

COVID-19 Guidance Pre & Post Occupation

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Contents

INTRODUCTION	4
PRE-OCCUPATION GUIDANCE	5
RISK ASSESSMENT	6
POLICY / PROCEDURES	6
BUSINESS RETURN TO WORK PLAN	6
PREPARING YOUR ESTATE FOR OCCUPANCY	7
MEASURES TO ACHIEVE DISTANCING	7
WORKPLACE CAPACITY	8
WORK RELATED TRAVEL	9
ACCESS / EGRESS AT THE WORKPLACE	10
TEMPERATURE CHECKING	10
WELFARE / FITNESS FACILITIES	10
SECURITY / VISITORS	11
DELIVERIES	11
FACE TO FACE MEETINGS	11
EMPLOYEE CANTEENS / KITCHENS AND REST AREAS	12
SMOKING / VAPING	13
SIGNAGE & MARKINGS	13
EMPLOYEES WHO WORK ON CLIENT SITES	13
STATUTORY CHECKING	14
LEGIONELLA	14
FIRE	14
FIRE HAZARDS	14
EMERGENCY ESCAPE LIGHTING SYSTEM	15
FIRE DETECTION AND WARNING SYSTEM	15
PORTABLE FIRE EXTINGUISHERS	15
OTHER FIXED SYSTEMS AND / OR EQUIPMENT	15
ESCAPE ROUTES	15
EVACUATION PROCEDURES	16
PASSENGER LIFTS	16
MECHANICAL PLANT & MACHINERY	17
ENERGY SYSTEMS	17
CLEANING	17
PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT	18
FACE COVERINGS	19
FIRST AID	20
CLINICALLY VULNERABLE OR CLINICALLY EXTREMELY VULNERABLE EMPLOYEES	21
EMPLOYEES WITH CHILDREN AND/OR CARE GIVERS	21
BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN	21
MENTAL WELLBEING	21
COMMUNICATION	22
POST OCCUPATION GUIDANCE	23
COMMUNICATION	23
EMPLOYEES WITH SYMPTOMS	23
RIDDOR REPORTING	24

CLEANING & WASTE	24
ROUTINE CLEANING	24
POSSIBLE OR CONFIRMED CORONAVIRUS.....	24
MONITORING MEASURES	25
GENERAL ADVICE FOR EMPLOYEES	26
FACEMASKS	26
GLOVES	26
PHYSICAL CONTACT	26
GENERIC RISK ASSESSMENT	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
DOCUMENT CONTROL AND VERSION HISTORY	27

Introduction

This document has been produced to give advice and guidance on the COVID-19 (coronavirus) Pandemic.

Please refer to the issue date of this document. Every effort will be made to keep this document up to date however the coronavirus pandemic is a rapidly changing situation.

This guidance was produced taking into consideration advice from:

- [Public Health England](#)
- [Health and Safety Executive \(HSE\)](#)
- [ACAS](#)
- [UK Government](#)
- [National Fire Chiefs Council](#)
- [legislation.gov.uk](#)

This document is based on guidance available and what is expected to be best practice. Due to the nature of the coronavirus pandemic each organisation will need to decide what measures they feel are reasonable to take.

Pre-Occupation Guidance

Guidance issued by the Government on 11th May 2020 introduced five measures employers must demonstrate to ensure they are managing the risk from coronavirus. Once you have implemented these five measures you are encouraged to display this poster where your employees, visitors and contractors can see it. The poster can be downloaded [here](#)

Further information from the Government can be found [here](#)



- ✓ We have carried out a **COVID-19 risk assessment** and shared the results with the people who work here
- ✓ We have **cleaning, handwashing and hygiene procedures** in line with guidance
- ✓ We have taken all reasonable steps to **help people work from home**
- ✓ We have taken all reasonable steps to **maintain a 2m distance** in the workplace
- ✓ Where people cannot be 2m apart, we have done everything practical to **manage transmission risk**

Employer _____ Date _____

Who to contact: _____
(or the Health and Safety Executive at www.hse.gov.uk or 0300 003 1647)

Risk Assessment

The coronavirus is a health hazard to all and with any hazard employers are required to undertake a risk assessment to determine what specific measures need to be in place to reduce the risk to as low as is reasonably practicable. The measures you determine are required must be communicated to your employees, visitors, contractors, and anyone else who may be affected.

