Government advice during the national lockdowns in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland for people who have clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) status is they should shield and not come to work if they cannot work from home. They will receive a new shielding notification from the Government/NHS advising them to do so.

For CEV employees who receive updated shielding notification:

- CEV people who have received the updated UK Government/NHS notification to shield and cannot work from home, should not attend work
- Once again, we have decided to extend Royal Mail sick pay to colleagues with CEV status in this situation. We will also offer full sick pay to support CEV colleagues who are due to move on to half pay/nil pay or Statutory Sick Pay (SSP). This means CEV colleagues with less than a year's service are also covered. Employees who are on half / nil / SSP and in this category will receive a letter confirming the arrangement. The extension of our policy is at our discretion and we will review the situation again at the end of March or once we know whether shielding is being extended

As a condition of extending sick pay colleagues must:

- Provide their manager with the letter they received from the Government/NHS advising them to shield and not come to work, if they cannot work from home, during the shielding period
- Agree to book and take all their full annual leave entitlement this holiday year (ending 31 March 2021) even if it overlaps with shielding
- Agree to take any pre-booked annual leave, even if that overlaps with shielding

Employees will receive their usual pay when taking holiday.

Managers should record any shielding self-absence on PSP using, 'Sick Coronavirus' from the absence type drop-down box then 'SDU070 – Shielding Self'. This absence code should only be used for CEV "shielding-self" employees who have received a Government/NHS letter, and not for any other COVID-19 related absence.

e) Attendance process

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. Please see the [manager guide](#) on managing coronavirus related absence for further information.

I have recorded an employee on PSP as a confirmed Coronavirus case. The system has prompted me to raise an OH referral. Do I need to?

You do not have to submit an OH referral for a confirmed Coronavirus case. However, if the absence exceeds expected timescales or a return to work cannot be agreed, a referral may support you to understand your employee's situation and/or highlight what adjustments can be made to support their return to work.

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 should be 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. Managers should seek guidance from HR Services Advice & Support if they are considering issuing an AR1/AR2 or considering dismissing an employee due to a coronavirus related absence. Please see the [manager guide](#) on managing coronavirus related absence for further information.

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. Please see the [manager guide](#) on managing coronavirus related absence for further information.

I have recorded an employee on PSP as a confirmed Coronavirus case. The system has prompted me to raise an OH referral. Do I need to?

You do not have to submit an OH referral for a confirmed Coronavirus case. However, if the absence exceeds expected timescales or a return to work cannot be agreed, a referral may support you to understand your employee's situation and/or highlight what adjustments can be made to support their return to work.

Will time off be granted to attend for vaccine appointments?

Where possible, colleagues should try to arrange appointments to receive the vaccine outside of working hours; though we do understand this may not be possible. Due to the exceptional circumstances of this pandemic and the importance to both our colleagues and Royal Mail in them receiving the vaccine, managers should support employees to attend their vaccination appointment. This may mean providing time off for colleagues to attend appointments during working hours.

Can you go back to normal activities after having your vaccine?

The UK Government advise that you should be able to resume activities that are normal for you as long as you feel well. If your arm is particularly sore, you may find heavy lifting difficult. If you feel unwell or very tired you should rest and avoid operating machinery or driving. You should inform your manager if you are fatigued or feel unwell.

f) Extremely clinically vulnerable employees

I have an employee in my team who is in the extremely clinically vulnerable group. There are regional restrictions in place, so do they need to shield again?

There may be cases of local/regional/national restrictions or lockdowns (e.g. the current national lockdowns in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales) where those employees who were previously shielding themselves are advised to do so again or take extra care. There may also be other employees who were not previously shielding, but due to a change in circumstances are now required to shield, e.g. they are undergoing chemotherapy. Where a local restriction impacts on the business, we will issue a COVID-19 flash communication to those in the affected areas. If this occurs, we encourage our managers to contact those employees to discuss their personal situation at the time.

