



Working Safely During COVID-19

Gordons LLP Risk Assessment and Updated Policies/Procedures

Introduction

This document considers the guidance given by the Government on 11 May 2020 (updated 8 Sept 2020) but will be revised as the Government's guidance is updated. The dates of any revisions will be added at the end.

In the preparation of this assessment, consideration has been given to equality in the workplace. Any decisions to return staff to work will ensure that we treat everyone in the workplace equally whilst being mindful of the needs of different individuals particularly those staff with protected characteristics.

Current position – 8 Sept 2020

Most staff (excluding those furloughed) are now working both from home and in the office.

As from 1 August staff who were previously shielding can now attend the office and work from home.

Some staff who cannot perform their jobs from home are working from the office full time.

Both offices are being limited to reduced occupancy to ensure social distancing.

As from 20 July Partners will attend the office each day and will mark their calendars if working from home.

There are various reasons why staff may now prefer to work from the office more regularly. We know from feedback that many prefer the ease of working from an office environment. They have tasks they cannot complete remotely. They prefer to work directly with partners on files for their own training and education and we know that, for some, the isolation of working remotely is affecting their mental health.

Following the changes to the office environment set out in this document we can now accommodate more people in the office working in a safe way. If staff wish to attend the office they can do so by following the procedures outlined below.

We have introduced a rota for staff attendance in the office to ensure we are working at a reduced occupancy on each floor/wing.

If staff wish to attend on a day when they would normally work from home we can manage this through the Essential Worker calendar with bookings being made through Ann-Marie Hullah. When accepting these bookings Ann-Marie will check total attendance, if it exceeds the limit then staff may be asked to attend for a meeting only or work from a meeting room. If you wish to attend the following day you should make a request before 4pm.

A copy of the rota is available on the intranet.

As we have staff who need to attend the office each day it is not possible to run the offices on a "social bubble" basis. Instead we are focussing on socially distancing and reminding staff of the need to maintain this. Most importantly we are keeping the offices at reduced occupancy only by operating on a working from office and working from home basis.



Risk Assessment

Section 1 – Managing Risk

Objective: To reduce risk to the lowest reasonably practicable level by taking preventative measures in order of priority.

We have considered the risks staff face and what we can do that is reasonably practicable to minimise them (i.e. sensible, preventative measures, in order of priority, recognising that we cannot completely eliminate the risk of COVID-19 in the workplace).

This document reflects the steps which are being taken to protect those currently attending, but also to prepare for a phased return of others who are currently working from home with the expectation that this will, initially, be on a rota basis.

The document has been prepared by Victoria Davey and Ann-Marie Hullah with input from other Business Support staff and feedback from partners since their attendance began.

On 22 May, all staff were informed that we were undertaking a risk assessment which would be shared with them. Staff were asked to volunteer as employee representatives if they wished to be involved in this exercise.

Three non-furloughed staff have volunteered. It was decided that their collective review would be most relevant to both offices and they have been asked collectively to review the risk assessment and provide feedback on it. The three employee representatives are Richard Jobes, Helen Starling and Lauren Barclay ('Employee Consultation Committee'). They each have experience of working in both offices and will therefore be able to provide invaluable assistance to this review.

This document will be available on the Intranet for staff to view and a notice will be displayed in both offices to show we have followed the Government's guidance on managing the risk of COVID-19. A copy will also be available on our website.

This document was approved subject to amendments which have been incorporated by the Employee Consultation Committee on 9 June 2020.

The updated guidance was approved on 17 September 2020

Section 2 – Who should go to work?

Objective: Employers should ensure workplaces are safe whilst also enabling working from home

As explained above, most staff (excluding those furloughed) are now working both from home and in the office.

For operational and business continuity reasons and in line with the current government dialogue staff are beginning to return to office attendance. This assessment has been updated to reflect the need to limit numbers attending to maintain social distancing within the office.

The intention is to keep the offices at a reduced occupancy only for the foreseeable future. This will be reviewed mid-October. In the event of a further lockdown this would be reviewed sooner.

