

COVID-19

Risk Assessment for Safe Office Working

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This risk assessment has been created in accordance with the HM Government Working Safely During COVID-19 in offices guidance.

1. – All employers should carry out a risk assessment

Employers have a legal responsibility to protect workers and others from risk to their health and safety. MAPS has thought about the risks staff face and will do everything practicable to minimise them, recognising that we cannot completely eliminate the risk of COVID-19.

MAPS will consult with our staff on health and safety as well as with the chosen health and safety representatives.

If you have any health and safety concerns, you can contact the following:-

- The employee representatives – Ilcen Sezer and/or Sarah Davey
- Your trade union
- www.hse.gov.uk/contact/concerns
- HSE by phone on 0300 003 1647

1.1 – MAPS has reduced risk to the lowest reasonable practicable level by taking these preventative measures in order of priority.

- **Important - Employees should not attend the office if they have symptoms of the virus**
 - **Remember, the symptoms are:-**
 - **a high temperature**
 - **a new, continuous cough**
 - **a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste**
- **If you experience any symptoms you must arrange to have a PCR test and not attend the office. You must self-isolate until you have received your result. If the result of this is negative then you can resume as normal. If the result is positive you must continue to self-isolate and inform HR immediately.**
- **We encourage staff who attend the office but do not have symptoms to perform regular lateral flow tests. If a lateral flow test comes back positive then you must immediately self isolate and not attend the office. We will ask you to send us a photo of your positive lateral flow test.**
- Increasing the frequency of handwashing and surface cleaning. We have anti-bacterial soap in the kitchen, paper towels and anti-bacterial wipes for surface cleaning.
- Enabling all staff to continue to work from home where necessary. When staff do attend the office we have made every effort to allow extra room to allow people to keep their distance.
- Active desks have been selected so people do not sit face to face within close range and have been separated with screens.
- We will individually consider any staff who fall into the vulnerable category. Staff should speak to HR if they have any concerns.

Positive tests

Anybody that has received a positive PCR or Lateral Flow test must immediately contact HR. We will also ask you to confirm any close contacts you have had in the office. As per the current government guidelines, a close contact is:-

- face-to-face contact including being coughed on or having a face-to-face conversation within one metre
- been within one metre for one minute or longer without face-to-face contact
- been within 2 metres of someone for more than 15 minutes (either as a one-off contact, or added up together over one day)
- travelled in the same vehicle or a plane

The employee who tested positive should self-isolate for 10 days. Government guidelines state that if you meet certain criteria, you may be able to come out of isolation early but we will still ask staff to work from home for the full 10 day period.

- For anybody who is identified as a close contact and they have been double jabbed, there is no longer a need to self-isolate.
- Anybody who is identified as a close contact and they have not been double jabbed will still be required to self-isolate as well as obtaining a PCR test.
- When identifying and contacting close contacts, HR will be asking the question about jabs and will advise accordingly.
- If we are informed of a positive test result and that person has attended the office, we will arrange for a deep clean that evening.

1.2 – Sharing the results of our risk assessment

We will share the results of our risk assessment with our entire workforce as well as publishing the results on our website.

2. – Staff will have the choice to work from home unless their role cannot be done from home

- The majority of MAPS staff will work from home most of the time. Some job roles cannot be performed from home and for those people, they will attend the office as needed.
- The office rota will be compiled by the relevant team manager and shared with HR.
- There are 31 active desks which are separated by Perspex screens
- Managers and Team Leaders are responsible for monitoring the wellbeing of team members who are working from home and ensure they stay connected.
- Managers and Team Leaders are responsible for keeping in touch with staff who are working from home regarding their welfare, mental and physical health and personal security.

- MAPS will provide equipment for people to work at home safely and effectively. Such things include – a laptop, remote access to the system, separate keyboard, separate mouse, laptop holder, backrest.

2.1 – Protect vulnerable individuals.

- Anyone who feels they fall into this category should speak to HR.
- We will take into account specific duties for those with protected characteristics including expectant mothers as well as those who live with clinically extremely vulnerable individuals. Anyone who falls into this category should speak to HR.
- All employees have access to the Health Assured Employee Assistance Programme offering 24 hour confidential advice and counselling.

