

Office Areas Risk Assessment: COVID-19

Site:

Office environments

This risk assessment covers the risk associated with Covid-19 infection only. It should be read in conjunction with other risk assessments that cover additional risks for activities and sites.

Note: This risk assessment is based on information and UK government advice as of the 10 June 2020. It will be revised as new information or guidance is issued.

Covid-19 is a new illness that can affect your lungs and airways. It is caused by a virus called Coronavirus. Symptoms can be absent, mild, moderate, severe or fatal.

Risk to clinically extremely vulnerable and clinically vulnerable people

The severity of the symptoms of Covid-19 varies from individual to individual. There are however two groups of people who HM Government has advised are more likely to experience severe or fatal symptoms than the general population. These groups of people have been designated as:

Clinically extremely vulnerable: people will have received a letter telling them they are in this group, or will have been told by their GP.

Clinically vulnerable people which include those aged 70 or over and those with these underlying health conditions:

- chronic (long-term) mild to moderate respiratory diseases, such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), emphysema or bronchitis
- chronic heart disease, such as heart failure
- chronic kidney disease
- chronic liver disease, such as hepatitis
- chronic neurological conditions, such as Parkinson's disease, motor neurone disease, multiple sclerosis (MS), or cerebral palsy
- diabetes
- a weakened immune system as the result of conditions such as HIV and AIDS, or medicines such as steroid tablets
- being seriously overweight (a body mass index (BMI) of 40 or above)
- pregnant women

Given the high impact of a Covid-19 infection) for these groups of people and the fact that there currently is no way to reduce this, we deem the risk of members of these groups to work anywhere other than their home to be too high, even where mitigating actions have been taken to reduce the likelihood of an infection.

Risk to all other groups

Whilst the severity of the symptoms of Covid-19 varies from individual to individual, people who are not in the vulnerable groups have a higher likelihood of a lower impact of a Covid-19 infection. Combined with measures to reduce the likelihood of an infection, a more acceptable level of risk is achievable for this group. Since there is currently no means to reduce the impact of the infection, this risk assessment only deals with reducing the likelihood.

Key considerations for this risk assessment:

Current guidance suggests that people can be infected and therefore infectious with Covid-19 without displaying any or even severe symptoms. This assessment therefore assumes that people may be infectious without realising it and therefore assumes that anybody in the workplace could be a source of infection.

There is no definitive guidance on how long the virus can survive on surfaces, only that an alcohol-based cleaner should kill the virus. This assessment therefore assumes that any surface potentially touched by an infected person continues to be contaminated with the virus unless cleaned with an alcohol-based cleaner.

Types of transmission considered:

Current guidance suggests that there are three ways a person can become infected with the virus:

- Direct contact infection: Having direct contact with an infected person e.g. by shaking hands AND subsequently touching areas of broken skin or eyes, ears or mouth with the contaminated body part.
- Surface contact infection: Having direct contact with a surface contaminated with the virus AND subsequently touching areas of broken skin or eyes, ears or mouth with the contaminated body part.
- Airborne droplet infection: Having direct contact with aerosol/droplets from an infected person via the air.



#	Activity	Hazard	Person(s) at Risk	Control Measures	Actions to be taken ← (Risk rating after taking control measures into account)	By Whom
1	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct contact infection • Airborne droplet infection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff • Visitors to our premises • Cleaners • Contractors • Drivers • Vulnerable groups – Elderly, Pregnant workers, those with existing underlying health conditions • Anyone else who physically comes in contact with our staff in relation to your business 	<p><u>People with symptoms of Covid-19 to stay clear of the workplace</u></p> <p>Any members of staff who are displaying Covid-19 symptoms (a new continuous cough, a high temperature, a loss of, or change to, their sense of smell or taste), or advised by the NHS “track and trace” team that they have been in close contact with a person that has been infected with Covid-19, should advise their line manager and HR Info and not attend the office and work from home if possible until the symptoms abate or be recorded as sick.</p> <p>Staff members displaying Covid-19 symptoms should also book a Covid-19 test to confirm their illness and inform their line manager of the outcome of the test.</p> <p>If anyone becomes unwell with Covid-19 symptoms in the workplace they will be sent home and advised to follow the stay at home guidance until a test result has been received.</p> <p>Line managers will maintain regular</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signage at the entrance to buildings advising people of the key symptoms and to not enter if they have these symptoms • Regular internal communications reminders to not attend work premises if you are displaying symptoms • Line manager communication and reminders to check with staff whether they have symptoms and to send anybody who displays symptoms home. • Declarations for external visitors/contractors that they do not have symptoms to be signed before they enter the premises. • Records of visitors to sites to be maintained 	

