

UK pallet network sector is all prepared for lockdown



The Association of
Pallet Networks

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APN reports the UK's pallet network sector is completely prepared for lockdown

The UK's pallet networks have everything in place to ensure business continuity, resilience and the safety of its keyworkers and the public. Key points:

- ***Pallet network distribution workers including warehouse staff and drivers are all essential key workers and so can continue to travel to work***
- ***Deliveries are contactless with photos used instead of signatures***
- ***Customer paperwork is all sealed within pallets and not handled by drivers***
- ***Hub spaces are all socially distanced and provide essential PPE to Hub workers***
- ***Member companies provide PPE to driving staff***
- ***Service levels have averaged more than 96% during 2020 and this resilience will continue***

The Association of Pallet Networks (APN) would like to reassure the UK marketplace that all its member networks have robust business continuity plans, and appropriate safety protocols in place to continue safe, reliable and professional deliveries throughout lockdown.

APN chair Paul Sanders says: "The pallet networks quickly adapted to new working arrangements for the March-April lockdown, and those procedures have never relaxed.

"Some of the changes brought in as COVID-19 safety protocols are in fact an excellent precaution against any kind of infection and are also more efficient in operational terms, so we intend to make those changes permanent," he continues.

"For instance, the inclusion of customer's own paperwork in the documents pouch on the prepared pallet is more efficient for the customer, the end user and the company delivering the pallet. Given that member networks provide substantial tracking and electronic proof of delivery information online anyway, this seems like a sensible evolution," he says.

Driver and Hub worker welfare is of paramount importance to the networks, and PPE, social distancing and "hands, face, space" reminders are now regular features of the sector.

Furthermore, drivers will give pallet recipients the necessary social distance on delivery and not require any contact to complete the exchange. Drivers can take a name and, if necessary, a photograph as proof of delivery.

Sanders says: "Our pallet networks will have a stiff challenge ahead of them because record volumes are combining with the Christmas peak and lockdown. That's not as easy scenario. However, the sector

has proved beyond any doubt that it has the skills, the resilience and the operational protocols to rise to this challenge.

“We’ll support UK plc as essential workers, and #KeepBritainMoving however long lockdown persists for,” he concludes.

Key facts of 2020 pallet network performance

96.1% optimal performance

73% trailer utilisation

Economy volumes up 18%

Q3 volumes 16% up

2020 to date volumes 0.3% down

Notes for editors

The **Association of Pallet Networks** has a membership of eight pallet networks in the UK: Palletways, Fortec, Palletline, United Pallet Network, Pallet-Track, Pall-Ex, Palletforce and THE Pallet Network. This in turn represents a total of 650+ hauliers, almost 30,000 vehicles and over 13 million sq ft of warehouse space.

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