

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Social Distancing in Offices and
Depots and getting to and from site



Guidance for Managers & Staff

DRAFT v3 / 18th May 2020

**THIS GUIDANCE APPLIES TO ALL
CARMARTHENSHIRE COUNTY
COUNCIL OFFICES & DEPOTS**

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This guidance set out measures to maintain safe working practices in the council's office and depot buildings in order to reduce the possibility of transmission of COVID-19 in the workplace, as and when lockdown restrictions are eased. The lockdown was implemented to reduce opportunities for transmission through social contact, and as far as possible we should continue with the principle of reducing social contact until such time as the government advises otherwise. As such, this means:

- **All employees should work at home, wherever reasonably practical**
- **When staff cannot work from home, they should minimise the number of days they work in an office setting**
- **Staff who have received a letter advising them to "shield" should not attend the workplace until advised otherwise by government and/or their GP**
- **Staff, or anyone living in their household, who are displaying any COVID-19 symptoms should not attend the workplace and self-isolate in accordance with the latest government's advice**
- **Where staff are required to attend the office workplace, social distancing of 2m must always be adhered to, including during breaks**

What to do if staff develop COVID-19 symptoms

To reduce the risk of infection, staff are encouraged to self-monitor in relation to symptoms of COVID-19 —a new continuous cough or fever (37.8°C) or a loss or changed sense of normal smell or taste (anosmia).

- **Staff who develop symptoms outside the workplace should not attend work, and should notify their supervisor/manager immediately**
- **If a worker's symptoms start at the workplace, they must advise their supervisor/manager and return home without delay to start self-isolation**

Anyone who has a a new continuous cough or fever or a loss or changed sense of normal smell or taste (anosmia) should quickly and directly return home and to remain there and initiate household isolation. If well enough, they can drive their own vehicle. Alternatively, they should request a member of their household pick them up immediately. If they have to use public transport, they should try to keep away from other people and catch coughs and sneezes in a tissue.

If they are so unwell that they require an ambulance, phone 999 and let the call handler know they are concerned about COVID-19. Whilst you wait for advice or an ambulance to arrive, try to find somewhere safe for the unwell person to sit which is at least 2 metres away from other people

If possible, and it is safe to do so, find a room or area where they can be isolated behind a closed door, such as a meeting room. If it is possible to open a window, do so for ventilation. The individual should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects and be advised to cover their mouth and nose with a disposable tissue when they cough or sneeze, and then put the tissue in the bin. If no bin is available, put the tissue in a bag or pocket for disposing in a bin later. If you don't have any tissues available, they should cough and sneeze into the crook of their elbow.

If a member of staff has helped someone who was taken unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, they do not need to go home unless they develop symptoms themselves. They should wash their hands thoroughly for 20 seconds with soap and water or use hand sanitiser if soap and water is unavailable, after any contact with someone who is unwell with symptoms consistent with coronavirus infection.

Basic infection prevention measures

All staff should adhere to the following infection prevention measures in the workplace:

- Stay at home if you are feeling sick or exhibiting any COVID-19 symptoms
- Regularly wash your hands for 20 seconds with soap and water, or use hand sanitiser if soap and water is unavailable
- Catch coughs and sneezes in a disposable tissue or into the crook of your elbow
- Do not shake hands – use other non-contact methods of greeting
- Routinely clean and disinfect all frequently touched surfaces in the workplace (desks, keyboards, phones, etc.
- Do not prepare food or drinks for any colleagues in the workplace, and immediately clean and put away any plates, cups, cutlery, etc. after use

At Work Guidelines

1. Car Parking

- 1.1 Whenever possible staff should leave one bay clear each side of their vehicle when parking.

2 Commuting and Business Travel

- 2.1 Wherever possible work from home. If this is not possible, travel to your place of work on your own.
- 2.2 Where practicably possible, staff should travel in their own vehicles rather than use public transport.
- 2.3 Carefully consider whether travel is required and avoid all non-essential travel. Consider using videoconferencing / Skype / Teams for work related meetings.

