



Good Afternoon

I know I promised this last week; yet again time seemed to elude me.

I was planning to write to you about space and stock but, on reflection, these are largely our problems rather than yours – so I thought I would focus on shipping/despatch which is, I know, a bigger issue for most of our clients.

To that end I am, again, attaching the schedule of despatch information circulated previously. The links in this document update automatically, so clicking any one of them will give you the latest news from each individual carrier. Given how quickly the picture keeps changing this is assuredly the best way to check current status. This update also includes information on the delivery impacts of the upcoming Bank Holidays scheduled for the 8<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup> May.

In summary, although all the carriers are striving to achieve business as usual, some of them are really feeling the strain now. Staff safety, a priority for us all, makes it harder for them to operate; and this is exacerbated by much higher than usual staff absence. Lack of trade business, which is, as you would expect, huge for them, has been mitigated slightly by Direct to Consumer (DTC) activity. However, those deliveries are both more costly and more complex for the carriers, so the mitigation is not substantial.

Some of the low-cost carriers, such as Yodel, Hermes and The Delivery Group (formerly Secured Mail) are now having quite a tough time. The Delivery Group has furloughed significant numbers of staff; as has Hermes; and Yodel are experiencing minor delays outside of their normal service levels. Clients are advised to allow an additional 1-2 days for deliveries to be made during the current crisis.

Even the slightly higher priced carriers are having some problems. ParcelForce are prioritising medical and food supplies and warning of some delays to non-essential deliveries. All our international carriers, including Asendia, DHL, FedEx etc., are warning of significant cost increases on international deliveries.

Royal Mail have confirmed that they are operating outside of their normal SLAs in all areas, saying that: “Despite our best endeavors, it is likely that some areas of the country will experience a reduction in service levels due to coronavirus-related absences at their local mail centre or delivery office.”

Our Despatch Department, operating with reduced staff due to absence, will do their very best to make sure that all our clients are provided with the most cost-effective and appropriate service and to keep you updated on developments as they arise.

However, as mentioned above, to check on the latest information from any individual carrier, just click on the links in the document provided.

I will keep providing updates on all key areas as and when I can; however, I have decided to stop setting myself deadlines because I suspect, given the current pressures, I will just end up apologising for missing them.

So, speak to you again soon and, meanwhile, stay safe.

Best wishes.