

Local Authority Parking and Traffic Management Operational Advice during COVID-19



Version 11 – 5th November 2020

Introduction

This advice has been produced jointly by the British Parking Association (BPA), London Councils and the Local Government Association to help local authorities develop and implement local plans for traffic and parking during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many sections in this advice note have been significantly updated following the announcement of another national lockdown. The authors of this advice will keep it under constant review in light of the rapidly changing situation and update and reissue as necessary.

No two authorities or even town centres are identical, so action will be dependent on local circumstances and it is entirely for each authority to decide what is best for them. The following advice is intended to provide a framework for those local decisions and help achieve some consistency where possible.

On and Off-Street Enforcement Activities

The majority of local authorities across England which temporarily suspended services at the start of the pandemic have returned, over recent months, to operating a full traffic management service. It is anticipated that the recent reintroduction of greater restrictions will not, result in the need to suspend enforcement as seen during the first peak. In many places' authorities continue to focus most of their enforcement activities on priority routes and incidences of dangerous, obstructive and anti-social parking as well as problem hot spot areas where demand for parking remains high. It is recommended that authorities continue to prioritise locations of heightened activity where a lack of controls will have a significant, detrimental impact on local communities in terms of safety and traffic management.

If authorities find it necessary to temporarily suspend or change controls locally, they may wish to continue the practice of using warning notices for a short period when such controls are reintroduced. Many authorities have reported that using an alternative waterproof envelope for warning notices to help ensure that they are not mistaken for a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN), see Appendix A, which has proven beneficial. Example advisory notice templates, created by the BPA are available at Appendices B and C.

Even when greater restrictions are being re-imposed, the freight sector will continue to need to be able to deliver goods and services to shops and businesses that remain open. Authorities need to ensure that loading and unloading can take place safely and legally and that the highway is not obstructed by vehicles parked in contravention that could have a negative impact on this activity.

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Those local authorities that undertake vehicle removals are advised to continue to prioritise vehicles that are parked dangerously or obstructing traffic flow and those vehicles that have been identified as persistent evaders. Where possible, authorities should consider a street to street relocation to a safe, lawful position close by rather than a removal to the vehicle pound.

Any changes in procedures and parking restrictions should be clearly publicised on authority websites and using any other suitable communication tools, with a facility to allow the public to make enquiries.

Civil Enforcement Officers

Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) can continue to work during the lockdown period as their duties cannot be performed from home and parking services are not suspended as part of lockdown stipulations. Please continue to refer to the frontline risk assessment framework at Appendix D to help keep front line officers safe whilst on duty.

CEOs should continue to be encouraged to provide help and advice about where people can and cannot park, ensuring that social distancing guidelines are applied and adhered to.

It is likely that, with the need to adhere to social distancing and threats of abuse, there may be increased incidents of CEOs not being able to successfully serve the PCN which may lead to an increase in postal Regulation 10 'prevented from serving' notices. Authorities need to ensure that they have all of the required evidence on the parking activity in accordance with existing guidance before taking the decision to issue such notices. See page 19 of Statutory Guidance [here](#)

Correspondence

Careful consideration should be given to the content of all outgoing correspondence, ensuring it is relevant and responsive to the current situation. A firm but fair regime of dealing with challenges is advised, taking care to acknowledge and respond specifically to issues raised by the person making the challenge. Many authorities have seen an increase in the number of challenges based upon mitigating circumstances relating to COVID-19 and it is advisable to consider showing understanding and discretion where this can be verified as a contributing factor to the issuing of the PCN.

Taking PCN Payments

Authorities are advised to continue, wherever possible, to take an understanding and flexible approach towards taking payments in recognition that an increasing number of people will be impacted financially by the pandemic.

Suggested approaches, adopted by many authorities, include extending the discount payment period or providing an offer to put cases on hold to a specific date when the person indicates that they will be able to pay. Where a motorist has multiple cases to pay, many authorities are offering payment plans or staggering the payments where this will improve the likelihood of resolution. It is recognised the ability to offer such payment options will be based upon what is feasible within each authority's own systems.