For those working from home we have continued to provide support including:

- discussing home working arrangements and providing IT equipment



- ensuring they have the right equipment, for example remote access to work systems
- including them in all necessary communications
- looking after their physical and mental wellbeing

Examples of this are listed below:

- Relevant IT equipment and systems provided to carry out their role.
- Managers/Departments in regular contact with home workers via telephone/MS Teams/email.
- Staff survey completed to highlight staff vulnerable to COVID-19 and any home working issues and experiences.
- HR available for counselling/advice.
- Mental Health First Aiders available for support.
- 24/7 access to free confidential telephone support via our Employee Assistance Programme with Health Assured – 0800 030 5182.
- The Health & Wellbeing page on the Intranet has additional resources including advice on home working and coping with stress.
- HR keep in contact with supervisors to assess whether they have any wellbeing concerns in their teams and follow-up telephone calls to team members.
- HR spot check phone calls to staff, in particular those considered vulnerable due to known poor mental health, isolation e.g. living alone.
- Staff invited to collect work equipment to assist longer term home working e.g. office chair.
- Introduction of MS Teams for video calling and more efficient ways of working remotely - including Secretarial Group and departmental group chats to foster inclusion.

2.1 Protecting people who are at higher risk

Objective: To support those who are at higher risk of infection and/or an adverse outcome if infected.

HR keep a list of people in these categories. Staff who are clinically extremely vulnerable should raise any concerns with HR.

2.2 People who need to self-isolate

Objective: To make sure individuals who are advised to stay at home under existing government guidance to stop infection spreading do not physically come to work. This includes individuals who have symptoms of COVID-19, those who live in a household or are in a support bubble with someone who has symptoms and those who are advised to self-isolate as part of the government's test and trace program.



Staff have been advised to inform HR and stay at home if they, or people they live with, have any symptoms.

Updated guidance was sent to staff on 10 June and regular reminders are sent to remind staff to update HR and stay at home if they are advised to self-isolate as part of the government's Test and Trace program.

Staff are asked to make a list of anyone in the office they had close contact with whilst attending the office.

- Close contact means:
 - having face-to-face contact with someone (less than 1 metre away)
 - spending more than 15 minutes within 1 metre of someone

If the self-isolating staff member develops symptoms, they must immediately inform HR and HR will inform their close contact co-workers and give appropriate advice as to whether they should self-isolate.

HR will also advise AMH of anyone self-isolating and the rota and EW Calendar will be checked to ensure any desks used by those staff are re-cleaned more fully.

Updated staff guidance was issued on 4 September, see Appendix 2.

2.3 Ventilation

Objective: To use ventilation to mitigate the transmission risk of COVID-19.

Ventilation

The government guidance recommends that most air conditioning does not need adjustment but that where systems service multiple offices that advice should be sought. We are encouraged to open windows/doors frequently to encourage ventilation where possible.

Our review has considered other H&S issues as well including staff security. We have also had input from our Landlord/managing agents at both offices to finalise the updated office guidance.

Bradford

The Landlord has confirmed that the air handling unit draws in fresh air from outside, passes it through a carbon pollution filter and then feeds the air around the building. The air handling unit operates on a constant basis throughout the day and as such there is a continuous supply of fresh air. Air within the building is also constantly drawn out through an extractor fan, thus proving fresh air circulation.

We occupy the ground floor. None of the windows open. It would pose a H&S risk to leave either front doors or fire exit doors open which the staff have confirmed they would not wish to happen.

We are leaving the air conditioning on at a normal setting of 24C. This should not be adjusted. The fan speed can be adjusted to increase the existing ventilation rate. The offices may be cooler than normal so please wear suitable clothing.



Leeds

The Landlord has confirmed that it is better to use the windows currently rather than the aircon units during the day and to warm/cool the offices overnight.

In the meantime, please turn off units when in the office and open windows. There are safety catches on all the windows and signs will be placed on ground floor meetings rooms to remind you to close the windows. The cleaners will also check the windows at the end of each day.

Staff were concerned about the doors to the front of the floors being left open so for the time being we will only have windows open and keep this under review.

Updated staff guidance was issued on 17 September, see Appendix 3.

Section 3 – Social Distancing at Work

Objective: Ensuring workers maintain social distancing guidelines (2m, or 1m with risk mitigation where 2m is not viable, is acceptable) wherever possible, including while arriving at and departing from work, while in work and when travelling between sites

Currently there are limited numbers of people in the office with a reduced occupancy limit on both floors and wings. All desks are at least 1m in length. Desks which have been identified as not meeting social distancing guidelines have been put out of action.

Colour coded plans showing people who may be in the office each day and on specific days are retained by AMH. The staff rota will be available on the intranet and staff can see who is in the office each day.

Staff are not permitted to sit immediately opposite each other, other than at desks where the monitors are immediately in front of people and in between colleagues. Back to back and side to side working is used wherever possible.

Hot desking should be avoided but if a workstation needs to be shared it should be by the smallest number of people possible but you must clean your desk, phone and PC with the wipes provided before and after use. Staff who usually move between offices have been allocated specific desks in an office which they must continue to use. If a member of staff is uncomfortable with their seating, they can request to move to another desk but are responsible for cleaning the desks and equipment both before and after use with the wipes provided.

