



Keeping homes running in a crisis

What this means for business



We're in this together



Across the world governments and industry are working together to understand the issues created by the spread of Coronavirus and find solutions. Health professionals are striving to care for the sick and most of us are in lockdown at home.

HomeServe is committed to supporting staff, keeping homes running and looking after those who are vulnerable. At troubled times such as these the investment we make in developing a customer first culture and empowering our staff to do the right thing for our members pays dividends.

Every business is facing its own challenges and is constantly reviewing its response. We have collated our thoughts on some of the areas to consider and shared some of the initiatives HomeServe has put in place to stay true to our purpose of making home repairs easy at this difficult time. We believe humanity, agility and communication are some of the critical ingredients.

I wish you and your businesses well at this extraordinary time.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Harpin'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Richard Harpin

Founder and CEO, HomeServe plc

Business Checklist



Mobilisation

Create a dedicated Crisis Team and develop a response plan framework.

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Safety and risk Ensure you use and provide trusted guidance and continually monitor risk.

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Your staff

Eliminate the spread whilst ensuring general wellbeing of your staff.

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Call centre management

Ensure clear site rules and stringent sanitisation are in place where closing sites is not possible.

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Customer management

Review your processes to ensure your most vulnerable customers remain a top priority.

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Your trade network

Prepare and reassure your field staff with suitable protective equipment and forum for discussion and advice.

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Communications

Create a simple plan for frequent communications to provide essential advice and boost morale.

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Technology

Review your IT set up from security to collaborative tools and service desks.

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Supply chain

Undertake demand planning, repair broken supply links and plan for continuity of supplies.

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Operations

Re-assess the changing market and respond with new solutions and relevant propositions.

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Culture and community

Understand the importance of a people centric culture to benefit the business. Strive to support key workers and those in greatest need.

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Return planning

Prepare protocols for getting back to work safely and bringing the business back to scale.

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Learn from experience

Identify opportunities, process improvements and adaption to strategy. Listen to feedback and learn from other businesses to emerge stronger.

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Mobilisation

Getting the right team and process in place is key for efficiency, agility and continuity during a crisis.

Create a dedicated Crisis Team to help you define workstream leaders who can manage key aspects of governance, data collection and reporting.

Develop a response plan framework to identify gaps in knowledge, aid collaboration across functions, empower decision making and budget reallocation.

At HomeServe we have a central team aligning the strategy and scenario planning. Our local 'Pandemic' teams meet daily and develop their country specific plans.



Daily meetings keep momentum and planning on track



Safety and risk

Customers and staff are looking to you for the right guidelines to follow, so be ready to provide them.

Ensure you use trusted sources of information and have validation mechanisms. Understand the best practice for the safety and well-being of your staff and customers and communicate that clearly.

Continually monitor risks to keep up with the constantly changing landscape. It's important to be ready to adapt your business model to minimise them.

At HomeServe we have provided all our staff with 'Working from home' guidance and allowed them to return to the office safely to collect office chairs to ensure a comfortable set up at home.



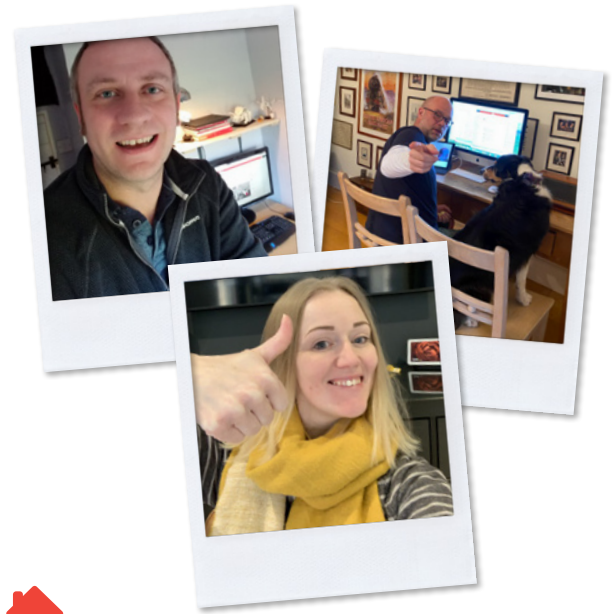
Your staff

Take affirmative action to eliminate the spread of the virus but also consider the mental impact on your staff.