Protecting individuals from BAME backgrounds

We believe that we have taken every possible step to ensure that the health of safety of all staff, including those from BAME backgrounds are protected from risks. If anybody has any specific concerns around this area then they should contact HR.

2.2 – Ensure individuals who are advised to stay at home under existing government guidance do so.

- Any staff member who is fit for work but is self-isolating should work from home.
- We will follow the current guidance on statutory sick pay in relation to COVID-19

2.2 – Treat everyone in the workplace equally

- We will understand and consider the particular circumstances of those with protected characteristics. If anybody has any concerns then contact HR.
- We will communicate appropriately with those workers to ensure they are safe.
- We will consider any reasonable adjustments that may need to be put in place.
- We will make reasonable adjustments to avoid disabled workers being put at any disadvantage and assess the health and safety risks for new or expectant mothers.
- We will ensure that the steps we take do not have an unjustifiable negative impact on some groups compared to others e.g. those with caring responsibilities or religious commitments.

3 – Social Distancing

- We advise that staff should continue to maintain 2m social distancing where possible. This applies to all parts of the business and not just where people spend most of their time.
 - Main entrance/exit – this is a revolving door which you access through individual divided sections. It activates automatically without the need to touch anything and is monitored by the main receptionist.
 - Stairs – use the stairs instead of the lift whenever possible
 - Lifts – The place markers in the lifts have now been removed but we advise that if you cannot maintain social distancing in the lift then you should use the stairs.
 - MAPS entrance/exit – we have a one-way system in place whereby staff will enter the office through the main door and exit the office through the post-room door. Avoid touching door handles where possible. Appropriate signage is displayed. We have covered every door handle, push plate and door release button with a protective covering which kills 99.99% of bacteria and viruses.
 - Toilets – always try to observe social distancing when using the toilets. If there are too many people in the toilets to enable you to keep your distance then you should wait or use the toilets on another floor.
 - Lunchroom – keep your distance when using the lunchroom. Only use the active desks to sit at. Check how many people are in there before entering to make a drink. Staff should eat at their desks where possible.
 - Post-room – a maximum of 3 people should access the post-room at any one time unless you are simply walking through to exit the office and you can maintain social distance whilst doing so.
 - Boardroom – the boardroom should only be used when necessary and a maximum of 8 people should use the room at any one time ensuring social distancing is maintained.

3.1 – Maintain social distancing on arrival and departure and wash hands on arrival.

- Large groups should not enter or leave the building together. Hold back so that social distancing can be observed at all times.
- Staff using public transport should follow the current guidelines on face masks and distancing as well as thoroughly washing their hands on arrival at the office.
- We will reduce congestion at entry points by using a one-way system.
- We have anti-bacterial handwash in the kitchen area as well as 70% alcohol sanitiser, in refillable bottles, by entry and exit points.
- Each active desk has its own hand sanitiser, anti-bacterial spray, anti-bacterial wipes and a box of tissues.

3.2 – Maintain social distancing wherever possible while people travel through and around the workplace

- Staff should regularly clean their equipment after use with antibacterial wipes and as a minimum, at the start and end of each day.
- Check who is in a certain area before proceeding to enter. If you cannot maintain social distancing in that area then do not enter until you can.
- Follow the directional signage that has been placed throughout the building.
- Make sure that priority is given to people with disabilities to access to the lifts.
- Staff need to be aware of who is around them before traveling through the office and building. Ensure you observe social distancing at all times.

3.3 – To maintain social distancing between individuals when they are at their workstations.

- We have reviewed the layout to allow people to work safely.
- We have used floor tape to mark a one way system
- Staff can work side-by-side and/or back-to-back rather than face-to-face.
- We have installed Perspex screens between desks to enhance staff safety.
- We will manage occupancy levels to enable social distancing by only having a maximum of 31 people in the office at desks.
- Additional people may be permitted to attend the office if they plan only on using the boardroom but this must be agreed with HR first and a decision will be based on current numbers in the office.
- In order to reduce the risk of transmission, the office will have a deep clean at the end of each week including disinfecting desk areas and equipment.

