

To: Business & Operational Continuity Committee

Dear member,

Please see below the meeting note from Tuesday's session of the Business & Operational Continuity Committee.

If you have any questions please let me know,

1. Support for home workers

- At a previous meeting, members discussed how firms were supporting their staff with home-working, such as supplying items for home offices and any payments for increased utility bills. In continuation of that discussion, firms noted that in the first lockdown there was a real push to get home workers set up, including providing laptops, desktop computers and accessories. Now that programme has been completed, some firms are now looking at the employee's role in the long term and what would be needed to support them in their future way of working.
- One firm noted they are now considering the DSE (workstation) assessments and are applying this globally. Now that they have moved on from an emergency posture, the focus is now ensuring that their home workers are working safely, according to the guidance. Firms can do this by supporting employees to ensure these assessments are carried out.
- One firm noted that whilst they continued to support staff in setting up home working stations, this doesn't include subsidising utility bills. It was seen that these costs were offset by the fact that the employee was no longer travelling to work.
- Firms then discussed the ability for employee's to apply for a government tax refund, or adjustment via Gov.uk. This applies to those who are working from home, see [here](#).
- As well as discussing setting up home working, one member noted that this assessment has coincided with their review of office space and the wider future operating model.

2. Changes in industry approach of office usage

- Linked to the above discussion, firms spoke to the ways in which their office usage may have changed between now and pre 29 March. Noting that changes to government guidance came into force on this date, but that the working from home message remains.
- Firms discussed the plans between now and Q4, and how they were communicating these messages to staff. For many, the government guidance around COVID secure workplaces, and in particular social distancing requirements, is limiting the extent to which firms can increase office capacity.
- It was also discussed that where firms may be part of the Critical National Infrastructure, their ability to reduce the office space due to the shift in working patterns was not possible.
- Firms also discussed the impact these decisions had on their overall BC planning, their approach to WAR sites and the need it has put on reviewing IT infrastructure. All of which needed to be factored into the ability to reconfigure offices effectively.

- Firms discussed whether the drive behind supporting home working came from a want to reduce a firms commercial footprint, or for staff benefit. Many firms commented that these were equal considerations and whilst reducing a commercial footprint can be seen as a positive biproduct of hybrid working, the pandemic has also shown the many positive benefits it can have on employees.
- UK Finance asked if members could share their view and position on the approach to office usage via email. It is often a question asked by the media and having a view from members would help support the messaging for UK Finance press, **ACTION**.

3. Questions of points to raise for NHS home/workplace testing

- UK Finance gave an update to members regarding the new workplace collect programme which the government launched on 6 April. In addition, it was noted that UK Finance continues to work with the DHSC to provide support for firms who have branches/offices across the devolved nations are continuously discussing ways in which they can support all staff access asymptomatic testing.
- It was noted that for those firms with a footprint outside of England, it is possible to use the workplace collect programme to service the employees who may live in Wales, NI or Scotland. In doing so, firms would need to ensure that the results of the tests are registered with NHS England.
- For the distribution of tests, firms should only supply home testing kits ordered via the government website to staff who want to test at home. If firms have on-site testing kits at their offices, these must only be administered on-site.

4. AOB

- A member raised an AOB item on tracking COVID cases and whether firms were still doing this. Some firms noted that they were still tracking confirmed cases across the business and were also using this to look at redesigning cleaning processes.
- Another member raised whether firms were considering the risks from the side effects younger staff may have when taking the COVID vaccine. Some firms were monitoring this but without holding the data on vaccines it was something that was still under consideration.
- UK Finance updated the committee on the process of electing a new Chair. There have been two nominations and their summary pitches are attached to this email. Members are asked to vote via email as to which representative they would like, and the new Chair will be confirmed at the next meeting on Tuesday 27 April.
- UK Finance reminded members that this committee's schedule of meetings can be revised if members feel it needs to be. Please do let UK Finance if the twice weekly meetings remain valuable.

Thank you,