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Debt registration and enforcement

The Taking Control of Goods and Certification of Enforcement Agents (Amendment) (No. 2) (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020, made on 19 June 2020, allowed Enforcement Agent visits to recommence from 24 August 2020 and this has not changed. **The only stipulation government has made for the second national lockdown is that EA's may not enter premises when on visits.**

A vast majority of authorities have resumed normal debt enforcement processes without any significant problems or adverse publicity. Enforcement Agents report that their experience so far generally is of people wanting to address their debt issues and the resumption of visits has also enabled them to play a valuable role in identifying vulnerability in the community and provide assistance. Authorities who have not fully re-engaged with debt recovery are encouraged to try to work towards this so that cases can be resolved.

The Civil Enforcement Association (CIVEA) has been proactive in providing best practice guidance to its members throughout the pandemic which exceed those in many sectors that make similar contact on the doorstep. CIVEA published a support plan for resumption of debt enforcement, which all CIVEA members have implemented. This includes not entering residential premises. This is important because the plan has been successful in protecting staff and the public. Of all enforcement visits in September, only 4% of cases reported COVID-19 symptoms, which shows that efforts to identify people in advance are working well. The content of this plan can be found in Appendix E.

Authorities are reminded that the Traffic Enforcement Centre (TEC) is no longer accepting unsigned statutory declarations and respondents should be contacting their local court in the normal way. We are not aware, at the time of writing, of increased restrictions impacting on this process, but will monitor the situation and advise if we are informed of any disruption to court services.

The Taking Control of Goods and Certification of Enforcement Agent Regulations (Amendment) (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020 extended automatically for a further 12 months the time limit for warrants which reached the end of their life during the COVID-19 period. The COVID-19 period was defined as 26 March 2020 to 23 August 2020.

Charging for parking

On and off-street charging strategies will play an important part in the recovery process by regulating vehicle movement and also for local authorities themselves.

Many authorities have encountered difficulties in getting local agreement to re-introduce charges following a period of suspension over recent months. This appears to be exacerbated the longer charges are suspended as free parking becomes an expectation and politically difficult to withdraw from. Conversely, those who did not stop charging at all in the early part of the pandemic reported little in the way of resistance from the public to paying during lockdown and minimal problems as initial lockdown restrictions were eased. Whether to charge for parking or not, will remain a local decision, but experience suggests that suspending and then reintroducing

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charges regularly can be confusing for the public and lead to longer term expectations which are not sustainable.

We understand that there will be pressure on councils to support local businesses who continue to suffer due to reduced footfall. Extensive research over many years around paying for parking does not support the notion that free parking has an especially great impact on footfall in either direction and the issues surrounding people's retail and destination choices are considerably more complex, even more so in the current situation. Conversely, free parking can hinder local businesses where that parking allocation is taken up by workers or others who are not their customers. There is currently funding available for losses in parking income incurred during the pandemic (see next section below).

More flexible approaches to tariffs, where possible within the bounds of statutory processes, are also a possible strategy to meet a whole new set of demands for parking services which may stretch well into the longer-term future. This could include recognising changes in requirements for all day worker parking which would benefit from more flexible offerings for season tickets or permits to support a blend of working from the office and home.

If authorities are re-introducing charging after a period of suspension, warning notices have been reported as beneficial for a short period after resumption of charges to help with public acceptance of such changes. Suggested content for notices can be found at Appendix C.

Whilst the government wishes to promote active travel as the preferred choice, parking provision will still be required by those who cannot or simply choose not to cycle or walk as an alternative to public transport.

As part of long-term strategy planning, authorities are encouraged to consider the feasibility of incentivising parking further out from retail and urban centres or key destinations such as hospitals and universities, by making it cheaper and combining it with active travel for the final part of the journey. This could be in combination with relatively higher pricing for short stay parking in central locations or near key destinations. A new initiative called Park Active enables parking operators to deliver and promote this 'last mile' active travel option, visit www.park-active.co.uk for further details.

