



COVID-19 – GENERAL GUIDANCE

Please refer to the detailed Government guidance on Working Safely during Coronavirus:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

Note that there are a number of guides covering different types of work.

Note the 5 main steps to working safely: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/5-steps-to-working-safely>

In summary these 5 steps are:

1. Before restarting work the College is carrying out a COVID-19 risk assessment in line with the [HSE guidance](#); consulting with staff and sharing results of the risk assessment with all staff and placing it on our website.
2. We are restating the importance of cleaning, handwashing and hygiene procedures
3. Staff who do not need to come into College to work should continue to work from home until further notice
4. Maintain 2m social distancing, where possible
5. Where people cannot be 2m apart, manage transmission risk

The College is adding two important points to the above:

If anyone has any worries they should contact their line-manager and/or the Personnel Advisor as soon as possible to discuss them.

If anyone sees something which concerns them about working practices and/or the physical environment – for example, where something is not helping contain the transmission of COVID-19 or could be improved to contain transmission they should contact their line-manager and/or the Personnel Advisor to get things changed.

General and working from home

General

- The College will continually review the number of staff needed on-site to operate safely and effectively.
- Ensure that everyone working at College is aware of all relevant Covid-19 risk assessments and have details of where these risk assessments can be found.
- Monitoring the wellbeing of people who are working from home and helping them stay connected to the rest of the team.
- Providing equipment for people to work from home safely and effectively, for example, remote access to work systems.

Protecting people who are at higher risk

- Providing support for workers around mental health and wellbeing.
- Ensuring the current advice on who is in the clinically extremely vulnerable and clinically vulnerable groups is followed.
- Enabling workers to work from home while self-isolating, if appropriate.

- Ensuring current guidance for employees and employers relating to statutory sick pay due to COVID-19 is followed.
- Ensuring current guidance for people who have symptoms and those who live with others who have symptoms is followed.

Equality in the workplace

- Understanding and taking into account the particular circumstances of those with different protected characteristics.
- Involving and communicating appropriately with workers whose protected characteristics might either expose them to a different degree of risk, or might make any steps you are thinking about inappropriate or challenging for them.
- Making reasonable adjustments to avoid disabled workers being put at a disadvantage, and assessing the health and safety risks for new or expectant mothers.
- Making sure that the steps taken do not have an unjustifiable negative impact on some groups compared to others, for example, those with caring responsibilities or those with religious commitments.

Maintain social distancing wherever possible, including while arriving at and departing from work, while in work and when travelling between sites

Coming to work and leaving work

- Staggering arrival and departure times to reduce crowding in and out of the college, taking account of the impact on those with protected characteristics.
- Providing additional parking or facilities to help people walk, run, or cycle to work, where possible.
- Limiting passengers in college vehicles.
- Reducing congestion, using markings or introducing one-way flow at entry and exit points.
- Providing handwashing facilities, or hand sanitisers where not possible, at entry and exit points.
- Implementing appropriate cleaning and maintenance regimes for work clothing and personal protective equipment.

Moving around buildings and worksites

- Reducing movement by discouraging non-essential trips within buildings and sites, for example, restricting access to some areas, and encouraging use of radios or telephones, where permitted, and cleaning them between use.
- Using fixed teams or adjusting booking processes to reduce the number of people in a work space at the same time to avoid overcrowding.
- Introducing more one-way flow through buildings, where possible, paying particular attention to long corridors
- Reducing maximum occupancy for lifts, providing hand sanitiser for the operation of lifts and encouraging use of stairs wherever possible.
- Making sure that people with access requirements are able to access lifts.

Workplaces and Workstations

- Reviewed layouts where possible, accepting the limitation of some workspace environments.
- Where appropriate using floor tape or markings to help people comply with social distancing.
- Maximise natural ventilation by opening doors and windows.