				<p>contact with staff members during this time.</p> <p>If advised that a member of staff or public has developed Covid-19 and were recently on our premises (including where a member of staff has visited other work place premises), the management team of the workplace will contact the Public Health Authority to discuss the case, identify people who have been in contact with them and will take advice on any actions or precautions that should be taken.</p>		
2	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct contact infection • Surface contact infection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff • Visitors to our premises • Cleaners • Contractors • Drivers • Vulnerable groups – Elderly, Pregnant workers, those with existing underlying health conditions • Anyone else who physically comes in contact with our staff in 	<p><u>Hand Washing/Sanitising</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hand washing facilities with soap and water in place. • Regular stringent hand washing taking place. • Hand washing for 20 seconds following hand washing guidance: https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/best-way-to-wash-your-hands/ • Drying of hands with disposable paper towels: https://www.nursingtimes.net/news/research-and-innovation/paper-towels-much-more-effective-at-removing-viruses-than-hand-dryers-17-04-2020/ • Staff encouraged to protect the skin by applying emollient cream 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put up signage reminding people to wash/sanitise their hands regularly throughout the premises. • Provision of paper towels and bins (which are sufficient to hold the expected amount of towels) in kitchens and bathrooms on premises. • Make gel sanitiser available in all areas where hand washing facilities are not readily available e.g. reception, by front door, in lift 	

			relation to your business	regularly Gel sanitisers to be available in any area where washing facilities not readily available e.g. at the entrance to buildings.		
3	All	Surface contact infection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff • Visitors to our premises • Cleaners • Contractors • Drivers • Vulnerable groups – Elderly, Pregnant workers, those with existing underlying health conditions <p>Anyone else who physically comes in contact with our staff in relation to your business</p>	<p><u>Reducing surface contact required during day to day activities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changing processes/setups e.g. reducing number of doors requiring opening by hand, assigning tools to individuals only. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prop open/remove doors wherever possible and this doesn't compromise fire safety/hygiene regulation. • [Consider automatic door openers?] • Move commonly used items out of cupboards/temporarily remove cupboard doors for commonly used items • Communication and signage advising staff to put their used cutlery and crockery into the dishwasher themselves. • Assign desks or workstations to individuals only, not to be used by others • Assign items requiring handling e.g. tools, staplers, hole punches to individuals, not to be shared with others. • Avoid use of shared paper files • Set printers to release all jobs on swiping the ID card, rather than requiring touchscreen interaction. 	
4	All	Surface contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff • Visitors to our 	<u>Communal cleaning</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thorough deep cleaning of all regularly touched surfaces with an alcohol-based 	

		infection	<p>premises</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleaners • Contractors • Drivers • Vulnerable groups – Elderly, Pregnant workers, those with existing underlying health conditions <p>Anyone else who physically comes in contact with our staff in relation to your business</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequently cleaning and disinfecting objects and surfaces that are touched regularly, particularly in areas of high use such as door handles, light switches, reception area using appropriate cleaning products and methods. 	<p>cleaning agent each evening, all staff to leave by a determined times to allow this to be carried out everywhere.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interim cleaning of regularly touched surfaces with an alcohol-based cleaning agent during the day. 	
5	All	Surface contact infection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff • Visitors to our premises • Cleaners • Contractors • Drivers • Vulnerable groups – Elderly, Pregnant workers, those with existing underlying health conditions 	<p><u>Individual cleaning</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleaning and disinfecting of the surface of items that cannot be allocated to individuals e.g. printers, pool cars/vans, files, laminators, guillotines by each individual after use. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alcohol wipes and signage reminding people to clean the item after use to be made available near each shared use item (printers, files, remote controls, large office equipment) • Users of shared vehicles to clean the touched vehicle surfaces and keys after use and where possible air the vehicle out between uses. 	