Central parking locations may also need to be prioritised to some extent in the longer term to provide for disabled parking where kerb side space might remain reduced to enable social distancing measures and increase social spaces.

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Loss of income and funding

Local authorities also need to be able to recover from significant losses in parking income which is required to support the ongoing provision of services. Government funding support is being made available for loss of parking income until the end of the 2020/21 financial year, and authorities are strongly encouraged to put forward their claims in good time. Further information about the funding available, its methodology and how to claim is here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-government-income-compensation-scheme-for-lost-sales-fees-and-charges>

Please take note of the stipulation that ‘voluntary’ losses cannot be claimed for and see Annex A, example 1 (paras 39-42) as this is significant in relation to decisions to provide free parking.

Social distancing and reducing virus transmission risks

Government guidance on social distancing relevant to transport, parking and the public realm is available and authorities should continue to refer to the relevant parts of this:

Department for Transport guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-COVID-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers>

Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-COVID-19-safer-public-places-urban-centres-and-green-spaces>.

Authorities can continue to offer all of their usual forms of payment but should carefully consider any risks associated with machines and take the necessary control measures to reduce them. Cashless and contactless payments can be encouraged but it is important to try not to fuel fear of touching things or disadvantage customers for whom cashless and card payments are not possible.

The BPA has produced a social distancing and virus transmission risk reduction tool kit for car parks which is available to members via the resource library [here](#). The tool kit includes a risk assessment template and ready to use template signs to promote social distancing and hand hygiene. Any queries about either of these resources can be sent to Alison.t@britishparking.co.uk

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Repurposing of kerb space

Many authorities have taken steps to introduce temporary or experimental traffic orders to re-purpose the kerbside and enable wider pedestrian spaces and cycle lanes. Success of and local opinion on such schemes so far has been mixed, but if designed and implemented well they can be an effective measure in encouraging increased levels of walking and cycling, whilst also supporting social distancing guidelines.

When implementing new schemes, planners need to be aware of the demand for parking services in an area and the impact that a significant reduction in the supply could have on the management of traffic on their highway. Whilst car use is not necessarily encouraged, private transport remains a more desirable travel mode. Any reduction in available space for blue badge holders needs to be considered before changes are made and viable alternatives provided, communicated and signposted.

Any highway repurposing should be carefully considered to avoid any negative impact on residents and the local business community, and an appropriate level of consultation is advised prior to the commencement of any temporary orders. The ability of freight operators to deliver goods and services should be considered as well as facilitating kerbside loading and unloading in a safe and practical way.

COVID-19 Related Parking Concessions

During COVID-19 lockdown restrictions, most authorities throughout England introduced temporary provisions to assist essential workers to be able to park for free. Some councils have since withdrawn these concessions, as traffic and parking demand has increased. As we enter a period of increased restrictions, councils need to make their own local decisions as to whether parking concessions are required to support specific groups of workers based upon need and availability of local provision. Whether or not to do this remains the choice of each local authority and there is no national guidance or policy to mandate the provision of free parking for essential or key workers in general, however please see the next section with regards to parking for critical care workers.

If or when it becomes necessary to withdraw concessions, this should ideally be undertaken in a phased manner, be well communicated to users and make use of warning notices for a period of time after the concessions have been withdrawn where possible.

Any groups of workers retaining priority/free parking should continue to be encouraged to park off-street where possible, with on-street as a last resort.

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Government Parking Pass Scheme for Critical Care Workers

In April 2020, the Secretary of State for Communities made an informal agreement with the leaders of the Local Government Association for local councils to provide free parking for critical care workers to assist them during the COVID-19 emergency response. Critical care workers were defined as being NHS staff, health and social care workers and NHS COVID-19 volunteers.

To support this agreement, MHCLG created a printable parking pass with associated guidance to enable those eligible to show their entitlement to free parking. At the time, this arrangement was anticipated to be temporary and related to the national lockdown period.

This remains a completely voluntary arrangement which has continued unchanged now for over six months. In that time authorities have encountered many challenges in managing the parking pass scheme including mis-use, use by those not entitled, overstretched demand on parking space, complaints from local residents, problems with distribution of the pass (which should be undertaken by employers), and difficulty in being able to effectively enforce the scheme.