With the limited number of people attending the offices each day, arrival/departure times have not been staggered but staff can speak to their supervisor if they would prefer to change their working pattern.

Staff who work on the 6th floor in Leeds have been advised to use the rear entrance and lifts in the building.

Staff arriving in Bradford should proceed immediately to their wing and not congregate in the foyer.

Photocopiers have been moved away from desks to create wider walkways.

The staff rooms are not in use and only two people are permitted to use the kitchen area at a time. Signs have been installed to remind staff.



To ensure that others can use the kitchens at all times, staff must not eat their meals in the kitchens.

Staff are encouraged to bring their own food although hot drink/filtered water supplies are available. Wipes are provided in the kitchen so people can wipe down any surfaces that are touched. Signage has been installed to remind people to do this.

Fruit for staff is currently not being provided. We recommend that staff do not share communal food.

Staff are encouraged to use and retain their own crockery.

Signage is in place to remind people to maintain social distance in and around the offices. At the entrance to each wing and floor is a visual representation of a social distance – currently 1m.

Microwave ovens have been installed in each kitchen on both floors and wings to limit movement between the wings and floors at busy times.

Updated procedures have been put in place for the delivery of post and files which need to pass between floors and wings.

We are not limiting movement between floors and wings. We are focusing on social distancing rather than social bubbles.

Consideration has been given to a one-way flow around the floors/wings. This is not reasonably practicable given the layout and the risk of it being ignored is high. Whilst numbers in the offices remain low we would prefer people to practise social distancing and keep that as a habit. Signage reminds people to socially distance at all times and allow people to pass before walking down narrow walkways and not approach desks.

As more people return, certain desks (as indicated on plans and on the desks by laminated signs) will be decommissioned temporarily to avoid people passing too closely.

The flow of movement around the office will be kept under review as occupancy levels increase.

The toilets (rooms rather than cubicles) are restricted to two people at a time. Signs have been installed to confirm if the toilet is vacant/engaged to avoid others entering the rooms. Reminders to social distance are also in place.

Staff have been asked not to leave any clothes in the office and any items left have been removed. Anything left must be put in drawers overnight and not left on the backs of chairs, lockers, or hangers.

Hand sanitiser and antibacterial wipes are available throughout the offices. Clean keys have been provided to assist with the opening of doors.

Keypads – staff can use electronic cards to swipe on arrival/exit without touching the keypad. If anyone does not have an electronic card these can be requested from AMH. There is also hand sanitiser near all main entrances which can be used before/after touching the keypad if the touchscreen is used.

Meetings

Objective: To reduce transmission due to face-to-face meetings and maintain social distancing in meetings



All meeting rooms have reminders to social distance and staff should use their common sense when using these rooms to ensure this is adhered to. Small meeting rooms should have no more than 2 people in attendance. Larger rooms can accommodate more but social distance must be maintained.

Staff should not sit opposite each other in meetings but spread out (and, if necessary, away from the table) around the room. When booking a meeting room you must ensure the room is large enough for the numbers attending to maintain social distancing.

Hospitality for meetings in Leeds is not currently being provided. Bottles of water are available in the kitchen.

Where possible, windows in meeting rooms should be opened to improve ventilation.

Stationery has been removed from meeting rooms. Hand sanitiser is available in all meeting rooms.

If the weather permits, people are encouraged to meet outside for walks or catch-ups in open space. Keys have been left in balcony doors in Leeds and these areas can also be used.

The use of MS teams continues to be encouraged for remote meetings.

Common areas shared with other tenants

Objective: To maintain social distancing while using common areas.

Leeds – guidance has been issued by the Landlord in relation to common areas and signage installed.

As other tenants return to the offices AMH will liaise with them to discuss plans for staggering arrival/departure times.

The 5th and 6th Floor will use separate entrances and lifts.

Bradford – signage has been installed by the Landlord.

As other tenants return to the offices AMH will liaise with them to discuss plans for staggering arrival/departure times.

Accidents, security, and other incidents

Objective: To prioritise safety during incidents

A reminder has been issued to all staff that in an emergency people do not have to comply with social distancing guidelines if it would be unsafe

Fire Wardens – Staff who are attending the offices daily have been appointed as temporary fire wardens. The necessary procedures have been updated and online training provided for the nominated people. The procedure will be continually reviewed as more staff return to the office and daily numbers increase.

First Aid – In addition to qualified first aiders who may not be attending the offices each day an Appointed Person has been selected at each office. This person can be contacted in the event of an accident if a first aider is unavailable and will retain a first aid box, first aid book and will be responsible for calling the relevant emergency services. Online training has been provided.



