

COVID-19 (Coronavirus) Policy

Introduction

Social distancing has been introduced as a public health measure to reduce the spread of infection of COVID-19 (Coronavirus). Those who are considered to be at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19 and those who are protecting others who live within the same household, should be particularly stringent in following social distancing measures.

In accordance with Public Health England (PHE) guidelines, where it is not possible to follow the social distancing guidelines relating to any activity, consideration should be given to whether that activity needs to continue. If so, all the mitigating actions possible should be carried out to reduce the risk of transmission.

Workplaces should be planned and organised to avoid crowding and to minimise the risk of spread of infection by following PHE and Health & Safety Executive (HSE) guidance.

Members of staff and visitors should be regularly reminded of the specific control measures necessary to protect them, their colleagues, families and the UK population.

What is "Social Distancing" ?

"Social distancing" refers to measures to be adopted to reduce social interaction between people, to reduce the transmission of COVID-19.

These measures include:

1. Avoidance of contact with someone who is displaying symptoms of COVID-19. These symptoms include a high temperature, a loss of smell or taste, and / or a new and continuous cough.
2. Avoidance of non-essential use of public transport when possible.
3. Working from home, wherever possible.
4. Avoidance of large and small gatherings in public spaces. Public houses, restaurants, leisure centres and similar venues which otherwise encourage large and small gatherings in public spaces have been closed as infections spread easily in closed spaces where people gather together.
5. Avoidance of gatherings with friends and family. Keeping in touch using remote technology such as telephone, internet and social media.
6. Use of telephone or online services to contact the GP or other essential services

Wherever possible, crowding should be avoided within the workplace, including areas where members of staff may interact with each other and members of the public, by maintaining a distance of at least 2 metres (3 steps) between individuals.

Procedure

Travelling to and from Work

Wherever possible members of staff will be encouraged to travel to and from the workplace alone, avoiding public transport wherever possible

However, if this is not possible, members of staff will:

- Share journeys with the same individuals and with the minimum number of people at any one time;
- Consider alternative means of transport to avoid public transport (eg driving, walking, cycling).

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The Place of Work

Wherever possible consideration will be given to the provision of additional / specific:

- Staggering of working hours;
- Parking arrangements for additional vehicles and bicycles;
- Rearranging desks and work equipment;
- Provision of physical barriers or screens where face-to-face work or contact cannot be avoided;
- Avoidance of hot desking;
- Additional arrangements to clean commonly touched items including work equipment, door handles, desks, telephone and keyboards;
- Hand cleaning facilities (eg "pop-up" facilities) at entrances and exits. These will include adequate supplies of soap and water or hand sanitiser if soap and water are not available;
- Arrangements for how those taken ill whilst at work would get home.

Public Transport

Wherever possible, members of staff will be discouraged from using public transport and encouraged to use alternative means of transport (eg cars, vans, cycling). However, where the use of public transport cannot be avoided, members of staff will be encouraged to:

- Maintain a distance of 2 metres between other passengers, including when buying tickets, when seated or when waiting at platforms and bus stops;
- Wear face coverings, especially whilst travelling on public transport and in crowded or enclosed areas. From 15th June 2020, it is compulsory to wear face coverings whilst using public transport in England;
- Purchase e-tickets or use contactless methods whenever possible;
- Change / stagger their arrival and departure times or working hours to reduce congestion on public transport;
- Avoid using public transport during peak times;
- Wash their hands for 20 seconds using soap and water or hand sanitiser if soap and water are not available, before and after each journey;
- Wipe table or trays when finding a seat;
- Avoid touching their face;
- Avoid eating whilst travelling.

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Driving at Work

When travelling at work or between site locations, members of staff will travel alone wherever possible. If members of staff have no option but to share a vehicle, then they will:

- Share with the same individuals and with the minimum number of people at any one time;
- Wherever possible, maintain a distance of 2 metres;
- Avoid touching their faces;
- Maintain good levels of ventilation (ie open windows);
- Face away from each other during the journey;
- Wash their hands for 20 seconds using soap and water or hand sanitiser if soap and water are not available, before entering and after getting out of the vehicle;
- Regularly clean the vehicle using gloves and standard cleaning products, giving particular emphasis on handles and other surfaces which are likely to have been touched during the journey;
- Wear disposable gloves when refuelling vehicles.

Access to the Workplace

Visitors which are considered to be "non-essential" visitors will not be permitted into the workplace.