3 Entrances

- 3.1 Staff are required to thoroughly wash their hands after entering the building.
- Hand washing guidance posters are to be placed in each entrance of the building
 - When building are re-opened to the public, sanitiser with associated posters are to be placed in accessible areas near entrances used by the public.
- 3.2 Designated entrances and exits may be required if there are significant numbers of staff using a building. Consideration will need to be given to fire safety measures in accordance with the "Fire Safety Briefing Note"
- 3.3 Service managers and staff should consider "Staggering" start, finish and break times to reduce congestion by limiting the number of people using building entrances at any one time.

4 Stairs, Lifts & Corridors

- 4.1 Strict 2m social distancing should be observed when using stairs. In some cases, it may be necessary to designate some stairs as either "up" or "down". Where this is the case they will be clearly signed and all staff should abide by this requirement. Where stairs are not designated "up" or "down" then staff should wait if any person is using the stairs in the opposite direction (i.e. coming down when you need to go up or vice versa) for that person to complete their use of the stairs.

- 4.2 Lift should only be used for people with mobility difficulties and the transportation of goods (in accordance with the lift capacity limit). Lifts should only be occupied by one person at a time.
- An enhanced cleaning regime is in place for all buttons/hand rails in/outside lifts.
 - Signage to be placed in visible area near/on lift to indicate single occupancy use only.
 - Signage to be placed within lift on to indicate single occupancy use only.
- 4.3 Where corridors are wide enough to maintain a 2m distance, staff should keep left when passing others using the corridor. In some cases, it may be necessary to designate some corridors as one-way. Where this is the case they will be clearly signed, and all staff should adhere to this requirement. One-way routes may be required around buildings to avoid congestion and maintain **2m social distancing**. Where these measures cannot be accommodated, consideration should be given to close the building.
- In the event of the fire alarm sounding, evacuate the building via the nearest fire escape whilst maintaining safe distance where possible.
- 4.4 Any changes to office layouts must take into consideration accessibility for people with mobility difficulties.
- 4.5 Fire doors should not be propped open. Enhanced cleaning arrangements are in place to ensure that frequently touched areas (such as door handles) are regularly cleaned. Fire doors can be left open if they are fitted with the automatic closing devices. In the event of the fire alarm being activated, they would automatically close.

Doors that are not fire doors and do not affect the building security can be left open as this would stop the need for people to touch the door whilst moving through the building.

For further guidance on fire safety please review the "Fire Safety Briefing Note" or e-mail TSMmanagement@cararthenshire.gov.uk

5 Work area and Workstations

- 5.1 In order to maintain social distancing, there should always be at least one empty workstation/desk between occupied workstations/desks. Where desks are arranged in "banks" the workstation/desk directly opposite an occupied workstation/desk should not be occupied (diagonally opposite is allowed) to maintain social distancing of 2 metres.
- Service managers are to assess their working areas to determine which desks are not to be used to maintain 2m social distancing.
 - Service managers to ensure minimum occupancy levels within the workplace and maintain social distancing arrangements.

