

COVID-19

Risk Assessment – 25th June 2020

166 Brinkburn Street, Newcastle

Update

The lockdown measures surrounding COVID-19 are clearly changing and we are closely monitoring the government's guidance. It would be prudent of us to start preparing for a return to the office and this correspondence aims to give further information of how we are planning for such a step, responsibly and safely.

In recent weeks, a return to work was "actively encouraged" for those who cannot work from home, whilst the guidance remained that for those able to work from home, should continue to do so.

It is to be expected that during the next few weeks, the lockdown will be eased further with more businesses being encouraged to re-open their workplaces allowing more employees a return to work.

Whilst the prospect of returning to the workplace will be an extremely anxious prospect for some employees, others will embrace the change as a positive move, ending a prolonged period of detachment and isolation.

At Silverbean and AGY47 we understand that each employee will have different feelings regarding a potential return, **we fully respect that** and will work with you through every step of the way, whenever that may be.

We are having to accept that COVID-19 will most likely be with us for some time to come. Like all businesses it is important that we plan accordingly, to ensure that a return to the workplace, when deemed appropriate, is safe, considered and has the health and safety of our staff at the heart of the decision-making processes.

We will not place the needs of the business above the welfare of our employees and are committed to taking the necessary steps to achieve this.

It is important that all staff contribute to our return to work strategy. New policies, procedures and control measures will only be effective with your input, understanding and appreciation.

Social distancing does not mean social disconnection

We are working hard to reduce the impact of any subsequent change to the minimum, however adjustments within our working environment are both inevitable

and essential. By contributing to the process, you can help everyone at Silverbean and AGY47 come through these difficult times, together and stronger.

In line with health and safety regulations, we must undertake a risk assessment to identify the hazards within the workplace which risk harm to those within it. COVID-19 is a new hazard which requires control measures to be considered. Any mitigation controls devised and implemented must reduce exposure of employees to the virus.

The risk assessment is a critical tool and allows us to plan for a safe return to work, so far as is reasonably practicable.

A popular method for approaching a risk assessment is to use the 'hierarchy of control' to reduce the risk from the hazard to as low as possible.

At the top of the hierarchy is **Elimination and Substitution**. As we now know, the only way that we can eliminate COVID-19 is by the manufacture of a successful vaccine.

Further down the hierarchy are **Engineering** controls. These may include matters such as the use of physical barriers (screens) to keep employees safely distanced from one another.

Administrative controls will be widely used in the control of COVID-19 within the working environment. Measures may include, redesigning the flow of people throughout the premises to avoid close contact, reducing the number of staff in the premises at any one time by working from home or using shifts and flexible working patterns, providing sufficient hand washing and hand sterilisation facilities, increase in cleaning regimes etc.

Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) is always at the bottom of the hierarchy and is generally considered the least effective control of a hazard as it does nothing to reduce the presence of a hazard from the environment and relies on people using it correctly. PPE is regarded as the last measure to consider and organisations are encouraged to seek measures from higher up the hierarchy of control.

Without doubt, good hand washing hygiene and social distancing are the most effective way of staying safe from COVID-19 and these two measures will be critical upon our return.

Overleaf we have produced a draft COVID-19 risk assessment for Silverbean and AYG47. It is important that you take some time to study this document and bring to our attention any omissions you may consider or suggestions which may enable our return to work to be as safe and as pleasant as possible. Please remember that a risk assessment is worthless unless the control measures are implemented and adhered to by **everyone** in the organisation.

Once finalised our risk assessment will become a live document requiring constant review and modification as guidance changes. Staff are encouraged to raise any concerns regarding health and safety in our workplace.