In response to these sorts of difficulties, our research tells us that around 50% of authorities have changed the conditions of or replaced the scheme locally. These changes have included:

- Requesting that anyone found using an MHCLG pass exchanges it for a council issued permit, many of which are virtual permit schemes.
- Restricting eligibility to certain groups of users or specific NHS workers
- Providing free parking to a core group of NHS workers and reduced price parking to other care workers
- Restricting where the concessions are available and in many cases removing entitlement for many of the on-street concessions listed in the MHCLG guidance

Around 6% of councils have removed all concessions altogether but are keeping this under review and would be willing to provide some kind of support to their local NHS or other care workers as or if it becomes necessary. Those who have stopped providing concessions tell us that so far, they have encountered very few difficulties or complaints locally.

The MHCLG pass remains the default position until advised otherwise for councils who wish to continue to provide concessions and are unable or not wishing to introduce a local alternative. This may be preferable in areas where the MHCLG scheme is not causing any significant problems.

BPA, LGA and London Councils have been in conversation with MHCLG for around 4 months to try to find a resolution to this situation. We are currently discussing options for making changes to their guidance, to address the problems highlighted above and we will update this note accordingly when the outcomes of those conversations are known.

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Appendix A: Warning Notice Waterproof Envelope



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Appendix B – Warning Notice Example – Resumption of Enforcement

Advisory Parking Notice

You can help your community by parking considerately

As of (insert date), we have resumed our normal levels of parking management at this location. For a short period, we are issuing advisory notices to draw people's attention to where parking rules have been broken & to encourage people to help their community by parking considerately.

Our officer believes that your vehicle is parked in breach of the Traffic Management Act 2004 and local Traffic Regulation Orders. These regulations are there primarily to keep your community safe and free from hazards and obstruction caused by parked vehicles and to protect some spaces for specific road users. At this time, ensuring routes are kept clear, spaces needed for critical workers & residents are protected and that people are not negatively affected by inconsiderate parking is especially important.

Please ensure you move your vehicle immediately so that you are parking in a permitted place and with consideration to others.

We do not wish to need to take enforcement action at this time, but we continue to have a responsibility to local communities in maintaining control of parking. If your vehicle is seen repeatedly parking in this way you will be issued with a Penalty Charge Notice.

Thank you for your assistance and cooperation.

(name of council) Parking Services.



MEMBER OF THE
BRITISH PARKING ASSOCIATION

If you need help with finding somewhere to park please: *(use one or both of the following & adapt if necessary):*

contact us at (e-mail/phone number) and we will do our best to direct you to somewhere safe and convenient.

visit our website parking pages where you will find information about available places to park and special permit schemes in operation www.xxxx.co.uk

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Appendix C- Warning Notice Example – Resumption of Charges

Advisory Parking Notice

Parking charges are being/have been reinstated in this location

As of (insert date) we resumed parking charges at this location. From now on you must pay for parking here to avoid the possibility of receiving a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN)

For a short period, we are issuing advisory notices to draw people's attention to the fact charges have been reinstated.

Please ensure you pay the appropriate fee for parking in this location on future visits.

We do not wish to need to take enforcement action at this time, but we have a responsibility to ensure parking is managed and that spaces remain available for those who need them. Parking charges are important for demand management and to ensure that the council can continue to provide this valuable service. If your vehicle is found to be parked here again without having paid, you may be issued with a Penalty Charge Notice.

Thank you for your assistance and cooperation.

(name of council) Parking Services.



MEMBER OF THE
BRITISH PARKING ASSOCIATION

If you need help with finding somewhere to park, please: *(use one or both of the following & adapt if necessary):*

contact us at (e-mail/phone number) and we will do our best to direct you to somewhere safe and convenient.

visit our website parking pages where you will find information about available places to park and special permit schemes in operation www.xxxx.co.uk

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Appendix D: Front Line Operations – Risk Assessment Framework

Front Line Operations – Risk Assessment Framework

This framework has been produced to help BPA members address the risks which may be involved relating to social distancing and reducing the risk of virus transmission for front line operations.