			Anyone else who physically comes in contact with our staff in relation to your business			
6	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct contact infection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff • Visitors to our premises • Cleaners • Contractors • Drivers • Vulnerable groups – Elderly, Pregnant workers, those with existing underlying health conditions <p>Anyone else who physically comes in contact with our staff in relation to your business</p>	<p><u>Avoiding activities that lead to direct contact between people</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redesign any processes/activities that lead to or require direct contact between people e.g. greetings, passing items between people • Where direct contact cannot be avoided e.g. lifting items that require multiple people where lifting tools cannot be used, PPE (face coverings and gloves) to be work by all participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signage and internal and visitor communication reminding of the need to avoid direct contact e.g. no shaking of hands • Use of a holding area for items that need to be passed between people e.g. post (i.e. person A puts item down in the area and then steps 2m away before person B collects it) • No personal items to be delivered to offices • Provision of disposable gloves and face coverings and immediate thorough handwashing afterwards for all processes where direct contact cannot be avoided. 	
7	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Airborne droplet infection • Direct contact infection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff • Delivery drivers 	<p><u>Redesign work setups and processes to minimise the number of different people staff come into contact with</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assign fixed pairings for each shift • Minimise the use of different temporary staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Line managers to form fixed pairs for shifts and schedule work patterns accordingly. 	

8	All	Airborne droplet infection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff • Visitors to our premises • Cleaners • Contractors • Drivers • Vulnerable groups – Elderly, Pregnant workers, those with existing underlying health conditions <p>Anyone else who physically comes in contact with our staff in relation to your business</p>	<p><u>Social Distancing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing the number of persons in any area on the premises to comply with the 2-metre (6.5 foot) gap recommended by the Public Health Agency • Taking steps to review work schedules including start & finish times/shift patterns, working from home etc. to reduce number of workers on site at any one time. • Redesigning processes to ensure social distancing in place. • Conference calls to be used instead of face to face meetings. • Ensuring sufficient rest breaks for staff. • Social distancing also to be adhered to in canteen area and smoking area. 	<p><u>Desks/Workstations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk occupancy to be spaced out such that individuals sit at least 2m away from others (in all directions) • Desks use to be as far away from circulation areas as possible e.g. by the window rather than the walkway • [Plexiglass dividers to be erected between desks?] • Signage/markings tape to be applied to desks not to be used <p><u>Toilet facilities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of toilet facilities to be restricted to the level allowed by social distancing (this may mean only one person can use the facilities at any moment in time) • Signage/markings tape to be applied • Facilities that cannot be used whilst maintaining social distance to be closed/taped off <p><u>Kitchens</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of kitchen facilities to be restricted to the level allowed by social distancing (this may mean only one person can use the facilities at any moment in time) • Signage/markings tape to be applied 	
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					<p><u>Break rooms</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of breakroom facilities to be restricted to the level allowed by social distancing (this may mean only one person can use the facilities at any moment in time) • No use of recreational equipment that does not allow for social distancing • Signage/marketing tape to be applied <p><u>Meeting rooms</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of meeting room facilities to be restricted to the level allowed by social distancing (this may mean only one person can use the room at any moment in time) • Signage/marketing tape to be applied <p><u>Other enclosed spaces e.g. server rooms, stationary cupboards</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of space to be restricted to the level allowed by social distancing (this may mean only one person can use the room at any moment in time) • Signage/marketing tape to be applied <p><u>Reception desk</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No visitor to come within 2m of reception desk staff • Install transparent screen around reception desk 	
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					<p><u>Circulation areas</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of circulation areas to be restricted to the level allowed by social distancing (this may mean introducing a one-way system) • Signage/markings to be applied <p><u>Stairs</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of stairs to be restricted to the level allowed by social distancing (this may mean introducing a one-way system, or that only one person can use the stairs at any moment in time) • Signage/markings to be applied <p><u>Lifts</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of lift to be restricted to the level allowed by social distancing (only one person can use the lift at any moment in time) • Signage/markings to be applied <p><u>Leaving site</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To reduce circulation across the premises and reduce contamination from the outside, staff to be advised to remain on site and only leave the premises at the end of the working day. • Internal communication • Signage to be applied 	
9	All	Airborne	• Staff	<u>Avoiding bunching up of people</u>	• Line managers and site controller to	