**Should you require support with you COVID-19 risk assessment
please make contact on 020 3011 4242**

If you have 50 or more employees, then you are expected to publish the findings of your risk assessment on your website. Displaying the COVID-19 Secure poster on your website is one way of confirming that you have complied with the government's guidance on managing the risk of COVID-19.

This risk assessment will need to be reviewed more regularly than would normally be expected as:

- The pandemic is an unprecedented situation which means guidance is constantly changing
- The government may impose / lift restrictions which will require you to act

Policy / Procedures

As part of lockdown easing, occupation of some workplaces will start again you should have a brief document detailing your arrangements for coronavirus. Many of the points in this document can help you form your own policy and procedures.

When these are available, they should be shared with your employees.

Business Return to Work Plan

Your leadership team should get together to discuss and put into place a plan about how the business will return to work.

You should consider the following:

- [Preparing your Estate for Occupancy](#)
- [Measures to Achieve Distancing](#)
- [Employees who work on Client Sites](#)
- [Statutory Checks](#)
- [Cleaning](#)

- [Protective Equipment](#)
- [First Aid](#)
- [Clinically vulnerable or clinically extremely vulnerable employees](#)
- [Employees who have children and or/ care givers](#)
- [Business continuity plan](#)
- [Mental Wellbeing](#)
- [Communication arrangements](#)

The next section of this guidance document looks at all these points in more detail.

Preparing your Estate for Occupancy

This guidance is tailored towards organisations who have had their buildings closed during the lockdown period.

Your building will likely have been unoccupied for several weeks now with your employees who are still working adjusting to working from home.

Where possible consider undertaking a physical preoccupancy inspection to help determine:

- What measures can be introduced to achieve distancing
- How many employees can reoccupy and how many will still need to work from home
- The status of your fire life safety systems
- That the building is still secure and has not had any unauthorised entry
- If vermin / pests have entered the building
- What supplies you have of critical items e.g. cleaning products, toilet roll etc.
- Premises or material stored there have not deteriorated
- If Passenger lifts are operating safely
- Drinking water stations are assessed

Measures to achieve distancing

Returning to the estate will not be the same as when it was left. Distancing measures will need to be maintained until government advice changes, expect this to be for months, rather than weeks.

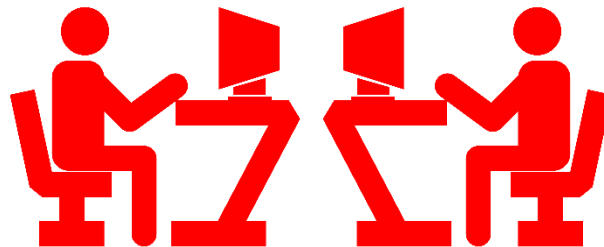
For office accommodation this will be based around the 2m separation rule which minimises the likely transfer of the virus from one person to the next.

Workplace Capacity

Maintaining the 2m rule will likely reduce the overall building capacity as most offices have desks very close together to get the best use out of their space.

You will need to look at your space and furniture to see how you can manage this requirement. Some options you may want to consider:

- Phased Return to Work
 - Only employees who cannot work from home should return, everyone else who can works from home
 - For those who must go into the workplace, hot desking should be avoided. If this is not possible workstations should be sanitised between shifts.
 - Move workstations further apart so people can still work face-to-face.
 - If this cannot be achieved layout desks so they are back to back, or side to side working, rather than face to face.
 - If this cannot be achieved, then the use of screens to separate people from each other.



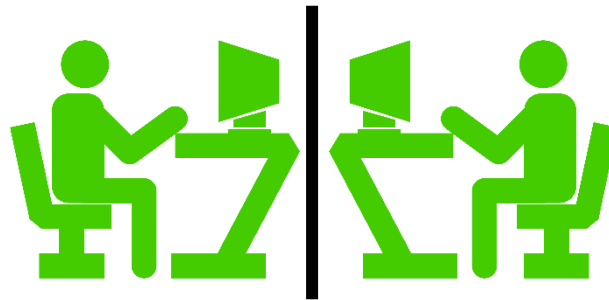
Less than 2m Face-to-face working – discouraged



Back-to-back working



Side-to-side working



Face-to-face working with a screen

- Marking floor areas with floor tape to help employees maintain social distancing.

