

Policy—Coronavirus (COVID-19) safety—office
workplace

DRAFT

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This policy sets out an overview of the Company's temporary arrangements for ensuring workers stay healthy and safe while they are working in the Company's [offices AND/OR contact centres AND/OR *[insert description of other similar indoor environments]*] during the coronavirus (or COVID-19) pandemic. It supplements, but does not replace, the Company's health and safety policy.
- 1.2 This policy does not form part of any contract of employment and the Company may amend it at any time.
- 1.3 This policy applies to all employees, workers and contractors.
- 1.4 The risk of coronavirus infection increases the closer you are to another person with the virus, and the amount of time you spend in close contact with them. Evidence suggests that the virus can exist for up to 72 hours on surfaces. For this reason, Public Health England recommends trying to keep two metres away from people outside your household as a precaution. Current government guidance also recommends:
 - 1.4.1 keeping your hands and face as clean as possible;
 - 1.4.2 working from home if you can;
 - 1.4.3 avoiding being face-to-face with people if they are outside your household;
 - 1.4.4 reducing the number of people you spend time with in a work setting;
 - 1.4.5 avoiding crowds;
 - 1.4.6 thinking about how and when you travel;
 - 1.4.7 washing your clothes regularly;
 - 1.4.8 keeping indoor places well-ventilated; and
 - 1.4.9 wearing a face covering in an enclosed space where social distancing is not possible and where you will come into contact with people you do not normally meet.
- 1.5 The government guidance is updated frequently. We strongly recommend that all staff familiarise themselves with the guidance on the GOV.UK website and check regularly for updates. We will also issue updates to staff, typically by email, if changes to the government guidance affect this policy.

2 Health and safety risk assessment

- 2.1 The Company has carried out a Coronavirus health and safety risk assessment in consultation with [union-appointed health and safety representatives OR workforce-elected safety representatives OR employees]. The Company will continue to ensure that [those representatives OR employees] are involved in the development and review of this policy as circumstances change during the coronavirus pandemic.
- 2.2 The purpose of this risk assessment is to identify the risks from Coronavirus to employee health and safety while working on-site and to ensure that we do everything reasonably practicable to minimise them.

- 2.3 In summary, the Company's risk assessment has identified the following risks: *[insert description of main risks identified by the risk assessment]*.
- 2.4 The Coronavirus risk assessment will be regularly reviewed during the pandemic, and the Workplace safety plan set out in the appendix will be updated accordingly.
- 3 Who should return to the workplace**
- 3.1 The Company will carry out an assessment of which employees it needs to work on-site, based on:
- 3.1.1 whether they are working in a role that is critical to the business (eg for business and operational continuity, safe facility management or regulatory requirements) or not; and
 - 3.1.2 whether they can work from home (ie remotely).
- 3.2 In determining whether you can work remotely, we will consider:
- 3.2.1 the nature of your work;
 - 3.2.2 whether it is possible to connect safely to the Company's systems;
 - 3.2.3 any home circumstances of which we are aware, eg available desk/office space, whether you live in shared accommodation; and/or
 - 3.2.4 any mental or other health issues that may make it more challenging for you to work from home, rather than on-site.
- 3.3 Before asking you to return to the workplace, the Company will also take into account:
- 3.3.1 whether you are considered clinically extremely vulnerable (in which case you may be shielding), because you have a specific underlying health condition that makes you extremely vulnerable to severe illness if you contract coronavirus;
 - 3.3.2 whether you are considered clinically vulnerable, ie at increased risk from coronavirus, eg because you are aged 70 or over and have an underlying health condition;
 - 3.3.3 whether you live with someone who is considered clinically extremely vulnerable;
 - 3.3.4 the nature of your commute to work, in particular whether you rely on public transport, or whether it is possible for you to walk or cycle;
 - 3.3.5 any protected characteristic that may increase the level of risk, eg age or disability, or other factors such as pregnancy; and
 - 3.3.6 childcare or other caring responsibilities.
- 3.4 Please make sure you inform your manager or the HR department of any relevant factors such as your home circumstances, if you are clinically vulnerable or clinically extremely vulnerable, or if there is anything else we might need to take into account. We can only take these matters into account if we are aware of them.