Develop tracking mechanisms for infected staff and make suitable changes to staff procedures and protocols such as travel, equipment, HR policies and financial support.

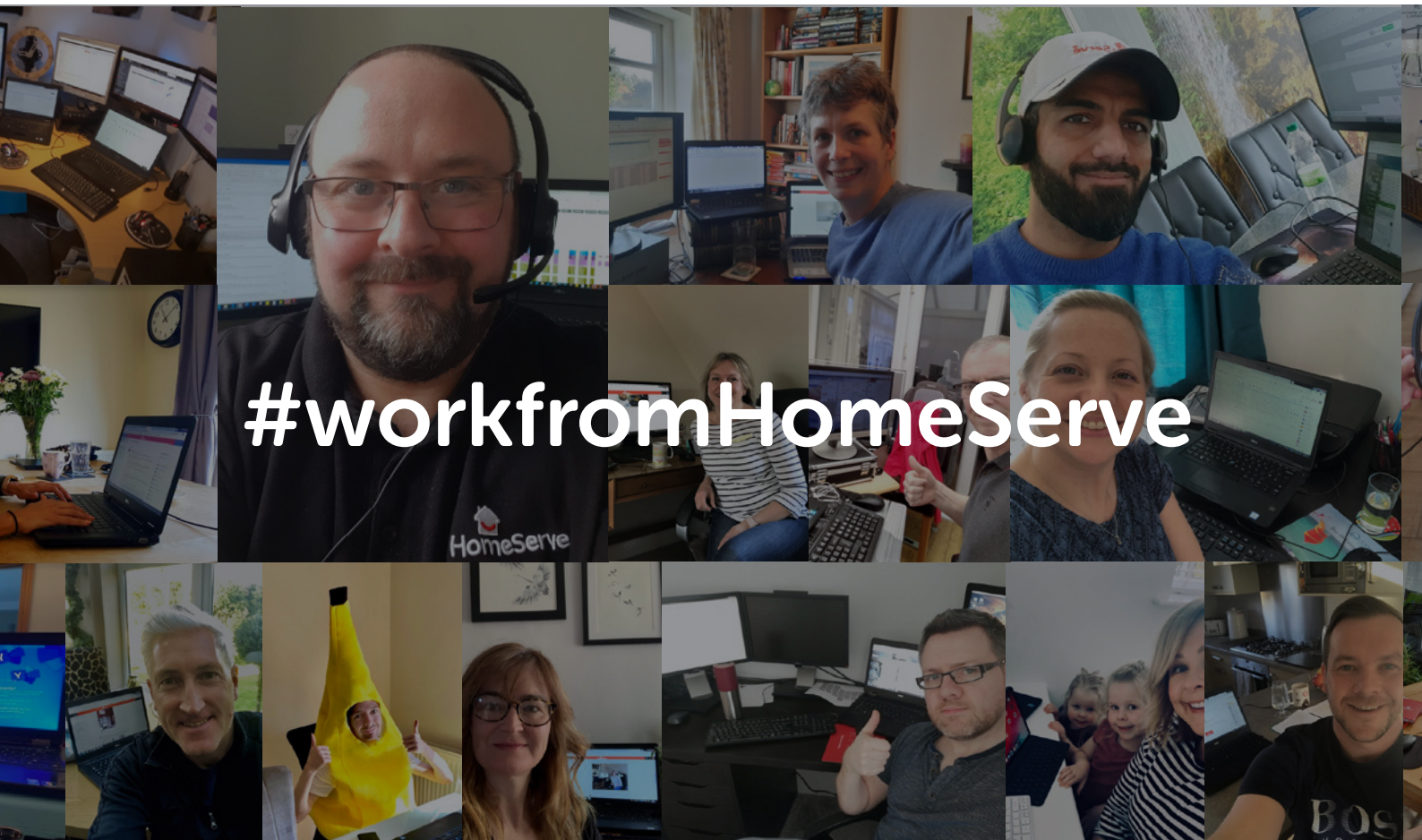
Create smaller team structures to help staff work remotely, prioritise actions and tighten routines to maintain productivity. Also encourage initiatives that build morale and reduce anxiety.