3.4 – To reduce transmission due to face-to-face meetings and maintain social distancing in meetings

- Where possible, meetings should take place remotely.
- Avoid sharing pens or other objects during meetings.
- Bottles of hand sanitizer are provided in each meeting room.

3.5 – To maintain social distancing while using common areas

- Staff should eat at their desk where possible.
- Staff should bring their own food in where possible.
- Staff should avoid sitting face-to-face when in the lunchroom using only the active seats.
- Staff are advised to avoid using the shower rooms.

3.6 – To prioritise safety during incidents

- In an emergency, for example, an accident or fire, people do not have to stay 2m apart if it would be unsafe.

- When assisting others, fire marshals and first aiders should pay particular attention to sanitation measures immediately after.

4 – Managing customers, visitors and contractors

4.1 – To minimise the number of unnecessary visits to offices

- Visits should be done remotely where possible.
- Where a site visit is required, guidance on social distancing and hygiene should be explained to visitors on or before arrival. All visitors need to wash their hands.
- Avoid any physical contact such as handshakes.
- We need to limit the number of visitors at any one time.
- Inform HR if you are arranging for a visitor to attend so we can monitor numbers.
- Maintenance and contractor visits should be arranged out of hours wherever possible.
- Visitors will no longer sign in and Reception is to keep an electronic record of all visitors.

4.2 – To make sure people understand what they need to do to maintain safety

- Clear guidance on social distancing and hygiene will be visible at reception as well as on our website.
- Whoever has arranged the visit will be responsible for the visitor and ensuring they understand and adhere to the guidelines.
- Visitors and contractors should observe the one way system for entry and exiting the office and ensure they keep 2m away from other people at all times.

5 – Cleaning the workplace

- Contract cleaning services have been increased. Toilets and communal areas are cleaned more frequently than before and the cleaning routine is to a higher specification.
- MAPS have also increased the number of cleaning hours, requesting that particular attention is paid to the active desks, as well as arranging for a deep clean to be carried out at the end of each week.

5.1 – To make sure that the office is clean and ready to restart including an assessment and providing hand sanitiser.

- The office is regularly and thoroughly cleaned.
- Each active desk has a sanitation pack.
- The air conditioning system has been checked and is maintained in accordance with both HSE and Government guidelines in terms of HVAC. See Appendix 1 for more details. If anybody has any concerns, they should speak to HR.

5.2 – To keep the workplace clean and prevent transmission by touching contaminated surfaces

- Anti-bacterial wipes will be placed around the office and should be used to regularly clean work areas and equipment, particularly shared equipment such as the photocopiers/printers after use.
- You should thoroughly wipe down the kitchen area after use.
- Door handles and keyboards should be cleaned regularly throughout the day with anti-bacterial wipes or spray. Any used wipes should be placed in the bin immediately.
- Ensure you leave your workspace clean and tidy, removing all waste and personal belongings, at the end of each shift.
- For shared items such as the photocopiers and scanners, ensure you wipe it down both prior to and after use. The cleaner will pay particular attention to these items as part of her daily clean also.

5.3 – To help everyone keep good hygiene throughout the working day

- We have displayed signs and posters reminding staff to maintain good personal hygiene standards.
- Hand sanitiser has been provided to all staff.
- Signage will be displayed in the toilets regarding personal hygiene.
- Toilet seats should be in a closed position before flushing.
- The hand-dryer in the toilets can be activated automatically without touching.
- Any concerns about cleanliness in communal areas should be raised with HR who will in turn raise it with Utility Warehouse immediately.
- There are plenty of rubbish bins located throughout the office and waste bins are emptied daily.
- Soap, hand sanitiser and antibacterial wipes are available. Paper towels are provided in the lunchroom to dry hands on.

5.4 – To minimise the risk of transmission in changing rooms and showers

- Staff are encouraged not to use these facilities for the time being.
- Enhanced cleaning of the facilities during and at the end of the day.

5.5 – To reduce transmission through contact with objects that come into the workplace.

- Disposable gloves are provided and may be used by staff when dealing with post and/or deliveries.
- Staff who deal with post and/or deliveries should wash their hands and use hand sanitiser more regularly.
- Personal deliveries to work should be kept to a minimum.

