

## COVID-19 WORK PLACE RISK ASSESSMENT

<b>Assessor:</b>	Judith Neenan
<b>Job Title:</b>	Human Resources Manager
<b>Assessment Date:</b>	19 June 2020
<b>Review Date:</b>	Ongoing
<b>Location Type:</b>	Office environments – low risk

Business hazards associated with the coronavirus pandemic	Potential risks to workers and the business caused by these hazards	Control measures	Action taken
<b>Infection Prevention – Cleaning and Staff Safety</b>			
<p>The Firm must ensure the safety of staff by making premises “COVID” secure in order to reduce the risk of virus transmission.</p>	<p>There is a direct threat to staff health and wellbeing from transmission of the COVID-19 coronavirus while at work. People can catch the virus from others who are infected in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the virus moves from person-to-person in droplets from the nose or mouth, spread when a person with the virus coughs or exhales.</li> <li>• the virus can survive for up to 72 hours out of the body on surfaces which people have</li> </ul>	<p>The Firm must ensure it complies with its duty to provide a safe and healthy workplace for staff in the coronavirus pandemic by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• circulating “COVID Secure” coronavirus policies and safety procedures to all staff and managers; these set out how staff should behave and the precautions they must adopt during the pandemic to keep them safe</li> <li>• requiring them to practice effective social distancing while in and around the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff announcement explaining what COVID-19 is, symptoms to look out for, affected countries, how to reduce the risk/dos and don’ts (12.02.20)</li> <li>• Hand sanitiser placed in all offices, Receptions, washrooms and kitchens with suitable signage (12.02.20)</li> <li>• Hand Sanitiser signage provided for all Reception areas (12.02.20)</li> <li>• PHE - Employers and</li> </ul>

	<p>coughed on etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• people can pick up the virus by breathing in the droplets or by touching contaminated surfaces and then touching their eyes or mouth.</li> </ul>	<p>workplace, while travelling to work and in all work business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the Firm should pass on and reinforce key Government public health messages to all staff including:</li> <li>• Implement Public Health England guidance for Employers and Businesses on Coronavirus, including the following key safety precautions:</li> <li>• keep risk assessments under review to ensure that a safe place of work is maintained</li> <li>• consult with staff fully</li> <li>• make any adjustments to the workspace, rotas and working procedures necessary to facilitate effective infection prevention and social distancing at work</li> <li>• follow government health and travel advice</li> </ul>	<p>Businesses Guidance Posters put up in all kitchens (12.02.20)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arranged with office cleaning companies to use virucidal spray on all touch points regularly (03.03.20)</li> <li>• Staff required to place used tissues and wipes in waste bin and to tie up bin liner for collection by cleaners (03.03.20)</li> <li>• Kent Health Protection Team contact details placed on intranet (02.03.20)</li> <li>• Update to staff on hygiene measures and what to do if someone in the office presents with symptoms (03.03.20)</li> <li>• COVID-19 Policy emailed to all staff and published on the Intranet (05.03.20)</li> <li>• New appointment screening questionnaire for clients</li> </ul>
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New appointments screening questionnaire withdrawn (no longer relevant) (23.03.20)</li> <li>• Fire Safety advice email from Health and Safety Officer to all staff (23.03.20)</li> <li>• Supply of face masks and non latex gloves provided (07.05.20)</li> <li>• Guidance given to all staff on appropriate surface wipes to use (14.05.20)</li> <li>• Advice provided on car sharing (13.05.20)</li> <li>• Updated symptoms emailed to all staff and self isolating diagram placed on Intranet on 19.05.20 and regular updates provided thereafter.</li> </ul>
<b>Homeworking, Hot-desking and Equipment Sharing</b>			
Staff working together in offices raises the risk of virus transmission.	Homeworking reduces the risk of staff gathering in the workplace and of transmitting the virus	Homeworking should be adopted within the Firm wherever possible and only staff who need to be on-site should attend the offices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IT Department procuring additional laptops to enable remote working from home (27.02.20)</li> </ul>

