



HM Treasury, 1 Horse Guards Road, London, SW1A 2HQ

21 April 2020

### **To everyone working in the provision of essential banking services**

I know that these are challenging times for those of you working on the front line to provide essential banking services during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many are maintaining a vital physical presence in high-street branches up and down the country and others are staffing contact centres that have seen a significant increase in demand over recent weeks. Following the Chancellor's recognition of the work carried out by many of you over the Easter Weekend to support customers with their Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme application, I wanted to write to thank you for your ongoing hard work and dedication.

The Government has always been clear that the financial sector has a vital role to play at a time when many face financial difficulty. That is why the Government asked schools and childcare providers to continue to provide care for children whose parents are critical to the COVID-19 response, including those of you needed for essential financial services provision. The essential services that you provide – such as requests for payment holidays, powers of attorney, and notifications of death – will be a lifeline to many during this period.

The Government has advised that wherever possible people should work from home. The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) are urging customers to use alternatives to bank branches where possible and to only contact their bank for access to essential services. However, there are still services that require direct engagement between a customer and a branch or contact centre and for many of you your job requires you to travel to your place of work. Let me be clear that you can continue to do so. This consistent with the Chief Medical Officer's advice.

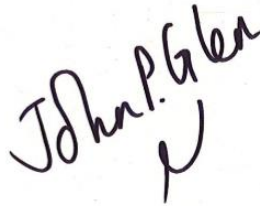
I am encouraged by the way the sector has responded and am confident that you will continue to meet these challenges. To help ensure workplaces remain safe, banks, building societies, credit unions and Post Offices, I am sure, will continue to follow the latest Government guidance on operating safely in the workplace.

Finally, I have also been very encouraged to hear about specific examples of the support being provided by many of you to the most vulnerable customers. This includes herculean efforts to help customers who are facing acute financial difficulty, as well ensure that those that are self-isolating can access cash, complete their everyday banking online, and even access food and medication. It is these actions that will be remembered for getting the nation through this crisis.

There is still a lot for us to do in the face of these challenges, and I welcome your ongoing support as we work to ensure we minimise the impact on consumers, businesses and the wider UK economy. As the Chancellor said, the priority for all of us – financial services and Government – should be to ensure that the benefits of the extraordinary package of support we have provided are passed through to businesses and consumers.

I commend you all for making a hugely valuable and critical contribution to the resilience of our nation at this most challenging time.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John P. Glen" with a stylized flourish underneath.

JOHN GLEN