

General Risk Assessment – Reoccupying Workplaces COVID-19

Documented to comply with The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, Regulation 3 (Record of Significant Findings and Groups of Employees or Others Especially at Risk) and the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002

Part 1 – General Details

Assessor	Emma Parker	Job Title	Executive Assistant
Project or location	All Vail Williams' offices for phased reoccupation		
Department/business	Safe reoccupation of workplace – Thames Valley (RG6 1PT), Southampton (SO14 3TJ), Portsmouth (PO6 3EN), Bournemouth (BH21 3AP), Birmingham (B3 3EF), Surrey (GU21 6HR), Gatwick (RH10 8JE) and London (W1G 0WP). Where the term 'Employee' is used this includes Equity Partners, staff, apprentices and consultants employed by Vail Williams LLP.		
Scope of risk assessment	This document records significant findings of the assessment on measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 on the return of Thames Valley (RG6 1PT), Southampton (SO14 3TJ), Portsmouth (PO6 3EN), Birmingham (B3 3EF), Surrey (GU21 6HR), Gatwick (RH10 8JE) and London (W1G 0WP) offices. It should be read in conjunction with up-to-date government advice from Public Health England (PHE) which can be accessed here: https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus		
Employees and others potentially at risk	Employees (and their households). Tenant Employees (and their households) – applicable at Thames Valley and Gatwick offices only. Visitors and Contractors (which will be kept to a minimum)		
COVID-19 properties (as of 29 April 2020)	COVID-19 is a disease caused by a virus transmitted in droplets when people are breathing, most particularly when they cough, or sneeze. It causes a lung infection which is currently estimated not to be severe in 80% of cases, but 20% of people catching it may go on to need hospital treatment. There is no current cure or vaccine. It is thought it can remain "live" on hard surfaces such as handles, switches, bannisters etc for 72 hours. If people touch a contaminated surface and then touch their nose or lips, or if they breathe in droplets from an infected person, they can be infected. They may be symptom-free but infectious during the incubation stage which is typically 5 days but can be up to a week. The virus can be killed using normal household detergents on hard surfaces.		
Main symptoms	<p>The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are recent onset of any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • new continuous cough • high temperature • loss of, or change in, normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia) <p>People with any of these symptoms should be self-isolating following the guidance from PHE https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance</p>		
Control of transmission	<p>Current guidance requires continuing to avoid close contact and remaining socially distant from anyone you do not live with or who is not in your support bubble – even inside other people's homes.</p> <p>It is critical that everybody observes the following key behaviours:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •HANDS - Wash hands regularly and for 20 seconds. Hand-gel should be used where soap and water is not available. •FACE - Wear a face covering in indoor settings where social distancing may be difficult, and where you will come into contact with people you do not normally meet. 		

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	<p>•SPACE - Stay 2 metres apart from people you do not live with where possible, or 1 metre with extra precautions in place (such as wearing face coverings or increasing ventilation indoors).</p> <p>Government legislation is in place for wearing of face coverings in enclosed spaces where people come into contact with those they do not normally meet such as on public transport and shops. Wearing a face covering is currently optional in an office based workplace such as that operated by Vail Williams. Employees will not be operating in a way that requires closer proximity than 2m; therefore face coverings are not required but supplies of hand-gel, anti viral wipes and protective gloves will be made available.</p> <p>Further guidance on working safely during Covid-19 can be found here: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19</p>
Vulnerable groups	<p>PHE has specific guidance for those defined as extremely vulnerable and those at risk of severe illness who should remain working from home at present: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing</p>
Travel	<p>Travel arrangement to and from the workplace should be considered such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoiding public transport wherever possible • Encourage cycling and walking for employees • Not car sharing with other colleagues
Staying Covid-19 Secure in 2020 Notice & QR Codes	<p>The Covid-19 Secure in 2020 Notice to be displayed in the workplace to show the Government guidance has been followed. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5eb97d30d3bf7f5d364bfbb6/staying-covid-19-secure.pdf</p> <p>A location specific QR code for the NHS Covid-19 app to be displayed and scanned by visitors, contractors and employees when they arrive to help trace and stop the spread of Covid-19.</p>