Work Related Travel

Employees that are required to attend the workplace will need to consider their travel arrangements.

The ideal travel situations are:

- Employee travels alone in / on their own vehicle
- Employee walks to work
- Employee cycles to work

Travel situations to avoid where possible include:

- Employees car sharing
- All forms of public transport

You may want to consider your parking and cycling arrangements to accommodate the change of travel circumstances.

Access / Egress at the Workplace

Employees arriving at and leaving the building is a time where there is an increased likelihood of spread of respiratory droplets as people cough, sneeze or talk. If the virus is contained within these droplets, they can potentially infect anyone, especially any security or reception employees.

To reduce this risk, you may want to consider:

- Staggering arrival and departure times to reduce the numbers congregating at the same time, taking into account of the impact on those with protected characteristics
- Staggering shift times
- Flexible start & finish times
- Using alternatives entrances / exits if available
- Using a one-way system around your building
- Using alternatives to touch-based security devices such as keypads.
- Looking at measures to protect reception e.g. Perspex screens
- Access to hand washing or sanitiser at the entrance / exit points

Employees will be used to travelling around the building / site to speak to colleagues face-to-face. This should be discouraged in favour of using the phone or virtual meetings. You will need to look at the high traffic areas including corridors, lifts, turnstiles and walkways and decide how you can maintain social distancing.

Temperature Checking

As part of your planning if you decide that you wish to monitor your employee's temperature in connection with coronavirus then it is similar to the medical testing for other reasons.

You will need to seek consent from your employees. Your contractual terms laid out in the contract of employment and / or your internal policies may be of assistance.

Some contracts will have clauses regarding drugs / alcohol testing etc and temperature checking may be covered by these clauses.

Check with your internal or external employment law advisers before starting this process.

Welfare / Fitness Facilities

Where possible limits should be placed on the number of people allowed to enter bathrooms at the same time. If you have shower facilities consider if these are still needed and if so, how they will be cleaned.

If your building has a gym facility you should consider if you want this to remain open and if you do how you will manage it. The safest measure is to close the gym; however, this may not be contractually possible.

Security / Visitors

The security of your estate is important as with many buildings closed, they can become a target for criminals.

When planning to re-occupy you should consider:

- Keeping a visitor logbook with contact details in case contacts of a virus victim needs to be traced
- How you can keep doors open to prevent contact points whilst keeping access secure
- Limiting the number of visitors to site

For those visitors you do allow on site you should:

- Limit the time they spend on site
- Consider if contractors can visit at alternative times e.g. after or before hours
- Give them instruction on your measures when they arrive
- Ensure they have a host and the host is clear on their new responsibilities

Deliveries

Deliveries should be scheduled to avoid multiple deliveries at one time or overcrowding in delivery areas.

You should still facilitate delivery drivers using your welfare facilities.

Consider ordering in larger quantities than normal to reduce the number of deliveries. Employees who normally order items for personal use to the workplace should be discouraged from doing so.

Face to Face Meetings

Face to face meetings should be minimised as much as possible, especially those involving anyone external to the organisation. Utilising technology to host virtual meetings will significantly reduce the risk.

Some face to face meetings will have to take place and you should use this time to assess your meeting spaces, breakout areas and any other place your employees use. Consider if you can hold any meetings outside, if not look at the most well-ventilated rooms first.

Once assessed, adjust the layout and furniture to try to maintain a 2m distance between anyone in the meeting. Providing hand sanitiser in the meeting room is advisable. Any meetings rooms that are not suitable should be marked.

When your employees return, they should be advised to keep face to face meetings as brief as possible and to maintain the 2m distance.

If meetings with external personnel are unavoidable you should ensure arrangements are in place that they are inducted into the building and know your specific arrangements.

Employee Canteens / Kitchens and Rest Areas

Employees should be encouraged to bring their own food into the workplace and employee canteens and distributors should move to takeaway.

