

Returning to the workplace and working from home safely

Latest briefing for staff

26 June 2020

As lockdown restrictions are gradually lifted and people can start enjoying more freedoms in daily life, we are more conscious than ever that we need to reinforce the message that staff need to continue to work from home and stay away from Trust sites as much as possible.

There have been warnings to this effect from leading health officials, clinicians, politicians and academics, especially in light of disturbing scenes of large numbers of people gathered at beaches, parties and celebratory events.

Our work on returning staff to the workplace safely and supporting you to work from home continues. Here's a quick update on where we are now.

Risk Assessment Process

All desktop risk assessments have now been completed at our 9 priority sites.

On-site visits have been completed at Parkside Lodge, St Mary's House, Newsam Centre and Becklin Centre with all areas scoring in yellow or green risk categories which is positive news. We are grateful to those who've led and participated in these assessments. The remaining sites will be completed next week.

The results of the risk assessment process will come to the Return to the Workplace group on 2 July for review. Risk assessments including Datix, site plans and revised building occupancy plans will then to be presented to our senior leadership "Gold Command" meeting on 15 July 2020. They will take the decision to certify the Trust as compliant at this stage, and whether we can proceed with the implementation of the logistical work required to make our sites safe for the return of some staff.

You can see a [flowchart and timeline of that process here](#).

Frequently asked questions

Wearing face masks

All visitors and staff are now required to wear face masks in clinical and non-clinical areas i.e. communal areas/offices, and designated face mask stations have been set up in specific locations across our Trust buildings.

As of Monday 15 June you will be able to collect your face masks from these stations as well as dispose of them in clinical waste bins located nearby. Signage will be available to clearly identify these stations and you will notice new “keep left” signage posted in corridors to help maintain social distancing and safe use of enclosed areas.

Full information can be found in the [Infection Control and PPE section of our website](#).

Hot desking is banned

One of our key principles for bringing staff back to the workplace safely is that all Trust offices must implement a no hot desk policy and staff that need to be in an office are assigned a desk. Travel between Trust sites should be kept to an absolute minimum. You can find more detail about that in our [outline plan and principles document here](#).

Safe working from home and DSE assessments

We recognise that a lot of staff are still working from home and we thank you for continuing to do this.

It's important to say that staff need to replicate, as far as possible, best practice office working conditions at home, including suitable desks, chairs and other workstation equipment.

Some staff have taken this from their offices and that is okay so long as any equipment you are taking home is being logged. However we recognise not everyone can do this, especially from shared community team bases.

As people are completing their personal wellbeing assessments it has become clear that a large number of people require Display Screen Equipment (DSE) assessments and potentially need extra equipment. Guidance on how to request an assessment [can be found here](#).

We are rapidly developing a process that will enable managers to source or purchase the necessary equipment to enable safe working from home. We'll update on progress of this next week.

What about the non-priority Trust sites?

People are asking us about our other Trust sites that do not fall into the priority category. It's important to say that we haven't forgotten about these sites and they will be included in a second phase of our safe return to the workplace project, once we've completed the work on our nine priority sites where we deliver our inpatient clinical services.

However, we have to reiterate that people should not be coming into work at these sites unless essential work cannot be completed at home or remotely, and all other options have been exhausted.

More information, asking questions and feedback

We will continue to update our [Back to workplace safely and working from home](#) web page 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 address and we'll ensure this reaches the right people to help.