

**Returning to the workplace and working from home safely**

**Latest briefing for staff**

13 July 2020

Those staff working in our nine priority sites will hopefully be seeing lots of activity as we’ve started preparing them for the return of up to 30% of normal staffing numbers. This includes PPE stations at entrances, configuring furniture for social distancing and putting up signage.

Please note that our policy on working from home has not changed and is still that staff who can work from home should continue to do so and avoid coming into any Trust site.

We’ll be holding workshops with the teams who work from our nine priority sites in the coming weeks to determine who comes on site when. We’ll be starting with our community mental health bases (St Mary’s House, St Mary’s Hospital and Aire Court) as they are the sites that have the most shared spaces. We are also prioritising locations like The Becklin Centre, where we know we have services that need to work on site, but also require urgent conversations to ensure they are working in a safe environment.

For those who can work from home, our position is that you should only go to work at a Trust site if:

* There is a specific piece of work or a task you cannot complete at home (like sorting the incoming post), and
* Your manager is made aware, undertakes a risk assessment and signs off on this activity.

**Cleaning**

We’ve started a programme of deep cleaning across the nine priority sites, starting at Asket Croft and Asket House. We’ll aim to publish the full schedule soon.

If you are currently working at one of the nine priority sites, please ensure your working area is completely free of clutter, which means removing things like files and papers from desks, shelves, floors and tops of cabinets to allow the deep clean to take place.

We’ve developed a standard operating procedure for daily cleaning schedules with our in house and contractor teams, which will be put in place once the deep cleans are finished.

**Non priority sites part of the phase two plan**

Now that our phase one plan is in full swing, we’ve started thinking about how we can re-open our other non-priority sites for up to 30% of normal staffing – which is phase two.

We know people are getting frustrated and are anxious to get clarity, but we have to do this work in the right order with priority going to front line service delivery.

**Kit and equipment to improve working from home**

Our senior management team has approved a process for managers to order kit and equipment for their staff to improve their working from home conditions. We are now developing a simple template for managers to order items for their teams. We hope to have this with you in the next two weeks.

Any items required will need to have been identified in people’s wellbeing assessment. [You can access the assessment here](https://www.leedsandyorkpft.nhs.uk/our-services/services-list/health-wellbeing-staff/). So please ensure this has been completed first to justify any required kit and equipment.

Occupational Health advice and Display Screen Equipment (DSE) assessments may also be required. Guidance on how to request a DSE assessment [can be found here](https://www.leedsandyorkpft.nhs.uk/our-services/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/05/DSE-response-to-Covid-19.docx).

**Next steps**

Please make sure you adhere to social distancing guidelines in order to protect yourself and your colleagues.  For example, you should make use of the numerous empty offices/ rooms in our sites in order to work at a distance from your colleagues. If you are unable to do this please speak to your manager urgently.

We hope all the logistical work on the nine phase one priority sites will have been completed by 24 July with new arrangements in place by 3 August. However we will provide more updates on these timelines as the work progresses. The latest flow chart with timelines on [can be found here](https://www.leedsandyorkpft.nhs.uk/our-services/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/04/Risk-Assessment-Flow-Chart-2-7-20.pdf).

We’re also producing a Return to Work & Working from Home Safely handbook for staff, which brings together a lot of the emerging advice, guidance and best practice in one place, to hopefully make it easier to follow. We aim to have this ready by early August.

**More information, asking questions and feedback**

We will continue to update our [Back to workplace safely and working from home web page](https://www.leedsandyorkpft.nhs.uk/our-services/home-wherever-possible-working-home-guidance/) as the project progresses. You can find more information about the project there.

We know there are currently lots of unanswered questions about returning to the workplace safely. This is as much as we can share for now but we are committed to on-going communication and engagement with affected teams going forward.

Please raise any questions through your usual line management routes in the first instance.

If you have questions that cannot be answered locally, either about safe home working or coming back to one of our sites, please email our [corona.virus@nhs.net](mailto:corona.virus@nhs.net) address and we’ll ensure this reaches the right people to help.