NICE COVID-19 business and office risk assessment and policy

**July 2021**

# **Statement of general policy and arrangements**

This is the statement of general policy and arrangements for: National Institute for Health and Care Excellence.

Jennifer Howells has overall and final responsibility for health and safety.

Michelle Rowlands has day-to-day responsibility for ensuring this policy is put into practice.

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| **Statement of general policy** | **Responsibility of (name/title)** | **Action/arrangements** |
| Prevent accidents and cases of work-related ill health by managing the health and safety risks in the workplace | Jennifer Howells- Director of Finance, Strategy & Transformation  Michelle Rowlands- Estates and Facilities Manager | Staff and line managers are responsible for ensuring their own safety & of those around them.  Director of FS&T and E&FM will ensure that the health and safety practices and updates are implemented and monitored. |
| Provide clear instructions and information, and adequate training, to ensure employees are competent to do their work | Michelle Rowlands – Estates and Facilities Manager  Grace Marguerie - Associate Director of HR | E&FM to identify suitable training and AD HR to ensure resources and provisions are in place to supply it. |
| Engage and consult with employees on day-to-day health and safety conditions | Health Assured – Occupational Health Consultant  Michelle Rowlands - Estates and Facilities Manager – Health and Safety Officer | E&FM will do a first assessment and refer to occupational health if needed. |
| Implement emergency procedures – evacuation in case of fire or other significant incident | Michelle Rowlands - Estates and Facilities Manager | Policy and process are in place and available to view on the staff intranet.  This is regularly reviewed and updated as required. |
| Maintain safe and healthy working conditions, provide, and maintain plant, equipment and machinery, and ensure safe storage/use of substances | Michelle Rowlands – Estates and Facilities Manager  Cleaning Contractor  M&E Contractor  Landlord | Facilities Manager will ensure that working conditions are healthy and liaise with the Landlord and the managed service contractors. |

Signed by Michelle Rowlands on 19th July 2021.

Health and safety law posters are displayed in the Café and tea points in Manchester and the 1st and 2nd floor copy rooms in London.

First-aid boxes are in the First aid room in Manchester and the 2nd floor first aid room in London.

Accident books are in the First aid room in Manchester and the 2nd floor first aid room in London. The accident, incident and near miss form is also located in the first aid rooms and on the staff intranet.

Accidents and ill health at work reported under RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations). For more information visit <http://www.hse.gov.uk/riddor>