<p>Hot desking and the sharing of equipment present hazards that raise the risk of virus transmission further still.</p>		<p>The following working arrangements will be put into place to support homeworking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partners and Heads of Department will plan for the minimum number of people needed on site to operate safely and effectively</li> <li>• Line Managers and HR should monitor the wellbeing of people who are working from home and put in place measures to support their mental and physical health and personal security</li> <li>• IT support to be provided to ensure the effectiveness of working arrangements and the security of information and data, e.g. remove access to work systems</li> <li>• Arrangements should be made to help homeworkers stay connected to the rest of the workforce as much as possible</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All staff asked to update their contact and emergency contact details (03.03.20)</li> <li>• Homeworking capability assessment conducted and results analysed (09.03.20)</li> <li>• Set up an area on the Intranet dedicated to Coronavirus advice and guidance (10.03.20)</li> <li>• Announcement from Partners regarding working arrangements. Statement published on website and footer for emails. (17.03.20)</li> <li>• Permission gained from all staff to share their contact details with the IT Department and others within the Firm. (17.03.20)</li> <li>• “How to Guides” for remote working published on Intranet (18.03.20)</li> </ul>
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consulted staff with parental responsibilities on the forthcoming school closures (20.03.2020).</li> <li>• Announcement from Partners – flexible working in light of school closures (20.03.20)</li> <li>• Announcement from Partners – All offices closed and staff to work from home wef 24.03.2020, save unavoidable trips into the office for essential tasks. No home visits, doors closed with appropriate signage, direct dial phone numbers given to clients, conference call facilities to be used.</li> <li>• Advice given to staff on how to work at home safely. HSE Leaflet provided (27.03.20)</li> <li>• Key Worker Letter provided to all staff (27.03.20)</li> <li>• IT protocols sent to all staff (30.03.20)</li> </ul>
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homeworking Risk Assessment (H&amp;S) conducted and results analysed. Issues addressed with advice or equipment sourced as necessary (01.04.20)</li> <li>• Advice provided to Head's of Department – "Helping People in Distress when Working from Home" 06.05.20)</li> </ul>
<b>Workplace Social Distancing</b>			
Effective social distancing is a key element in reducing the transmission of COVID-19	Social distancing refers to people being required to maintain a distance from each other of 2 meters wherever possible. Social distancing effectively puts people at a safe range from any coughing. The main route of virus transmission is through droplets exhaled or coughed by an infected person.	<p>Staff are required to practice effective social distancing while in and around the workplace, while involved in work activities and when travelling to and from work, wherever possible by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoiding non-essential contact with others</li> <li>• Keeping a safe distance of at least 2m from others whenever possible</li> <li>• Avoiding physical contact (hand shakes etc.,)</li> </ul> <p>Adaptations to the premises to</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff Announcement - Travel to other offices restricted to essential only (12.03.20)</li> <li>• Procedure implemented to notify attendance in office/at home/on leave to monitor numbers attending the workplace. (27.03.20)</li> <li>• IT and HR Induction courses now delivered to new staff remotely (01.04.20)</li> <li>• Signs placed on all desks advising people not to use if within 2m of another person,</li> </ul>

		<p>support social distancing should include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A review of all work premises to identify suitable adaptations which will support social distancing</li> <li>• Offices and open plan areas to be set up to support social distancing, e.g. layout changes, appropriate signage, floor markings to denote safe distances.</li> <li>• Workstations and desks to be organised to incorporate a minimum 2m separation between/opposite where possible</li> <li>• Establishing maximum occupancy limits for offices and work areas.</li> </ul> <p>Adaptations to work processes to support social distancing will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One to one and departmental meetings conducted by</li> </ul>	<p>either alongside or opposite (18.05.20)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safe zones created using “2m safe distance” tape applied to floors within offices around printers, reception desks etc.</li> <li>• Cleaning contractors required to use a double liner within all waste bins and the staff asked to knot them securely at the end of the day if they contain any contaminated tissues, wipes or PPE” (16.06.2020)</li> <li>• IT software to create online training videos in-house (21.05.20)</li> <li>• Recruitment interviews now conducted by video call (14.05.20)</li> <li>• Additional hand sanitiser provided for larger interview rooms and open work areas</li> </ul>
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		<p>video/telephone conference</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Holding essential meetings in large well ventilated rooms with appropriate social distancing in place – limit numbers to essential members only and use phone/video conferencing instead where possible.</li><li>• Clients and other visitors should not be invited to attend the office unless necessary (such as to sign an essential document etc.). This should be by appointment and the client or visitor should be met at the entrance, asked to use hand sanitiser and then be taken to a meeting room or other appropriate place where social distancing can be observed during the meeting. Do not shake hands with your visitor, maintain a distance of 2 metres apart and spend no longer with them than necessary to conduct the business in</li></ul>	
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		<p>hand. All touch points and surfaces used <u>must</u> be sanitised afterwards.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rooms must be booked in advance and at least 15 minutes allowed between appointments to allow for cleaning.</li><li>• Providing hand sanitiser at meetings</li><li>• Cancelling non-essential training and all face-to face training/recruitment practice</li><li>• Carrying out any essential training or recruitment by using email/online e-learning wherever possible rather than bringing people together face to face.</li><li>• Notices should be displayed in all premises reminding staff of the key infection prevention requirements, including the need to maintain safe distancing</li></ul>	
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		<p>Where social distancing guidelines cannot be followed in full, in relation to a particular activity, the Firm must carry out further risk assessments and consider whether that activity needs to continue for the business to operate. Where such activities need to continue appropriate mitigation methods should be put in place such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased hand washing</li> <li>• Increased cleaning of surfaces and equipment</li> <li>• Reducing the time of the activity as much as possible</li> <li>• reducing the number of people each person has contact with by using “fixed teams or partnering (so that each person works with only a few others)</li> </ul>	
<b>Higher Risk Areas of the Workplace</b>			
Some areas of the workplace may present a higher risk than others – this may include areas such as	Heavily used areas of the workplace are more likely to present an infection transmission	Ensure high-risk, high traffic areas of the workplace are COVID secure by applying appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement a midday inspection of all toilets and kitchens to ensure adequate</li> </ul>