Hazard	Who might be harmed and how?	Controls	Do you need to do anything else to control this risk?	Action by who?	Action by when?	Completed
COVID-19	<p>Staff, suppliers, contractors, clients and visitors. COVID-19 is spread in minute water droplets that are expelled from the body through sneezing, coughing, talking and breathing. The virus can be transferred to the hands and from there to surfaces. It can survive on surfaces for a period after transfer (depending on such things as the surface type and moisture content). If it is passed from one person to another, while the majority survive infection (including many who will not experience any symptoms), some may suffer serious illness and in a small number of cases, some may die from the disease. It is regarded as a high hazard.</p>	<p>Employees have been working from home since before the UK lockdown. Currently and in accordance with government guidelines, those who can work from home, should work from home.</p> <p>We acknowledge the importance of consultation with all our staff and appreciate that It is a two-way process, allowing our staff to raise concerns and influence decisions on managing health and safety. Regular communication between management and all employees continues.</p> <p>We have been following guidance from the government, HSE and our own health and safety consultant</p>	<p>Return to work plans to be discussed and shared with all staff including distribution of the risk assessment.</p> <p>Back to work Inductions for all staff upon their return, to show and demonstrate new procedures, protocols, one-way routes etc.</p> <p>Ensure so far as is possible, that contractors, suppliers and visitors are aware of all procedures.</p>			

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COVID-19	Coronavirus (COVID-19) can make anyone seriously ill. But for some people, the risk is higher.	<p>We will not ask employees who have been identified by the NHS as being at higher risk, to return to work. Provision will be made to enable them to continue to work from home with further support provided by the business.</p> <p>Employees identified in moderate-risk groups will have their circumstances discussed and carefully considered with the priority on allowing them to continue working from home.</p>	<p>All staff to be asked if they are in the identified NHS 'at risk' groups. For personal reasons they may not have previously disclosed this information. (appendix 1). This process will be classified as highly confidential and discussed thoroughly with staff who come forward.</p> <p>Ask employees if they are caring for adults or children who are in the higher risk groups. Any employees in this group will have their circumstances discussed and carefully considered</p>			
COVID-19	<p>Anxiety and stress.</p> <p>The COVID-19 pandemic will affect people in many ways and there is significant research to show this. The prospect of returning to the workplace may be traumatic for some, whilst a relief for others.</p> <p>Some employees may know or be grieving for others who have contracted the virus, whilst others may be suffering from issues caused by being in isolation without social interaction.</p> <p>Staff will inevitably have differing opinions regarding the pandemic which may cause upset and anxiety for those who are worried and concerned or have personal experience of the seriousness of the virus.</p>	<p>Regular communication and team meetings with staff to ensure they feel supported.</p> <p>Staff have undergone some mental health training during their time away from the office.</p> <p>Management recognise COVID-19 as a high-risk hazard and appreciate the effects it may have on staff. All employees will be required to follow all new procedures imposed upon the business following completion of risk assessment.</p>	<p>Offer continual support to both those working from home and from the office.</p> <p>Opportunities for one-to-one or small group discussions to help those who need it.</p> <p>Portland Health and Safety to help with wellness and welfare assessments</p> <p>Staff need to be informed about new procedures prior to a return with an emphasis on the need for everyone to respect and adhere to the guidelines. Any incidents of non-compliance will be dealt with promptly. Continual monitoring required to stop poor habits from emerging.</p>			

Hazard	Who might be harmed and how?	Controls	Do you need to do anything else to control this risk?	Action by who?	Action by when?	Completed
COVID-19	Employees travelling to work could encounter infected people. The risk of transmission can be reduced by reducing the number of people you come into close contact with.	<p>Staff to be asked to try and avoid travelling by public transport as far as is possible.</p> <p>Flexible start times will be discussed to avoid staff using public transport at peak times.</p> <p>Staff asked to avoid car sharing but if not possible, limit to sharing with same person, plenty of ventilation and cleaning of common touch points (door handles, seat belt connectors)</p>				
COVID-19	Employees could become infected if a colleague returns to work infected with COVID-19	Inform all staff to stay at home and to self-isolate as per NHS guidelines if they have any of the COVID-19 symptoms or someone within their household has symptoms. Staff asked to access the NHS test and trace service (Appendix 2) .				
COVID-19	Employee could fall ill with COVID-19 whilst at work	<p>A staff member who develops symptoms at work will be asked to return home as soon as possible if safe to do so and avoiding use of public transport.</p> <p>A room for self-isolation will be provided if unable to leave immediately.</p> <p>Staff member will be asked to access the NHS test and trace service (Appendix 2) and follow procedures including arrangement of COVID-19 test.</p>	<p>Ensure HR records up to date with emergency contact details.</p> <p>Set up system to ensure the affected member of staff has returned home safely.</p> <p>Plan required for cleaning employee's workstation and self-isolation room if applicable.</p>			