- Staff must not sit facing each other without a barrier screen to separate.
 - All reception areas must have a perspex/glass screen to separate staff from public
 - Cashless payments methods should be used wherever possible.
 - 2m floor markings should be laid to indicate a safe zone to distance visitors from the reception desk.
- 5.2 Workstations/desks should be cleaned by the member of staff using it prior to commencing any work, and at the end of the working day. Cleaning materials will be provided in each office. In order to maintain the highest level of cleanliness, a clear desk policy should be enforced to ensure no documents or other unnecessary items are left on the workstation/desk surface at the end of the working day.
- Hand sanitiser may be required within the working area depending on practicality/accessibility of handwashing facilities.
- 5.3 If possible (i.e. if there are enough workstations/desks for each individual member of staff), supervisors/managers should allocate each member of staff with an individual workstation/desk, and **clearly label** this, and the associated chair, with the member of staff's name. No other staff member should use a labelled workstation or chair designated for a particular staff member.
- 5.4 Where all staff in a team have a dedicated workstation/desk, it is the responsibility of the supervisor/manager of that team to schedule staff attendance at the workplace to ensure that the alternate workstation/desk requirement detailed in 4.1 above is strictly adhered to. This may mean introducing a rota system or staggered hours.
- 5.5 Where the number of staff in a team is greater than the number of workstations/desks, supervisors/managers will need to consider the most appropriate way of managing this situation and maintaining social distancing. This may be a mixture of dedicated (and clearly labelled) workstations/desks and chairs for members of staff who regularly attend the office, and shared workstations/desks for staff who attend less regularly. Where desks are shared, a practical way of managing this would be to assign one workstation/desk to no more than two people, and label both the workstation/desk and chair with the name of the two allocated individuals. In this situation, the attendance of the two individuals who share a workstation/desk will need to be managed so that they do not attend the workplace at the same time. For such shared workstations/desks, the requirement for members of staff occupying the desk to clean at the outset and end of the working day as detailed in 4.2 above should be **very strictly** adhered to.

- 5.6 Wherever possible “corridors” between identified workstations/desks should be at least 2 metres wide to enable the required social distancing when individuals are walking past workstations/desks. This will also apply to the corridors between workstations/ desks. Where this is not possible desks adjacent to walkways are to be designated “out of use” to ensure social distancing requirement is adhered to.
- One-way routes around open offices may be required to maintain social distancing requirements.
- 5.7 If changes are required to desk allocations whilst social distancing requirements are still in place, the workstations/desks should be wiped down by the new individual before use cleaned before reallocating, and once reallocated should be clearly labelled with the individual(s) names as detailed in 4.3 and 4.5 above. Wherever possible, individuals should retain the same chair prior to any reallocation, but where this is not possible the touch surfaces of the chair should be wiped down prior to each use
- 5.8 Wherever possible the work area should be well ventilated and encourage the use of ventilation/air conditioning/opening windows in the working area to increase air flow.

6 Touchdown Areas

- 6.1 All previously dedicated Touchdown Areas will be closed and not available for agile working. It may be possible to reallocate these as dedicated desks for staff to help with social distancing. Where this is the case, the workstation/desk should be **clearly labeled** with the member of staff’s name, as set out in 4.7.

7 Phones & Other Equipment

- 7.1 Where a staff member has a dedicated workstation/desk (see section 4), only the person(s)/persons assigned to this workstation/desk should use the equipment on it (phones, keyboards, etc.).
- 7.2 The use of “shared” equipment (e.g. staplers, hole punches etc) should be limited as much as possible. Shared equipment should be cleaned prior to use, and then again after use, using the cleaning materials provided.
- 7.23 All phones (and other frequently touched equipment such as keyboards) should be routinely cleaned by the individual using them.
- Hand contact surfaces and equipment to be identified and will also be subject to the enhanced cleaning regimes during the day and in the evening

- 7.4 Wherever possible staff should must store/keep personal items (coats/bags/personal effects) at their workstation or in a dedicated personal locker/store. Staff should not use communal storage facilities (such as coat stands, drying cabinets) where there could be a risk of cross contamination.