Where there are no practical alternatives, canteens can remain open if appropriate adjustments are made to allow for social distancing. These include:

- Employees who work in the canteen who are unwell should not be at work
- Canteen employees should wash their hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before and after handling food
- Employees should be reminded to wash their hands regularly using soap and water for 20 seconds and before and after eating. If possible, increase the number of hand washing stations available.
- 2 metres should be maintained between anyone in the canteen wherever possible. Consider marking this gap on the floor at the areas where people queue.
- Employees can continue to use rest areas if they apply the same social distancing measures
- Notices promoting hand hygiene and social distancing should be placed visibly in these areas
- Frequently clean and disinfect surfaces that are touched regularly, using your standard cleaning products
- Consider extending and staggering mealtimes to avoid crowding

Kitchens should be limited where possible so that the least possible numbers are in at the same time. This may require you to stagger lunch times.

You should consider how you manage:

- Use of Fridges
- Preparation of Food
- Vending machines of any kind
- Cleanliness in drink making areas

You can consider relaxing any rules that may be in place and allowing employees to eat at their desks. Where this is introduced, you should encourage strong personal hygiene in these instances.

Alternatively use other parts of the workplace or building that has been freed up by remote working.

Smoking / Vaping

Employees smoking or vaping should be reminded to social distance in smoking areas. Potentially consider allocating additional external smoking areas to facilitate employees to self-manage the number of people in each area.

Signage & Markings

Anyone who attends your workplace will have a level of awareness of the coronavirus pandemic and distancing measures. They will need to know what your specific arrangements are.

Signage and floor markings can help with giving people a nudge to follow those arrangements.

Areas to consider a sign or marking include:

- Kitchen / kitchenette / canteen / restaurant
- Main entrance to the building / reception
- Reception area
- Corridors
- Toilets

Employees who Work on Client Sites

Whilst you can control the arrangements to manage the risk of coronavirus on your estate the same cannot be said for your client's estate.

Where possible you should avoid attending client's sites, however for some organisations e.g. gas engineers this simply won't be the case.

You should carry out a risk assessment for employees travelling to client's sites to determine what measures are needed to protect them from coronavirus. You will likely need to consider:

- Travel to and from the site
- Personal Protective Equipment
- Personal hygiene measures
- Client specific requirements
- Aborted and no-go criteria

Statutory Checking

Where possible all statutory checks should be completed as normal. You will need to liaise with service, testing and maintenance providers to check their situations.

Legionella

With buildings closed there is potential for multiple outbreaks of Legionnaires' disease if measures are not considered and put into place.

Duty Holders and Landlords still have a duty of care to protection those in and around their properties from exposure to Legionella bacteria.

Your legionella risk assessment & management plan should be reviewed to consider each building's circumstance.

Reoccupation procedures will need to be considered before the building can be re-opened.

The minimum expectation for small, simple hot and cold water systems would be carefully flushing through with fresh mains water.

Consideration should be given to water system cleaning and disinfection and/or controlled flushing to mitigate the risk of prolonged stagnation.

To ensure measures have been successful sampling can be undertaken, however bear in mind these should be taken between 2-7 days following recommission. If you want to ensure your building is ready to go you will need be well prepared.

You should liaise with a competent person to assist with the measures required. Bear in mind the demand for these services will high so engage with hem as soon as possible.

Fire

Before full reoccupation you must check to make sure fire safety systems are in good working order. In order to maintain distance, the measures you will need to implement will likely influence fire safety.

Your fire risk assessment should be reviewed by a competent person to ensure that it is current and reflects the way your business now operates. Bearing in mind that the measures may be in place for some considerable time.

Fire Hazards

Ensure that there has not been a build-up of combustible items inside or outside of the building and that if the electrics have been isolated it is safe to reconnect the power.

Emergency Escape Lighting System

Ensure that the system is fully functioning and that the batteries have not deteriorated during the lockdown period. It would be prudent to undertake a full monthly user test by using the test key facility if available or by simulating a mains failure. If there are any issues, then a competent person should be appointed to restore the system so that it is fully functioning as it is designed to.

Fire Detection and Warning System

Ensure that the system is fully functioning, more specifically that the power light on the panel is illuminated and that there are no faults indicated on the system.

It would be prudent to undertake a weekly test of all fire alarm manual call points to ensure If there are any issues, then a competent person should be appointed to restore the system so that it is fully functioning as it is designed to.

Portable Fire Extinguishers

Ensure that the extinguishers are in the correct locations and that the annual service date on the labels has not expired.

If the service period is overdue, then a competent person should be appointed to service the extinguishers.

