



Update 17.04.2020 – What is the global car industry up to in these challenging times?

Eventually the global car industry will have to return to some semblance of normality in the coming months. We have been watching developments with some interest and thought we'd share what we'd found so far...

Ford is testing an innovative solution to aid the safe resumption of production at its plants: a social distance-monitoring wristband that buzzes in warning if employees come nearer than six feet of each other. The device is being tested by Ford employees at its Plymouth, Michigan facility.

Vauxhall has slashed the cost of servicing and repairs at its dealer network, while also prioritising key workers and NHS staff. Two new pricing structures are offered: Vauxhall Genuine for those who want only genuine manufacturer parts, and Vauxhall approved for those who are happy to save money and have 'approved' parts fitted with a two-year parts and labour warranty.

Nissan is using its experience of supply chain management at its Sunderland plant to aid mass distribution of face masks and other Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for frontline NHS workers and other carers. The firm has been taking delivery of 3D-printed visors produced by volunteers across the country, sorting them into packs of 125 and distributing to the NHS. It will send out more than 77,000 masks by the end of the week and will be able to process 100,000 masks a week shortly.

Aston Martin is working with engineering firm Multimatic and research organisation the Manufacturing Technology Centre to design and produce a range of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to assist NHS staff. The firms are collaborating on a new intubation shield that can help protect medical staff who are intubating and extubating patients with COVID-19. The new device is effectively a one-piece Perspex box that is placed over the patient's upper body and is designed to be stacked to take up less space. The new machines are being produced at the MTC, with Aston Martin using cutting machines at its

Gaydon plant normally used to craft leather to cut silicone components used for the box. The device is currently being trialled at the Royal London Hospital.

Bentley has extended the shutdown of its Crewe factory for a further three weeks. The British manufacturer had initially aimed to resume work on Monday 20 April but is now intending to begin the ramp-up of manufacturing on 11 May, with full production resuming a week later.

Rolls-Royce is producing face visor kits at its Goodwood factory that are being provided to local NHS staff, as first reported by the Chichester Observer. The firm is also understood to have released its fleet of 30 cars to local charities and NHS services to assist in essential deliveries to those in need.

Volkswagen is working on plans to restart its production operations in Europe. It will start by resuming work at its plants in Zwickau, Germany and Bratislava, Slovakia on Monday 20 April, with its remaining German plants and those in Portugal, Spain, Russia and the USA scheduled to resume on 27 April. It aims to open factories in South Africa, Argentina, Brazil and Mexico during May. The firm has developed a 100-point plan, which it says is based on experience from China, where 32 of its 33 plants have now resumed production and no staff members have since reported coronavirus cases.

Audi joined Hyundai in announcing plans to resume some production in Europe, even though much of the continent remains on lockdown. Bloomberg reports that the premium German brand now has around 100 workers in its Győr, Hungary engine site, working in a single shift system. A second line is expected to open up by the end of this week.

Volvo will restart production at its factories in Torslanda, near Gothenberg in Sweden, and Ghent in Belgium on Monday 20 April. It will also reopen its offices in Sweden. The firm says that both the factories and offices have been prepared to ensure staff are as safe as possible, while production output will be adjusted to reflect Volvo's current order books and market demand.

This is a difficult time for everybody, and as we are open supporting critical services to stay on the road. We are here for everyone, Stay Safe

The Fleetline Team