At HomeServe we feel that by looking after our staff, they in turn will look after our customers.



No furloughs, no redundancies.

All staff across the business were reassured of the resilience of the HomeServe business and that there would be no redundancies or furloughing as a consequence of the virus crisis.





Call centre management

Ensure you protect your call centre staff so they can continue to serve.

Consider closing or combining sites where possible and enable staff to work from home. Ensure you have clear site rules for physical distancing and movement restrictions.

Increased sanitisation is also essential. Make sure everyone washes or uses gel on entering and leaving the building and encourage more frequent hand washing.

Thoroughly sanitise the whole workspace regularly too.

At HomeServe many of our staff started to work from home almost immediately. As for the rest we quickly ring-fenced and protected our call centre locations with no visitor access, distancing rules and more stringent sanitisation.

We are able to transfer calls between sites and have multi skilled staff capable of handling different types of calls. We have implemented a call priority plan with priority given to claims and engineer dispatch.

We have multi skilled staff and have a call plan with priority given to claims and engineer dispatch.



Customer management

Retaining service levels is a challenge so be prepared to adapt your processes.

Plan for vulnerable customers and those directly affected with infection as a priority. Constantly review your demand planning.

At HomeServe we turned IVR off so customers can speak to someone right away, as well as issuing new scripts to better determine the situation before sending an engineer.

We are working hard to keep customers informed of their claims progress and are 100% focused on ensuring essential services in the home are working, particularly for those most vulnerable. Our engineers are also empowered to

provide extra support for those who need it, we encourage and celebrate 'random acts of kindness'.





Trade network

Enable your trade network to still work safely and effectively on the frontline.

Secure the availability of engineers by providing them support and supply of increased personal protective equipment. Also put new protocols in place that aid minimal contact and reassure customers and engineers alike.

Encourage open communication within the network by way of Town Hall meetings or social network groups so you can share best practice and be a united front.

At HomeServe we are really proud of how our trade network has risen to the challenge. Where possible our team will try to solve simple problems for customers over the telephone or via video link.

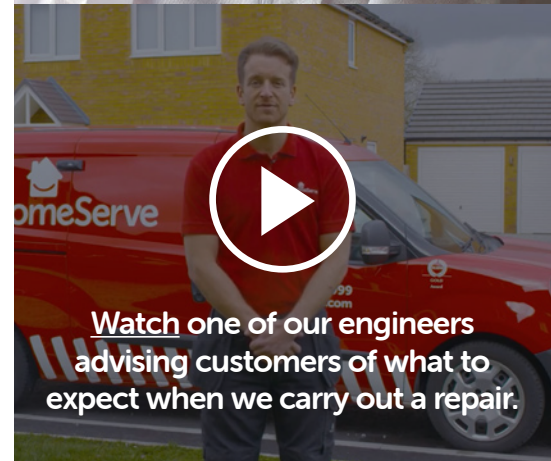
We have provided protective suits for our volunteers lined up to enter homes where there is risk of infection. They have even gladly shaven their beards. For low risk homes, they wear a new mask and protective gloves for every job.

engineers keep 2.2m away from customers at all times, talking to the customer to understand the job before they enter and only take essential tools into the house. They don't touch anything unnecessary and clean any surfaces and tools before and after each visit. The customer also no longer needs to sign at the end of the job further reducing physical contact.

If an engineer is showing symptoms of Covid-19 they self isolate at home and follow Government guidelines. We also hold web conferences for the whole trade network, including contractors, to help overcome problems and share best practice.



We are really proud of how our trade network has risen to the challenge.



Watch one of our engineers advising customers of what to expect when we carry out a repair.

— 2.2m —



Engineers keep 2.2m away from customers at all times

Customer signature no longer required at the end of the job

Surfaces and tools cleaned before and after each visit



Communications

Keeping people informed offers much needed help and reassurance.

