



5 November 2020

**JOINT STATEMENT POST OFFICE, CWU AND UNITE
Compulsory Wearing of face-coverings behind the counter and
Clinically Extremely Vulnerable**

With the rise of the pandemic, we are all experiencing unprecedented challenges with all four countries of the UK introducing emergency measures to bring down the levels of infection from Covid-19.

Post Office, Unite and CWU continuing to work together to ensure we prioritise making the workplace as Covid-secure as possible. This has included the full supply of PPE, the introduction of safe ways of working, adjusted workspaces, robust risk assessments and effective reporting processes. Our aim in collaboratively working is to enable us to react quickly to any challenges that arise.

As essential workers we all recognise the importance of continuing to operate, especially as many in society and across local communities and in particular the most vulnerable rely on us to provide the services they need.

Compulsory Wearing of face-coverings behind the counter

We have to ensure that the Health, Safety and Wellbeing of colleagues is our number one priority we have therefore agreed to revise the guidance and put in place a further mandatory step.

- **DMB colleagues will be expected to wear face coverings at all times whilst at work including behind the counter.** The only exception is fortress positions where a single-till is in use i.e. Giro/Bureau Room.
- It is important that colleagues continue to follow the safe ways of working particularly social distancing by using every other position and if not possible make full use of the Perspex partitions which should be in place.
- If working on the public side of the Counter, which will continue to be on a voluntary basis at this time, a **face covering or face mask** is required but if social distancing cannot be maintained, a **visor** must be worn also to give additional protection for the eyes.
- In open plan branches, colleagues should always be **sat behind fitted sneeze guards**. This will give colleagues and our customers' added protection.
- It is accepted there is exemptions from wearing face coverings due to a medical condition therefore in cases such as this a visor should be worn at all times. However should other colleagues have any problems after wearing a mask for a lengthy period, please speak to your BM who will do all they can to support you.

- Masks can become contaminated, therefore, it is important that they are changed regularly. Safe hand hygiene should be complied with at all times when wearing, putting on and taking off face masks. Colleagues should refer to the in-branch **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) - Covid -19 guide** for further information.

Clinically Extremely Vulnerable

As a further precaution and in line with the recent changes to government guidelines, colleagues across the UK that are classed as Clinically Extremely Vulnerable will be placed on paid special leave from Thursday 5th November for the four weeks of the lockdown period. Those able to work from home will continue to do so.

The Clinically Extremely Vulnerable are those that have any of the following underlying health conditions, are on the NHS shielded patient list and received a letter

- solid organ transplant recipients
- those with specific cancers:
 - people with cancer who are undergoing active chemotherapy
 - people with lung cancer who are undergoing radical radiotherapy
 - people with cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma who are at any stage of treatment
 - people having immunotherapy or other continuing antibody treatments for cancer
 - people having other targeted cancer treatments that can affect the immune system, such as protein kinase inhibitors or PARP inhibitors
 - people who have had bone marrow or stem cell transplants in the last 6 months or who are still taking immunosuppression drugs
- those with severe respiratory conditions including all cystic fibrosis, severe asthma and severe chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
- those with rare diseases that significantly increase the risk of infections (such as severe combined immunodeficiency (SCID), homozygous sickle cell disease)
- those on immunosuppression therapies sufficient to significantly increase risk of infection
- adults with Down's syndrome
- adults on dialysis or with chronic kidney disease (stage 5)
- women who are pregnant with significant heart disease, congenital or acquired
- other people who have also been classed as clinically extremely vulnerable, based on clinical judgement and an assessment of their needs. GPs and hospital clinicians have been provided with guidance to support these decisions

As per the Government guidance those that fall into the clinically vulnerable category or live with someone who is Clinically Extremely Vulnerable do not have to shield. However, they should be especially careful to follow the Covid-19 guidance as set out by Government. They should continue to wash hands carefully and more frequently than usual and maintain thorough cleaning of frequently touched areas in the home and/or workspace.

If you travel on public transport and have any concerns, please raise these with your line manager.

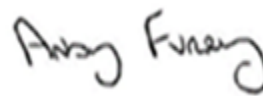
We will of course carefully monitor all related developments from government and communicate these accordingly. If you are unsure or need further clarification on the above, please speak to your manager or union rep who will advise you. You will also find the details on the government Covid-19 website.



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