- 3.5 You will be notified whether you have been assessed as:
- 3.5.1 working in a role that can be performed from home, in which case you will be expected to work from home (whether your role is critical or not);
 - 3.5.2 working in a critical role which cannot be performed from home, in which case you will be expected to work in the work place, unless one of the matters referred to in paragraph 3.2 applies, in which case see paragraph 3.7;
 - 3.5.3 working in a non-critical role that cannot be performed from home, in which case it may be possible for you to remain furloughed under the government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.
- 3.6 if you are pregnant, we will carry out a specific risk assessment in relation to you.
- 3.7 If one of the other matters referred to in paragraph 3.2 applies and you are unable to work from home, we will consider first whether you can be given an alternative role that would enable you to work from home. If not, we will usually take the following approach:
- 3.7.1 if you are clinically extremely vulnerable, you will not be able to return to the workplace. We will consider whether you can be placed on furlough. Alternatively, you may be able to claim sick pay;
 - 3.7.2 if you are clinically vulnerable, live with someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable or there is another factor that might put you at a higher level of risk (other than pregnancy), we will consider whether it is possible for you to work safely in the workplace. If not, we will consider whether you can be placed on furlough, or whether you may be able to claim sick pay. Other options may include taking paid annual leave or some other form of leave, which may be unpaid.
- 3.8 If you disagree with the Company's assessment of whether you should, or should not, work from home, you should ask your manager or the HR department to reconsider, giving your reasons. If the assessment cannot be agreed between you and your manager, you should ask the matter to be referred to the HR department or Director.

4 Training and communication

- 4.1 The Company is committed to ensuring all staff members are competent to do their tasks in accordance with this policy and the Workplace safety plan set out in the appendix, and will provide adequate training and supervision to enable them to do so.
- 4.2 The Company will communicate this policy to its staff members, customers and clients and other stakeholders by means of *[insert details of how the employer communicates the policy to stakeholders, eg via the intranet, its website, brochures, signage etc]*. Copies of this policy are made available to all staff members and are provided to visitors where appropriate or on request.

5 Reporting concerns and dealing with breaches

- 5.1 Staff are encouraged to make further suggestions in relation to the Workplace safety plan set out in the appendix. If you have a suggestion, you should contact *[insert name or details, eg your safety representative/representative of workplace safety/a Company Director]*.

- 5.2 If you are concerned that a work colleague is flouting or disregarding the Workplace safety plan set out in the appendix, please raise your concern in the first instance with your manager.
- 5.3 The Company is fully committed to the highest possible standards of openness, honesty and accountability, particularly in relation to the Workplace safety plan. In line with that commitment, the Company actively encourages any employee who is concerned that the Workplace safety plan set out in the appendix is not being complied with to report their concerns under the Company's *[Health and safety policy or Whistleblowing policy]*.
- 5.4 The Company considers this policy to be extremely important, given that it concerns measures to try to minimise the risk of employees contracting what is a potentially life-threatening virus. Any breach of Workplace safety plan set out in the appendix will be dealt with under the Company's disciplinary procedure. In certain circumstances, breach of this policy may be considered gross misconduct and may result in immediate termination of employment or engagement without notice or payment in lieu of notice.

THE APPENDIX
WORKPLACE SAFETY PLAN

Government guidance is that we should maintain two-metre social distancing wherever possible. In light of the coronavirus risk assessment, we have identified the following steps to try to ensure social distancing within the workplace:

1 Shift patterns

- 1.1 splitting staff into teams or shift groups where possible, and keeping those groups the same during the pandemic;
- 1.2 minimising direct contact, eg delivery of office supplies and post, by using drop-off points;

2 Social distancing at work

- 2.1 staggered start and finish times, to avoid busy commuter times on public transport;
- 2.2 additional car parking and bike rack facilities;
- 2.3 limiting passengers in corporate vehicles, eg work minibuses;
- 2.4 additional storage for workers' clothes and bags;
- 2.5 introducing one-way flow at entry and exit points, and throughout the building;
- 2.6 temporarily suspending touch-based entry system;
- 2.7 restricting access to different areas of the building;
- 2.8 suspending 'hot-desking', and reducing rotation of jobs and locations;
- 2.9 reducing maximum occupancy for lifts, giving priority to those with disabilities and, in the case of others, restricting the use of lifts to those [travelling OR ascending] more than [three] floors;
- 2.10 controlling movement in busy areas, eg corridors, staircases, turnstiles and walkways;
- 2.11 using floor signage at entry/exit points and in corridors, staircases, office areas, meeting rooms, common areas, to indicate direction of flow and two metre distancing;
- 2.12 providing handwashing facilities or hand sanitiser at entry and exit points;
- 2.13 managing occupancy levels by working alternate [days OR weeks] on-site;
- 2.14 reviewing office layouts to allow people to work further apart from each other, eg leaving desks free, working side by side or facing away from each other, using screens if necessary;
- 2.15 replacing face-to-face meetings with telephone/video conference meetings where possible;
- 2.16 where meetings are necessary, taking steps to maintain social distancing eg avoiding sharing pens, objects etc, holding meetings outdoors or in well-ventilated rooms;
- 2.17 staggering break and lunch times;