Other fixed systems and / or Equipment

Ensure that any other fixed systems and / or equipment is in a healthy state and will function as designed to. If there are any defects, then these should be rectified by a competent person.

Escape routes

Where there are alternative escape routes and a one-way system has been imposed care should be taken to ensure that this does not have a detrimental impact on the evacuation procedures. It is recommended that the fire risk assessment is reviewed to reassess the new arrangements.

Check that all escape routes are clear and available, and all final exits should open freely.

Ensure that where an escape route goes through a neighbouring building that the route is still available, e.g. has the neighbouring business re-occupied their building. If they have a conversation should be had to determine their opening times. If there are any concerns regarding the availability of the escape route (s) then the fire risk assessment should be reviewed.

If fire doors need to be held open by unapproved means in order to minimise the spread of Coronavirus then as a short term solution a robust management procedure must be implemented to ensure that upon activation of the evacuation signal that the doors are manually closed. As a longer-term solution each door should be fitted with an approved hold open device such as an

electromagnetic device linked to the fire detection and warning system or a Dorgard device that releases upon activation of the fire detection and warning system.

If final exits need to be kept locked to prevent unauthorised access into the building then the method of releasing the door in an emergency must be readily available in a conspicuous location and all employees must be made aware of the arrangements in place.

Evacuation Procedures

If social distancing cannot be achieved at the Assembly Point (AP), then consideration should be given to splitting employees over more than one AP. If more than one AP is utilised communication links should be made to ensure that between AP's information can flow to and from fire marshals / wardens and to the emergency services if they are in attendance. The emergency plan and fire action notices that detail the AP should be amended accordingly, and all employees be made aware of the new procedures.

If you have nominated individuals to undertake specific fire related tasks in an emergency you should re-evaluate who has been nominated to ensure you have adequate numbers to implement your procedures at all times, if there is a short fall then this should be addressed and appropriate training provided as necessary.

More specifically:

- Persons nominated to assist with an evacuation.
- Persons nominated to assist mobility impaired persons either as part of a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan for employees or a General Emergency Evacuation Plan for visitors.
- Persons nominated to use fire extinguishers.

Consider if any effects of the virus negatively impact on the ability of previously healthy employees to be able to evacuate unaided. It might be necessary to conduct Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans.

If the evacuation procedures have been amended, ensure that any supporting notices and signage is amended to reflect the new arrangements and that all employees are made aware of the new procedures. It may be necessary to undertake a fire drill to ensure that the new arrangements are adequate and fully understood.

Passenger Lifts

Where a passenger lift is not essential, it is advisable to shut it down in order to minimise the likelihood of a breakdown. A passenger lift is an enclosed space and can allow easy transfer of the virus from one person to another. A breakdown would require a call out for lift engineers or the fire service, at a time when contractors may not be reliable, and when the fire service have other priorities.

If you do decide to keep passenger lifts running you should ensure that it continues to be maintained and consider how many people can use it at any one time and ensure it is cleaned regularly.

If you allow more than one person in a lift at a time you should consider marking the lift floor to show where people should wait whilst the lift is in operation.

Mechanical Plant & Machinery

Regulatory inspections of plant and machinery may have been delayed or cancelled during lockdown. Given the limited notice given, some plant and machinery may not have been properly de-commissioned. Consider appointing a competent person to carry out a re-commissioning inspection on any plant and machinery you are responsible for.

This may include:

- Hot Water Boilers
- HVAC (Heating Ventilation Air Conditioning)
- LEV (Local Exhaust Ventilation)
- Lifts & Hoists
- Escalators
- Pressure Vessels
- Compressed Air
- Kitchen Extraction

Energy Systems

Energy systems (gas, electric, oil) will still need to be inspected and maintained and if you are due an inspection e.g. fixed wiring then you should check with your supplier to see if they can still attend.

Any systems that were shut down or isolated will need to be reinstated by a competent person.

Cleaning

Estates that have been unoccupied for several weeks are unlikely to have any trace of the virus living on surfaces. However, good practice would be to have a deep clean of the building before reoccupation.

Consider having a conversation with your cleaning contractors now about the arrangements in place to protect their employees and for reoccupation, including increasing the frequency of cleaning.

If your cleaning is undertaken by your employees, you should look at your COSHH assessments to ensure they are still valid including arrangements for personal protective equipment (PPE).