Part 2 – Preparation of Building and Tenants for re-occupation

Hazards, Dangers, Problems	People At Risk	Legislation Applicable	Existing Controls	Current Risk	Further Controls Required or Issues to Consider	Risk After Further Controls
Vulnerable groups	Employees, or members of their households	Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, Part 1, Sections 2, 3 and 7	N/a	High	<p>Employees should be made aware of current PHE Guidance which identifies these groups and actions to control risks to their health. See links to PHE website on page 1.</p> <p>Those defined as extremely vulnerable and at risk of severe illness should continue to work at home for the present.</p> <p>Any member of staff with a household member in either category should continue to work at home where possible, and in any case should not be in the first phase of reoccupation.</p>	Low
Employees with symptoms of COVID-19	Employees, contractors or visitors	Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, Part 1, Sections 2, 3 and 7	n/a	High	<p>Employers should be requiring positive confirmation from employees that they are symptom-free before they return to work and on an ongoing basis.</p> <p>Contractors should be asked to confirm that they have appropriate measures in place prior to agreeing their attendance at site.</p>	Low

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Hazards, Dangers, Problems	People At Risk	Legislation Applicable	Existing Controls	Current Risk	Further Controls Required or Issues to Consider	Risk After Further Controls
Fire related systems readiness	Employees, tenant employees, visitors and service contractors	Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005	<p>Office sites have individual fire risk assessments detailing appropriate controls and, where necessary, actions to implement suitable additional controls.</p> <p>Monthly H&S checks conducted for each site confirm fire extinguishers are all in date and housed in the correct location.</p>	Medium	Prior to reoccupation confirmation will need to be sought to ensure that the premises fire alarm systems have been subject to testing and that maintenance is not overdue.	Low
Fire evacuation	Employees, visitors and service contractors	Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005	Fire evacuation procedures vary across sites, but is on a single stage full evacuation process in all instances.	Medium	<p>Review provision of fire warden cover if all staff are not back on site. Wardens could be asked to cover larger physical zones or basic training be given to staff to cover this.</p> <p>Assembly points may need to be revised for employees to maintain social distancing (where possible). If this is not possible, assembly times will be kept as short as possible.</p> <p>Review fire procedures for the premises to ensure arrangements are still valid during the time of Covid-19.</p>	Medium

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Hazards, Dangers, Problems	People At Risk	Legislation Applicable	Existing Controls	Current Risk	Further Controls Required or Issues to Consider	Risk After Further Controls
Office and electrical equipment	Employees	Electricity at Work Regulations 1989	Electrical inspections are tracked on a monthly H&S site checklist.	Medium	<p>Check that PAT testing and fixed electrical wiring test and inspection regimes remain up to date; where any inspections were due during the Covid-19 shut-down efforts should be made to rearrange.</p> <p>Where PAT is overdue staff should conduct a physical inspection of equipment prior to use, and arrangements for the scheduled test should be made once possible to do so.</p>	Low
Deep Cleaning	Employees, tenant employees and contractors	Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 2002	Buildings have been maintained during lockdown.	Medium	A deep clean of the premises should be considered at the conclusion of contractor visits and immediately before reopening to ensure all contact surfaces (including portable appliances as relevant) are clean.	Low

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Part 3 – Maintaining Social Distancing in Communal Spaces

Hazards, Dangers, Issues	People At Risk	Legislation Applicable	Existing Controls	Current Risk	Further Controls Required or Issues to Consider	Risk After Further Controls
<p>Occupation of building while maintaining social distancing-</p> <p>Overall Occupation</p>	Employees, visitors and contractors	Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 2002	Current workplace standards designed to comply with the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992	High	<p>Staff attendance at site should only be permitted in instances where it is established that the work cannot be adequately completed from home.</p> <p>Non-essential site attendance by staff, contractors and/or client visitors should not be permitted. All attendance at site should be established as necessary prior to confirmation; any tasks that can reasonably be conducted by other means (conference call, web-hosted meetings, e-mail communication etc.) should be conducted using those alternative means.</p> <p>Maximum number of occupants for each space to be determined with social distancing criteria in mind to enable staff/tenants to observe 2m distance from others whilst within the workplace.</p> <p>Considerations may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relocation of desks and workstations; • Avoidance of workstations near to circulation routes and walkways where social distancing may not be possible; • Avoidance sharing of work stations and equipment in quick succession; • Utilisation or repurposing of other areas to accommodate staff i.e. reception area etc.; • A reduction of seating in rest or other areas to enable social distancing requirements to be observed; and • Phased return to work with only essential employees returning in the first phase to allow a manageable number of staff/tenants into the workplace. 	Low