		Other employees will not need to self-isolate as long as they have been adhering to social distancing. If they have been in close contact for more than 15 minutes, they should self-isolate for 14 days, and contact NHS test, and trace if they develop COVID-19 symptoms.				
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COVID-19	Evidence suggests that the virus can exist for up to 72 hours on surfaces. Good personal hygiene and regular handwashing is acknowledged as one of the most effective ways to stop the spread of COVID-19.	<p>Good washroom facilities provided with automatic sensor hand dryers.</p> <p>Hand sanitising units have been ordered and will be positioned in strategic locations i.e. front entrance, queue for kitchen, top and bottom of stairs. Ensure adequate supply of refills.</p> <p>Staff have their own allocated workstations so no hot desking. Staff will have responsibility for cleaning their own workstation at the end of each shift. Disposable disinfectant wipes and personal hand sanitiser gel for each employee has been ordered.</p> <p>Key fobs for magnetic entry door locks have been obtained to eliminate need for staff to use key code entry</p> <p>Minimise the requirement of using meeting rooms but ensure staff clean their chair arms and table space if used.</p>	<p>Good personal hygiene to be encouraged through inductions, meetings, and signage.</p> <p>Produce list of communal touch points where staff must wash or sanitise hands immediately after using. i.e. fridge door handles, kettles, handrails.</p> <p>Create staff cleaning rota to ensure that strategic areas are cleaned more regularly throughout the day i.e. kitchen benches, wash hand basins, toilet seats and push button flush '</p> <p>Key fobs require programming</p> <p>Only use seating which can be wipe cleaned after use. Avoid sofas and soft furnishings.</p> <p>Encourage staff to avoid needlessly touching surfaces. This will require regular reinforcement and messaging. Consider signage.</p> <p>Review the provision of certain foods i.e. bread and pastries to minimise contact.</p>			

Hazard	Who might be harmed and how?	Controls	Do you need to do anything else to control this risk?	Action by who?	Action by when?	Completed
COVID-19	The risk of infection increases the closer you are to another person with the virus, and the amount of time you spend in close contact with them. Current guidelines state a 2m distance should be kept from person to person.	<p>A Phased return to work is being considered once guidelines change, this will help to ensure a controlled number of staff on site at any one time.</p> <p>Open plan nature of the premises enables good sight lines for staff to avoid the need for close contact.</p> <p>Staff to observe the 2m social distancing guidelines throughout premises.</p> <p>Work stations have been arranged which will allow a 2m separation (during a phased return).</p> <p>Break times to be staggered to ensure numbers using kitchen, washrooms and break rooms are controlled.</p> <p>Staff to be discouraged from making unnecessary movement around office.</p>	<p>Communicate as and when required</p> <p>Use signage to clearly mark out traffic routes where required including right of way on stairs. One-way system where appropriate. Barrier screens may be required for certain sections.</p> <p>Use signage where appropriate and communicate on a regular basis.</p> <p>Once office returns to full capacity; extra screening will be required for some workstations if social distancing remains.</p> <p>Consider how meeting rooms will be used. Reduce number of participants from smaller rooms (remove chairs). Minimise the need for face to face meetings if possible. Use large meeting room even for small meetings.</p> <p>Consider changing downstairs seating arrangements to minimise close contact. Use signage on benches to ensure adequate spacing during break times and meetings.</p>			
COVID-19	Evidence suggests that the virus is less likely to be passed on in well-ventilated buildings and outdoors.	First floor has numerous windows which can be opened to help ventilation.	Limit use of smaller meeting rooms which have limited airflow.			
Stairs	Increased risk of trips on stairs as staff may be afraid of hand contact with handrails		Encourage staff with signage to use the handrails for safety and to sanitise or wash after use.			

Appendix 1

People at higher risk from coronavirus

Coronavirus (COVID-19) can make anyone seriously ill. But for some people, the risk is higher.

