

## PW Accountants Ltd

### COVID-19 Workplace Health & Safety Risk Assessment

All staff have been working from home during the pandemic lockdown. In line with the latest government guidance and the advice of the WHO however, we are now preparing to return to work at the office from Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2020, following lockdown.

This risk assessment outlines the risks posed by the coronavirus and the control measures we are putting in place to minimise the risks to staff.

The company is committed to the health, safety and well-being of our staff and to providing a healthy and safe workplace. If you have any concerns or issues related to anything outlined in this risk assessment or connected to returning to work, please bring to the attention of Paul Whitmell without delay.

<b>Business hazards associated with the coronavirus pandemic</b>	<b>Potential risks to workers caused by hazards</b>	<b>Control measures</b>
<b>Infection prevention, cleaning and staff safety</b>		
As the business starts to get back to normal after lockdown and staff return to work, the company must ensure the safety of staff by making the business premises COVID secure. Ensuring a safe	The direct threat to staff health and well-being from transmission of the COVID-19 coronavirus whilst at work.  People can catch the virus from others who are	Ensure the company complies with its duty to provide a safe and healthy workplace and safe working conditions for staff during the pandemic by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Circulating information (from reliable sources), policies and procedures to all staff setting out how staff should behave and the precautions they must adopt during the pandemic to keep them and their colleagues safe.</li><li>• Requiring staff to practice effective social distancing while in and around the workplace, while travelling to work and in all work business</li></ul> Each staff member should reinforce key Government public health messages to staff:

workplace minimises the risk of virus transmission	<p>infected, in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The virus moves from person to person in droplets from the nose or mouth and spread when a person with the virus coughs or exhales</li> <li>• The virus can survive for up to 72 hours out of the body on surfaces which people have coughed on etc</li> <li>• People can pick up the virus by breathing in the droplets or by touching contaminated surfaces and then touching their eyes or mouth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cover the mouth and nose with a tissue or sleeve (not hands) when coughing or sneezing (Catch it – Bin it – Kill it)</li> <li>• Put used tissues in the bin straight away</li> <li>• Wash hands regularly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds .</li> <li>• Avoid close contact with people who are unwell</li> <li>• Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces</li> <li>• Do not touch face, eyes, nose or mouth if hands are not clean</li> </ul> <p>Fully implement Public Health England (PHE) <i>Guidance for Employers and Businesses on Coronavirus</i>, including the following key safety precautions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep risk assessments under review to ensure that a safe place of work is maintained, and consult with staff</li> <li>• Provide hand sanitiser as required – there will be two sanitisation stations in the office and each member of staff is to be given a bottle of anti-bacterial solution</li> <li>• Allow staff to provide and wear personal protective equipment (PPE) such as gloves &amp; masks in the work place if they want to.</li> <li>• Increase cleaning in the workplace; review and update cleaning schedules, methods and frequency, and ensure cleaning staff have access to suitable detergents, disinfectants and PPE (the office door, keypads, toilet door handles etc will be wiped down with antibacterial wipes twice a day)</li> <li>• Office cleaning will take place at the weekend and the window cleaner will clean the windows before 9am</li> </ul>
<b>Equipment sharing</b>		
The sharing of equipment present hazards that raise the risk of virus transmission	Minimising the sharing of equipment reduces the risk of transmitting the virus	<p>Equipment (phones, cutlery, cups etc) should not be shared between staff</p> <p>Where possible staff should bring their own drinks to work with them. A flask is advised.</p> <p>Use must be limited of high-touch equipment in the workplace eg whiteboard, pens, photocopier. Hand sanitiser must be used before and after use of communal equipment</p>