8 Meetings

- 8.1 Avoid face to face meetings wherever possible by using alternative means such as video conferencing. (Skype, Teams etc)
- All Service managers are required to take steps to encourage their teams to minimise all face to face meetings and to comply with the social distancing and sanitising requirements.
- Refreshment (tea, coffee, biscuits) should not be provided within meetings. It is permissible for staff to bring their own refreshment (e.g. reusable water bottles) to meetings.
- 8.2 Meeting room capacities will be reduced to ensure the 2 metre social distancing requirement can be adhered to by removing chairs, and in some cases tables. The maximum capacity of the room (i.e. the number of chairs in the room) **must not** be exceeded, and additional chairs or tables should not be brought into any meeting room.
- Notices will be placed at the entrance of each room identifying maximum occupancy levels permissible.
 - Due the expected significant reduction in the need for face to face meetings, most meeting rooms are likley to be re-designated as office space, to facilitate social distancing.
- 8.3 Meeting room tables should be cleaned by a member of staff involved in the meeting prior to commencing the meeting, and then again at the end of the meeting. Cleaning materials will be provided in each meeting room. No documents or other items should be left on the table/in the room at the end of the meeting.
- 8.4 Additional video-conferencing facilities are available in some meeting rooms. This will better enable those working remotely to join a meeting without the need to be physically present.

9 Print/Photocopier/Stationary Rooms

- 9.1 Printing should be limited, where possible to reduce the use of photocopiers / printers.
- 9.2 Print/Photocopier/Stationary rooms should only be occupied by one person at a time.
- Signage to be placed at the entrance on Print/Photocopier/Stationary rooms identifying access limit.
- 9.3 Printers/Photocopiers should be cleaned by the user prior to use, and then again after use, using the cleaning materials provided.

Equipment will be included in the enhanced cleaning regime during the day and at the end of the day

10 Toilets

- 10.1 Toilet areas should only be occupied by one person at a time. External signage will be provided to indicate whether the toilet is engaged or not. Staff using the toilet will need to change the sign as they enter and exit the toilet area. The external engaged/vacant sign and frequently touched areas will be included in the enhanced cleaning regime during the day and cleaned at the end of the day
- Visible tape will be placed on the floor outside toilet areas to ensure 2m social distancing is maintained.
 - Hand washing guidance posters are to be placed within and at the entrance of each room.

11 Staff Rooms/Areas/Kitchens (including lunchtime arrangements)

- 11.1 The capacity of staff rooms and other staff welfare areas will be reduced to ensure the 2 metre social distancing requirement can be adhered to by removing chairs. The maximum capacity of the room (i.e. the number of chairs in the room) **must not** be exceeded, and additional chairs should not be brought into any staff rooms or welfare areas.
- Signage will be placed at the entrance of each room identifying the maximum occupancy levels.
 - Frequently touched areas will be included in the enhanced cleaning regime during the day and cleaned at the end of the day.
- 11.2 Where kitchen rooms/areas are provided, they should only be used by one person at a time.
- 11.3 Staff should use one dedicated cup/mug that is personal to them for any drinks and should not prepare drinks or other refreshments for other members of staff or visitors. Any cups, mugs, crockery, cutlery used should be immediately washed up and put away after use. **Do not** leave any crockery or cutlery in the sink or on the draining board.
- Frequently touched areas, including external handles of fridges, microwaves, kettles and taps etc will be included in the enhanced cleaning regime during the day and cleaned at the end of the day. The interior of fridges and microwaves will be cleaned weekly and no food should be left at the end of the working day. Any food left will be disposed of.
- Those using these facilities should wash their hands before and after use.

- 11.4 Food should be eaten at this workstation/desk, rather than a staff kitchen or dining area. Workstations/desks should be wiped down by the user before and after meals. Regular breaks and exercise should continue to be taken

12 Reception, Visitors and Deliveries

- 12.1 While the building is not open to the public no reception facilities will be provided.
- Deliveries and Visitors should be managed by the receiving officer / service and should be limited as much as possible.

