

1/5/2021

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WE'RE STRONGER TOGETHER

5 January 2021

Hello everyone,

Happy New Year and I hope you are well.

I wanted to send a communication to you following the announcements on the new lockdowns that started today in England and Scotland. These are in addition to lockdowns already in place in Wales and Northern Ireland.

We have managed through previous lockdowns, and know what to expect now. Our focus is to support you in the best way we can. Below are some initial updates on what the latest news means, and we have summarised guidance and shared links to resources you may find useful. Changes impacting service levels and products will be sent in the usual way through memoviews.

Your commitment to your customers and, communities has shone through since the pandemic started in March – Thank you.

Post Office – an essential service

As with previous lockdowns, Post Office is an essential service, with Postmasters and branch teams designated as key workers. This means we would continue to be open as long as it's safe to do so.

The key worker letter we issued last year has been updated and is available [here](#).

Guidance for clinically vulnerable groups

Clinically vulnerable people are those who are aged 70 or over or under 70 with an underlying health condition. Government guidance says it is safe for these individuals to continue to work but they should be especially careful to follow the rules, social distance in the workplace and when travelling, wear face masks in public areas and continue to wash your hands and more frequently than usual.

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There is a further group of people who are defined, also on medical grounds, as clinically extremely vulnerable to coronavirus – that is, people with specific serious health conditions who will have been added to the NHS Shielded Patient List and would have previously received a letter.

Over this period, the Government are advising that this group do not go to work. Further information is available [here](#).

Health and safety in branch

Please continue to take safety precautions to protect yourself, your team and your customers.

Maintaining social distancing, wearing face coverings (a legal requirement) and regular hand washing are critical and are also now part of everyday life.

This [guidance](#) provides some support and contains information on face coverings and exemptions, health and safety in branch, social distancing in branch as well as managing difficult situations such as violence and verbal abuse.

Ordering PPE for your branch

As a reminder, we have worked with our supplier, Banner to develop a way for you to order and pay for PPE items that you might need. The Banner ordering and payment portal is available to access through [Branch Hub](#). Through our supplier you can order face masks, visors, hand sanitisers, gloves and antibacterial wipes. These items are available for the same prices that Post Office pays and there is no obligation to use this, as you might have alternative providers. Further details including how to order and information on prices is available [here](#).

Postmasters who want to order and pay for additional Covid-19 screens directly from our supplier Futurama should email [spg@futura.co.uk](#) or call Brooke Dean

GRO**GRO****Financial support**

The Chancellor has today announced further support for businesses in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors and you may be eligible to apply. You can read more [here](#). And existing support remains available, for example you can claim a third grant this month

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through the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme [here](#).

Our own Hardship Scheme remains open for Postmasters who are experiencing severe financial issues – the eligibility criteria remain the same and applications should be made using the template available on the One website. You can find more details on the criteria and the application form [here](#).

Updating your branch hours

Please continue to update your branch hours on Branch Hub [here](#) as this information will be published on Branch Finder on the Post Office website for customers to see when your branch is open. If you do not have access to Branch Hub, please report hours in to the Branch Support Centre.

We'll also share opening hours information with Supply Chain and our clients such as Royal Mail to help them inform their schedules.

Downloadable branch posters and social media messages

A range of covid-19 posters have already been issued as part of our post-Christmas marketing campaign. Additional downloadable posters for your branch are available [here](#). Posters include Change to opening hours, We're Open as Usual, and Reducing customer numbers.

Messages and images for your own social media accounts are available [here](#). Example posts include face covering, social distancing and We're open messages.

Working together

We will reinstate our Postmaster Covid-19 Response Group, (which was an extended group of our Branch User forum). The call is tomorrow and we plan to meet regularly so we can continue to hear your views directly from the frontline and make any necessary changes to improve our support to you.

Area Manager support

If you have any questions or would like to discuss any concerns, please contact your Area Manager who will be more than happy to support. They will operate in line with latest advice and adhering to social

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distancing. They can also help with any additional Point of Sale guidance where needed.

Thank you for your support and stay safe.



Amanda Jones
Group Retail & Franchise Network Director

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