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BUSINESS DURHAM CONNECTS COMPANIES TO SOLVE COVID-19 CHALLENGES

Business Durham is linking up companies across County Durham to help them find solutions for their current business challenges during the coronavirus outbreak.

While many businesses have had to shut down during the crisis, others are adapting to new ways of working and producing new products to support the efforts to tackle COVID-19. By matching companies who can work together, Business Durham is helping businesses to tackle COVID-19 related shortages and meet demand with partnerships from within the county.

Following the Government's call for companies to help produce personal protective equipment (PPE) for frontline staff fighting the coronavirus pandemic, plastic packaging company PACCOR has started manufacturing protective face visors.

The company, which specializes in sustainable plastic packaging solutions for the food industry, is using its expertise to make full face visors across three of its international sites including Chester-le-Street, France, and Poland.

Jonathan Lundberg, Sales and Business Development Manager at PACCOR, said: *"This is a challenging time for all businesses, but we wanted to support the international effort in tackling COVID-19. After hearing about the PPE shortage we knew we could help make vital equipment to help keep staff safe in the fight against coronavirus."*

"We have the in-house design capabilities, technical knowledge, resources, and manufacturing skills to produce protective visors on a wide scale. Initially, we planned to supply staff within the food industry but soon realized there was a much wider demand particularly for care homes and the NHS."

"We started manufacturing the visors two weeks ago and have already produced 60,000. If demand for PPE continues we hope to be able to scale up production and manufacture 20,000 visors a day."

"As part of this we want to be able to support local care homes, care providers, and hospitals and have made a couple of charitable donations. Business Durham helped us connect with Supportive and Premier Community Care and we are delighted to be able to help them keep their staff, volunteers, and patients safe."

Business Durham, the economic development arm of Durham County Council, were aware of companies who needed to urgently source PPE for their staff and approached PACCOR about introducing them.

Supportive, a registered charity, which provides domiciliary care and volunteer transport in the community from their base in Ferryhill, welcomed the introduction as it had been having difficulty sourcing PPE for their care staff and volunteer drivers for their patient transport scheme.

Following the introduction, PACCOR agreed to provide Supportive with 100 protective visors free of charge for them to trial with their staff and volunteers. The visors were made and supplied within a couple of days.

John Davison, Chief Executive of Supportive, said: "Like many organizations across County Durham and the UK we are feeling the impact of COVID-19. However, we are determined to continue providing our quality care and patient transport service thanks to the dedication and hard work of our staff and volunteers."

"Their safety is our top priority and we have been working tirelessly to source PPE from various organizations. We were delighted to be introduced to PACCOR through Business Durham as to find a local business who can supply protective visors, which give our staff added protection has been fantastic. It is incredibly generous of PACCOR to offer us the visors free of charge and to turn them around so quickly has been a massive help, we cannot thank them enough."

Supportive is hoping to continue using PACCOR as a PPE supplier as well as other local business in County Durham.

Sarah Slaven, Interim Managing Director of Business Durham, said: "During this unprecedented time we are continually offering support and advice to businesses in County Durham to help them survive the coronavirus outbreak."

"Our Business Engagement team has been proactively seeking out collaborative opportunities for businesses who are facing certain challenges due to COVID-19 and it is fantastic to see PACCOR and Supportive working together to protect frontline staff."

"Collaborations like this demonstrate how businesses are evolving during the crisis and how they are showing resilience and adaptability to survive and indeed thrive. We need to continue supporting companies over the coming months to ensure we protect our communities and workforce in County Durham."

Cllr Carl Marshall, Durham County Council's cabinet member for economic regeneration, said: "It is fantastic that Business Durham has been able to bring together enterprises in a collaborative effort to support one another during the coronavirus outbreak."

"Finding solutions to the challenges that have been brought to light during this difficult time is crucial in helping to ensure our businesses in County Durham thrive. I highly commend the resilience shown by everyone as we continue to provide support during and beyond this pandemic."

Advice for businesses and employees in County Durham can be found at www.durham.gov.uk and at <http://www.businessdurham.co.uk/covid19>

BUSINESS DURHAM

Business Durham is the economic development arm for County Durham, working on behalf of Durham County Council to deliver the environment for business and economic growth.

It is a knowledgeable and trusted guide that connects businesses with the right funding, advice, and networks they need to grow and thrive.

Business Durham works closely with partners to encourage an enterprise culture, helping entrepreneurs to turn bright ideas into successful reality and students to develop enterprise skills to become our future business leaders.

The organization manages a portfolio of business property and excels in finding the right space for businesses to grow – commercial office space, modern laboratories, and industrial property units.

Business Durham attracts capital and inward investment to the county and develops an innovative economy that enables companies to grow and flourish.

Business Durham builds long-term relationships to foster sustainable growth in businesses, raising economic aspirations and making Durham a place where the business is done.

For more information visit www.businessdurham.co.uk.

ABOUT PACCOR

At PACCOR we create innovative and sustainable packaging solutions for the consumer, food and foodservice market. Our overall goal is to protect what is worth being protected: our planet, our partners' products and our employees. We have high expertise in developing and providing valuable rigid plastic packaging products. Our solutions meet current market trends by constantly thinking outside the box. With more than 3,000 dedicated employees in 15 countries, PACCOR is a global player in the packaging industry. Everything we do contributes to the protection and hygienic safety of valuable products. PACCOR leads the transition towards a circular economy. Because we believe this is the best way to achieve real change in the industry and to create shared value for all our stakeholders and society.

More: <https://www.paccor.com/>