

To: Business & Operational Continuity Committee
Cc'd: COVID 19 Exit Strategy Group

Dear member,

Please note two items for your attention and action.

1. Vaccinations for key workers

As discussed on Tuesday's BOCC call, a number of members have asked if the Government is considering prioritising key workers for COVID19 vaccinations once the initial priority categories of the most vulnerable have received their vaccinations.

We raised this with the Government during a recent meeting, and were advised that at present there is no intention to change their approach. We were asked however to gather data on just how many financial services staff would be in scope if they were, at a later stage, to open vaccinations to certain categories of key workers.

Please note:

- Key workers in scope for this exercise are those whose duties require them to personally and physically engage with members of the public, such as those in a customer service setting. This includes branch staff, or staff who are required to travel into people's homes, such as for property valuation services.
- It does not include any other types key workers, such as those who support retail services in an operational capacity (i.e. CHAPS operations support staff), or staff members in a customer or client service role who are able to perform that role remotely (i.e. wholesale client meetings, call centre staff, etc). Staff who cannot work from home and need to travel into the office but who are also not physically customer facing (i.e. traders, compliance, IT support, building security staff etc) are also outside of the request at this time.

For the purpose of this request and to ensure simplicity, when thinking about branch staff numbers, firms should not delineate between counter or floor staff and those who may not be customer facing (i.e. branch management), or those who work behind Perspex screens. So if a total of 20 staff members work at a branch, then all 20 staff members should be included in their numbers.

We have been advised that most retail members have a good understanding of how many staff members work in their branch networks and are in scope of HMG's request. Accordingly, members are asked to provide data by **Friday 5 February, COB**. If this is not correct and firms need more time, or you have any other questions, please let us know.

2. BOCC minutes

Please find below the meeting note from Tuesday's meeting of the BOCC.

1. Update for members on key worker letters and vaccination prioritisation for key workers

Key worker letters

- As members will recall, at our last meeting of the BOCC we discussed whether, similar to the first lockdown, firms may issue letters for their key workers for the purpose of accessing education services. We have now received confirmation from the FCA although they are not likely to update their guidance, firms can meet their existing key worker obligations by reissuing key worker letters for key/critical staff in line with their March 2020 guidance. The FCA added that those letters should be accepted as sufficient evidence of key worker status and allow staff to access education for their children. The FCA advised that firms are not required to reissue letters for staff who are commuting to and from work.
- It was noted that this only advice applies onto those key workers in England.
- The FCA advised there is no requirement for firms to reissue letters to staff who already received one in March, i.e. previously issued letters can still be relied upon and there is no 'used by date'.
- The UK Finance key worker note, originally circulated in April, has now been updated to reflect the latest guidance, please see attached.
- Members are asked to provide UK Finance with any examples of key worker staff being refused access to schools where they have had a letter. Please include a brief outline of the incidents and the general location – no need for mention of specific schools. This will be shared with representatives at the FCA and HMG and will help to direct this information into Department of Education, **ACTION**.

Vaccinations for key workers

- Please refer to our request above.

2. Branch comms on mask wearing and Q&A

- Members were joined by our UK Finance colleague Giles Mason. He updated the committee on the work we have been progressing to raise awareness of mask wearing in branches. Some lines and social media collateral have been designed by our team and should be visible on our sites this week.
- He shared that UK Finance have also been in contact with the British Retail Consortium (BRC) and the Post Office who have agreed to work with UK Finance in supporting and combining the messaging which is hoped to increase awareness and support other industries who are facing the same problems.
- Members noted that in addition to those who have experienced customers not complying to mask wearing roles, there were also increasing reports of abuse against staff.
- Members discussed the varying ways in which they are addressing these issues, including an increased security presence and the closure of accounts in serious cases. UK Finance will review the data on abusive customer reports and feed this into HMT again to support their messaging.

3. Support for employees affected by COVID-19

- Members discussed the increased pressure on staff with caring responsibilities and the widening of the governments furlough scheme. Although no members reported to have used the governments furlough scheme, they noted the increasing need to support staff via flexible working policies. Many firms were increasing the options available to staff, dealing with situations on a case-by-case basis and are consistently reviewing their policies.

4. Current staff levels in offices

- With more media attention on the increased numbers of people on the roads and using public transport, members discussed the current staffing levels in their offices and the changes, if any, between this lockdown and the one in March.
- Members shared their current operating levels in offices and most were reporting levels of between 5-10%. Most members noted no change between now and March and were keeping in-office staff to only those who are critical.

5. Antigen testing

- Members discussed whether any firms were running active staff testing programs. Some firms noted that they were beginning to develop their thinking around this, but plans were in the early stages.
- One member shared that they had been testing onsite staff, as well as in some cases offering tests to those who are offsite. They raised that they saw this as a positive way to reassure staff that measures are being taken to protect them.

6. AOB

- Members discussed whether they had been approached by the government, or any public authorities to provide their office space to support the roll out of the national testing or vaccination program. One member raised that they had been approached and were in the position to provide their space and support the initiative.

Thank you,

Action Log

No.	Action	Owner	Status	Due date	Comments
1-19/01	Members are asked to provide UK Finance with any information they have regarding staff being refused access to schools. Please include a brief outline of the incident and the location.	Members	Open	5 February	
2-19/01	Could members provide, if possible, the number of staff you have who are in customer facing roles specifically.	Members	Open	5 February	