		<p>Post should be left until later in the day to open and then safely disposing of the outside packaging immediately. Staff should wash their hands before and after opening the post.</p>
<p><b>Workplace Social Distancing</b></p>		
<p>Effective social distancing is a key element in reducing the transmission of COVID-19</p>	<p>Maintaining a safe distance from other people (2 metres or 1 metre plus mitigations) minimises the risk of transmission of the virus between people.</p>	<p>Staff are required to practice effective social distancing while in and around the workplace, while involved in work activities and when travelling to and from work, whenever possible, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoiding non- essential contact with others</li> <li>• Keeping a safe distance from others whenever possible</li> <li>• Avoiding physical contact ie hand-shakes</li> </ul> <p>Staff working in their own office do not require screens to be put in place. Staff working in the open plan area are 1 meter apart.</p> <p>Adaptations to the premises to support social distancing will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishing maximum occupancy limits for communal areas ie kitchen</li> <li>• Reducing the need for staff to move around within the workplace</li> </ul> <p>Adaptations to work processes to support social distancing will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There will be no face to face meetings in the office with third parties for the foreseeable future.</li> <li>• Essential meetings will take place outdoors in the courtyard.</li> <li>• Use phone / video conferencing instead of face to face meetings whenever possible</li> <li>• Use online training / video conferencing to support essential training and cancel</li> </ul>

		<p>non-essential training.</p> <p>Where social distancing cannot be followed in full for a particular business activity that has already been assessed as essential to the business, further mitigation methods should be put in place such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased hand washing</li> <li>• Increased environmental cleaning</li> <li>• Keeping the activity time involved as short as possible</li> <li>• Reducing the number of people each person has contact with by using “fixed teams or partnering” (so each person works with only a few others)</li> <li>• Where other mitigation factors cannot be maintained, a face mask must be worn</li> </ul>
<b>Visitors to the Premises</b>		
<p>Non-staff visitors to the premises may increase the risk of virus transmission</p>	<p>Non staff visitors to the premises must be kept to the bare minimum essential for business operations, and appropriate health and safety controls must be implemented to minimise the risk of virus transmission</p>	<p>No visitors will be allowed to the office and no client appointments for face to face meetings will take place in the office for the foreseeable future.</p> <p>All contact with visitors will take place over the phone, email or video conferencing</p> <p>Essential visitors (ie connected with the monthly collection of secure waste, and the exchange of sanitary equipment) should have no contact with staff and should aim to stay on the premises for a minimum time period</p> <p>Frequency of office deliveries should be minimised</p>
<b>Higher Risk Areas of the Workplace</b>		
	<p>Heavily used areas of the workplace are more likely to</p>	<p>Ensure higher-risk high- traffic areas of the workplace are COVID- secure by applying appropriate safety precautions, including:</p>

<p>Some areas may present a higher risk ie the staff toilet and the kitchen</p>	<p>present an infection transmission risk</p> <p>Essential for staff to wash hands regularly but also that toilets are kept clean and free of coronavirus contamination</p> <p>Staff using the kitchen facilities at the same time may compromise their ability to comply with social distancing</p> <p>Increased risk of people coughing and touching door handles, taps and toilet flush handles</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stressing the need for staff to follow good hygiene practice at all times while at work (ie regular handwashing, using tissues and disposing of them appropriately, etc)</li> <li>• Ensuring that adequate hand cleaning resources are provided; staff toilet to be supplied with adequate supplies of hot water, liquid soap and paper towels</li> <li>• Limiting numbers of staff who can use high traffic areas such as corridors, stairs and kitchen</li> <li>• Staggering breaks to ensure that kitchen and toilet facilities are not overloaded</li> <li>• Increasing environmental cleaning, especially in and around toilet and kitchen; special attention to be paid to frequently touched surfaces such as door handles, toilet flush handles, light switches, etc</li> <li>• Increasing toilet inspections to check for cleanliness/adequate stock of soap/toilet paper, etc</li> <li>• Providing paper towels instead of using towels.</li> </ul>
<b>Vulnerable and Extremely Vulnerable Staff</b>		
<p>Some staff may have pre-existing medical conditions which render them more vulnerable to the dangers of coronavirus infection</p>	<p>Those who are classified by PHE as being at greater risk from COVID-19 include people in the vulnerable (moderate risk) and extremely vulnerable (high risk) categories.</p> <p>Vulnerable (moderate risk) people include those who:</p>	<p>The government’s shielding programme is expected to be paused from 31<sup>st</sup> July, enabling those who were shielding to return to work in COVID-safe workplaces from the beginning of August. As a result PWA is asking staff to return to the work place on Monday August 3<sup>rd</sup> 2020.</p> <p>Manager should identify and be aware of staff who fall into vulnerable and extremely vulnerable categories so they can ensure that they are given adequate protection and support to enable them to comply with government health recommendations (an individual risk assessment should be undertaken)</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• are 70 or older</li><li>• are pregnant</li><li>• have a lung condition such as asthma, COPD, emphysema or</li><li>• bronchitis (not severe)</li><li>• have heart disease, diabetes, chronic kidney disease or liver disease (such as hepatitis)</li><li>• are taking medicine that can affect the immune system (such as low doses of steroids) or</li><li>• are very obese</li></ul> <p>Extremely vulnerable (high risk) people include those who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• have had an organ transplant</li><li>• are having chemotherapy for cancer, including immunotherapy</li><li>• are having an intense course of radiotherapy for lung cancer</li><li>• have a severe lung condition (such as severe asthma or severe COPD)</li></ul>	<p>All reviews of staff roles and safety should be non- discriminatory and take into consideration equality considerations and protected characteristics as defined under the Equality Act 2010, eg disabled staff.</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are taking medicine that makes them much more likely to get infections (such as high doses of steroids)</li> <li>• have a serious heart condition and are pregnant</li> </ul> <p>People in both categories are advised by the government to be particularly stringent in complying with social distancing requirements</p> <p>Pregnant women are included in the “moderate risk” category as a precaution but are not considered by PHE to be more likely to get seriously ill from COVID-19</p> <p>There is some evidence that people from ethnic minority backgrounds are hit harder by COVID-19</p>	
<b>Staff Health and Staffing Levels</b>		
Low staffing levels due to high rate of staff sickness	Staff may get sick with coronavirus infection	The following safety arrangements should apply to staff health or staffing levels:

<p>or staff having to self-isolate</p>	<p>People who have symptoms must “self-isolate” at home for 7 days from the start of symptoms</p> <p>Those who live with others and where one person has symptoms must self-isolate as a household for 14 days from the day when the first person in the house became ill. If anyone else in the household starts displaying symptoms, they need to stay at home for 7 days from when the symptoms appeared, regardless of what day they are on in the original 14- day isolation period</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff who are considered extremely vulnerable or high-risk should not be expected to attend for work on Monday August 3<sup>rd</sup> 2020.</li> <li>• Staff who are sick or self-isolating should phone immediately and inform a director – on no account should they attend for work</li> <li>• No member of staff should come to work if they are self- isolating or if they have COVID-19 symptoms or if they feel unwell</li> </ul>
<p><b>Premises Access and Travel</b></p>		
<p>Staff who are required to attend for work must be given safe access to the workplace</p>	<p>Travel to and from work may lead to greater risk of virus transmission</p>	<p>The following safety arrangements should apply to workplace access and travel arrangements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that all access points to the premises have supplies of sanitiser available</li> <li>• Staff are encouraged not to use public transport, but drive to work – staff are not to share cars</li> </ul>



	Access to the premises may create risk if staff all use the entrance at once	
<b>Possible Infection On-Site</b>		
People becoming unwell while at work or a symptomatic person using the premises	High risk of transmission	<p>If a member of staff becomes unwell in the workplace with coronavirus symptoms they should be sent home and advised to follow government advice to self-isolate.</p> <p>The following actions should be taken within the workplace:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All surfaces that a symptomatic person has come into contact with must be cleaned and disinfected, especially objects visibly contaminated with body fluids and all potentially contaminated high- contact areas such as toilets</li> <li>• Public areas where a symptomatic individual has passed through and spent minimal time, such as corridors, but which are not visibly contaminated with body fluids, can be cleaned thoroughly as normal</li> <li>• Cleaning staff should use disposable cloths or paper roll and a combined detergent disinfectant solution at a dilution of 1000 parts per million available chlorine</li> <li>• Cleaning staff must wear appropriate PPE</li> </ul> <p>Waste from cleaning of areas where possible cases have been (including disposable cloths and tissues) should be “double-bagged” and tied off; it should be placed in a secure holding area for 72 hours before being disposed of in general waste</p>