The current Government advice during the national lockdowns in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland for

people who have clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) status is they should shield and not come to work if they cannot work from home. They will receive a new shielding notification from the Government/NHS advising them to do so.

For CEV employees who receive updated shielding notification:

- CEV people who have received the updated UK Government/NHS notification to shield and cannot work from home, should not attend work
- Once again, we have decided to extend Royal Mail sick pay to colleagues with CEV status in this situation. We will also offer full sick pay to support CEV colleagues who are due to move on to half pay/nil pay or Statutory Sick Pay (SSP). This means CEV colleagues with less than a year's service are also covered. Employees who are on half / nil / SSP and in this category will receive a letter confirming the arrangement. The extension of our policy is at our discretion and we will review the situation again at the end of March or once we know whether shielding is being extended

Managers should record any shielding self-absence on PSP using, 'Sick Coronavirus' from the absence type drop-down box then 'SDU070 – Shielding Self'. This absence code should only be used for CEV "shielding-self" employees who have received a Government/NHS letter, and not for any other COVID-19 related absence.

When an extremely clinically vulnerable employee is returning to work managers should use the [Return to work toolkit](#) to discuss their return to work and contact HR Advice and Support where necessary.

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

I have an employee in my team who is considered clinically extremely vulnerable and has an NHS letter advising them to shield again. They have stated that they want to come to work? What should I do?

There may be cases of local/regional/national restrictions or lockdowns (e.g. the current national lockdowns in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales) where those employees who were previously shielding themselves are advised to do so again or take extra care. There may also be other employees who were not previously shielding, but due to a change in circumstances are now advised to, e.g. they are undergoing chemotherapy.

People who have clinically extremely vulnerable status are at very high risk of severe illness from COVID-19, so if an employee receives a letter from the UK Government/NHS advising them to shield, they should do so. If they are unable to work from home, they should not come to work. We encourage our managers to contact them to check their current situation.

The current Government advice during the national lockdowns in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland for people who have clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) status is they should shield and not come to work if they cannot work from home. They will receive a new shielding notification from the Government/NHS advising them to do so.

For CEV employees who receive updated shielding notification:

- CEV people who have received the updated UK Government/NHS notification to shield and cannot work from home, should not attend work
- Once again, we have decided to extend Royal Mail sick pay to colleagues with CEV status in this situation. We will also offer full sick pay to support CEV colleagues who are due to move on to half pay/nil pay or Statutory Sick Pay (SSP). This means CEV colleagues with less than a year's service are also covered. Employees who are on half / nil / SSP and in this category will receive a letter confirming the arrangement. The extension of our policy is at our discretion and we will review the situation again at the end of March or once we know whether shielding is being extended

Managers should record any shielding self absence on PSP using, 'Sick Coronavirus' from the absence type drop-down box then 'SDU070 – Shielding Self'. This absence code should only be used for CEV "shielding-self" employees who have received a Government/NHS letter, and not for any other COVID-19 related absence.

When an extremely clinically vulnerable employee is returning to work managers should use the [Return to work toolkit](#) to discuss their return to work and contact HR Advice and Support where necessary.

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

Managers should record any shielding self-absence on PSP using, 'Sick Coronavirus' from the absence type drop-down box then 'SDU070 – Shielding Self'. This absence code should only be used for CEV "shielding-self" employees who have received a Government/NHS letter, and not for any other COVID-19 related absence.

When the shielding period is coming to an end, managers should use the Return to work toolkit to discuss with employees about returning to work and contact HR Advice and Support where necessary.

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

Regarding sick pay for colleagues with CEV status, as a manager, is there anything I need to action for my CEV colleagues?

