

Returning to the workplace safely

Latest briefing for staff

19 June 2020

Many staff are asking questions about returning safely to the workplace and how long it will take. We're aiming to be as open and honest with you as possible.

It's important to say this isn't just about our buildings and how many people we can fit in them. We're following the full range of government guidance, summarised in their [5 steps to working safely](#) which are:

1. Carry out a COVID-19 risk assessment
2. Develop cleaning, handwashing and hygiene procedures
3. Help people to work from home
4. Maintain 2m social distancing, where possible
5. Where people cannot be 2m apart, manage transmission risk

We've formed a Return to the Workplace task force (see table below). From Monday 22 June Richard Hill (Health & Safety lead), Stan Cutcliffe (Infection, Prevention and Control lead) and Dave Syms (Chair of Staffside) will be going out and about supporting representatives from our identified nine priority sites to conduct on-site risk assessments.

| Return to workplace task force | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Directorate | Nominated representative(s) | Nine priority sites |
| Operations | Judith Barnes | 1. Becklin Centre |
| | Kurt Maloney/Claire Layton | 2. Newsam Centre |
| | Paul Exley | 3. The Mount |
| | Nigel Whelan | 4. Asket |
| | Lyndsay Brown | 5. Aire Court |
| | Josef Faulkner | 6. St Mary's House |
| | Julie Howard | 7. St Mary's Hospital |
| | Sally Rawcliffe-Foo | 8. Clifton House |
| | Amanda Naylor | 9. Parkside Lodge |
| Workforce | Lindsay Jensen | All sites |

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| Staffside | Dave Syms | All sites |
| Infection Control | Stan Cutcliffe | All sites |
| Environment | Myles Callaway Jo Creek | All sites |
| IT | Terry Sandford | All sites |
| Logistics | Andy Mobbs Darren Wilson Paul Flint | All sites |

This work is happening alongside other interlinked pieces of work. For example, care services are working out new operating models in line with the principles, including how services are prioritised and supported to reset, recover or restart some parts of their services. Leadership teams are undertaking impact assessments to inform this work, collaborating with each other and improvement colleagues to help develop new models that will support recovery. There are also the on-going individual wellbeing assessments and supporting people to work at home safely in the longer term i.e. wellbeing, furniture, technology etc.

All the shops are opening, so why is it taking so long for us?

All this preparatory risk assessment work will show us how much we've got to do to make our sites and operating models safe. There are many other variables including redeployed staff, results coming back from test and trace, shielded staff and more anticipated changes to government guidance.

The worst thing we could do now would be to rush into something unsafe, which risks an outbreak that could set us back weeks. It's right that we are careful, cautious and considered.

We know this will be frustrating for many staff who are keen to resume "normal" operations, or return to their regular teams. We have to be honest and at this point we can't be absolutely sure when this will happen.

We'll be presenting our findings and proposed next steps to the Trust's senior management team on 15 July – so we hope to share more with you then about how quickly we can do the work to start moving more people back into sites.

What should I do now?

If you work in one of the nine priority sites, please help us by working with our Return to the Workplace task force to complete your risk assessments as quickly as possible.

Line managers please ensure you conduct individual wellbeing assessments with your teams as quickly as you can, prioritising any Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff members. [You can find the paperwork here.](#)

And please – for those that are working from home continue to do so until we let you know any differently.

Asking questions and feedback

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.

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 address and we'll ensure this reaches the right people to help.