- 2.18 using safe outside areas for breaks;
- 2.19 installing screens to protect staff in receptions, post rooms etc;
- 2.20 replacing staff canteen with packaged meals and/or encouraging workers to bring their own lunches;
- 2.21 reconfiguring seating and tables in common areas;
- 2.22 encouraging staff to remain on-site and to maintain social distancing while off-site;
- 2.23 regulating use of locker rooms, changing areas and other facility areas to reduce concurrent usage;
- 2.24 encouraging a 'clear desk' policy, and storage of personal items and clothing in personal storage spaces;
- 2.25 working with landlords and other tenants to ensure consistency in common areas;

3 Visitors

- 3.1 encouraging remote meetings or visits in place of physical visits;
- 3.2 where on-site visits are essential, providing visitors (in advance or on arrival) with guidance on on-site social distancing and hygiene measures;
- 3.3 limiting the number of visitors, and limiting visitor times to specific time window (avoiding main staff start and finish times);
- 3.4 scheduling essential services and maintenance to minimise interaction with staff, eg at night;
- 3.5 maintaining visitor records;
- 3.6 reviewing visitor arrangements, eg use of pens to sign in, provision and return of passes and lanyards;
- 3.7 ensuring clear signage, reviewing entry and exit points;

4 Travel

- 4.1 minimising non-essential travel;
- 4.2 minimising the number of people travelling together in any one vehicle;
- 4.3 where workers are required to stay away from their home, centrally logging the stay and making sure any overnight accommodation meets social distancing guidelines;

5 Cleaning and hygiene

- 5.1 before re-opening, assessing cleanliness of site, and carrying out additional cleaning where needed;
- 5.2 ensuring adequate stocks of soap, hand sanitiser and other cleaning products;
- 5.3 checking heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems;

- 5.4 where possible, using natural ventilation (eg opening windows);
- 5.5 frequent cleaning of work areas and equipment between uses;
- 5.6 frequent cleaning of objects and surfaces that are touched regularly, eg door handles, keyboards and mouses;
- 5.7 making sure there are adequate refuse waste arrangements;
- 5.8 ensuring workspaces are cleared and waste and belongings are removed from desks at the end of the day;
- 5.9 limiting or restricting use of high-touch items and equipment, eg printers or whiteboards;
- 5.10 providing regular reminders and signage to maintain personal hygiene standards, eg good handwashing technique, the need to increase handwashing frequency, to avoid touching your face and to cough or sneeze into a tissue which is binned safely, or into your arm if a tissue is not available;
- 5.11 providing hand sanitiser in office areas, meeting rooms and common areas;
- 5.12 setting clear use and cleaning guidance for toilets;
- 5.13 providing hand drying facilities, ie paper towels or electrical driers;
- 5.14 providing more waste facilities and more frequent waste collection;
- 5.15 clear use and cleaning guidance for showers, lockers and changing rooms;
- 5.16 enhanced cleaning of toilet, shower and other facilities regularly during the day and at the end of the day;
- 5.17 introducing cleaning procedures for supplies entering the site;
- 5.18 restricting non-business deliveries, eg personal deliveries to workers;

6 Personal protective equipment (PPE) and face coverings

- 6.1 in accordance with government guidance, we do not consider the use of PPE beneficial;
- 6.2 we do not require you to use a face covering or mask while working in the office; you may of course use one if you wish;
- 6.3 if you use a face covering:
 - 6.3.1 wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser before putting it on, and after removing it;
 - 6.3.2 avoid touching your face or face covering, as you could contaminate them with germs from your hands;
 - 6.3.3 change your face covering if it becomes damp or if you've touched it;
 - 6.3.4 continue to wash your hands regularly;

- 6.3.5 change and wash your face covering daily;
- 6.3.6 if the material is washable, wash in line with manufacturer's instructions. If it's not washable, dispose of it carefully in your usual waste.

7 If an employee develops symptoms at work

- 7.1 If you develop symptoms (ie a new, continuous cough or a high temperature) while you are on-site, you must:
 - 7.1.1 inform your manager immediately (using your mobile phone if possible) and go home quickly and directly; if you have to use public transport, try to keep away from other people;
 - 7.1.2 avoid touching anything;
 - 7.1.3 cough or sneeze into a tissue and put it in a bin, or if you do not have tissues, cough and sneeze into the crook of your elbow;
 - 7.1.4 use a separate bathroom from others, if possible;
 - 7.1.5 self-isolate for seven days; anyone else in your household must self-isolate for 14 days and, if they start to display symptoms, for a further seven days from that point.
- 7.2 When an employee develops symptoms while on-site:
 - 7.2.1 PHE guidance on cleaning will be followed;
 - 7.2.2 if you have helped the person who developed symptoms, you do not need to go home unless you develop symptoms yourself. You should wash your hands thoroughly for 20 seconds after any contact with someone who is unwell with symptoms consistent with coronavirus infection;
 - 7.2.3 according to the current government guidance, it will not be necessary to close the business or workplace or send any staff home.