



# Policy for Dealing with a Pandemic in the Workplace

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## A) INTRODUCTION

The Company is committed to ensuring the health and safety of its workforce and the following procedure sets out the contingency measures that the Company will bring into effect in the event of a pandemic outbreak. The following procedure aims to ensure that the Company will be able to continue its business operations to the best of its abilities in such an event while protecting, as far as is reasonably practicable, our employees.

In outlining its procedures however, the Company expects all of its employees to take reasonable care for themselves and others, to behave responsibly and sensibly, and to act at all times in line with the latest guidance from the Government.

## B) COMMUNICATION

During a pandemic, the Company will nominate a senior member of staff who will be responsible for communicating important messages to our workforce, including on the impact of the pandemic on our operations and the Company's response to it, and to whom all questions from the workforce should be directed.

Communication may be undertaken by group meeting, email or by letter, or by other digital means if it is no longer possible to operate from the workplace.

## C) BUSINESS TRAVEL

The Company recognises that there may be restrictions placed upon travel so will consider every business trip that is planned for the near future on an individual basis and identify if alternatives to making the trip can be considered, where possible. This may include postponing the trip or holding meetings digitally.

If travel is deemed necessary, we will conduct a full risk assessment into the risks associated with the trip with involvement from employees who are being asked to travel.

## D) EMPLOYEE TRAVEL

During a pandemic, certain countries may be identified as posing a particularly high risk to visitors. The Company accepts that some of its employees will have made plans to travel which may include pre-booked and paid for holidays. We would therefore ask that employees consider, for their health reasons, whether travelling to these countries is the best thing to do. If a decision is made to travel, we ask that employees let their manager know of the countries to be visited so that their return can be managed appropriately.

If you would like to cancel any pre-booked annual leave, you should discuss this with your manager however please be aware that we are under no obligation to allow you to change or cancel any previously booked holiday.

## **E) INFECTION CONTROL MEASURES AND PERIODS OF SELF-ISOLATION**

We expect all employees to follow all guidelines issued from the World Health Organisation or as advised by the UK Government or any other authority, in both daily life and whilst at work. This includes any social distancing measures. In addition, depending on the nature of the pandemic, the Government may require people to self-isolate, which means staying at home and not having contact with other people. In this situation, the following applies:

- All employees should keep up to date on Government guidance on who should self-isolate.
- If you are required to self-isolate, you must inform your manager at the earliest opportunity. Your manager will keep in contact with you during this period. You must not attend work during the isolation period.
- Where feasible, we may consider whether you can work from home during this period.
- Details of any payment being made during this time will be advised to you at the start of the self-isolation and will be in accordance with Government guidance at the time.

## **F) BECOMING ILL**

If you become ill from the threat to health, you should take and follow medical advice on the length of your sickness absence. Prior to returning to work you should ensure you are symptom free. You must not return before you are completely recovered. Your manager will keep in touch during your absence and will confirm your return date with you.

Our normal sickness absence and sick pay procedure will apply. You are required to produce a medical certificate for illnesses lasting more than seven calendar days, however, we appreciate that you may not be in a position to obtain a medical certificate in usual timescales, therefore you should provide it as soon as is reasonably practicable.

Alternative medical certificates may be accepted, where it is confirmed by the UK Government that such are acceptable as evidence.

## **G) ATTENDANCE AT WORK**

Unless you are sick or are in self-isolation in accordance with Government guidance and have followed our usual reporting procedures in relation to absence, or not attending work under our specific instruction, you are expected to attend work as normal. However, if there is a reason why you think you may have been exposed to a threat to your health, or you begin to feel ill whilst at work, you should let your manager know.

The Company's leave and absence policies will be continuously reviewed as the status of the pandemic changes.

## **H) WORKING AT HOME OR ANOTHER LOCATION**

It may be necessary for us to require you to work from an alternative work location if, for example, instructions from a third party mean that entry into our current workplace is not permitted. Your flexibility in this regard will be expected, however, all instructions of this nature will be reasonable.

The Company will consider, as part of its general approach to maintaining normal business operations, whether employees are to work from home and will take into consideration Government guidance on this issue. Obviously, this may not be possible in every case due to the nature of the business and individual roles. However, where applicable, we will assess the viability of this option, taking into consideration any equipment needed, at the relevant time and, as a result, you may be required to work from home for a temporary period. Employees should not assume that they will be permitted to work from home and advance authorisation will be needed in every case.

## **I) TEMPORARY BUSINESS CLOSURE**

Depending on the impact of the pandemic, it may become clear that the business is temporarily unable to continue its operations as normal. In some cases, we may be advised or required to close the business by the UK Government or other authority. In this scenario, we may be forced to close all, or part, of the business temporarily until such a time as we are able to resume operations. Whilst we will do everything we can to ensure that this does not happen, including the implementation of temporary home working where the nature of the role allows, we may be in a position where we are unable to provide you with work as normal. Where this happens, we may be left with no option but to place you on lay off, short time working or designate you as a furloughed worker during which time you will cease to do all work for the Company. Any payments made to employees during lay off, short time working or furlough will be subject to legislation and Government guidance in place at the relevant time.

## **J) RETURNING TO WORK**

In the event that our business closes, we will closely monitor the situation in order to ascertain a time at which it may re-open, or if it has remained open but we have implemented a period of home-working, a time at which we are able to re-open the normal workplace. We will take into consideration guidance from the UK Government or other relevant authorities when making this assessment, including giving utmost priority to whether it is safe to do so and we will keep you updated on the current situation. When the decision has been made to re-open, we will endeavour to give you as much notice of this as possible. Heads of department will be responsible for contacting their team members to ensure that the time and date on which you are required to return to work has been communicated, as well as any additional health and safety measures that we require you to observe on your return. Unless otherwise directed, you will be required to return to the location at which you were working prior to the shutdown/home working period, and on the same hours of work.

On the first day back in the workplace, managers will hold meetings with their teams to welcome you back and deliver any important messages about any adjustments to working that may still be required, for example, in respect of health and safety measures, in the delivery of our service to our customers. Your manager will remain the initial point of contact for any questions that you may have about the delivery of our service on your return. If you work part-time, or are not able to return on the re-open day due to sickness or other absence, your manager will arrange a return to work meeting with you on your first day back.

Any equipment that you were provided with for the specific purpose of carrying out your duties at home during the shutdown/home working period, including but not limited to mobile phones and laptops, must be returned to us. You must also ensure that any company documentation or information used or printed out in your home is returned or brought into the workplace.

If you were already a home-worker prior to the shutdown/wider home-working period, your manager will arrange a digital return to work discussion with you.