6 – Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and face coverings

MAPS staff have never required any specific PPE to carry out any activities. Additional PPE is not beneficial. COVID-19 needs to be managed through social distancing and hygiene rather than through the use of PPE. We do not encourage the precautionary use of extra PPE outside clinical settings or when responding to a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19

6.1 – Face coverings

Wearing a face covering may be beneficial as a precautionary measure. Evidence suggests that wearing a face covering does not protect you but may protect others if you are infected but have not developed symptoms.

Government advise the continued use of face coverings in enclosed spaces. It only needs to cover your mouth and nose. It is not the same as a face mask and supplies of PPE, including face masks, must continue to be reserved for those who need them to protect against risks in their workplace.

Wearing a face covering is optional and not required by law. MAPS will support anyone who chooses to wear one as long as they adhere to the following:-

- ❖ Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser before putting a face covering on and after removing it.
- ❖ When wearing a face covering, avoid touching your face or face covering, as you could contaminate them with germs from your hands.
- ❖ Change your face covering on a daily basis or if it becomes damp or if you've touched it.
- ❖ Continue to wash your hands regularly.
- ❖ Change and wash your face covering regularly.
- ❖ If it is not washable then dispose of it carefully in your usual waste.
- ❖ Practise social distancing whenever possible.

7 – Workforce management

7.1 – To change the way work is organised and reduce the number of contacts each employee has.

- No more than 31 people will attend the office at any one time unless pre-agreed via HR.
- Only the active desks will be used.
- Managers will liaise with HR to confirm who will be attending and when.
- Where possible, staff should not pass items directly to each other.

7.2 – To avoid unnecessary work travel and keep people safe when they do need to travel between locations

- Staff should not travel together in any one vehicle if possible and if not possible they should avoid sitting face-to-face and increase ventilation.

7.3 – To make sure all workers understand COVID-19 related safety procedures

- We will regularly communicate with staff via email.
- We will engage with workers and worker representatives via email and/or Microsoft Teams to explain and agree any changes in working arrangements.
- We will communicate any new safety procedures to staff prior to their return to work.
- We will continuously monitor any unforeseen impacts of changes to working environments.
- We are aware of the importance of mental health at times of uncertainty and have designated mental health first aiders for staff.
- All guidelines will be clear and simple.
- We will publish our risk assessment on our website so that suppliers and customers can access it.

Appendix 1 – Air Conditioning System

Currently HSE advice is as follows:

General ventilation

Employers must, by law, ensure an adequate supply of fresh air in the workplace and this has not changed.

*Good ventilation can help reduce the risk of spreading coronavirus, so focus on improving general ventilation, preferably through fresh air or mechanical systems. **Note: we maintain good ventilation throughout***

*Where possible, consider ways to maintain and increase the supply of fresh air, for example, by opening windows and doors (unless fire doors). **Note: the building is not designed to have openable windows, hence fresh air provisioned mechanically***

*Also consider if you can improve the circulation of outside air and prevent pockets of stagnant air in occupied spaces. You can do this by using ceiling fans or desk fans for example, provided good ventilation is maintained. **Note: not relevant to this building***

*The risk of transmission through the use of ceiling and desk fans is extremely low providing there is good ventilation in the area it is being used, preferably provided by fresh air. **Note: provisioned***

Air conditioning

*The risk of air conditioning spreading coronavirus (COVID-19) in the workplace is extremely low as long as there is an adequate supply of fresh air and ventilation. **Note: There is adequate provision***

*You can continue using most types of air conditioning system as normal. But, if you use a centralised ventilations system that removes and circulates air to different rooms it is recommended that you turn off recirculation and use a fresh air supply. **Note: not relevant to this building***

*You do not need to adjust air conditioning systems that mix some of the extracted air with fresh air and return it to the room as this increases the fresh air ventilation rate. Also, you do not need to adjust systems in individual rooms or portable units as these operate on 100% recirculation. You should still however maintain a good supply of fresh air ventilation in the room." **Note: There is adequate provision***

There is plenty of fresh air coming into the building and separately into each of the floors. No adjustments have needed to be made to the current setup in accordance with the guidelines.