

Returning to the workplace and working from home safely

Latest briefing for staff

6 July 2020



We've now completed all the on-site environment inspections at our nine priority sites across the Trust. This incorporated a range of reasonable preventative measures to enable a safe return to the workplace for up to 30% of staff at any one time.

The majority of sites were classified as low risk which is very positive and we'd like to thank everyone who took part and made this happen so quickly.

As previously reported, there cannot be any "hot desking" going forward. By this we mean that you are unable to drop in at a site - either your usual place of work or a base you are close to - and expect to use any desk. All desks need to be booked in advance, so colleagues can be clear who is working at what desk on a given day and allow time for sanitising. This will also apply to meeting rooms. We will be working this process through with you in the coming weeks.

We picked up during the site inspections that some colleagues were confused about wearing face masks and social distancing. Surgical mask should be worn by all staff when on site as this is safest way to protect you and others from spreading the virus. Our policies and procedures on this can be found on the [Infection Control and PPE section of our website here](#).

Plans for our nine sites – view them on Staffnet

We've developed individual plans for each of the nine priority sites which show how our plans will be implemented in each location.

We'll shortly be posting them on a news page on Staffnet (not the website) as they go into very specific detail about each of our sites and we don't want these documents to be shared with the wider public. Large print outs will also be displayed on site.

Next steps

From this week colleagues will be making the necessary changes on site to enable up to 30% of staff to return at any given time. This includes displaying signage and identifying which desks can and cannot be used.

Staff working on site will see this taking place, along with a suite of posters, site plans and signage to help staff on site understand what to do when they are on site.

We'll also be holding workshops in the coming weeks with each team that occupies one of our nine priority sites. This will be for teams to discuss who comes on site, when, and how this works with other teams using the same site as them.

We're currently in the process of recruiting a team of Site Facilities Co-ordinators who will be making sure our safety measures are working at each site, and helping solve any problems as they arise.

Before anyone comes back, there will be a deep clean of communal areas, offices and meeting rooms of the nine priority sites. To help the domestic team do this, your working area will need to be completely free of clutter and paperwork. Please clear all files and papers from desks, shelves, floors and tops of cabinets to allow for a deep clean to take place. We'll be in touch soon to share dates of when each building will receive its deep clean.

We hope all the logistical work 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](#).

Safe working from home update

Throughout the pandemic we've been committed to supporting you to work from home and we thank all those who've done this.

We've asked all managers and staff to complete a wellbeing assessment. This takes into account staff mental wellbeing about their personal context, working environment, considers age, gender, ethnicity and health vulnerabilities (as identified by the Government) and any additional impacts, alongside an assessment of an individual's role and workplace environment. This assessment also seeks to understand whether staff have the appropriate tools to do their role from their home and includes the completion of a Display Screen Equipment (DSE) assessment for the home environment.

Appropriate equipment is one of the key measures of the wellbeing assessment. Any equipment required to undertake home working safely should be identified as part of the assessment and managers are responsible for considering and implementing requests that are reasonable. Where appropriate, occupational health/DSE advice may be required. Guidance on how to request a DSE assessment [can be found here](#).

We're finalising a process for managers to order the "kit and equipment" they need for their home working colleagues. We hope this will be approved in the next week.

Video consultations and virtual platforms for clinical practice

Clinical teams have asked for clarity on what video conferencing platforms the Trust considers to be safe for contact with patients, as this is an essential tool for conducting clinical work from home.

Colleagues from our Clinical Work Stream have developed a new [standard operating procedure for Video Consultations/ Virtual Platforms in Direct Clinical Practice](#) during the pandemic.

[This can also be found on our website](#) under 'Standard Operating Procedures'.

This document sets out the Trust policy for the protection of the confidentiality, integrity and effective use of video consultation platforms for use within service user consultations, and establishes the Trust's and user's responsibilities.

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.