Checking stock levels and ordering more supplies ready for occupation would be wise this would include:

- Cleaning Products
- Soap
- Hand Sanitiser – place in multiple locations throughout
- Personal Protective Equipment
- Tissues
- Toilet Roll
- Waste facilities
- Paper towels as an alternative to hand dryers or towels

Signs and posters can be used to remind employees of the need to increase the frequency and duration of handwashing.

Please act responsibly when maintaining stocks of PPE. Supplies are in high demand and you should not hoard these items.

Protective Equipment

Current government guidelines do not state that employees are required to constantly wear gloves and masks. The guidance states:

- Where you are already using PPE in your work activity to protect against non-COVID-19 risks, you should continue to do so
- When managing the risk of COVID-19, additional PPE beyond what you usually wear is not beneficial (except clinical settings)

The best approach is to avoid and reduce the likelihood of people potentially coming into contact with the Coronavirus rather than a reliance on PPE, this is based on the hierarchy of control and [principles of prevention](#).

Disposable gloves and aprons should be worn when carrying out general cleaning of the workplace. You will only need to wear protection for the eyes, mouth and nose (for example surgical mask and visor) if an area has been heavily contaminated, such as with visible bodily fluids, from a person with coronavirus.

Once any PPE has been used, you should ensure that this is disposed of appropriately. All PPE should be double-bagged, then stored securely for 72 hours then thrown away in the regular rubbish after cleaning is finished.

After removing any element of PPE, hand hygiene should be practiced and extended to exposed forearms.

The typical PPE that should be made available is:

- Disposable Gloves (consider non-latex)
- Surgical Masks
 - cover both nose and mouth
 - not be allowed to dangle around the neck after or between each use
 - not be touched once put on
 - be changed when they become moist or damaged
 - be worn once and then discarded – hand hygiene must be performed after disposal
 - it is noted that masks are not as effective when the user is not clean shaven.
- Disposable Aprons

It is noted that government guidance is changing regularly so you should keep yourself up to date with the PPE requirements of employees.

Face Coverings

Face coverings are not classed as PPE, however, there are some circumstances when wearing a face covering may be marginally beneficial as a precautionary measure.

Evidence suggests that wearing a face covering does not protect you, but it may protect others if you are infected but have not developed symptoms.

A face covering can be very simple and may be worn in enclosed spaces where social distancing isn't possible. It just needs to cover your mouth and nose. It is not the same as a face mask, such as surgical masks or respirators.

It is important to know that the evidence of the benefit of using a face covering to protect others is weak and the effect is likely to be small, therefore face coverings are not a replacement for the other ways of managing risk, including minimising time spent in contact, using fixed teams and partnering for close-up work, and increasing hand and surface washing.

These other measures remain the best ways of managing risk in the workplace and the government would therefore not expect to see employers relying on face coverings as risk management.

Wearing a face covering is optional and is not required by law, including in the workplace. If you choose to wear one, it is important to use face coverings properly and wash your hands before putting them on and taking them off.

You should support employees in using face coverings safely if they choose to wear one. This means telling employees:

- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser before putting a face covering on, and after removing it

- When wearing a face covering, avoid touching your face or face covering, as you could contaminate them with germs from your hands
- Change your face covering if it becomes damp or if you've touched it
- Continue to wash your hands regularly
- Change and wash your face covering daily
- 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

First Aid

When your employees return to work, you should ensure that first aiders are instructed in identifying the symptoms of coronavirus and know what steps to take if an employee shows signs of having the virus. Advice and guidance for first aiders can be found on the [St Johns Ambulance Website](#) and [Resuscitation Council \(UK\)](#).

With it likely that not all your employees will be returning to the workplace at the same time, it is important that you manage the number of first aiders.

If the situation arises where there are no trained first aiders available in the building, you should develop a process for managing both minor and major ailments:

- Minor Ailments (small cuts and abrasions, sprains etc)
 - The affected person will be in a position to self-administer any first aid they feel is required.
 - The affected person should then inform their line manager of the incident.
 - If the affected person is unsure, they should phone 111 for further advice.
- Major Ailments (fitting, unconsciousness, suspected fracture, head injury)
 - Immediately contact the 999 emergency services.
 - The line managers of the affected person should then be informed of the incident.

These arrangements should be communicated to everyone in the building.