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Hazards, Dangers, Issues	People At Risk	Legislation Applicable	Existing Controls	Current Risk	Further Controls Required or Issues to Consider	Risk After Further Controls
Reception and signing-in arrangements	Employees, tenant employees, contractors, visitors	Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 2002	N/A	High	<p>Employees status as symptom-free should be confirmed before return to work in the premises.</p> <p>Arrangements should be in place for the staggering the pacing of arrival for staff/tenants, avoiding peak times where possible, to avoid congestion in the reception area.</p>	Low
Reception and signing-in arrangements (cont'd)	As above	As above	As above	As above	<p>Arrangements will need to be in place for regular cleaning of the barriers, door handles and other frequently touched surfaces.</p> <p>Floor markings may be used to indicate 2m spacing in areas where queues may form.</p> <p>Pedestrians In addition to pedestrian traffic flow restrictions within the main entry\reception routes, emergency or other stairwells should be designated as UP or DOWN, where possible, to reduce bottlenecks and ease the flow of people and maintain social distancing. Nb. Emergency procedures must also be considered.</p>	Low

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<p>Reception and signing-in arrangements (cont'd)</p>	<p>As above</p>	<p>As above</p>	<p>As above</p>	<p>As above</p>	<p>Cyclists To avoid the use of public transport where possible, cycling and other transport methods should be encouraged. Arrangements will need to be put into place for the storage of cycles and for changing facilities\showers etc. Changing rooms are to be marked with maximum occupation and alternative showers\ facilities made available to avoid queueing (including those in other\tenant areas if possible). This should be monitored closely. Cleaning arrangements should already be in place, though may need to be increased if usage increases significantly.</p> <p>Car Use/ Parking Where alternate forms of transport are not practical, private car use should be encouraged for commuting to reduce risks from use of public transport. Employees should be dissuaded from offering lifts or car sharing during this period. Additional parking arrangements may need to be considered to accommodate for the increase in private car use.</p> <p>If there is a significant increase in numbers of cyclists using the facilities it is unlikely that social distancing measures can be maintained. Timed slots for arrival could be considered if practical, with clear information that if the slot is missed, queuing will be necessary. Changing room facilities may have to be withdrawn if users breach social distancing rules.</p>	<p>Low</p>
<p>Lift lobbies and lifts</p>	<p>Employees, tenant employees, and contractors</p>	<p>Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 2002</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>Staff are advised to avoid the use of lifts at work wherever possible unless one person per lift rules are being implemented.</p>	<p>Low</p>

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Stairwells	Employees, tenant employees and contractors	Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 2002	N/A	High	<p>Alternate route and emergency stairs to be designated UP or DOWN if possible (in non-emergency situations).</p> <p>Limitations on stair usage (in non-emergency situations) staggered start/finish and break times. Floor markings may be used, where appropriate, to provide a visual reference of social distancing requirements.</p>	Low
Toilets and welfare facilities	Employees, contractors and cleaners	<p>The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992</p> <p>Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 2002</p>	N/a	High	<p>For kitchen facilities consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limiting numbers in facility to allow for social distancing; • Requesting staff to bring in food from home for lunch; • Staff to be required to clean up immediately after themselves, including wiping of touch points such as taps and fridge doors. • Consider requesting staff to bring cutlery/mugs/plates from home and wash personally in kitchen. • Food to be consumed at desks (or elsewhere if social distancing can be maintained) to allow others to use the facilities. • Displaying posters to regularly remind people of personal hygiene standards 	Low

