

GENERAL RISK ASSESSMENT – Coronavirus – Working during COVID-19 (all 4 offices)

Location: All Whitley Stimpson offices & staff working environments	Date of this Assessment: 3 rd December 2020
People involved in assessment: Anna Wakelin, Tracy Williams	People at Risk: Employees, anyone visiting WS premises and household members where staff are working from home.
Task / Process: Risks from Coronavirus	
Hazard: Uninformed staff. Staff who are not fully aware of, or lack understanding of, the procedures and arrangements we have put in place to work within Government Policy on working, could compromise our arrangements and jeopardise the health of others.	
Control Measures:	
1. Our plans and procedures have been shared and co-ordinated with our landlord (Witney) and other tenants at our premises (HW).	
2. Health & Safety communications are available to all staff; NHS, Public Health and Governments guidance is used. Warning posters are displayed throughout the premises; copies are also available on the intranet under Coronavirus.	
3. Every member of staff has been fully briefed to ensure that they are aware of the hazards and risks and understand the rules and procedures we have put in place. Any concerns should be raised with a manager / director / HR.	
4. Specific procedures and measures to reduce the risk of spreading Coronavirus have been prepared. These are based on NHS, Public Health, Government guidance and instruction as well as staff input. They are updated regularly to reflect any changes in the official advice and guidance.	
Hazard: Food & Drink Preparation Areas Potential risk or transfer of virus through cross contamination.	
Control Measures:	
1. Maintain 2m social distancing in these areas, even if that means only 1 person in the room at a time. Signs are displayed to reinforce this.	
2. Staff instructed to ensure that good hygiene standards must be maintained when food or drinks are being prepared.	

3. Ensure that when spills of food or liquids occur, they are cleaned straight away, and work surfaces are left in a clean and sanitised condition. Disposable gloves are available to assist with this.
4. Staff should use their own drinking mugs and glasses to prevent cross contamination. If company utensils are used, ensure hand washing before and after use.
5. Staff should keep their hands out of and be aware that food and waste bins or receptacles may contain contaminated products, food or tissues.
6. Staff should wash their hands thoroughly before and after using these facilities.
7. Ensure all food products are in a clean, sealed wrapper, bag or container, if they are to be stored in the communal refrigerator.
8. Company towels are no longer provided; single use paper towels are available. Staff can supply their own if they wish, these must be kept at individual workstations.
9. Used kitchen items must be placed in the dishwasher immediately to ensure they are thoroughly cleaned before next use.
10. If / when company fruit is available, this should be washed as necessary before consumption.
11. Use the products provided to wipe coffee machine buttons, water cooler levers, fridge door handles, microwaves, toasters and other similar items before and after use.

Hazard: Communal facilities, entrance, toilets, stairs etc. Risk of cross contamination from equipment, surfaces etc. that may have been touched or otherwise contaminated by coronavirus and create a risk to health.

Control Measures:

1. Contract cleaning services are in place. Toilets and communal areas, along with workspaces, are cleaned more frequently than before.
2. Supplies of soap and sanitising agents are provided and regularly topped-up at all hand washing stations. NHS and Public Health hand washing advice posters are displayed to remind staff to regularly wash their hands using the recommended technique.
3. Staff know that where welfare facilities are used during the working day, they must have an awareness of surfaces (toilets, sinks, door handles, soap, and soap dispensers, etc).
4. Staff are required to ensure that coats, scarfs, bags and other outdoor items are stored separately, avoiding contact with other people's personal items.

5. All staff and visitors must use the hands-free Sign in App and avoid touching the screen wherever possible. If touching is essential, please use wipes provided to clean.

Hazard: Waste. Ill-health as a result of the transfer of coronavirus and other pathogens through cross contamination after contact with waste (accidental or otherwise).

