

8 April 2020

Lowell signs up to C-19 Business Pledge

Lowell, one of the UK's largest credit management services companies, has become the first in its sector to sign up to the C-19 Business Pledge, and comes on the back of Lowell extending its commitments to customers during the coronavirus pandemic.

The C-19 Business Pledge (www.c19businesspledge.org/) was launched by Rt Hon. Justine Greening, and has the backing of a number of other Members of Parliament. The Pledge encourages businesses and universities to be a force for good by making a commitment to doing what they can to tackle Coronavirus (COVID-19). The intention is to not only help our country get through the immediate challenges of Coronavirus, but also recover. Business has a crucial role to play in helping to rebuild over the medium to long term.

There are three areas the pledge covers:

- **Employees:** support colleagues throughout and beyond this challenging time, this could include practical support and advice on financial security, mental health, personal wellbeing.
- **Customers:** publishing clear and simple advice for customers. Where possible they should have specialist teams dedicated to supporting customers if they are having problems, such as those facing repayment difficulties and vulnerable customers.
- **Community:** communities coming together with practical support, such as food deliveries, collections and financial assistance for organisations that specialise in supporting vulnerable people.

Lowell has taken steps to support its colleagues with a significant communication and mobilization plan: providing daily updates and enabling all 1700 colleagues to work from home (an increase of 1200 in 2 weeks). Wellbeing support from the business and from individual managers has been key to the plans and actions.

For customers, Lowell has a long history of providing flexible, tailored support, and extra, specialist care for the vulnerable. Building on this, Lowell last week announced an extended package of commitments to give customers dealing with the impacts of COVID-19 the support and reassurance they need.(see Editors' notes)

Understanding the impact on the community, Lowell has been working closely with the debt advice sector to ensure it provides support where it can. Lowell is also supporting its local community in Leeds, with donations to Leeds Citizens Advice Bureau and Leeds South and East Foodbank. In recognition of the heroic work of healthcare workers, Lowell is making a donation to the Cavell Nurse's Trust, which helps nurses, midwives and healthcare assistants, when they're suffering personal or financial hardship.

John Pears, UK Managing Director at Lowell, said:

"In signing up to the pledge, we are publicly committed to playing our part in beating coronavirus. I call on every business to sign up to the Pledge and ensure they are doing the right thing for their colleagues, customers and communities in these unprecedented times. By coming together, thinking of each other and supporting those in need, we will not just beat the coronavirus but minimise its effects and, hopefully come through it stronger as a nation."

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Notes to Editors

Lowell’s extended customer commitments:

1. **Extended breathing space** – We will give customers impacted by COVID-19 more time to help them take control of their finances, increasing breathing space from 30 to 90 days.
2. **No interest, fees or charges** – We will continue not to add any interest, fees or other additional charges on managed accounts.
3. **Additional payment flexibility** – We will enhance the existing flexible approach we take with our customers for those most acutely impacted. Those impacted by COVID-19, such as those on a reduced income, simply need to contact us to discuss amending or suspending plans for as long as needed.
4. **No new litigation claims or bailiff action** – We will not issue new claims or request any new bailiff action during the crisis.
5. **Maintain customer support** – We will continue to be available for customers where they choose to contact us either over the phone or online. We’ll continue to invest in new online support services.
6. **Increased signposting guidance** – We will work tirelessly with our debt advice partners, including StepChange and the Government, to understand how customer’s circumstances are changing in order to provide up to date advice and support. Given the debt advice sector is seeing high levels of additional demand, we will do even more to signpost the variety of help available to customers.

About Lowell

Lowell is one of Europe’s largest credit management companies with a mission to make credit work better for all. It operates in the UK, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Denmark, Norway, Finland and Sweden. Headquartered in Leeds, it currently employs 4500 people across Europe with over 1700 in the UK.

Lowell prides itself on having a fair and ethical approach to debt recovery with an existing breathing space scheme, sensitive cases team and our ‘no fees, interest or charges’ policy. We currently manage around 7.1 million accounts in the UK, resulting in past or existing customer relationships with one in five UK adults. We were founded in the UK in 1994 and are headquartered in Leeds.

Lowell’s unparalleled combination of data analytics insight and robust risk management provides clients with expert solutions in debt purchasing, third party collections and business process outsourcing. With its ethical approach to debt management, Lowell always looks for the most appropriate, sustainable and fair outcome for each customer’s specific circumstances.