Section 4 - Managing customers, visitors, and contractors

Objective: To minimise the number of unnecessary visits to the office and to make sure people understand what they need to do to maintain safety

Cleaners of both offices have been asked to delay the arrival onto floors/wings until staff have departed and will not attend until after 5pm. If staff wish to remain on site they must social distance.

Staff have been asked to cease personal deliveries to the office to limit contractors arriving on site and parcels requiring collection/delivery.

Visitors to the offices will be limited and by pre-arranged appointment only. All appointments must be booked in the normal way using Outlook and the required room and parking requested. All visitors will be asked to follow the social distancing guidance and follow good hygiene practices whilst on site. The member of staff attending the meeting will ensure the visitor is escorted both into and out of the premises. The guidance under section 3 explains meeting room use. Where possible all meetings will be held via Microsoft Teams. If a visitor reports that they are feeling unwell they must not attend the premises.

Contractor visits to be limited to days and times when fewer staff are on site. Before attending AMH will request their Risk Assessment for visiting client premises so we can ensure they follow this guidance whilst on site. Contractors will be encouraged to wash their hands-on arrival and our internal social distancing guidance will be explained. Staff will continue to be informed when contractors are on site to ensure social distancing guidance is followed.

The Landlords/ Managing Agents have installed the relevant signage in the building entrances at both offices.

Section 5 - Cleaning the Workplace

Objective: to make sure that any site that has been closed or partially operated is clean and ready to restart. To keep the workplace clean and prevent transmission by touching contaminated surfaces.

A deep clean was undertaken in Bradford on 11 May and Leeds on 12 May. Further deep cleans will be arranged on a three monthly basis to ensure hygiene is kept to a high standard.

The current cleaning regime has been reviewed with contractors and adapted to ensure daily cleaning of all multi contact points including door handles and push plates, light switches, telephones, desks, and all other surfaces. Kitchens/vacuuming/waste removal will be dealt with each day.

To maintain increased hygiene levels the daily cleaning has been adapted with the Landlord/Managing Agents for all common areas to include regular cleaning of the toilets, shower rooms and multi contact points. This will be carried out throughout the day at both offices.

Cleaning products have been provided in the shower rooms so staff can clean these before and after each use.

Staff have been reminded that all shared equipment should be wiped down and the relevant cleaning materials have been provided. Kitchens are stocked with the necessary cleaning materials so these can be cleaned after use. Paper towels are provided for hand drying together with hand soap and sanitiser. Cleaning wipes are available in each meeting room so tables, chairs and touch points can be cleaned as required.



Daily checks are completed to ensure all hand sanitiser, cleaning materials, hand soap, paper towels are fully stocked, and orders placed on a regular basis to maintain stock levels.

Wipes are available for staff to clean their monitors and keyboards. Staff are encouraged to ensure their desks are left clear each evening to ensure these surfaces can be properly cleaned.

H&S inspections are taking place each week to ensure that walkways are kept clear and staff will be informed if desks or work areas need tidying and this must be actioned immediately.

Hygiene

Objective: To help everyone keep good hygiene through the working day

Handwashing guidance issued to staff via email and posters installed in all kitchens and toilet facilities to remind staff of good hygiene practices and washing hands on a regular basis.

Hand sanitiser is available at the main entrance of each building and as you enter each wing or floor. Additional hand sanitiser is available in kitchen areas and meeting rooms.

A weekly reminder is issued to staff on the importance of hygiene, regular handwashing and social distancing.

Objective: To minimise the risk of transmission in changing rooms and showers

Shower rooms will now be cleaned twice daily by the Landlord's/Managing Agent's cleaning staff.

In addition, cleaning materials are available in each shower room so staff can also clean these after each use.

Staff have been advised not to leave personal belongings in the communal shower rooms and the relevant notices have been installed. Daily checks will be made to ensure this is being maintained.

Objective: To reduce transmission through contact with objects that come into the workplace and vehicles at the worksite

There is only one company van.

The use of the van will be limited to one person at a time. This will in normal circumstances be the same person each day but if this were not the case the van would be cleaned ready for another person to use.

Cleaning wipes and hand sanitiser are provided in the van. After each use the van will be wiped down on all touchpoints as appropriate. The monthly van check will identify if the stock of cleaning wipes and hand sanitiser is low and if the van requires a wash and valet.

Section 6: PPE in the Office

Current guidance does not require us to provide PPE for use in the office, but face coverings and clean keys are available from AMH for any staff who wish to use them.