To reduce the risk of any major ailments from occurring, you should review the risk assessments of higher risk tasks, such as working at height, to take account of the absence of first aiders. Any higher risk work should only be undertaken if essential.

Where First Aid Training Certificates have expired after the 16th March, the HSE have stated that the re-certification date can be extended by up to three months allowing these employees to continue to be an appointed first aider.

Clinically Vulnerable or Clinically Extremely Vulnerable Employees

You will need to consider how employees who are classed as clinically vulnerable or clinically extremely vulnerable can return to work. Risk assessment should be used as part of this process.

These employees should be supported and you should follow the recommendations set out in guidance on [social distancing](#) and [shielding](#) respectively.

Employees with Children and/or Care Givers

Employees are entitled to time off work to help someone who depends on them (a 'dependant') in an unexpected event or emergency. This would apply to situations related to coronavirus e.g.

- If they have children, they need to look after or arrange childcare for because their school or nursery has closed
- To help their child or another dependant if they are sick, or need to go into isolation or hospital

There is no statutory right to pay for this time off, but you might offer to pay depending on the contract or workplace policy.

ACAS have more [information online](#) and can help with specific queries by phone.

Business Continuity Plan

You will be familiar with your business continuity plan as you have most likely activated it. Your plan will need to be reviewed / updated before you re-occupy. Some points to consider:

- Supply Chain – Are you aware of their situation and their plans. How vulnerable are they and what risks do they face?
- Contact Details – If you have not already, now would be a good time to ensure contact details are up to date for all your employees.
- Operations – How will you operate if the next peak leads to 10 or 20% of your workforce not being able to work due to illness or care responsibilities.

Mental Wellbeing

Your employees will have already had to adapt to working from home and the challenges this can cause. They will now be reasonably comfortable with these arrangements and we are now asking them to adjust again, don't forget some will take longer to adjust than others.

Many of your employees will have experienced challenging domestic situation such as:

- Juggling childcare with work

- Caring for a vulnerable or extremely vulnerable relative
- Financial strain
- Illness or Bereavement

Expect that your employees will be anxious about returning to work, knowing that it will increase the chances of them catching coronavirus, some may display mild symptoms of agoraphobia.

Every employee should feel that they are returning to environment that is safe and supportive.

One of the best ways of helping your employees with this is to communicate with them. Managers should check in with their teams even if they are on furlough leave.

If your organisation has an Employee Assistance Programme or access to Occupational Health then make sure these services are highlighted. If you don't have access to these then refer to organisations such as [Mind](#) who have produced guidance.

Communication

The final part of your thinking around pre-occupation should be how you are going to communicate with you employees. Hopefully, you will have already developed communication arrangements whilst your employees have been working from home or on furlough leave.

Decide your strategy for how you will communicate the new arrangements to your employees and ensure you have covered:

- Who will be returning to the workplace
- Building cleaning and personal hygiene facilities
- Fire and First Aid Arrangements
- Travel and arrival arrangements
- Workstation arrangements
- Face to face meeting arrangements
- Canteen, rest areas and breaks
- Reporting symptoms

Developing communication and training materials for employees prior to returning will be essential.

Clear, consistent and regular communication will provide employees with reassurance.

Post Occupation Guidance

Communication

Your employees are likely to be anxious about coming back to their normal workplace and the increased risk of contracting coronavirus.

The measures you have put in place as part of your pre-occupation planning should be have already been communicated, now you need to reinforce them. Some ideas to consider:

- Asking managers to deliver a briefing with their teams
- E-learning training
- Specific coronavirus site on the intranet
- Display notices in key places e.g. entrance, eating spaces

If your managers were unable to have one-to-ones with their team before they came back, then they should take the opportunity as soon as possible. They will need to have a very open, sensitive conversation to discuss the individual's situation and needs.

This conversation should continue and any change for the business or individual be discussed as soon as possible.

Employees with Symptoms

Employees who are already unwell with symptoms of coronavirus should not travel to or attend the workplace.

Any employee who develops symptoms of coronavirus (a new, continuous cough and/or a high temperature) should be sent home and stay at home for 7 days from onset of symptoms.

If the employee lives in a household where someone else is unwell with symptoms of coronavirus then they must stay at home in line with the stay at home guidance.