<p>toilets and kitchens</p>	<p>risk.</p> <p>Essential for staff to wash hands regularly but also that toilets are kept clean and free of contamination</p> <p>A number of staff going to the toilet together may compromise their ability to comply with social distancing.</p> <p>Increased risk of people coughing and touching door handles, taps, and toilet flush handles.</p>	<p>safety precautions including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stressing the need for staff to follow good hygiene practice</li> <li>• Staggering breaks to ensure that kitchens and toilets are not overloaded</li> <li>• Establishing safe queuing systems by use of room occupancy limits and floor marking/signage, etc.</li> <li>• Placing 65% alcohol hand gels at convenient places around the workplace with instructions for use</li> <li>• Increasing cleaning, especially in and around toilets and kitchens, special attention to be paid to frequently touched surfaces such as door handles, toilet flush handles, light switches etc.</li> <li>• Increasing toilet inspections to check for cleanliness and adequate supplies of soap and toilet paper</li> </ul>	<p>supply of paper towels, hand wash and hand sanitiser (normal clean overnight by external cleaning contractor to continue). All handles and touch points to be cleaned with a virucidal disinfectant at lunch time (19.06.2020)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A record of the inspections should be kept by the office manager or an appointed person in each office. (19.06.2020)</li> <li>• Air conditioning in all offices serviced</li> <li>• Motion sensor (touch free) paper towel dispensers to be installed in Rose Lane toilets (11.06.2020).</li> </ul>
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<b>Vulnerable and Extremely Vulnerable Staff</b>			
Some staff may have pre-existing medical conditions which render them more vulnerable to the dangers of coronavirus infection	<p>Those who are classified by PHE as being at greater risk from COVID-19 include people in the vulnerable (moderate risk) and extremely vulnerable (high risk) categories.</p> <p>Vulnerable people include those who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>are 70 or older</li> <li>are pregnant</li> <li>have a lung condition such as asthma, COPD, emphysema or bronchitis (not severe)</li> <li>have heart disease, diabetes, chronic kidney disease or liver disease such as hepatitis</li> <li>are taking medicine that can affect the immune system (such as low doses of steroids) or</li> <li>are very obese</li> </ul> <p>Extremely vulnerable people include those who:</p>	<p>The following safety and staff health arrangements apply to staff who are classified as vulnerable or extremely vulnerable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Human Resources Manager should identify those staff who fall into vulnerable and extremely vulnerable categories so that they can be given adequate protection and support to enable them to comply with government health recommendations.</li> <li>No member of staff in the <b>extremely vulnerable</b> category should be expected to come to work during the pandemic crisis or during recovery from the lockdown – these staff should be advised to follow government medical advice and stay at home</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Risk Assessment conducted in order to identify those who are vulnerable or extremely vulnerable (self-isolating, isolating for others, shielding, have child care needs etc.) (20.03.20)</li> <li>Those who fall into the above categories and are well enough to work, now working from home (23.03.20)</li> <li>Return to work risk assessment conducted and results analysed (13.05.20)</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have had an organ transplant</li> <li>• are having chemotherapy for cancer, including immunotherapy</li> <li>• are having an intense course of radiotherapy for lung cancer</li> <li>• have a severe lung condition such as asthma or severe COPD</li> <li>• are taking medicine that makes them more likely to get infections such as high doses of steroids.</li> <li>• Have a serious heart condition and are pregnant</li> </ul> <p>The following PHE advice applied:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Those who are <b>extremely vulnerable</b> are subject to special “shielding arrangements – they are advised to self-isolate and not leave home for any reason for at least 12 weeks</li> <li>• Those who are <b>vulnerable</b> are advised to stay at home as much as possible – they can go to work if they cannot</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Extremely vulnerable</b> staff will be offered furlough arrangements or where it is possible or appropriate for them to work safely from home without risk.</li> <li>• Staff in the <b>vulnerable</b> category should be considered on a case by case basis – wherever possible they will be supported from home.</li> <li>• Staff in the <b>vulnerable</b> category who cannot work from home and wish to return to work, should be offered additional protection so that they can achieve effective social distancing.</li> <li>• Managers and HR should stay in touch with vulnerable or extremely vulnerable staff who are staying home by phone to ensure they are well and to prevent them from feeling isolated.</li> <li>• All reviews of staff roles and</li> </ul>	
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	<p>work from home</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People in both categories are advised by the government to be particularly stringent in complying with social distancing requirements.</li> </ul> <p>Pregnant women are included in the vulnerable category as a precaution but are not considered by PHE to be more likely to get seriously ill from COVID-19. COVID-19.</p>	<p>safety should be non-discriminatory and take into consideration equality consideration and protected characteristics as defined under the Equality Act 1010 e.g. disabled staff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reasonable adjustments must be made to avoid disabled workers being put at any disadvantage.</li> <li>• Managers should refer to existing policies regarding new and expectant mothers e.g. entitlement to suspension on full pay if suitable safe roles cannot be found</li> </ul>	
<b>Staff Health and Staffing Levels</b>			
<p>Low staffing hazards due to high rates of staff sickness or staff having to self-isolate themselves at home or remain at home because they are “shielded”</p>	<p>Staff may get sick with coronavirus infection</p> <p>People who have symptoms must “self-isolate” at home for 7 days from the start of symptoms to prevent them passing the infection on and contributing to the overload on the NHS.</p> <p>Those who live with others and</p>	<p>The following safety arrangements should apply to staff health or staffing levels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff who are considered <b>extremely vulnerable</b> or high-risk should not be expected to attend for work in the workplace – where possible or appropriate they should be furloughed or supported to</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff announcement explaining what COVID-19 is, symptoms to look out for, affected countries, how to reduce the risk/dos and don'ts. (12.02.20)</li> </ul>

