

## Working safely during Covid-19

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### 1. Overview

As staff begin their return to work on the week commencing 11th May 2020, the following measures have been implemented to ensure staff are fully able to comply with all aspects of social distancing and maintain the health and safety of themselves and their colleagues.

This document applies to all PDSE staff and Honorary Contract Holders.

This document will be updated as and when new information becomes available from the NHS and the Government.

### 2. Risk

In line with the Government guidance on working safely during the Covid-19 pandemic, PDSE have completed a risk assessment for all sites. A copy of this risk assessment can be found on the [PDSE website](#).

All staff are required to complete an individual risk assessment on returning to the workplace. This should be submitted to their line manager and reviewed regularly. If a member of staff is identified as at risk, they may be referred to Occupational Health.

#### 1. Who should go to work

PDSE are regularly reviewing our guidance around who should attend work and who can continue to work from home. Staff who predominantly work in clinical or patient facing roles should attend work. This may include, but is not limited to, the following staff groups:

- Dental Nurses
- Dental Administrators

- Decontamination Staff
- Team Leaders
- Central Administrators

Line managers have devised a skeleton roster of staff to ensure that staff are provided with adequate work space areas, in order to comply with social distancing. In order to ensure collaboration of rostering, specifically across the Plymouth sites, visibility is being granted to outlying team managers in order for them to plan their staff attendance across the sites and to ensure that there are minimal staff working concurrently.

In line with government guidelines staff who can work from home should continue to do so, subject to the prior agreement from their line manager. This is now limited to staff who have a laptop issued by PDSE.

Staff who are working from home will be expected to attend the workplace if there is a task required that cannot be completed from home.

Staff who are unsure about whether they are required to attend work should discuss this with their line manager.

### Clinically vulnerable staff (moderate risk)

Staff should inform their manager if they are in a moderate risk group as defined by the NHS. This may include staff who are pregnant, over 70 years of age, or staff who have a health condition that defines them as clinically vulnerable according to NHS guidelines.

Line managers will work with the staff member to ensure that additional measures are put in place where necessary to protect the safety of staff.

### Clinically extremely vulnerable staff (high risk) and households

Clinically extremely vulnerable staff may have previously been advised by the NHS that they should be shielding. However, the NHS is no longer advising that shielding is required. Staff who were previously shielding will be supported to return to the workplace and reasonable adjustments will be considered where necessary.

Staff who live in a household with clinically extremely vulnerable individuals should inform their line manager immediately. This will be assessed in order to ensure that they can complete their work in the safest possible way.

## **2. Building access**

All sites will remain locked in order to prohibit unauthorised access to the general public. All student swipe cards have been deactivated to prohibit unauthorised access to the clinics.

All staff can access the building using their swipe card. Any staff who experience issues with accessing the building should report this to their line manager immediately.

Visitors to the buildings, such as Contractors, will only have access to the building by prior appointment. It is expected that all visitors follow the measures that we have implemented, such as social distancing and regular hand washing. Visitors must be briefed on these expectations before entering the building.

### **3. Social distancing**

All staff should adhere to the government's guidance and remain 2 metres apart from other people within the workplace wherever possible. Where a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained, a distance of 1 metre can be used instead provided that other risk mitigations are in place.

Social distancing applies to all parts of the building such as in the clinical areas, offices, staff rooms and corridors. Measures are in place around the buildings to ensure that staff are able to move around the building safely and maintain social distancing. All staff must follow these measures at all times.

Where social distancing cannot be adhered to, the task will be assessed to ensure that it is necessary for it to still go ahead. The task should be avoided if possible. If the task can't be avoided, staff should speak to their line manager about wearing PPE.

#### **Arriving and departing work**

Staff should ensure that social distancing is observed when arriving at work. This includes when using the car park and on entry and exiting the building.

Staff using the on-site parking at Exeter and Plymouth sites are encouraged to park their vehicles away from others.

Staff should ensure they wash their hands or use hand sanitiser on entry and when exiting the buildings.

#### **Allocated workspaces**

Staff will be allocated a workspace by their line manager, which will ensure that staff are appropriately distanced throughout the building.

For staff who normally work in the office, a schedule is available and must be completed each Friday for the week ahead so that staffing levels can be monitored. This will allow us to ensure adequate space is available to staff to work safely within the office. Staff who intend to work from the office must check this schedule before going to the office to ensure there is sufficient space available. Priority will be given to those who are required to attend work or those who are able to work from home but have essential work in the office to complete.

Where possible, staff should not sit face-to-face. Instead, staff are advised to sit to the side of each other or back-to-back. The use of hot desks should be avoided if possible.

#### **Confined communal areas**

Confined communal areas, such as toilets or changing rooms, have been provided with a laminate 'registers' on entry/exit, to enable staff to operate a 'one out one in' system.

Use of the lifts should be avoided where possible but if they must be used, priority should be given to those who need to use the lift the most, e.g. people with disabilities.