The letters to employees on half/nil pay or SSP will be sent out centrally by HR Services directly to employees. For employees who are not able to work from home during shielding, you should make sure:

- The employees have provided you with the letter they received from the Government/NHS advising them to shield and not come to work, if they cannot work from home, during the lockdown period
- Their absence is recorded correctly on PSP using the "SDU070 – Shielding Self" code (Remember, this absence code should only be used for CEV "shielding-self" employees who have received a Government/NHS letter, and not for any other COVID-19 related absence)
- They book and take all of their full annual leave entitlement this holiday year (ending 31 March 2021), even if that overlaps with shielding
- They take any pre-booked annual leave, even if that overlaps with their period of shielding
- The employee's booked annual leave has been recorded correctly on PSP

One of the conditions of the extension of Royal Mail sick pay for employees with CEV status is to book and take all of their full annual leave entitlement this holiday year. Do they have to take the holiday entitlement before they would be entitled full sick pay, like they did with furlough?

No. This is different from furlough where employees had to have taken 2 weeks of their annual leave entitlement before being eligible to apply for furlough.

The condition for receiving the extension of Royal Mail sick pay during this current shielding period is to book on PSP and take all annual leave entitlement in this holiday year (i.e. by 31 March 2020).

Will RMG sick pay for colleagues with CEV status who are shielding due to the current national lockdowns, be backdated to the start date of lockdown for that country?

Yes. Providing employees meet the annual holiday conditions noted in their letter from HR Services, the pay will be backdated to the start date of lockdown for the relevant UK country.

Please make sure the employee's booked annual leave has been recorded correctly on PSP.

The annual holiday ceiling in our office has already been reached. How can I deal with this for CEV employees who are required to take their full annual leave entitlement this holiday year?

We appreciate we are entering Christmas peak period and it is only a few months until the end of the holiday year. However, the number of employees who are shielding during lockdown are small, so we expect units to be able to accommodate any additional holiday requests from colleagues with CEV status.

Managers should:

- Talk with the employee to ask when they would like to take the holiday
- Check what dates are currently available and whether this meets the employee's requests. Remember, during this pandemic many employees have been absent from work at short notice due to self-isolating, so these holiday requests should be able to be accommodated
- If the dates the employee has requested are not available, provide two or three alternatives
- If the above options do not allow the employee to meet the holiday conditions of the extended sick pay, they may have to take some or their holiday during the shielding period

- Remind the employee that the taking of annual holiday this year is a condition of receiving RMG sick pay during their shielding

3. OPERATIONAL

- 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

What help is there for parcels over 20kgs, we normally use a 2 person lift?

It is not required that a 2 person lift is carried out if the parcel is greater than 20kg, but it may be necessary dependant on whether the individual can safely manage it on their own or not. [Please display this poster.](#)

General guidance for heavy/large items:

- Avoid lifting heavy or large items if it is not necessary e.g. scan a heavy parcel in the bottom of York and rather than lifting it out.
- When handling heavy or large items, use a suitable handling aid like a sack truck wherever possible.
- Plan the route taking note of any issues e.g. steps.
- If you have doubts about your ability to move a parcel safely on your own speak to your manager.
- If you need to carry out a two person lift you should wear a mask unless the person you are lifting with is from your household.

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

Yes, unless you're advised by your SHE Business Partner to prevent all contractors attending. PFS have taken steps to ensure our own workforce and contractors are working to relevant health authority guidance.

The contractor operating instructions are available [here](#) which includes some basic site rules for contractors to follow in Section 2.0 Implementing social distancing within PFS.

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'.

What do I do if I want to move sorting frames in my unit?

If you think that you need to move sorting frames/equipment to maximise space to achieve the 2 metre social distancing requirements, please discuss the options with your line manager or SHE Business Partner. Remember sorting frames and fixtures can only be moved by contractors authorised by Group Property. This should be a last resort after other operational changes have been considered – you should discuss these options with your line manager in the first instance.

What if we have already moved frames ourselves?

We are aware that a number of units have already moved some frames. The field SHE team have gathered information on where this has taken place and shared with Group Property. Subsequently, a further risk managed approach has been considered and the following next steps will now take place:

1. All sites must check that there are no obvious signs of damage or instability:
 - Have the frames been unscrewed from the floor?
 - Do the frame legs appear to be stressed/buckled?
 - Do the mechanical fixings appear to be loose or missing?
 - Is there any obvious wobble/movement of the structure?
 - Are there sharp edges or obvious signs of damage?
 - Is there evidence of any floor, walls or ceiling damage as a result of the movements?