Staff will wish to follow government guidance on PPE when travelling to and from the office.

When reception returns, we will review procedures to protect reception staff.



See Appendix 1 for updated guidance on face coverings issued August 2020.

Section 7 Shift Patterns and Working Groups

Objective: To change the way work is organised to create distinct groups and reduce the number of contacts each employee has and provide guidance in an event of a COVID-19 outbreak in the workplace.

A rota has now been put into place which limits occupancy levels on each floor/wing to ensure social distancing is maintained. This is constantly under review and will be revised as required. Numbers are currently limited and shift patterns/working groups will be reviewed before requesting that most non-furloughed staff return to work.

In the event of a COVID-19 outbreak Ann-Marie Hullah or in her absence Victoria Davey have been appointed as a single point of contact (SPOC) and would lead on contacting the local Public Health teams.

Section 8 Inbound/Outbound goods

Objective: To maintain social distancing and avoid surface transmission when goods enter and leave site

General Office staff and anyone assisting with incoming/outgoing post will be provided with disposable gloves which they can wear when carrying out this task. All envelopes/packages will be removed from the offices each day and disposed of accordingly.

Disposable gloves to be worn when taking receipt of any deliveries to the office. General Office to be informed when a delivery has arrived so they can meet the driver and give them the necessary instructions as to where the goods should be left and what social distancing measures need to be followed. When a delivery arrives a member of General Office will supervise this at a social distance. If a delivery must be signed for then again, the social distancing guidance must be followed. Only use your own pen when signing paperwork. Screens should not be signed.

Staff have been informed that personal parcels should not be delivered to the offices to reduce visitor numbers and packages passing between people.

If staff have an IT issue which requires a member of the team to either sit at their desk or touch the equipment, then disposable gloves should be worn, or equipment wiped down before use. Staff will be advised to leave their workstation if this is required in line with the social distancing guidance and to clean all surfaces and equipment when completed.

DOCUMENT VERSION HISTORY

Version	Author	Change Detail	Date Issued	Approved
1	VLD/AMH	n/a	June 2020	VLD
2	VLD/AMH	Full review	July 2020	VLD
3	VLD/AMH	Full review	Sept 2020	



Appendix 1 – Face Coverings

The government has updated the guidance on face coverings . This means that any visitors to our offices must now wear face coverings when attending meetings.

We will leave a supply of face coverings in the reception desk in Leeds. We don't have client meetings currently in Bradford but Ann-Marie/Jodie have some if required.

We are required to take reasonable steps to promote compliance so if you are making appointments with clients to attend the offices please inform them of this requirement. Obviously this does not apply if you make arrangements to meet a client outside or in restaurants, coffee shops etc

Please be mindful and respectful of circumstances where people are less able to wear face coverings. Those who have an age, health or disability reason for not wearing a face covering should not be asked to give any written evidence of this.

The guidance has not been updated to require office workers to wear face coverings in the work place. If you are attending enclosed meetings outside the office you should wear your face covering.



Appendix 2 – Guidance when feeling unwell

If you are feeling unwell you should contact your supervisor/HR to discuss whether you should come in before coming in.

If you have any of the following symptoms: a high temperature, a new continuous cough or a loss or change to sense of smell or taste, you must not attend the office (or go home if already in the office)

You should stay home and request a free NHS Test - inform HR that you have done this.

You should inform HR of anyone in the office that you had close contact within 48 hours prior to developing those symptoms.

Close contact for work purposes means anyone you had face to face contact with, within 1 metre, or any colleague you travelled in a vehicle with (given our social distance requirements no one should fall within this category but if there is please inform HR)

HR will inform those colleagues that they have been in close contact with someone who has symptoms. They will not disclose your name unless you confirm you are happy that they can.

Those colleagues will not be required to self isolate but should take extra precautions (avoid contact with high risk people, increase hygiene measures, be more vigilant of social distancing)

If you test positive you must inform HR – they will inform your close contact work colleagues (as will NHS Test and Trace) and they will be required to self isolate for 14 days. If those colleagues develop symptoms they must follow the above procedure.

You will have to self-isolate for at least 10 days from when your symptoms started.

If your test result is negative you can return to work (unless you have been in contact with someone who has tested positive in which case you must continue to self-isolate for the rest of the 14 days). Please send HR a copy of your negative test result.



Appendix 2 – Ventilation - Leeds

After further guidance from our engineers the air conditioning will now be on each day. This will be set at auto, 23. Please do not adjust the settings. We need to continue to ensure that there is ventilation into the floors. A selection of windows will be opened each morning. It is important that these are left open. If you want to open further windows then this is fine.