It has not been laid out in the form of a risk register as it is recognised that members have their own company template for risk registers.

The framework provides information and considerations members can use whilst completing their own risk assessments.

How to use the framework:

1. Use the list in the hazards column to help you identify those which apply to your organisation and processes
2. Estimate the likelihood of risk arising from the hazards you have identified
3. Estimate the potential exposure
4. Use the list in the control measures column to help you determine the measures you will implement and assess the level to which they will reduce the risks.
5. Use the contents of the implications column to help you to implement control measures

Hazard	Control Measures	Implications
Infected workers spreading Covid-19	Temperature checks at start of shifts Implement and enforce policy for self isolation of staff https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/COVID-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-COVID-19-infection	Consider infra red thermometer for checks upon arrival at base. Individual thermometers for remote workers and requirement to check temperature before each shift.
Officers working from base may be subject to infection transmission whilst within the office environment.	Implement where appropriate, Government guidelines for Office working. www.gov.uk/workingsafely Create staggered start and finish times where possible. Stagger all breaks Insist on regular hand washing/sanitising and cleaning of surfaces and equipment. Provide necessary cleaning and washing facilities and ensure this message is reinforced through posters and notices in all work environments.	Ensure all staff are briefed regarding Government guidelines. Provision of hand washing facilities and sanitiser Provision of cleaning materials.
Cross infection from shared equipment used by staff	Provide personal issue equipment. If not personal issue, ensure equipment is cleaned with anti-bacterial agent before and after use.	Requirement for additional equipment Provision of cleaning

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<p>Travel in vehicles whilst at work and travel to work</p>	<p>Implement where appropriate, Government guidelines for Vehicles. www.gov.uk/workingsafely</p> <p>Anti-bacterial wipes or cleaning materials to be provided in vehicles. Staff are required to wipe clean the surfaces in the vehicles at the start and end of their driving duties.</p> <p>Sole occupancy of vehicles recommended.</p> <p>With multiple occupancy, <u>max 2 people</u>, if rear seating available, seat one in the rear diagonally opposite the driver to maximise distancing, all occupants must wear masks throughout the journey. Also consider the following:</p> <p>Occupants face forward if both in the front seats Windows kept open Try to rota so the same pairs are sharing vehicles on each shift Dashboard signage to remind of rules</p> <p>Consider supplying masks for use on public transport for travel to and from work</p>	<p>materials.</p> <p>Ensure all staff are briefed regarding Government guidelines.</p> <p>Provision of cleaning materials.</p> <p>Provision of masks</p>
<p>Staff exposed to possible infection whilst dealing with members of the public</p>	<p>Adhere to government guidelines on social distancing and hygiene.</p> <p>Provision of PPE to staff to include face covering, hand sanitiser, gloves and eye protection.</p> <p>Review Government guidance on use of PPE https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-COVID-19-personal-protective-equipment-ppe</p> <p>Provide masks for any front-line staff working within or close to hospital sites</p>	<p>Consider issuing staff with “distance reminder badges”.</p> <p>Training of staff in the use of equipment and in particular the proper fitting of face coverings.</p> <p>Consideration to be given as to type of face covering to be issued. This could be a face mask and face goggles or a full visor.</p> <p>Government guidance at the moment states that face masks are more for the protection of others rather than the wearer.</p>
<p>Threat to staff from confrontational situations including abuse and assault</p>	<p>Ensure staff are trained on how to be aware of and how to diffuse escalating situations.</p> <p>Provision of PPE to staff to include face covering, hand sanitiser, gloves and eye protection.</p>	<p>Consideration to be given as to type of face covering to be issued. This could be a face mask and face goggles or a full visor.</p>

