

7 April 2020

Rachel Reeves MP
Chair of the Business, Energy and
Industrial Strategy Committee
House of Commons
LONDON
SW1A 0AA

Dear Rachel Reeves

Response from DPD

Thank you for getting in touch and forwarding the submission relating to workplace concerns over coronavirus.

Keeping our workforce and the communities we serve, safe, is our number one priority at this worrying time for everyone. DPD has meticulously followed all government and Public Health England advice and guidelines and our HR and management teams are continuously researching and applying the best practice guidance available.

We have been communicating with our workforce on the Covid-19 situation since mid-February and daily since 3 March. Our daily communications are sent to all email addresses and also posted on all notice boards and crew rooms and used at our daily team briefings. We have also been constantly updating our Frequently Asked Questions document, which is circulated to all employees daily.

In addition, we have implemented a series of wide-reaching new processes into our operation to protect our workers and our customers, including:

- Contact free delivery is our standard process and customers are not being asked to sign our driver's handheld unit;
- Our contact free delivery process also recognises that some people may be self-isolating or unwilling or unable to open their door to receive parcels. We have added information to the notification we send to all recipients to make it clear they can give specific instructions to their driver;
- To comply with the Government's advice to close non-essential shops, we immediately suspended our DPD Pickup service. This means customers can't drop off their parcels at a shop, divert their parcels to a shop in-flight or collect their parcels from their local shop;
- Social distancing measures have been fully implemented for all our people at work to help reduce social interaction – this involves staying 2 metres apart during briefings and for all operational procedures such as loading and unloading vehicles;
- We have also introduced a wave delivery program which staggers driver start times to reduce the number of people on site at any given time;

- Our depots and hubs are already high security environments, but we are now also using our 3,400 CCTV cameras to help keep our people safe. The technology is helping us study movements around the depots, to continuously improve the measures taken to protect our people and ensure social distancing at all times. For example, we have created new entrance and exit points to remove potential bottle necks and borrowed the concept of chevrons from the motorway network, to help keep people 2 metres apart on our walkways;
- De-risked our depots and hubs by asking all non-operational people to work from home;
- Invoked our peak operational plan, which enables us to reallocate drivers amongst sites, meaning we currently have 20% additional driver resource available to cover absentees;
- Full home working is being undertaken across the business for everyone that can work from home. We've designed rotas for managers and supervisors at our locations to help minimise unnecessary contact and create social distancing for those that do have to come to work;
- Our Customer Service team have fully transferred to working from home, meaning all channels - phone, chat and emails - are operating as normal;
- Made other arrangements to re-deploy staff from one role to another as required. For example, we have senior drivers who are able to undertake supervisory work in depots if required;
- Cleaning has been increased throughout the business as a preventative measure;
- Implemented measures to support our self-employed drivers should they need to self-isolate.

Regarding the specific points raised in the submission:

It is not correct to say that DPD is applying the Bradford Factor score to anyone absent for Covid-19 related reasons. Use of the index for any Covid-19 related absence was suspended at the start of the lockdown period.

We initially followed the guidance that Covid-19 absences were treated as sickness absence and therefore included in the Bradford Factor score. This was revisited following changes to government guidance and also representation from our recognised trade union Unite.

No single absence, whether Covid-19 related or not, would result in a dismissal due to poor attendance. However due to the unprecedented situation surrounding Covid-19, and to reassure our employees, we took the decision that no employee would be dismissed as a result of any Covid-19 sickness absence.

In addition, DPD have been supporting all our employees who have been certified as High Risk vulnerable and those over the age of 70 by requesting that they shield for the recommended 12 weeks. This is on full pay.

The government guidelines have been followed for all types of leave requested. For example, if an employee could not work due to school closures, they could take emergency dependants leave, paid holiday or unpaid leave. The government advice for anyone living with High Risk vulnerable individuals or over 70s is that they do not need to shield but observe all the social distancing and hygiene routines. This is the advice given to our employees.

Company sick pay is payable to all employees with eligible service. If an employee is not eligible for full company sick pay due to their length of service or that they have exhausted their annual entitlement, they will be in receipt of SSP. Employees also have the option to take paid holiday leave.

We have also committed to pay any furloughed employees 100% of salary.

The Department for Transport has clarified in a letter to the Freight Transport Association and the Road Haulage Association (both of which we are members) that the logistics sector is essential and should continue operating. This includes all areas of the sector not just the transport of food and medicines. The letter also confirms that staff involved in the operation of the business including warehouse staff can travel to and from work to perform their duties. A copy of the letter is attached.

Government advice is clear that we need to continue making deliveries. Our drivers, warehouse teams and all operators are doing an incredible job and have delivered a large volume of essential supplies including food parcels and NHS deliveries as well as other items needed by people at home.

DPD is now delivering Morrisons food boxes in addition to handling an increase in deliveries for existing food and recipe box shippers. Total food deliveries have topped 200,000 a week and we expect that number to rise significantly.

We are also now making thousands of additional deliveries for the NHS including hospitals, GP surgeries, out of hours centres, pharmacies, adult care homes and hospices. DPD has recently delivered 10.3 million masks, 6.7 million gloves and 5.2 million aprons for the NHS.

In addition, DPD is providing a free collection and delivery service to supply 3D printed face shields to the NHS. Working with 3DCrowd, we are collecting the component parts from thousands of volunteers using our nationwide network and delivering them, free-of-charge, to a central hub in Sheffield where the face masks are being assembled.

We will then distribute the completed visors to hospitals, GP practices and other healthcare organisations around the country.

I hope this answers the points raised in the submission and outlines the wider steps we are taking to protect our people and our customers, while allowing us to continue to provide the nation with an essential service.

If you require any additional information, please feel free to contact me directly.

Best wishes



Tim Jones
Director of Marketing



Sharon Hughes
Director of People and Talent



Department for Transport

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30 March 2020

by email

Dear Richard & David,

Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Essential Work of the Logistics Sector

I am writing to confirm that the Department for Transport considers it essential that the work of the logistics sector should continue to the greatest extent possible through the Covid-19 crisis.

Haulage drivers, managers, warehouse staff and all other logistics professionals need to continue to go about their business to keep supply chains moving, and government policy is clear that this applies to all supplies chains and not only those for food and medical supplies. All travel related to the operation of logistics businesses (including for instance necessary washing of vehicles or supply of spare parts) or necessary travel by logistics workers to places of work such as distribution centres is therefore to be considered 'essential travel' in the context of current restrictions. At all times workers should however follow Public Health England guidelines on social distancing.

We have communicated this to the National Police Chiefs Council to ensure it is shared with all police forces in the context of their important work to enforce the new restrictions on movement. I would be very happy for you to share this letter with your members, and for them to use it as evidence of the government position on this point in the event of any misunderstandings.

Thank you for everything you and your members are doing to keep supply chains moving in these difficult times.

Yours sincerely,

Ben Rimmington