There are 2 levels of higher risk:

- high risk (clinically extremely vulnerable)
- moderate risk (clinically vulnerable)

People at high risk (clinically extremely vulnerable)

People at high risk from coronavirus include people who:

- have had an organ transplant
- are having chemotherapy or antibody treatment for cancer, including immunotherapy
- are having an intense course of radiotherapy (radical radiotherapy) for lung cancer
- are having targeted cancer treatments that can affect the immune system (such as protein kinase inhibitors or PARP inhibitors)
- have blood or bone marrow cancer (such as leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma)
- have had a bone marrow or stem cell transplant in the past 6 months, or are still taking immunosuppressant medicine
- have been told by a doctor they you have a severe lung condition (such as cystic fibrosis, severe asthma or severe COPD)
- have a condition that means they have a very high risk of getting infections (such as SCID or sickle cell)
- are taking medicine that makes them much more likely to get infections (such as high doses of steroids or immunosuppressant medicine)
- have a serious heart condition and are pregnant

Information:

If you are at high risk from coronavirus, you should have received a letter from the NHS and been advised to take extra steps to protect yourself. This includes not leaving your home for any reason (called shielding).

Speak to your GP if you have not been contacted and think you should have been

People at moderate risk (clinically vulnerable)

People at moderate risk from coronavirus include people who:

- are 70 or older
- are pregnant
- have a lung condition that is not severe (such as asthma, COPD, emphysema or bronchitis)
- have heart disease (such as heart failure)
- have diabetes
- have chronic kidney disease
- have liver disease (such as hepatitis)
- have a condition affecting the brain or nerves (such as Parkinson's disease, motor neurone disease, multiple sclerosis or cerebral palsy)
- have a condition that means they have a high risk of getting infections
- are taking medicine that can affect the immune system (such as low doses of steroids)
- are very obese (a BMI of 40 or above)

What to do if you are at moderate risk

If you are at moderate risk from coronavirus, it is important you follow the advice on social distancing.

This means you should stay at home as much as possible. But you can go out to work (if you cannot work from home) and for things like getting food or exercising.

Unlike people at high risk, you will not get a letter from the NHS advising you to stay at home at all times.

Pregnancy advice

If you are pregnant and worried about coronavirus, it is advised that you speak to your midwife or maternity team for further advice.

Appendix 2

How NHS Test and Trace Works

Part 1: for someone with symptoms of coronavirus

1. isolate: as soon as you experience coronavirus symptoms, medical advice is clear: you must self-isolate for at least 7 days. Anyone else in your household must self-isolate for 14 days from when you started having symptoms
2. test: order a test immediately at www.nhs.uk/coronavirus or call 119 if you have no internet access
3. results: if your test is positive, you must complete the remainder of your 7-day self-isolation. Anyone in your household must also complete self-isolation for 14 days from when you started having symptoms. If your test is negative, you and other household members no longer need to self-isolate
4. share contacts: if you test positive for coronavirus, the NHS test and trace service will send you a text or email alert or call you with instructions of how to share details of people with whom you have had close, recent contact and places you have visited. It is important that you respond as soon as possible so that we can give appropriate advice to those who need it. You will be told to do this online via a secure website or you will be called by one of our contract tracers.

Part 2: if you are contacted by the NHS test and trace service because you have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for coronavirus

1. alert: you will be alerted by the NHS test and trace service if you have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for coronavirus. The alert will usually come by text, email or phone call. You should then log on to the NHS test and trace website, which is normally the easiest way for you and the service to communicate with each other – but, if not, a trained call handler will talk you through what you must do. Under-18s will get a phone call and a parent or guardian will be asked to give permission for the call to continue
2. isolate: you will be told to begin self-isolation for 14 days from your last contact with the person who has tested positive. It is really important to do this even if you do not feel unwell because, if you have been infected, you could become infectious to others at any point up to 14 days. Your household does not need to self-isolate with you, if you do not have symptoms, but they must take extra care to follow the guidance on social distancing and handwashing and avoid contact with you at home
3. test if needed: if you develop symptoms of coronavirus, other members of your household must self-isolate immediately at home for 14 days and you

must book a test at www.nhs.uk/coronavirus or call 119 if you have no internet access. If your test is positive, you must continue to stay at home for at least 7 days and we will get in touch to ask about your contacts since they must self-isolate. If your test is negative, you must still complete your 14-day self-isolation period because the virus may not be detectable yet - this is crucial to avoid unknowingly spreading the virus.