Our manufacturing and logistics facilities have remained open and fully operational throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. We are proud of the way our employees quickly adapted to the new ways of working and the commitment they showed during this difficult time. All our Manufacturing and Logistics facilities adopted safe ways of working such as physical distancing, and increased respiratory, hand and environmental hygiene measures in line with their respective country guidance, the alert level present in each country and our own internal risk assessment.

Although all the changes which were implemented were essential to protect our employees, these have affected our Manufacturing and Logistics output in some areas particularly where line speeds were reduced and product schedules changed to enable employees to continue to work safely.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is essential across our manufacturing facilities as it provides protection to our employees from exposure to hazardous substances. At various times throughout the pandemic PPE became scarce and more costly. We were also acutely aware that we and other sectors may be competing with the needs of essential healthcare services. Therefore we strictly controlled our existing supplies, sourced reusable items to reduce our consumption and avoided stockpiling items that may be in short supply. Despite increased costs and depleted availability we have maintained the required high level of protection for our employees throughout the pandemic and have never compromised on safety.

The hygiene standards at our manufacturing and logistics facilities are already high and in line with Good Manufacturing Practice standards. However, we enhanced these where we felt this was necessary and in some cases this necessitated us losing time in the production schedule to create time separation and allow cleaning between our shifts. This not only protected our employees from contact with members of other shifts but also significantly limited opportunities for transmission of the virus, reducing the risk of absence due to self-isolation.

Supporting our essential workers was paramount during these difficult times, from checking that they had the correct permissions to be at work during the lockdown periods to providing a safe commute to the workplace. We provided items to maintain good hygiene when travelling via public transport and provided alternative or adapted means of communal transport where appropriate.

To protect our workforce further we limited access to our sites for any non-essential visitors and contractors. Although we allowed all essential statutory visits and inspections to progress, these were strictly controlled using health declarations for anyone coming to our sites. For deliveries and collection of materials, where drivers were likely to have crossed borders, protective measures were taken at each site to meet the welfare requirements of the drivers, whilst keeping them away from our own employees.

We are pleased to report that our controls have been successful in preventing the transmission of the virus across our workplaces whilst fully maintaining the supply to our customers. Where we have had colleagues who have acquired the infection in the community we have supported them throughout their illness and self-isolation periods until a safe return to work was agreed. This has meant that we have experienced increased absence levels; however, the impact of absence has been minimal.

Throughout the pandemic we have regularly communicated and consulted with our Manufacturing and Logistics employees. We have also encouraged our whole workforce to share ideas for improvements and to raise any concerns they may have. Whilst the pandemic remains, our controls will be maintained and enhanced to continue to protect our employees.

Simon Francis (featured on the left in the photo above)
Sadly missed by all of us. Simon’s passion for health and safety, his ‘look out for each other’ approach lives on as his legacy.