		droplet infection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitors to our premises • Cleaners • Contractors • Drivers • Vulnerable groups – Elderly, Pregnant workers, those with existing underlying health conditions <p>Anyone else who physically comes in contact with our staff in relation to your business</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staggering of staff arrival and leave times to the office to support social distancing • Timing of other visits e.g. visitors, deliveries, contractors so that they do not coincide with each other or when staff are likely to enter and leave the building • Staggering of break times between members of staff to avoid large groups forming in rest areas. 	<p>agree schedule of start and leave times for staff to avoid bunching up of people at car parking and entry and exit points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reception to keep schedule of all third party visitors to premises and staff start and leave times to facilitate spacing out of entries to the building, • Line managers and site controller to agree schedule of break times for staff to avoid bunching up of people at break areas. 	
10	All	Airborne droplet infection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff • Visitors to our premises • Cleaners • Contractors • Drivers • Vulnerable groups – Elderly, Pregnant workers, those with existing underlying health 	<p><u>Increase ventilation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where possible increase ventilation of spaces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where possible and practicable open doors/window to increase ventilation • Ensure HVAC system continues to operate at full capacity even if site occupancy is lower. 	

			<p>conditions Anyone else who physically comes in contact with our staff in relation to your business</p>			
11	All	Airborne droplet infection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vulnerable groups – Elderly, Pregnant workers, those with existing underlying health conditions 	<p>Reallocating tasks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where a staff member is in a vulnerable group and their normal work task cannot be carried out without appropriate social distancing (including during the travel to and from work) this staff member should be re-allocated to other tasks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Line managers to identify vulnerable staff members whose normal work task cannot be carried out without appropriate social distancing (including during the travel to and from work) and reallocate these tasks to others. 	
12	Travel to and from work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct contact infection Airborne droplet infection 	Staff	<p>Avoiding public transport</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wherever possible staff to be advised to avoid the use of public transport Where public transport cannot be avoided, government guidance is to now wear face coverings whilst on public transport. These can be re-usable home-made coverings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal communication to staff re the avoiding of public transport and wearing of face coverings Support for use of walking/cycling into work e.g provision of safe bike storage Support for car parking for staff who cannot walk/cycle to work 	
13	All	Mental Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff 	<p>Mental Health</p> <p>Management will promote mental health & wellbeing awareness to staff during the Coronavirus outbreak and will offer whatever support they can to help</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular internal comms messages of support to staff e.g. advertising mental health first aiders Line managers to monitor stress level and mental health of teams Mental health first aiders to be available to support staff 	

14	All	Providing first aid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff • First aiders 	<p><u>Provision of first aid capability</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the allowable site occupancy leads to more than 50 people being on site, there must continue to be a First Aider onsite. • First aiders to wear disposable gloves and face masks to attend to anybody requiring first aid. • Anybody requiring first aid to also be issued with a facemask whilst first aid is being administered to them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sufficient first aider presence to be present for each site • First aid kits to be supplemented with a stock of disposable gloves and disposable face masks. 	
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