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Hazards, Dangers, Issues	People At Risk	Legislation Applicable	Existing Controls	Current Risk	Further Controls Required or Issues to Consider	Risk After Further Controls
First aid cover	Employees, tenants and contractors	The Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981	Sites have individual first aid needs assessment and have appointed suitable first aiders to accommodate the number of people and typical workplace hazards present.	Medium	<p>Arrangements will need to be in place to provide first aid cover whenever employees are at work.</p> <p>The first aid needs assessment will have determined the level of risk within the workplace and the facilities required for the specific work environment. Many actions (such as issuing plasters) could be completed while maintaining social distancing. However, some interventions might require hands-on treatment. Employers should also review the levels of first aid equipment that they have on site and ensure that these are still adequate to minimise risk to first aiders in a COVID-19 context. In particular, consideration should be given to the purchase of additional resuscitation face shields, disposable gloves and aprons.</p> <p>If CPR is required, then the Resuscitation Council in the UK has provided some useful advice on how to keep safe: https://www.resus.org.uk/media/statements/resuscitation-council-uk-statements-on-covid-19-coronavirus-cpr-and-resuscitation/covid-community/.</p> <p>If not all staff return to work, ensure sufficient first aid cover is provided. The return of first aid trained staff may need to be prioritised.</p>	Low
DSE and workstations	Employees	The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992	Individual DSE self-assessments are periodically conducted by all staff.	Medium	<p>Staff to use only the desk spaces made available.</p> <p>Equipment issued on an individual basis is not to be shared. It should be stored onsite in individual lockers when not in use or taken home by the owner.</p> <p>Mobile phones to be used rather than desktop phones.</p> <p>Individuals/cleaners are responsible for cleaning equipment on a regular basis with cleaning products supplied on-site.</p>	Low

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Cleaning	Employees, tenant employees and cleaners	Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 2002	A daily cleaning and refuse disposal regime is in place at each site via contracted cleaners.	Medium	Plans to be developed to include extra cleaning of touch points. This should include: door handles and panels; handrails, taps; showers; lift buttons and any other frequently touched surfaces. If more use is to be made of staircases (the use of the stairs should be encouraged in preference to lifts where possible) increased cleaning of handrails in stairwells should also be considered.	Low
Stress	Employees	The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999	A stress risk assessment is in place as well as Health & Wellbeing programme.	Medium	Extra stress for staff may be expected as a result of the pandemic. Staff should be encouraged to report any concerns to their line manager. Line managers will potentially need to show more flexibility. Depending on the length of continued coronavirus measures consider extra mental health first aid support (if this can be arranged online).	Low
Management and supervision	Employees, tenant employees, contractors	The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974	Day to day responsibility and overall responsibility for health and safety in each office rests with named employees.	Low	Each team will require senior management presence to provide leadership and support. Line managers to ensure that workers in their charge understand risks associated with COVID-19 in the work environment and measures to control them. Covid-19 risk assessments to be submitted by all contractors and service persons in advance of attending site.	Low
Consultation and information	Employees, tenant employees, contractors and others	The Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996	Staff are directly consulted.	Medium	Specific briefing to be produced for staff before return to prepare them for the new ways of working; staff representatives for consultation have been identified. This risk assessment should also be communicated and published on the Vail Williams website.	Low

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Planning, monitoring and review	Employees, tenant employees, and contractors	The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999	N/a	Low	<p>This assessment and its controls should be frequently reviewed, especially during early stages of return to reoccupation to ensure they are practical and suitable.</p> <p>PHE and government advice is also likely to change as the pandemic moves on. The situation will need to be regularly monitored and the controls within this assessment adapted as new information and guidance is released.</p>	Low

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Part 4 – Action Plan

A separate action document has been produced to ensure that specific actions / additional controls identified in this risk assessment are dealt with prior to and during re-occupation of the 3 offices highlighted. All actions deemed to be 'Urgent' under the threshold outlined below:

'Urgent' priorities must be actioned immediately / 'High' priorities within one month / 'Medium' within two months / 'Low' priorities within three months

Assessor:

Signed: ***Emma Parker*** Date: 21/05/2020 Reviewed & updated: 01/07/21 (*formatting change only*)
Print name: Emma Parker

Adopted by Local Managers Responsible:

Signed: ***David Thomas*** Date: 28/05/2020
Print name: David Thomas (Regional Managing Partner – Thames Valley)

Signed: ***Gary Jeffries*** Date: 01/03/2021
Print name: Gary Jeffries (Regional Managing Partner – Solent)

Signed: ***Carole Taylor*** Date: 28/05/2020
Print name: Carole Taylor (Regional Managing Partner – Birmingham)

Signed: ***Geoff Fallon*** Date: 29/06/2020
Print name: Geoff Fallon (Regional Managing Partner – Surrey)

Signed: ***Peter Sudworth*** Date: 02/07/2020
Print name: Peter Sudworth (Regional Managing Partner – Gatwick)

Signed: ***James Lacey*** Date: 01/10/2020
Print name: James Lacey (Regional Managing Partner – London)

The results of the risk assessment to be shared with the workforce.