- Only where it is not possible to move workstations further apart, using screens to separate people from each other.
- Only where it is not possible to move workstations further apart, arranging people to work side by side or facing away from each other rather than face-to-face.
- Managing occupancy levels, to maintain social distancing in areas with restricted space, for example, by adapting booking systems to limit usage.
- Cleaning workstations and shared equipment and machinery, where it is feasible to do so.
- Limiting use of high-touch items and shared office equipment.

Meetings

- Using remote working tools to avoid in-person meetings.
- Only absolutely necessary participants should attend meetings and maintain social distancing throughout.
- Avoiding transmission during meetings, for example, avoiding sharing pens and other objects.
- Providing hand sanitisers in meeting rooms.
- Holding meetings outdoors or in well-ventilated rooms whenever possible.
- For areas where regular meetings take place, using floor signage to help people maintain social distancing.

Common areas

- Staggering break times to reduce pressure on breakrooms or places to eat.
- Using safe outside areas for breaks.
- Creating additional space by using other parts of the workplace or building that have been freed up by remote working.
- Installing screens to protect staff in receptions or similar areas.
- Providing packaged meals or similar to limit the need for using staff dining areas.
- Encouraging workers to bring their own food.
- Reconfiguring seating and tables to maintain spacing and reduce face-to-face interactions.
- Encouraging staff to remain on-site and, when not possible, maintaining social distancing while off-site.
- Regulating use of locker rooms, changing areas and other facility areas to reduce concurrent usage.
- Encouraging storage of personal items and clothing in personal storage spaces, for example lockers, during working hours.

Where social distancing guidelines cannot be followed in full in relation to a particular activity

Consider if the activity needs to continue and if so, take all the mitigating actions possible to reduce risk of transmission. Mitigation actions include:

- Further increase frequency of handwashing and surface cleaning
- Keep activity time involved as short as possible.
- Limit face to face working by use of back to back or side to side working; use of screens/barriers;

use of fixed teams/partnering.

- Continue to conduct dynamic risk assessments whilst completing the work and see if there is a safer way of completing the task.

Ensure that any person classed as being Clinically Vulnerable, who is at higher risk of severe illness, for example an individual with a pre-existing condition, does not break social distancing guidelines. If this is not possible, carefully assess whether this involves an acceptable level of risk. Refer to government guidance.

Minimise the number of unnecessary visits to college site

General

- Encouraging visits via remote connection or remote working for visitors where this is an option.
- Limiting the number of visitors at any one time.
- Limiting visitor times to a specific time window and restricting access to required visitors only.
- Determining if schedules for essential services and contractor visits can be revised to reduce interaction and overlap between people, for example, carrying out services at night.
- Maintaining a record of all visitors, if this is practical.
- Revising visitor arrangements to ensure social distancing and hygiene, for example, where someone physically signs in with the same pen in receptions.
- Providing clear guidance on social distancing and hygiene to people on arrival, for example, signage, visual aids and before arrival, for example, by phone, on the website, by email.
- Establishing host responsibilities relating to COVID-19 and providing any necessary training for people who act as hosts for visitors.
- Reviewing entry and exit routes for visitors and contractors to minimise contact with other people.
- Coordinating and working collaboratively with other colleges/departments and other areas of college, for example, discussing arrangements in shared buildings, waste or cleaning contractors, DLO or Security Services.
- Regularly clean common contact surfaces in reception and delivery areas, particularly during busy periods.

Cleaning the workplace

Before reopening

- Check whether you need to service or adjust ventilation systems, for example, so that they do not automatically reduce ventilation levels due to lower than normal occupancy levels.
- Check to ensure air conditioning system do not need adjustment.
- Check to ensure air ventilation regimes and/or local exhaust ventilation is working appropriately.
- Check on restarting and testing other specialist equipment that may have unused for a longer than usual period of time.

Keeping the workplace clean

- Frequent cleaning of work areas and equipment between uses, using your usual cleaning products.
- Determining the required cleaning process for expensive equipment that cannot be washed down, designing protection around machines and equipment.