Ensure your managers know how to spot symptoms of coronavirus and are clear on any relevant processes.

You should use your discretion concerning the need for medical evidence for certification for employees who are unwell. This will allow GPs to focus on their patients.

If evidence is required, those with symptoms of coronavirus can get an isolation note from [NHS 111 online](#), and those who live with someone that has symptoms can get a note from the [NHS website](#)

As part of your business continuity planning you should consider how you will respond to expected spikes in the pandemic. Planning now will help you respond quickly in this foreseeable event.

RIDDOR Reporting

The HSE have added coronavirus to RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations)

The HSE's guidance states that you must only make a report of coronavirus under RIDDOR when:

- An unintended incident at work has led to someone's possible or actual exposure to coronavirus. This must be reported as a dangerous occurrence. An example would be where a lab worker accidentally smashes a glass vial containing coronavirus, leading to people being exposed to the virus.
- A worker has been diagnosed as having coronavirus and there is reasonable evidence that it was caused by exposure at work. This must be reported as an exposure to a biological agent; as a case of disease. An example of a work-related exposure to coronavirus would be a health care professional who is diagnosed with coronavirus after treating patients with coronavirus.
- If someone dies as a result of a work-related exposure to coronavirus and this is confirmed as the likely cause of death by a registered medical practitioner, then you must report this as a death due to exposure to a biological agent using the 'case of disease' report form. You must report workplace fatalities to HSE by the quickest practicable means without delay and send a report of that fatality within 10 days of the incident."

Cleaning & Waste

Routine Cleaning

When carrying out any routine cleaning, key contact points such as door handles, banisters, lift buttons and security pads should be included.

You should also encourage your employees to take personal ownership for their own desk and equipment hygiene, including security badges. If possible, provide cleaning equipment but also encourage people to bring their own in; self-protection is key.

If employees are hotdesking, employees should ensure that they clean down their whole workstation before and after use. This particularly includes keyboards and mice.

Ensure that someone in your organisation is monitoring your supplies of cleaning products / equipment.

Possible or Confirmed Coronavirus

If an employee has symptoms of coronavirus, they should self-isolate. The area where they work and immediately around them should be cleaned.

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.

The minimum PPE to be worn for cleaning an area where a person with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) is disposable gloves and an apron. Hands should be washed with soap and water for 20 seconds after all PPE has been removed.

Use disposable cloths or paper roll and disposable mop heads, to clean all hard surfaces, floors, chairs, door handles and sanitary fittings, following one of the options below:

- use either a combined detergent disinfectant solution at a dilution of 1,000 parts per million available chlorine

or

- a household detergent followed by disinfection (1000 ppm av.cl.). Follow manufacturer's instructions for dilution, application and contact times for all detergents and disinfectants

or

- if an alternative disinfectant is used within the organisation, this should be checked and ensure that it is effective against enveloped viruses

Any cloths and mop heads used must be disposed of and should be put into waste bags.

Waste from possible cases and cleaning of areas where possible cases have been (including disposable cloths and tissues):

1. Should be put in a plastic rubbish bag and tied when full.
2. The plastic bag should then be placed in a second bin bag and tied.
3. It should be put in a suitable and secure place and marked for storage until the individual's test results are known.

If the individual tests negative, this can be put in with the normal waste, if the individual tests positive, then store it for at least 72 hours and put in with the normal waste

Monitoring Measures

Having spent the time and effort to put into place and communicate measure will be wasted if you do not monitor the workplace to ensure these measures are being followed.

General Advice for Employees

Facemasks

- Employees are not recommended to wear facemasks (also known as surgical masks or respirators) to protect against the virus.
- Facemasks are recommended to be worn by people who have symptoms of COVID-19 and for those caring for individuals who have symptoms, such as cough and fever, or those being deployed into a clinical setting.
- The best way to reduce any risk of infection is good hygiene and avoiding direct or close contact (closer than 2 metres) with any potentially infected person.

Gloves

- Gloves are not effective in preventing the coronavirus infection. Regularly washing bare hands offers more protection against catching COVID-19 than wearing them.

Physical Contact

During the coronavirus pandemic it is advisable to avoid physical contact between colleagues or visitors. This is to reduce the risk of spreading the virus. This would include:

- Handshakes
- Hi-Fives & Low-Fives
- Hugging

Document Control and Version History

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