	<p>where one person has symptoms must self isolate as a household for 14 days from the day when the first person in the house became ill. If anyone else in the household starts displaying symptoms they need to stay at home for 7 days from when the symptoms appeared, regardless of what day they are on in the original 14 day isolation period.</p> <p>Those who are considered extremely vulnerable are advised to “shield” themselves at home.</p>	<p>work from home</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff who are sick or self-isolating should phone immediately and inform their line-manager – on no account should they attend for work</li> <li>• Make sure that communications go out that no member of staff should come to work if they are self isolating or if they have COVID-19 symptoms or if they feel unwell</li> <li>• Staff may be reallocated from non-essential parts of the business to essential functions or may be subject to furlough arrangements.</li> </ul>	
<b>Mental health and wellbeing</b>			
<p>Staff furloughed may suffer detrimental effects of isolation and be worried about the future of their jobs, especially if they live alone.</p> <p>Staff covering for those on furlough leave may be working excessive hours and suffer “burn</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain contact with furloughed staff as much as possible</li> <li>• As they cannot leave their home at all, the Firm should help to provide additional support for any <b>extremely vulnerable</b> staff who may be</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Email distribution group created for all staff on furlough leave and keeping in touch email sent (21.04.20)</li> <li>• Staff on maternity leave contacted and given Coronavirus guidance and an update on the Firm’s working</li> </ul>