Control Measures:

1. Staff are required to have consideration for contracted cleaning staff with regards to discarded tissues, food, etc. to prevent cleaning staff being accidentally contaminated.
2. All waste bins and receptacles are carefully and safely emptied daily.
3. Staff instructed that disposable tissues should be used when coughing and or sneezing and put directly into a waste bin or pocketed and taken home.
4. Staff instructed to not put their hands directly into food waste or general waste bins or receptacles as they may contain contaminated products, food or tissues.
5. Waste bins are provided at employee desk areas and within kitchen areas.

Hazard: Meeting rooms Potential risk or transfer of virus on account of close contact with other persons.

Control Measures:

1. Staff instructed that meetings in enclosed spaces such as conference and meeting rooms should only be undertaken when essential for business needs and kept as short as possible. Remote meetings should be held where possible.
2. Staff using conference and meeting rooms instructed to follow Government advice and maintain a 2m separation distance. Chairs to be removed to support this.
3. Staff instructed that the same 2m distance rule must be applied to any meetings with clients or visitors. Remote meetings should be held where possible.
4. Staff told to avoid physical contact with each other, clients and visitors, such as handshakes, hugs, etc; and to give a polite explanation of this policy if required.
5. Hand sanitiser is provided within the meeting rooms for use by attendees.

6. If the use of flip charts/ boards is essential, pens are to be sourced individually and cleaned after use.

Hazard: Workstations, IT and telephony equipment. Direct contact with potentially cross contaminated workstations, IT or telephone equipment may cause adverse coronavirus health effects.

Control Measures:

1. Staff instructed not to share phones and personal mobile phones with others to prevent accidental cross contamination.
2. Staff instructed that they should not use each other's IT equipment, to prevent accidental cross contamination
3. Staff are instructed to ensure that their workstations, IT and telephone equipment, such as keyboards, screens, phones and headsets are cleaned and sanitised on a regular basis throughout the working day. Suitable wipes and cleaners that do not damage equipment are provided.
4. Staff should be cautious when handling and sharing paper files and documents; wear protective gloves if appropriate.
5. Do not share desks (hot desking) unless previously agreed with a manager. If this is necessary pens, staplers etc., must not be shared. Ensure that any shared equipment, to include desk, chair, IT, telephony equipment is thoroughly cleaned after use.
6. Avoid passing office supplies directly between staff wherever possible. When this is unavoidable, particular attention must be paid to handwashing / sanitising both before and after contact.

Hazard: Close contact. Staff working on the premises may be at risk of exposure to other members of staff or visitors who are carrying coronavirus, knowingly or unknowingly.

Control Measures:

1. Staff instructed to avoid close face-to-face contact or touching other employees, visitors etc. wherever possible and follow the 2m rule.
2. Signage is in place to instruct staff not to pass on staircases, but to allow one person at a time to maintain 2m distance. Priority given to person coming downstairs. In Banbury a one-way system on stairs is in place, staff should follow signs.
3. Physical contact, such as handshakes, hugs, pat on the back, etc. is to be avoided.
4. Staff are reminded to be aware of good ventilation. Keep doors and windows open where possible and use desk fans to improve air circulation so long as there is good ventilation with a supply of fresh air.

5. Visitors and contractors follow site office rules with regards to *signing in / out*, by using the Sign In App.

6. Our offices are not open to members of the public unless there is a prearranged appointment. In this circumstance, staff must wear a face covering if they are likely to come within close contact of a member of the public, unless they have an exemption.

Hazard: Vulnerable employees. Vulnerable employees are at a higher risk of contracting Covid-19, which may have a significant increased adverse effect on their health and wellbeing.

Control Measures:

1. Individual discussions take place and arrangements are made with staff who are in the vulnerable and higher-risk categories.

2. Staff with family members in higher risk categories have been instructed to inform their Director / HR. Decisions on home working in accordance with Government policy are taken on a case by case basis.

Hazard: Cleaning and hygiene. Inadequate cleaning and hygiene standards pose a risk of spreading infection by way of cross contamination from surfaces contaminated with the coronavirus.

Control Measures:

1. Cleaning regimes have been increased, including the frequency of cleaning of hard surfaces e.g. individual workstations, kitchens.