<p>(spitting or coughing at close range with coronavirus threats)</p>	<p>Review Government guidance on use of PPE https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-COVID-19-personal-protective-equipment-ppe</p> <p>Use of radio or other communication device to call for assistance if required.</p> <p>Try to ensure police support / good police relations / coms</p> <p>If situation arises where PCN cannot be issued safely, back off and do not issue or, as an alternative and where permissible, issue Regulation 10 PCN where issue process had started.</p> <p>Consider the supply of Bodycams to staff to act as a deterrent and also to provide evidence of any criminal act.</p> <p>Consider the use of and explicit display of Spit Kits to staff to act as a deterrent and also to provide evidence of any criminal act.</p>	<p>Government guidance at the moment states that face masks are more for the protection of others rather than the wearer and offer little protection from close range spit or cough attacks.</p> <p>It is recommended that for this particular risk, full visors or at least eye goggles and a mask be worn.</p> <p>Delivery of conflict management training and training of staff in the use of equipment and in particular the proper fitting of face coverings.</p> <p>Consider issuing staff with “distance reminder badges”.</p> <p>Training of staff in the use of bodycams.</p> <p>Training of staff in the use of Spit Kits.</p>
<p>Exposure to cross infection when coming into contact with pay machines.</p>	<p>Clean equipment with anti-bacterial materials before and after contact.</p>	<p>Issue staff with anti-bacterial cleaning materials and instructions on its use.</p> <p>Provide gloves to be worn during cleaning and advise on safe disposal after use.</p>
<p>Exposure to cross infection when using public toilet facilities</p>	<p>Clean touch parts within the facility with anti-bacterial materials before and after use.</p>	<p>Issue staff with anti-bacterial wipes/cleaning materials and instructions on its use.</p> <p>Provide hand sanitiser and recommend using after leaving the toilet facilities</p>

List of suggested places to try for purchase of PPE which have been recommended by other BPA members:

Penham Excel - www.ppe-products.co.uk

AlsoPrint - <https://www.alsoprint.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/ALSOprint-Limited-Employee-Welfare-Catalogue-May-2020.pdf>

Dynateck (also supply thermometers and can source many other items upon request) – dynateck1@btconnect.com

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Appendix E – CIVEA Post Lockdown Support Plan

COVID-19 Pre-Visit Letter and Vulnerability Identification Phase

Prior to recommencing any visits to customers, all CIVEA members will implement a Pre-visit Letter and Vulnerability Identification Phase. This will involve issuing a light touch reconnection letter, which uses a template based on wording provided by CIVEA, plus follow up communication e.g. by text, email, phone where possible. Firms will use the standard form letter unless their council clients require an alteration. The letter seeks to engage consistently with customers to understand how they have been affected by the COVID-19 crisis and respond as appropriate. Each case will be offered support as appropriate, including signposting to the Money Advice Service and debt advice charities.

Enforcement visit suspension

When enforcement can resume following the lifting of emergency regulations, individuals will be given 30 days' notice of a visit by an enforcement agent, unless the local authority has specific requirements. This is to provide sufficient opportunity for engagement with customers prior to the attendance of an Enforcement Agent, which could prevent additional fees being added to the outstanding debt

Training

All enforcement agents will be required to undertake additional, mandatory CIVEA-approved training prior to any recommencement of visits.

The newly designed training programme will include: the effective use of protective equipment and social distancing requirements, how to protect themselves and those that they encounter in the community. This will be supplemented by refresher training on supporting the vulnerable and recognising mental health issues.

Pre-visit Assessment

Where a telephone number has been sourced and if appropriate to do so, CIVEA members will make outbound calls in advance of enforcement visits to identify any vulnerabilities or changes in circumstances.

Data collection and recording

All CIVEA members will collect and record details of customer vulnerabilities, in line with data protection requirements e.g. customer consent, and develop support plans that reflect CIVEA's guidance on assessing the impact of COVID-19 on households.

Provision of protective equipment

The majority of enforcement payments are made by telephone before an enforcement agent is required to visit or after a letter has been left. When visits are necessary, CIVEA will work with members to source sufficient workwear and hygiene supplies to protect and reassure staff and members of the public. Enforcement agents will practice social distancing, comply with enhanced hygiene techniques (including disinfecting their kit) and be issued with hand sanitizer.

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