



Update on the return of staff to the office environment and future ways of working

Finance and Resources Select Committee –
1 October 2020



Our strategy

- Follow Govt and Public Health advice
- Maintain service delivery whilst minimising risk to health of staff, members, and customers
- Everyone would work from home unless they could not work from home
- Proactively engage, consult and communicate with staff
- Plan ahead but be flexible and responsive
- Consistent approach as far as possible, across all buildings
- Any return to the office would be 'gradual and phased'
- Learn from and use the experience of working practices during Covid to shape the longer term workspace strategy
- Maintain clear audit and record of the costs of Covid

Developing an action plan

- An officer Return to Office Steering Group, Chaired by Ian Thompson formed to review Govt guidance and develop dynamic action plan
- The Steering Group includes representatives from HR, IT, Property, Finance Health & Safety, and Comms
- Close liaison with Public Health to help interpret Govt advice and respond to specific scenarios
- First phase of the plan predicated on the Govt advice that everyone should work from home unless they cannot work from home
- The action plan is dynamic responding to a rapidly and constantly changing environment
- The action plan has been underpinned by regular engagement and consultation with Trade Unions and Employee Representatives

Focus the Steering Group

1. Categorising our employees to understand who could and could not work from home
2. Carrying out risk assessments for buildings, services (and individuals where needed)
3. Preparing our buildings to mitigate the risk of Covid particularly as and when staff started to return to work
4. Supporting people to work from home
5. Communications plan including consultation with the unions and staff representatives and employee engagement to capture the experience of working from home to inform the longer term workspace strategy
6. Capturing the workplace financial implications
7. On-going review of Govt and Public Health guidance as pandemic continues

Categorising our employees

Developed to help us primarily understand, the number of staff who:

- Needed to be in the office because of the nature of their role
- Are mainly community based, with an occasional need to work in the office
- Could be mainly home based, with the occasional need to work in office
- Could not work from home because of their environment
- Numbers of staff in each category under constant review

Risk assessments

- Each building and service risk assessed so that mitigation measures could be put in place including PPE supply needs. Some individual risk assessments.
- The risk assessments extend to other buildings where staff required to work to deliver a service eg community centres (used as PPE distribution centres), and crematoria
- New IT System implemented for staff to confirm they have read the Building Guide and Risk Assessment

Preparing the buildings

FM teams worked collaboratively to ensure consistent approach

- Floor plans produced with social distancing in place
- Out of 2,500 desks normally available, capacity reduced to around 800
- Desks that can and cannot be used clearly marked
- 'Touch down' space identified in each building for people who need to come to the office occasionally
- Meeting room capacity reduced in line with social distancing guidelines
- Screens installed in areas of customer contact – eg reception

Preparing the buildings continued

- Signage in place to show routes round buildings and remind people of the safe working requirements
- Enhanced cleaning regime
- Hand sanitisers and wipes in place throughout the buildings
- Everyone required to sign in on arrival and the desk space used recorded for track and trace
- Building guides and videos produced. All staff entering the a building, first required to sign to say that they had read and would follow the requirements

Preparing the buildings continued

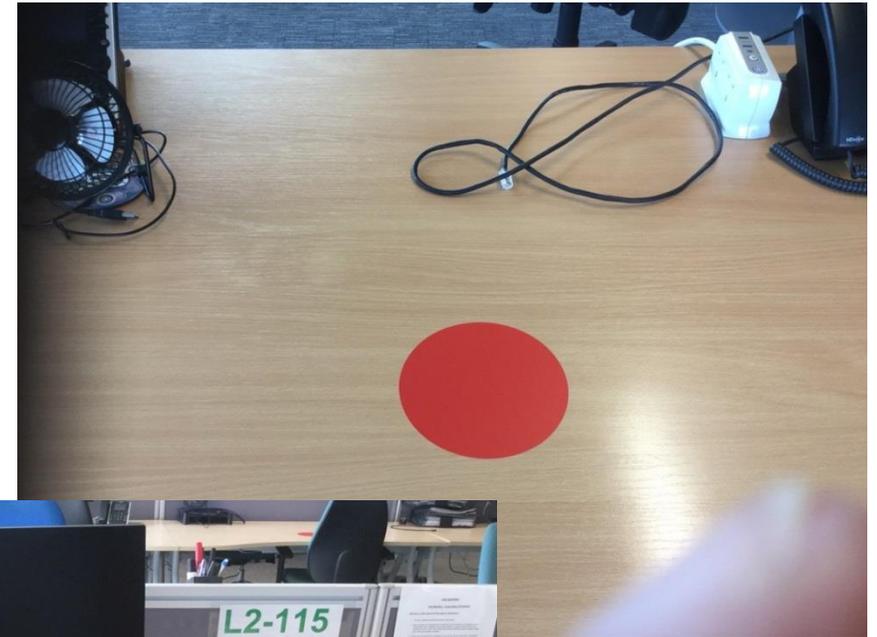
- Implement new Track and Trace IT system to record all staff, visitors and Cllrs entering our main buildings
- Ability to immediately identify anyone working closely with someone later diagnosed with Covid
- Real time data feeds into analysis on future building options
- IT reallocating unused office equipment to Home Users



The different reception desks with signage, way marking and screens in place



Signage and information boards in place in buildings



Supporting people to work from home

Two key objectives:

1. Providing staff with the right software and hardware to fulfil their role from home

- Staff complete a working from home health and safety assessment
- Monitor, keyboard, chair and headsets available
- Implemented new IT System to manage all orders with link to starters and leavers process
- Roll out of Microsoft teams for online calls and meetings

2. Caring for staff health, resilience and overall wellbeing. Comprehensive programme including

- Employee Assistance Programme which provides counselling
- Health and Wellbeing Champions
- Webinars, eLearning courses
- Online wellbeing and fitness activities organised by staff



Communications and engagement

Comprehensive and on-going including

- 'In it together' vlogs from Chief Executive
- Virtual roadshows for staff
- Regular updates on The Source
- Pulse and OLE Surveys undertaken to gauge staff experience of working from home
- Consultation with the Trade Unions & Employee representatives
- Survey and focus groups to capture reflections from staff, members and a wide range of staff and other stakeholders & partners of the Covid experience

Capturing the costs

- The costs of implementing the measures to enable home working and safe working in the buildings, is being captured.

Where are we now continued?

- Pre the Govt announcement on 22 September, we were considering how teams could return to the offices for meetings
- We are registering our different sites for the NHS test and trace app and displaying posters with the QR code for people to scan
- However, and the re-introduction of some lock down measures, our default position remains the same ie staff should continue work from home
- We are reviewing the longer term implications of the latest measures

The longer term workspace strategy



- Reviewing the Covid working from home experience for staff, members, customers, partners etc to help shape the longer term strategy
- The new 'normal' is yet to be established but more home working and more flexible working is likely to feature
- New IT Network design will include lessons learnt
- In due course Cabinet will be asked to approve a budget for support to develop the strategy
- The strategy will need to consider:
 - the needs of each service
 - our working practices
 - the IT and other support needed
 - the impact on our operational property and how we make the most efficient use of the estate