

As we move to step four of the Government's plan out of lockdown, I would like to thank our clients for their patience and understanding after a challenging re-opening period for the foodservice supply chain.

It has been well documented that there has been unprecedented demand across the industry. Trade reports show there was a surge of an 80% increase in May 2021 on the pre-pandemic levels of May 2019. As a result of this, in conjunction with foodservice supply businesses still re-emerging from a 'hibernation-like' status, many are experiencing significant workforce shortages.

It has been estimated that the country is devoid of 60,000 HGV drivers and this has had ramifications on both the in-bound logistics to our catering suppliers and their own out-bound delivery capabilities.

Unfortunately, these challenges are affecting all types of catering and foodservice operations, from education to workplace dining, from the high street to healthcare.

We are working closely with our suppliers to understand, and where possible ease, pressure points. We believe there will be a reduction in demand over the school summer holidays and are aware that many suppliers have plans in place to recruit drivers in the short term.

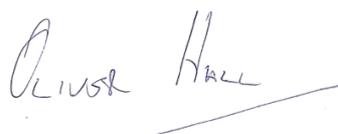
We are also working closely with suppliers to understand the plans for the 'back to school' period in September, which is always a pressurised time for the whole food supply chain, not just for education. Understanding their forecasting and pinch points will help us advise you, our clients, where challenge may be anticipated, thereby giving you the ability to plan ahead. The reverse is also true... providing our joint suppliers an indication of your requirements as early as possible will also help. We therefore continue to recommend:

1. That orders are placed with as much lead time as possible
2. If you have the space, to increase your stock holding to mitigate any shortages
3. To remain as flexible possible to manage changes made at short notice.

It has been a very challenging time in all aspects of catering and foodservice and we trust that you appreciate that suppliers dearly want to supply in full and on time. But, owing to national labour shortages and other unprecedented factors, there have been - and may continue to be - supply disruption.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any queries or if we can support you further, in any way.

With very best wishes,



Oliver Hall  
Managing Director