#### **Lunch breaks**

Lunch breaks will be staggered to avoid overcrowding and the use of the student common rooms will be promoted to provide additional rest areas and minimise the amount of people in one room.

Staff room-chairs have been marked to ensure that only certain chairs are used in order for social distancing to be maintained. Line managers will be reinforcing that staff must demonstrate self-discipline in order to maintain social distancing, especially when on breaks.

### Meetings

Face to face meetings should only take place where social distancing can be maintained, though Staff are encouraged to use video or telephone conferencing where possible. PDSE is working on providing appropriate IT solutions to enable video conferencing etc. between sites. Please speak to your line manager if you have any concerns.

Where a face-to-face meeting must go ahead, social distancing should be maintained and a well ventilated room should be used. Staff should take sensible precautions during meetings. For example, the sharing of items such as pens should be avoided.

## **4. Hygiene & cleanliness**

All staff have a responsibility to ensure that they keep their workspace clean and report any issues to their line manager.

All staff are encouraged to wash their hands frequently. Hands should be washed thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds.

Hand sanitizer provisions will be stationed at the entrance and around the buildings and available for staff to use. Training will be offered to non-clinical staff on the use of these items, as required.

Staff have access to changing facilities and lockers within the DEF, though the use of showers should be avoided where possible. These facilities should be kept clean and clear of personal items and social distancing should be maintained.

## **5. Personal protective equipment (PPE)**

There may be occasions where it is necessary for PPE such as face masks or gloves to be used. If staff feel they are completing a task and require PPE they should contact their line manager.

Training will be provided on the correct procedures for using PPE effectively.

## **6. Travel**

Staff are encouraged to travel to work in the safest way possible. This may include avoiding the use of public transport when travelling to or from work or between workplaces. Staff should speak with their line manager if they have any issues with travelling to or from work.

All non-essential work related travel, such as travelling between sites to attend meetings, should be avoided where possible.

## **7. Developing symptoms of Covid-19**

Staff who develop symptoms of Covid-19 must isolate in accordance with NHS guidance. Symptoms of Covid-19 include:

- high temperature
- new, continuous cough

- loss or change to your sense of smell or taste

Staff must follow NHS advice and stay at home if you have any of the above symptoms for a period of:

- 10 days if you live on your own
- 10 days if you live with other people but are the first person to develop symptoms
- 14 days if you with other people and are not the first person to develop symptoms

Staff should also stay at home and self-isolate if a member of their household has symptoms of Covid-19. In this instance, the staff member should self-isolate for 14 days.

Staff should also stay at home and self-isolate if they have been advised via the Test and Trace system that they have been in contact with someone who has tested positive for Covid-19. In this instance, the staff member should follow the advice from the NHS Test and Trace team and self-isolate for 14 days. Staff may be required to provide evidence of this.

Staff should report to the absence line on their first day of absence by calling 01752 434353 before 08.30am. Staff should leave a voicemail message including their name, line manager's name, and explain how long they are self-isolating for.

### Developing symptoms in the workplace

If a staff member becomes unwell in the workplace or attends work with symptoms of Covid-19 they should:

- Tell their line manager or the next available line manager immediately and go home
- Avoid touching anything
- Cough or sneeze into a tissue and dispose of this (or use their sleeve if they do not have a tissue)
- Use a separate bathroom to others
- Use their own phone or computer if they need to contact NHS 111 or a Doctor

## **8. Returning to work after a Covid-19 related absence**

Staff may contact their line manager to discuss their return to work if they feel better and no longer have symptoms. Staff must complete the period of isolation as detailed in the NHS guidance before returning to work.

If symptoms persist, staff should remain off work and seek medical advice from NHS111 using the online service (or call NHS111 if unable to access the online service).

## **9. Testing for Covid-19**

All staff who have symptoms of Covid-19 or who live with someone who has symptoms of Covid-19 are advised to get tested.

Staff who have symptoms of Covid-19 and require a test can obtain one by visiting the [Government website](#), by telephoning 119 or by emailing [PDSEHR@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:PDSEHR@plymouth.ac.uk)

Staff who have been tested for Covid-19 may be asked to provide a copy of their test results once received.

### Covid-19 test results

If you test positive for Covid-19 you should inform your line manager immediately.

If you are already self-isolating, you should continue with this for the remainder of the isolation period in accordance with NHS guidance. Once you have completed your advised period of self-isolation and are symptom free, you may contact your line manager to discuss your return to work.

If you receive a negative test result, you should follow the NHS guidance on whether or not you need to self-isolate still. This guidance can be found on the [NHS website](#). If you are no longer required to self-isolate, you should contact your line manager to discuss your return to work.

Further information on what to do if you have been tested for Covid-19, including what to do if you receive an unclear, void, borderline or inconclusive test result can be found on the [NHS website](#).