<p>out”.</p> <p>Staff working from home may also become isolated if they live alone and don't receive regular contact from their line managers.</p>		<p>shielding and live alone; this might include offering to shop for essentials and medicines where they are unable to gain support from elsewhere.</p>	<p>arrangements. Contact details updated (30.03.20)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff still in probation given early access to Perkbox and the EAP (27.03.20)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Premises Access and Travel</b></p>			
<p>Staff who are required to attend for work must be given safe access to the workplace</p>	<p>Travel to and from work may lead to greater risk of virus transmission.</p> <p>Public transport may be restricted in order to achieve social distancing on trains, buses etc.</p> <p>Access to and from buildings may create a virus transmission risk if many staff use the same entrance/exit at once</p> <p>Risks may be increased for disabled staff who may have reduced options for access</p>	<p>The following safety arrangements should apply to workplace access and travel arrangements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use floor markings and signage at entrances and exits.</li> <li>• Enable flexible/staggered working arrangements so that staff can avoid travelling at peak times or all arriving or leaving at the same time.</li> <li>• Discourage staff from sharing cars</li> <li>• Encourage staff not to use public transport if at all possible – where they do use public transport they should conform with all</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All Receptions/entrances and exits provided with hand sanitiser (12.02.2020)</li> <li>• Introduce staggered start and finish times and lunch breaks</li> <li>• Additional staff trained as Appointed Persons and Fire Wardens in order to ensure adequate cover during shift patterns.</li> <li>• Advice provided on car sharing (13.05.20)</li> <li>• Staff Announcement - Travel to other offices restricted to essential only (12.03.20)</li> <li>• Arrangement made with local church for staff to use their</li> </ul>

		<p>requirements e.g. wear face coverings if required, social distancing etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In all cases non-essential travel for work purposes should be minimised.</li> </ul>	<p>car park (at their own risk) until the church re-opens. All staff notified of procedure and booking schedule given to Reception. (19.05.20)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Latest government advice on safer travel, including the legal requirement to wear a face covering on public transport in England provided to all staff and furloughs (14.06.2020)</li> </ul>
<b>Cases of Possible Infection on-site</b>			
<p>People becoming unwell while on site or a symptomatic person using a site</p>	<p>High risk of transmission</p>	<p>If a member of staff becomes unwell in the office with coronavirus symptoms (a new continuous cough, a high temperature or recent loss of taste/smell), they should be sent home and advised to follow government advice to self-isolate.</p> <p>The following actions should be taken within the workplace:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All surfaces that a symptomatic person has come into contact with must be cleaned and disinfected, especially objects visibly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff announcement explaining what COVID-19 is, symptoms to look out for, affected countries, how to reduce the risk/dos and don'ts (12.02.20)</li> <li>Updated symptoms provided to all staff and self isolating diagram placed on Intranet (19.05.20)</li> <li>PHE - Employers and Businesses Guidance Posters put up in all kitchens (12.02.20)</li> </ul>

		<p>contaminated with body fluids and all potentially contaminated high contact areas such as toilets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public areas where a symptomatic individual has passed through and spent minimal time, such as corridors, but which are not visibly contaminated with body fluids can be cleaned thoroughly as normal</li> <li>• Cleaning contractors should use disposable cloths or paper roll and an appropriate alcohol based virucidal disinfectant solution.</li> <li>• Cleaning contractors should be advised to wear appropriate PPE</li> <li>• Waste from cleaning of areas where possible cases have been (including disposable cloths and tissues) should be “double-bagged” and tied off; it should be placed in a secure holding area for 72 hours</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asked staff to place used tissues in waste bin and to tie up bin liner for collection (03.03.20)</li> <li>• All Cleaning companies required to use virucidal spray on all touch points. (03.03.20)</li> </ul>
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		before being disposed of in general waste.	
<b>Information</b>			
Hazards caused by lack of information or inaccurate information being circulated	The pandemic has been accompanied by a large amount of official guidance, some of which needs interpretation and also by misinformation, rumour and “fake news” or “myths”. If these are allowed to gain traction within the Firm they can confuse vital health and safety measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff should be kept informed of the latest advice and guidance in the form of consistent simple and clear messages.</li> <li>• Care should be taken to ensure as much as possible that advice and guidance is accurate and only obtained from official and reliable sources rather than from the media or word of mouth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HR Manager and Partners providing regular updates by way of email announcements and Intranet updates and on a regular basis thereafter.</li> <li>• Government advice provided regularly to partners</li> <li>• Advice is only obtained from official websites such as the UK government, Public Health England, HSE.</li> <li>• Regular update announcements from Partners (24.03.20)</li> </ul>