To reduce the likelihood of congestion at peak hours and to enable social distancing during access and egress of the workplace, wherever appropriate:

- Consideration will be given to staggering members' of staff start and finish times;
- Consideration will be given to reviewing the number / locations of existing access and egress points (either increasing to reduce congestion or decreasing to enable monitoring, including in the case of emergencies);
- Members of staff will be instructed to ensure plenty of space between themselves and others.

Where applicable, any entry systems that require skin contact (eg fingerprint scanners) will be removed / disabled or will be cleaned between each individual use.

Members of staff and visitors will be required to wash their hands for 20 seconds using soap and water when entering and leaving the workplace.

Adequate cleaning regimes will be developed with members of staff or contracted cleaners to ensure that surfaces which are likely to come into frequent / common contact are regularly cleaned (eg reception, door handles, scanners, turnstiles, screens, telephone handsets, desks and furniture). These regimes will be supported by arrangements for ongoing compliance monitoring.

Introduce one-way systems throughout buildings where possible and avoid using lifts or restrict number of occupants of lifts.

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Signage:

Where appropriate additional, prominent signage / floor markings will be installed to encourage at least 2 metres' distance between members of staff and visitors when queuing and to remind members of staff and visitors not to attend / to follow up to date guidance if they have symptoms of Covid-19.

Meetings including Training and Site Inductions

The number of people attending meetings, including training and site inductions will be managed to as few as possible. Wherever possible, consideration will be given to holding site inductions etc outdoors.

Loading & Offloading

Wherever possible, drivers will be instructed to remain within their vehicles.

Where drivers are required to exit their vehicle, they will be required to wash or sanitise their hands before handling any materials. All deliveries are to be wiped down with antibacterial spray prior to being brought on to the site. This is the outer layer of each piece of material, so if items are packaged and sealed from, only the covering will need to be wiped down.

Hand Washing

Members of staff will be provided with regular breaks throughout the working day to wash their hands.

The minimum standards of hand washing facilities which will be available to members of staff and visitors will include:

- Where appropriate, additional hand washing facilities (eg "pop-ups") to the usual welfare facilities, particularly on large spread-out workplaces or where there are significant numbers of people present;
- Adequate supplies of soap and fresh water which will remain readily available and will be kept topped up at all times;
- Hand sanitiser (minimum 60% alcohol based) where hand washing facilities are unavailable;
- Suitable and sufficient rubbish bins for hand towels with arrangements for regular removal and disposal.

Arrangements will be made for the regular cleaning of the hand washing facilities.

Sanitary & Toilet Facilities

Members of staff and visitors will be provided with access to sanitary and toilet facilities in accordance with the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992.

Members of staff will be instructed to manage the number of people using the toilet facilities at any one time and to ensure that a distance of 2 metres is maintained between themselves and others, especially when queuing. As appropriate, additional signage and floor markings will be provided.

Adequate supplies of soap and / or hand santiser will be made available to members of staff and visitors for before and after use of the toilet and sanitary facilities.

Arrangements will be made for enhanced cleaning regimes of the toilet facilities, with particular attention to the door handles, locks and the toilet flush.

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Sanitary & Toilet Facilities (cont)

The use of portable toilets will be avoided wherever possible, but where in use these will be cleaned and emptied more frequently.

Suitable and sufficient rubbish bins for hand towels will be provided with arrangements in place for their regular removal and disposal.

Kitchen (Canteen) and Rest Areas

Wherever possible, members of staff will be encouraged to bring in their own food, and to stay on site once they have entered it and to avoid using local shops during the working day.

The workplace canteen will remain open to provide and appropriate adjustments will be made to ensure social distancing, including:

- Indicating the capacity at the entrance of each canteen or rest area;
- Break times will be staggered to reduce congestion and contact at all times;
- Staff will be encouraged to bring in bottled drinking water and drinking taps will be provided with enhanced cleaning measures of the tap mechanism;
- Frequent cleaning regimes of commonly touched surfaces using standard cleaning products (eg kettles, refrigerators, microwaves);
- Hand cleaning facilities or hand sanitiser will be available throughout the premises, including the kitchen. Members of staff will be instructed to use these facilities when entering and leaving;
- A distance of 2 metres will be maintained between users, wherever possible;
- All rubbish and waste will be put straight in the bin and not left for someone else to clear up;
- Tables etc will be cleaned between each use;
- Crockery, eating utensils, cups etc will not be used unless they are disposable or are washed and dried between use.

These practices will be supported by arrangements for ongoing compliance monitoring.

