

Covid-19: Statement from Chief Executive Officer

As we mark a year since lockdown, our thoughts are with everyone affected by the dreadful Covid-19 pandemic and in this context, the health and wellbeing of our colleagues, their families and all stakeholders, remains our number one priority.

To protect all stakeholders, C&C is operating in line with all government guidelines and regulations. We are carrying out stringent daily audits of our operations to ensure adherence to safe social distancing as well as all other relevant health and safety controls. These include thermal cameras at the entrance to buildings to measure body temperature and door handles that release sanitising gel to minimise the potential for contact transfer of the virus. As part of an NHS trial, we have introduced Flow Testing within all our main depot sites in England, to further enhance safety. Given these rigorous measures, all our offices, depots and production facilities have been accredited as being Covid-19 secure and therefore remain fully operational. I want to thank all colleagues for their dedicated adherence to all safety standards.

In line with Government policy, only essential staff are attending their normal place of work. All other colleagues are working from home and we have significant support measures in place to facilitate this, including risk assessments. In addition, many colleagues have been placed on furlough, some for many, many months on end. This, I recognise is difficult, and I want to take the opportunity to thank those colleagues affected by furlough, for their perseverance and patience. To help furloughed colleagues to stay connected and engaged, we are in regular on-going contact, including newsletters and group calls. Colleague wellbeing continues to be supported by the provision of impartial advice and information on physical and mental health, financial concerns as well as access to specific counselling services. I would encourage all colleagues to, without hesitation, avail of these support services in order to fully protect their wellbeing.

Following the announcements of the relaxation of restrictions, we are working with colleagues, customers and suppliers on measures to facilitate the re-opening of hospitality. These measures can include: availability of key lines of owned and 3rd party brands; our 24/7 e-commerce platform; unique online promotions; 'guest checkout' facility; a simplified online process for new account openings; managing credit terms and arranging the safe uplift of product from cellars. We have also commenced the phased return of colleagues to meet the increasing demand that comes with the re-opening of the on-trade. To facilitate this, staff can view short films and return to work inductions to familiarise and educate themselves with the increased safety measures and layouts we have put in place across all of our sites. Distribution colleagues have also had refresher training in delivering at social distance, using PPE. All these measures are to ensure that our quality products can be enjoyed safely by consumers when they return to their favourite local pub.

Finally, I want to wish all colleagues, customers, suppliers and wider stakeholders of C&C continued safe passage through this pandemic. The roll out of the vaccine offers optimism of an end to this dreadful ordeal. We will continue to work together to safely re-open hospitality. In the meantime our collective vigilance is required in order to beat the virus. Please stay safe!

David Forde,
Chief Executive Officer,
C&C Group plc