

BOCC Minutes - Tuesday 2nd June

**TO: Business & Operational Continuity Committee
Incident Management Communications Group (for info)**

Please find below the minutes from last week's BOCC meeting (Tuesday, 2nd June).

1. Tour of table – update from members on operating stance in light of lessening of lockdown and government advice.

Members were invited to speak about their present operating challenges. Several members reported that their “return to office” plans are advancing, with particular focus on governance and procedures. A new issue emerging for a number of firms is the request from staff WFH for better supporting infrastructure and equipment, especially as the situation is likely to continue for some time. Some firms are meeting these requests through redistributing unused equipment from offices to staff at home (i.e. chairs, laptops etc.) whilst others are directing staff to purchase any needed equipment reimbursing them later. Both options raise the question of potential H&S obligations for the employers as the WFH situation continues.

With respect to preparing offices and premises for staff return, most members reported that they are doing so not through removing equipment (e.g. take away every second desk) rather they are limiting or removing the ability to hot desk, blocking access to one desk out of two with tape/signs, and implementing one-way travel systems on office floors. One member reported that they are using a “red/green” system on desks, to signal to cleaners which desks had been used and needed cleaning before being reset to green and free to use for the following day. Some members are also moving some equipment to clear space around shared facilities or common areas (e.g. printers).

On the new “track and trace” Government strategy, members posed a number of questions on their implications for the workplace:

- Cleaning regimes where a staff member has tested positive – does the entire workplace need to deep cleaned, or just the area where that staff member spent time? Members also asked if there is a different approach for situations where a staff member tests positive for COVID19, vs staff members being asked to self-isolate (without necessarily testing positive) due to their potential exposure to someone who had tested positive.
- Staff communications: How should firms communicate with staff who may have been exposed to a colleague who has tested with COVID19?
- Branches: How should firms approach situations in branches where a customer has been identified as being testing positive? Do firms need to close the entire branch, even if there are mitigants in place, such as plexiglass screens, or social distancing? Do all staff members in the branch need to self-isolate, or just those people who may have come in contact with the staff member? Could colleagues from another local branch coming in to work in the branch after a deep clean?

One member noted that under the guidance, employees should still only come into the office when they cannot reasonably WFH. Some members were concerned that this could raise insurance questions for firms if either the firm or staff do not follow the official guidance and have staff who could WFH come into the office for either regulatory or compliance/oversight reasons.

Firms note that the subsequent reopening (e.g. reopening of non-essential shops / restaurants in England) announced for later in June and July could mark a change in the guidance to allow employees who wish to go back to the office to do so.

2. 2m social distancing rule vs 1m meter

Andrew Rogan (AR) reported that some MPs and business groups were advocating a reduction of social distancing rule from 2m to 1m, which would make viable opening some smaller businesses. UK Finance has been asked about the implications for members operations of such a change, and whether it would result in firms bring more staff back into the office. Members reported that it made no difference, as the 2m rule was just one factor when considering whether staff should return to the office.

3. TUC letter: UKF has received the attached letter, that I have provided for your information and discussion.

AR advised that UKF had received a letter from the TUC offering to work with individual firms as they undertake their risk assessments. UK Finance has forwarded that letter to the BOCC for members consideration and use, if required.

4. AOB

None.