Changing Facilities, Showers and Drying Rooms (where applicable)

Where changing facilities, showers and drying rooms are provided, arrangements will be made to:

- Consider increasing the number or size of facilities available;
- Determine the number of people that can use the facilities at any one time to ensure that social distancing is achieved;
- Restrict the number of people using these facilities at any one time;
- Introduce staggered start and finish times to reduce congestion and contact at all times;
- Introduce enhanced cleaning of all facilities throughout the day and at the end of each day;
- Provide suitable and sufficient rubbish bins in these areas with regular removal and disposal.

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Remote Workers

For remote workers, where facilities to wash hands are not available, hand sanitiser will be issued and its use will be encouraged.

Regular announcements will be provided to remind remote workers to follow social distancing guidance and to:

- Wash their hands at regular intervals throughout the working day;
- Use digital and remote transfers of material, such as e-forms, emails and e-banking, wherever possible, in preference to "hard copy" and paper-based transactions, such as the use of memory sticks and cash transactions;
- Identify any additional "pop-up" handwashing stations or facilities which may be available for their use;
- Wherever possible, remain 2 metres apart, and observed floor-markings or barriers in particular when queuing / crowded areas;
- Where it is not possible to remain 2 metres apart, wherever possible, to work side-by-side, or facing away from each other, rather than face to face;
- Whilst face-to-face contact will be discouraged, wherever face-to-face contact is essential, to keep this to a maximum of 15 minutes.
- Wherever working in teams cannot be avoided, to keep the teams to as few members as possible and to maintain the same team members (cohorting) wherever possible.

Responsibilities of Employees

Section 7 of the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 sets general duties for employees to take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and of others, who may be affected by their acts or omissions at work; and to co-operate with their employer in the interests of their health and safety, and of others'.

In particular, members of staff will be required to work in accordance with this Procedure, and to:

- Ensure that any coughs or sneezes are covered with a tissue, which will then be disposed of;
- Wash their hands regularly throughout the working day, and in particular after using the sanitary / toilet facilities and prior to eating, drinking and smoking.

Risk Assessment

A suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks in the light of COVID-19 (Coronavirus) will be carried out by a competent person.

The assessment will consider the risks to members of staff and visitors in the workplace and away from the workplace.

The risk assessment will be reviewed on a periodic basis, in light of the latest Government and World Organisation guidance in accordance with Regulation 3 of the Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999:

- If there is any other reason to suspect that it is no longer valid; or,
- If there has been a significant change to the organisation or the risks and controls surrounding the virus.

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Training

All members of staff will be provided with adequate training, instruction and information relating to the risks from COVID-19 (Coronavirus), along with the arrangements in place to control the risks, and the responsibilities of all employees.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Any personal protective equipment which is identified within the risk assessment will be provided and made readily available to members of staff.

In accordance with Section 9 of the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974, no charge will be made to members of staff for the provision of any personal protective equipment which is used in the workplace.

Emergency Procedures

The key roles / individuals whose absence would have a significant impact on the business will be identified.

Records of the emergency contact details for members of staff will be maintained and kept up to date.

Due to the impact on the emergency services, consideration will be given to restricting or rescheduling high-risk work activities and, in the event that high-activities are to be scheduled, consideration will be given to the impact of a potential delay in emergency services response times, due to additional pressures on resources.

The contact details of First Aiders and the location of the site first aid kit will be known to all members of staff.

COVID-19 emergency procedures will be developed and communicated to all necessary members of staff.

First Aiders will be consulted and procedures and instructions will be provided to them, including COVID-19 CPR guidance.

In the event that a member of staff develops a high temperature, a loss of smell or taste, or a persistent cough whilst at work, then they will be instructed to:

- Ensure that their line manager or supervisor is informed;
- Return home immediately;
- Avoid touching any surfaces or work equipment;
- Cough or sneeze into a tissue and to place in a bin, or into the crook of their elbow if tissues are not available;
- Follow the latest Government guidance surrounding self-isolation and not return to work until their period of self-isolation has been completed.

First aid will be administered if required and until the emergency services have attended.

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Monitoring

A combination of proactive and reactive arrangements will be developed to assist the monitoring of the existing controls. These will include:

- Concerns raised by members of staff and visitors;
- The behaviour of members of staff and visitors in accordance with this Policy;
- Ill-health and sickness absence records;
- Follow-up investigation records and identifying trends.

Record Keeping

Records of reviewed risk assessments and updated versions of this Policy will be archived and maintained for a minimum of 5 years.

Review

This policy will be reviewed following the issue of updated Government and Public Health England (PHE) guidelines and on a regular basis.

Signed



Daniel Moore

Managing Director