2. Suitable cleaning products are used by the contracted cleaning staff.

3. Enough hot water, liquid soap, disposable towels and hand sanitiser are provided throughout the building.

4. Staff are required to clean up any spillages without delay; disposable gloves are available.

Hazard: Personal hygiene. Poor personal hygiene standards pose a risk of passing or contracting the infection.

Control Measures:

1. The importance of good personal hygiene has been explained to all staff. Particularly the need for regular, thorough hand washing and the avoidance of touching eyes, nose or mouth.

2. Staff instructed to clean their hands frequently, washing their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or using alcohol-based hand sanitisers. Soap and gels are provided.

3. Staff instructed that disposable tissues should be used when coughing and or sneezing. Used tissues to be put into a bin or pocketed and taken home for safe disposal.

4. Any used disposable masks and gloves to be put into a bin or taken home for safe disposal. These items are not recyclable.

Hazard: Outbreak of COVID-19 in workplace. Lack of communication can result in an outbreak within each office.

Control Measures:

1. Anyone required to self-isolate in line with government guidance or, showing symptoms of COVID-19, is not permitted to attend the offices or, visit clients.

2. The Company has a plan in case there is a COVID-19 outbreak which is detailed in the Office Working During COVID-19 Policy.

3. There is a single point of contact (SPOC – the HR team) who will contact local public health teams if there is more than one case associated with the workplace (each individual office).

4. Ongoing assessments take place to determine the appropriateness of staff working from home, part-time, full time or on a rota basis.

Hazard: Offsite working in areas of higher COVID tier. Increased risk of infection when working offsite within areas at a higher tier level.

Control Measures:

1. Meetings should be held via Zoom / Teams wherever possible.

2. If an offsite visit is essential the member of staff involved must check the local COVID tier level and act within government rules.

3. Complete a risk assessment in line with Company policy.

Hazard: Fire (fire in office)

Control Measures:

1. Assessment undertaken and temporary change made to previous fire documentation to leave internal doors open to limit risk of COVID-19 spreading; in the event of fire evacuation the last person to leave a room must shut the door.

2. In emergency (fire evacuation or accident) employees do not have to stay 2m apart as this would potentially be unsafe.

Hazard: First Aid Provision (lack of first aid provision in offices due to first aiders not being on site, leading to injury, further injury or prolonged pain)

Control Measures:

1. Remind all staff where the First Aid Boxes and accident books are located.
2. Ensure gloves are put on before handling the First Aid Box or contents; this must be cleaned after use.

Hazard: Homeworking (display screens)

Control Measures:

1. Employees encouraged to take equipment from the office to support homeworking during Covid-19 (chair, screen, laptop etc.) and advise IT.
2. Homeworking surveys carried out (March, May 2020 & DSE Oct. 2020) with feedback to employees.
3. Staff encouraged to discuss any concerns via regular HR updates and *The Whitley Weekly*.
4. Homeworking H&S document with checklist for staff issued, including DSE points (April 2020) and re-issued November 2020.

Hazard: Homeworking (fire)

Control Measures:

1. Homeworking H&S document with checklist for staff issued, including fire safety precautions (April 2020).

Hazard: Homeworking (slips, trips and falls)

Control Measures:

1. Homeworking H&S document with checklist for staff issued, including housekeeping points (April 2020).

Hazard: Homeworking (electrical equipment)

Control Measures:

2. Homeworking H&S document with checklist for staff issued, including electrical points (April 2020).
3. Portable appliance testing is carried out on WSL equipment that may be being used for homeworking.

Hazard: Homeworking (stress)

Control Measures:

1. Homeworking survey carried out (May 2020) with feedback to employees, including a section on stress / mental health.
2. Regular HR Updates with COVID-19 information including links to Government and NHS websites.
3. *The Whitley Weekly* health and wellbeing email introduced (April 2020); including links to CABA support.
4. Welfare calls / emails from managers and HR to staff.
5. *Teams* video meetings used for communications and meetings.

Next Review Due: By 5th January 2021 (Anna Wakelin, Tracy Williams)