If you answer yes to any one or more of the questions above, please contact the Property Helpdesk for further assistance.

In the event of any frame(s) being damaged or unstable, you must take them out of use immediately until your frames have been checked and passed as suitable for use by a PFS contractor.

Where the move has resulted in a change to the use of the space/layout, you must review the Fire Risk Assessment and associated evacuation plan, and the Workplace Onsite Risk Assessment.

Some sites have been designated to receive a more formalised inspection programme. You will be contacted shortly by an Engineer. Step 1 should still be followed until an engineer is able to visit.

In all cases, you must not move the frames again without using competent contractors via the Property Helpdesk.

What training and induction do we need to give to any casuals or new entrants?

Casual and agency employees and new entrants must be given a site induction on their first shift including local site information and working practices relating to Coronavirus. They should also be included with all future briefings to keep them informed of any changes to working practices.

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.

Can postmen use cycles to convey to their first point of delivery or on delivery?

No cycles should be used to convey, transport, travel anywhere on delivery or to delivery points unless it is part of an approved RMG duty Structure

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

MCDR & DODR are being updated and reporting is being returned to normal reporting. Units should complete MCDR and DODR fully.

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. Practices will need to meet the specific requirements of each unit and we are therefore giving managers a number of options.

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

Where we cannot access the delivery address to deliver mail, because they do not have a letterbox, and no Redirection or Keepsafe is in place then addresses with no delivery point can be treated as a Delivery USO exception. In this circumstance, the Delivery Office Manager should create a case for the addressee(s) on the USO SharePoint to request the suspension letter. Once approved the manager can print the letter from the SharePoint, (the site 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](#)

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.

Can we use volunteers from other units to cover Covid-19 absence?

In units where there is a low number of cases proportional to the number of employees on site and there is no additional local council/health board local outbreak measures in place then volunteers can be brought into units. Volunteers should be shown the coronavirus signage and where hand sanitiser and other protective items can be obtained. Following any positive case offices receive enhanced cleaning and our units are COVID secure.

Local conversations should take place between unit managers and the SHE BP to discuss any local issues when transferring employees if managers are unsure.

In some cases the unit may be given clear advice on employee movements by the HSE or council and we would expect units to abide by any requests from the authorities.

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.

Further information on testing kits can be found via the links below: [Coronavirus Testing Kits SSOW](#)
[Damaged Covid-19 Test Kit Handling Procedure](#)

[Tracked Returns 24 Covid19 Test Packs](#)

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

What are the changes made to the Special Delivery Guarantees? Is this correct

New guaranteed times for by 1pm and 9am services

Special Delivery by 1pm - the new guaranteed delivery time will be by 4pm. Special Delivery by 9am - the new guaranteed delivery time will be 11am.

Are we changing the Customer Service Points opening hours?

CSP opening times are constantly being reviewed, and opening times aligned to the number of parcels being returned to CSPs. You will be advised when to extend opening times.

It is also important that the revised P739s are used in your delivery office. These are available by ordering through the normal portal. The old cards with the CSP opening hours on the card, will provide customers with the wrong information and could lead to wasted trips and complaints.

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?

Yes, we are now collecting surcharges again. CSP staff can order the latest Fee to Pay (P4605) cards from the portal as normal. The card directs customers to stay home, be safe and pay online.

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?

The previously extended retention period has now returned to 18 days for Domestic/International and 21 days for Custom Charge items 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:

- Only RFD scan Tracked parcels that you can commit to deliver today
- Ensure any Tracked items that you have scanned but are unable to take out receive a Delivery not Attempted scan

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 letter boxable (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 2metres
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 2metres
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 2metres
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 "Challenge25" 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.
8. 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 parcels 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 25check).
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.