Have a robust yet simple plan for internal and external communications. Consider channels, frequency, messaging and creating a 'rhythm' of updates and engagement.

Use virtual alternatives to replace team chats and formal meetings and provide an outreach for vulnerable customers and staff alike.



At HomeServe we believe in 'All the channels, all of the time'. All lines of communication are 'always on' for our staff, engineers and customers.

Our communications have been frequent, clear and personal, split into information, help and praise. We have ensured that we interpret and re-iterate government advice as well as engaging and stimulating morale.

For staff we have issued daily email briefings and weekly videos as well as using existing digital platforms so staff feel part of a community. Teams meet on video calls daily to check on wellbeing.

Our most senior leaders have issued videos sharing their tips for effective home working and our US team sent a postcard to all staff from the CEO to thank them for their support.

For customers our website and social channels share home tips, FAQs and thank yous as well as virus related information. We also use [video](#) to demonstrate to customers how we will protect them when engineers visit.

Our culture of caring, our sense of community and sense of humour has been more evident than ever. We believe it's what you do in the years before a crisis that matters, so our staff believe us when we say 'we're in this together'.





Technology

Support remote working with IT and network changes and utilise collaboration platforms.

Strengthen service desk and IT security controls.

Develop an incident co-ordination model to support activity.

At HomeServe our teams worked around the clock to step up the support required to facilitate home working on a mass scale.



Supply chain

Understand your procurement and stocking needs and plan for continuity of critical supplies.

Repair broken links in supply chain.

Demand modelling to cover all areas.

At HomeServe we have been proactive in anticipating and securing parts and safety equipment for our teams on the road.





Operations

Reassess changing market needs and respond with solutions.

Evolve the operating model with new and more relevant propositions to support the change in circumstances.

At HomeServe teams have worked tirelessly to consider how we can leverage our operations quickly to maintain support of customers in their homes, protect the most vulnerable and help key workers.

Each market has responded with solutions developed quickly and designed to support those in greatest need.



Supporting the community around the world

In Spain, on behalf of our partner in Huesca, we are offering free boiler repairs to people over the age of 65.

Checkatrade.com

In the UK, within our tradesperson online market place, Checkatrade, we have introduced a video calling option on the website and are encouraging our trade members to accept video calls through WhatsApp in order to carry out quotes for fixes needed in the home. We are also supporting our trades with managing their finances at this uncertain time.



In the US, we have launched Telefix, a toll free support 'phone line for homeowners to obtain advice on repairs for their home directly from an engineer. No charge, no obligation. If we can't help over the 'phone or video, we will offer the option of a home visit.



Culture and community

Extra support for communities and vulnerable customers



Small actions such as providing 3000 water bottles for local hospital



Development of **new products**

Extra funding for those on the front line



Support for **key workers**



We are HomeServe

Our culture of caring for staff, engineers and customers has enabled us to respond in a way that is a shining light in the community, when the going gets tough, HomeServe gets going, even more.



6000

people working from home and we're completing **150 jobs an hour**



Our CustomerFirst daily forum which finds solutions for our most vulnerable customers, has demonstrated the value of its existence more than ever

“ I'm a nurse working in the front line – please thank the lady who's working from home who took my call, and the engineer who sent me a private message to thank me and my colleagues, as well as fixing my boiler. Their kindness made me cry – your team were my heroes, please thank them both. ”

Living our values:

- Dare to care
- Do the right thing
- Own it
- Always improve
- Win together, trust each other

What's happens next?



Return planning

Preparations to get back to work safely

Modelling of disruption and recovery scenarios, including a second wave of infection

Re-forecasting

Bring the business up to scale and further growth

Return to work protocols (dependent on testing availability)



Learn from experience

Re-imagine what normal will look like once the crisis has passed.

Identify opportunities and adapt strategy

Identify process improvements

Opportunities to provide better customer solutions

Learning from other businesses

Feedback from staff for future improvement

The only constant is change.

We believe a business should never stop learning and adapting.
We are there with you, so if you need support or to talk to us, please get in touch.



For more information, visit homeserveglobal.com
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