



**Wismettac**

Wismettac Harro Foods Ltd.

## **WORKING AT WHF DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

Updated 5 June 2020

Wismettac Harro Foods Ltd is a Japanese food wholesaler and distributor based in Chessington, Surrey. We supply chain restaurants, takeaways, supermarket kiosks, and individual restaurants throughout the UK. WHF has been closely following government guidance and public health best practice from sources like the gov.uk website, NHS, WHO, Public Health England, HSE, trusted news outlets, and other official bodies during the Covid-19 pandemic of 2020.

According to official UK guidance published on 19 March 2020, WHF is an essential business in food distribution; therefore, we have remained open for customers who are working hard to feed the nation. Many of our customers have needed to close for the time being, so our safety measures are designed to be scalable when work returns to normal volume.

WHF has taken steps to be 'Covid-19 secure' and reduce our potential impact on the spread of the virus as much as possible and practicable. In line with official guidance, our safety measures have focused on a risk-based approach:

- What are the hazards?
- Who might be affected?
- How can we control or contain the hazards?
- How risky is the hazard and what is the likelihood that it will happen?
- What more could we do?
- How frequently do we need to review the hazards?

During lockdown, we have focused on:

- Self-isolation: can staff work from home?
- Social distancing at work and during deliveries: how do we maintain safe distance of 2m or more?
- Frequent handwashing, disinfecting, and cleaning
- Providing masks, gloves, and hand sanitiser for staff
- Looking after our customers: how can we provide safe food and service?
- Looking after our staff: what support, stability, and reassurance can we provide?

While we have remained open throughout the lockdown, our operations have only required a skeleton staff in the Warehouse and Transport departments. Visual aids, barriers, PPE, and new procedures have been introduced to encourage social distance and reduce the chance of transmission. Our premises are large enough to keep employees safely 2m apart; however, we are changing the layout of shared spaces where social distancing is more difficult.

Our office staff have been working remotely for the most part. Like most businesses, we have found the new technology challenging but it has also proven to be reliable and we believe the impact on our customers and work teams has been minimal.



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Since we do not require our full headcount at this time, we have made the difficult decision to furlough some employees who cannot work from home. We are rotating staff on and off furlough: this serves several purposes.

First, it allows us to have small teams of people who work together reducing the chances of spreading the virus among a larger, mixed group. Next, it ensures that everyone has some time at work and some time at home with their families. While staff are at home on furlough, they can engage in online training on customer service. We know that this is a challenging time for our employees, and we are doing our best to support them while looking to the future for our business.

WHF takes pride in being part of a global supply chain – and a global pandemic presents challenges that we have never faced before. We are looking for the opportunities: how can we make our business more sustainable? How can we work with and support our suppliers in different countries? Our supply chain is intact; our food quality has not suffered as a result of the pandemic. We have donated to local food banks and we are establishing our own sustainable development goals (SDGs).

As we move into the 'new normal', WHF is committed to providing a safe work environment which allows us to serve our customers in a safe way. Our detailed risk assessments can be obtained upon request by emailing [info@wismettacuk.co.uk](mailto:info@wismettacuk.co.uk)