As part of the Covid temporary measures in CSPs, there should be receptacles in place for customers to place their P739 cards into once they have received their items. Completed P739 cards are considered confidential and to ensure our customer’s privacy is upheld, we must empty the receptacle contents into confidential waste sacks/store them securely throughout the day.

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 18 days from the date the delivery was first attempted and then after 18 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)

- At the end of March 2020, we deferred scheduled maintenance on light commercial vehicles for a period of 3 months, on 29th June we will recommence this although there are some changes still in effect. The following information details our current approach to vehicle maintenance:
- Scheduled Maintenance on light commercial vehicles (LCV's) will recommence on Monday 29th June, please check M5 and confirm your appointments
- Our Maintenance Policy for LCV's has been updated to remove the requirement for an additional inspection once a vehicle is over 4 years old, these vehicles will still have an annual check of their mileage and on the number of times we replaced brake friction materials to determine the inspection frequency to ensure vehicles are safe and reliable
- DVSA have deferred MOT's on LCV's by six month on a rolling basis, we will continue to monitor this and will ensure that vehicles are scheduled to have an MOT before the legal expiry date. Note that the DVSA only update the expiry date 7 days before it is due so future changes would not be visible if you were to undertake an MOT expiry check online. Note that different MOT rules apply in Northern Ireland which we have also updated in M5
- To ensure that we can give everyone the best service possible and get your vehicles back to you quickly please confirm your scheduled maintenance appointments on M5 as soon as possible and book defects in for repair through the Customer Service Centre on 0345 2660005 (bookings opt:3). As we increase our capacity, we will need to work strictly to booked appointments

Large Goods Vehicles (LGVs) & Trailers

- Large Goods vehicles (LGV's) had no change to their scheduled maintenance but DVSA have deferred MOT's and tachographs tests, again we will continue to monitor this and will ensure that vehicles are scheduled to have an MOT and tachograph calibration before the legal expiry date.

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,

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 will always maintain a 1m+ 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 allowed inside RAC vehicles, with the appropriate mitigation which will include enhanced cleaning of vehicle surfaces, wearing a face covering (the RAC will provide if our driver does not have a suitable covering of their own), open windows where practical and reduced conversation during the journey.

Vehicle Cleaning

Where vehicle cleaning is identified (this will not be undertaken unless against a Positive Coronavirus diagnosis (following testing) has been completed), RM Fleet will arrange for the vehicle(s) in which the affected colleagues who have driven the vehicle to be cleaned.

The vehicle must be left in quarantine until the specialist clean has been undertaken.

- Where a confirmed case of Coronavirus has been identified, Regional Public health bodies will provide advice on that affected employees case and the need for cleaning of specific areas within their workplace including equipment and any vehicle use.
- RM Fleet central booking helpline should be advised as soon as a positive test case has been confirmed by the operational site, of the vehicle that requires cleaning. The booking can be contacted - RM Fleet on 0345 2660005 (select option 3)
- The vehicle must remain quarantined until the specialist clean has been undertaken.
- RM Fleet will arrange a clean / sanitisation of the vehicle by an approved sub-contractor at the RM location.
- An RM fleet approved sub-contractor will confirm a booking date for the vehicle to be sanitised.
- The sanitisation process has been approved by RM Safety.
- Additionally, all general debris & rubbish (coffee cups, something for you cards, sandwich bags) will be removed from the vehicle and double bagged, the bags will be left at the RM site for disposal via normal procedures.
- Other items such as clothing or RM equipment will be single bagged at left at the RM location for inspection after 72-hour quarantine.
- Line managers should make a note in the vehicle log book of the date the vehicle was sanitised.

Note 1: no vacuuming or brushing of surfaces will be undertaken so as not to cause any virus particles to become air borne.

Note 2: Removal of debris in the vehicle is part of the standard daily check.

Note 3: the process is to sanitise and kill any virus in the vehicle, it is not a valet process

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