- Frequent cleaning of objects and surfaces that are touched regularly, such as door handles and making sure there are adequate safe disposal arrangements.
- Clearing workspaces and removing waste and belongings from the work area at the end of a shift.
- Following guidance for dealing with a known or suspected case of COVID-19 whilst at work.

Hygiene – handwashing, sanitation facilities and toilets

- Using signs and posters to build awareness of good handwashing technique, the need to increase handwashing frequency, 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.
- Providing regular reminders and signage to maintain hygiene standards.
- Providing hand sanitiser in multiple locations in addition to washrooms.
- Setting clear use and cleaning guidance for toilets to ensure they are kept clean and social distancing is achieved as much as possible.
- Enhancing cleaning for busy areas.
- Providing more waste facilities and more frequent rubbish collection.
- Providing hand drying facilities – either paper towels or electrical dryers.

Changing rooms and showers

- Where shower and changing facilities are required, setting clear use and cleaning guidance for showers, lockers and changing rooms to ensure they are kept clean and clear of personal items and that social distancing is achieved as much as possible.
- Introducing enhanced cleaning of all facilities regularly during the day and at the end of the day.

Handling goods, merchandise and other materials, and on-site vehicles

- Cleaning procedures for material and equipment entering the site.
- Cleaning procedures for the parts of shared equipment you touch after each use.
- Cleaning procedures for vehicles.
- Encouraging increased handwashing and introducing more handwashing facilities for workers handling deliveries or providing hand sanitiser where this is not practical.
- Restricting non-business deliveries, for example, personal deliveries to workers.

Ensure the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) is in line with government guidance, noting the limitations in the effectiveness of certain PPE for controlling COVID-19 and the potential impact that its use could have on health or social care settings.

Risk assessing the need and use of PPE

- Explaining the hierarchy of control for identifying under which specific circumstances PPE might be required and highlighting the limitations for use of personal protective equipment as a general means of controlling COVID-19.
- Prescribing those specific circumstances where personal protective equipment is required as a result of this or other risk assessments, including the specific types of PPE that will be provided.
- Explaining how all forms of personal protective equipment should be worn, used, maintained and/or disposed of, if a risk assessment has identified a need.
- Ensuring that those who need to use filtering face piece respirators, as a result of a risk assessment, have been face fit tested or, if the assessment identifies a reasonable level of risk, a fit check procedure.

- Reminding individuals who choose to provide or use their own personal face coverings of the limitations and possible restrictions in certain areas (e.g. workshops), and the requirements for regular changing, washing and enhanced hygiene levels.

Changing the way work is organised to create distinct groups and reduce the number of contacts each worker has.

General

- As far as possible, where individuals are split into teams or shift groups, fixing these teams or shift groups so that where contact is unavoidable, this happens between the same people.
- Identifying areas where people directly pass things to each other, and finding ways to remove direct contact, such as using put-down-pick-up processes.

Work-related travel

- Minimising non-essential travel – consider remote options first.
- Minimising the number of people travelling together in any one vehicle, using fixed travel partners, increasing ventilation when possible and avoiding sitting face-to-face.
- Cleaning shared vehicles between shifts or on handover.
- Where workers are required to stay away from their home, centrally logging the stay and making sure any overnight accommodation meets social distancing guidelines.

Make sure all workers understand COVID-19 related safety procedures.

Communications and training

- Displaying copies of risk assessments / work plan on the college website or intranet.
- Consulting and reviewing the risk assessment / work plan via the college Safety Committee
- Providing a signed, by the head of house, commitment to appropriate COVID-19 arrangements at the entrance to the college.
- Providing clear, consistent and regular communication to improve understanding and consistency of ways of working.
- Developing communication and training materials for workers prior to returning to site, especially around new procedures for arrival at work.
- Communicating approaches and operational procedures to suppliers, customers or trade bodies to help their adoption and to share experience.
- Using simple, clear messaging to explain guidelines using images and clear language, with consideration of groups for which English may not be their first language.