13 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- 13.1 There is currently no requirement for staff to wear additional PPE in the general office setting. This will be continually reviewed and revised in line with government recommendations.
- The current Government advice is that the wearing of Respiratory Protective Equipment (RPE) is only required in medical environments and other settings where care is being provided for people who either have symptoms, have been tested positive or medically diagnosed with Coronavirus, and staff cannot maintain adequate social distancing when providing care or other interventions.
- 13.2 Fluid-resistant (Type IIR) surgical masks (FRSM) are only required to be worn by staff who are providing personal care to people in the highest risk group identified by the Government.
- 13.3 Whether face coverings, including homemade masks, cowls, scarfs etc should be worn in public is currently under consideration by Government as a possible measure to be introduced as the lockdown is eased. *It is not known at this time if this will become Government policy or whether the availability of medical face masks will become widespread. Therefore, this guidance should be regarded as under review.*
- 13.4 Specific risk assessments will be required for those staff working outside an office environment such as depot settings, construction, catering and social care. The requirement for PPE will be identified as part of the risk assessment.

14 General Health & Safety Arrangements

- 14.1 Despite the current circumstances, Service Managers, PRP's and staff must ensure that health and safety measures associated with the usual safe running of the premises are maintained. Staffing levels and competency of staff should be assessed regularly.
- 14.2 In the event of an emergency it should be noted that it may take longer than usual for an ambulance to arrive. First Aiders should be prepared to support a casualty for longer than normal and ensure they keep medical services updated if their condition worsens.

- 14.3 If First Aiders are required to perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), they should conduct a risk assessment and adopt appropriate precautions for infection control. Where possible, it is recommended that they do not perform rescue breaths or mouth-to-mouth ventilation; they should perform chest compressions only. If a decision is made to perform mouth-to-mouth ventilation in asphyxial arrest, first aiders should use a resuscitation face shield.

Should first aiders give mouth-to-mouth ventilation there are no additional actions to be taken other than to monitor themselves for symptoms of possible COVID-19 over the following 14 days. Should they develop such symptoms they should follow the current Government advice.

Please contact Health and Wellbeing team if you require any further advice

- 14.4 All staff should continue to use Carmarthenshire County Council's accident reporting system to report all accidents and incidents.

Violence and aggression should not be tolerated despite the increased tension and worry being experienced in the current climate. Head teacher should use the Personal Safety Toolkit as guidance. If there are any incidents of this nature, the head teacher should consider calling the police if appropriate and report all incidents to the Health and Wellbeing team

- 14.5 Violence and aggression should not be tolerated despite the increased tension and worry being experienced in the current climate. Staff should use the Personal Safety Toolkit as guidance. If there are any incidents of this nature, staff should consider calling the police if appropriate and report all incidents to the Health and Wellbeing team

15 Handling Post and Packages

- 15 Staff should continue to follow existing risk assessments and safe systems of working; there are no additional precautions needed for handling post or packages beyond the guidance mentioned in this document.

16 Enhanced Cleaning Arrangements

- 16 In addition to normal evening cleaning, enhanced cleaning arrangements will be put in place during the working day. This will include regular cleaning of frequently touched areas and surfaces, such as toilet areas, kitchens, grab-rails in corridors and stairwells and door handles.

17 Legionella

Legionella risks to buildings during the COVID-19 outbreak to be managed in accordance with the “Managing Legionella Risk in Buildings” guidance.

18 Fire Safety

Fire Safety to buildings during the COVID-19 outbreak to be managed in accordance with the “Fire Safety Briefing Note”.

Source Documentation and Government Guidance:

Welsh Government

- <https://gov.wales/coronavirus-covid-19-employers-and-businesses-guidance>
- <https://gov.wales/stay-home-guidance-households-possible-coronavirus>
- <https://gov.wales/taking-all-reasonable-measures-maintain-physical-distancing-workplace>
- <https://gov.wales/taking-all-reasonable-measures-maintain-physical-distancing-workplace-supplementary-guidance>

UK Government

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-interim-guidance-for-first-responders/interim-guidance-for-first-responders-and-others-in-close-contact-with-symptomatic-people-with-potential-2019-ncov>
- <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/offices-and-contact-centres>