# **COVID-19 Essential Business Risk assessment**

Company name: National Institute for Health and Care Excellence

Date of risk assessment: 19th July 2021

## **Infection prevention and staff safety**

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| **Business hazards associated with the coronavirus risk** | **Risks to staff / stakeholders / contractors / visitors** | **Control measures** |
| Direct threat to staff health and wellbeing from transmission of the coronavirus while at work | Possible transmission of the virus between the following:  NICE staff  Landlord staff  Visitors to NICE offices  Cleaners  Security staff  Maintenance staff  Sub-contractors  People can catch the virus from others who are infected in the following ways:  Virus moves from person to person in droplets from the nose or mouth spread when a person with the virus coughs or exhales  The virus can survive for up to 72 hours out of the body on surfaces which people have coughed on   * People can pick up the virus by breathing in the droplets or by touching contaminated surfaces and then touching their eyes or mouth | Provide a safe and healthy workplace / working conditions for staff using the workplace during the coronavirus pandemic.  Managers should pass on and reinforce key Government public health messages:   * Cover the mouth and nose with a tissue or sleeve (not hands) when coughing or sneezing (Catch it – Bin it – Kill it). * Put tissues in straight in the bin. * Wash hands regularly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds; use hand sanitiser if soap and water are not available. * Avoid close contact with people who are unwell. * Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces. * Do not touch face, eyes, nose, or mouth if hands are not clean.   Encourage staff to follow working safely guidance while in and around the workplace and when travelling to and from work by:   * Avoiding non-essential contact with others. * Respecting other staff safety concerns and anxieties * Avoiding physical contact (e.g. handshakes, hugs). * Wearing face coverings whilst moving around the workplace or in enclosed or crowded spaces. * Encouraging staff to complete rapid lateral flow tests before attending the workplace.   Implement the following key precautions:   * Keep local risk assessments under review to ensure that a safe place of work is maintained. * Consider meetings with video conference / phone conferencing in place of face-to-face meetings. * Follow Government health and travel advice relating to work practices. * Increase environmental cleaning in the workplace; review and revise cleaning method statements and schedules and ensure cleaning staff have access to suitable detergents, disinfectants, and PPE. * Display public health posters, such as cleaning and disinfection guidance. * Provide handwashing / hand sanitation at entry and exit points. * Encourage use of stairs where possible. Provide hand sanitiser for the operation of lifts. * Adjust office layout to let employees work further apart from each other. * Introduce workstation booking system where staff use designated workstation, which is cleaned and sanitised after each use including shared equipment. * Limited use of high-touch items and shared office equipment (for example, printers) and hand sanitiser close to these. * Frequent cleaning and disinfecting objects and surfaces that are touched regularly, particularly in areas of high use such as door handles, light switches, reception area using appropriate cleaning products and methods. * Enforce clear desk policy where staff must clear their workstation and remove waste and belongings from the work area at the end of shift. * Ventilation systems set to external air intake and run on low power constantly rather than be turned off. Clear use and cleaning guidance for showers, lockers and changing rooms to ensure they are kept clean, clear of personal items and social distancing is achieved as much as possible. * Cleaning procedures for goods and deliveries entering the site. Nearby supply of hand sanitiser for employees to use handling deliveries when handwashing is not practical. * Updated fire safety policy and procedures. * Allow for staggered arrival and departure times at the workplace to reduce crowding into and out of the workplace and to assist with staggered travel on public transport. * Touch free door access.   Onsite meetings:   * Provide hand sanitisation and cleaning materials in meeting rooms.   Visitors to the office:   * Encourage visits via remote connection/working and only have site visits if necessary. * Site guidance given prior to visit or upon visitor’s arrival. * Digital record of visitors. * Revise visitor arrangements to ensure hygiene measures (for example, not physically signing at reception). * Compulsory booking in of visitors so we can manage requests for visitors from multiple teams. * Establishing host responsibilities relating to Covid-19, providing any necessary training for people who act as hosts for visitors. * Coordinating and working collaboratively with other occupiers in multi-tenant sites (for examples, shared working spaces). |

**Cases of possible infection on-site**

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| **Business hazards associated with the coronavirus risk** | **Risks to staff / stakeholders / contractors / visitors** | **Control measures** |
| People becoming unwell while on-site or a symptomatic person using a site | * High risk of transmission | If a member of staff becomes unwell in the workplace with coronavirus symptoms (a new continuous cough, a high temperature, loss or change to sense of smell or taste) they are sent home and advised to follow Government advice to self-isolate.  The single point of contact for each office will lead on contacting local Public Health teams if there is a COVID-19 outbreak.  We will immediately identify any close workplace contacts and ask them to self-isolate.  All surfaces that a symptomatic person has come into contact with are cleaned and disinfected, especially objects visibly contaminated with bodily fluids and all potentially high-contact areas such as toilets.  Public areas where a symptomatic individual has passed through and spent minimal time, such as corridors, but which are not visibly contaminated with bodily fluids, are cleaned thoroughly as normal.  Cleaning staff use disposable cloths or paper roll and a combined detergent disinfectant solution at a dilution of 1000 parts per million available chlorine.  Cleaning staff wear appropriate PPE.  Waste from cleaning of areas where possible cases have been (including disposable cloths and tissues) are double-bagged and tied off. Then placed in a secure holding area for 72 hours before being disposed of in general waste. |

**Higher risk areas of the workplace**

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| **Business hazards associated with the coronavirus risk** | **Risks to staff / stakeholders / contractors / visitors** | **Control measures** |
| Potential enhanced risk of transmission in areas such as toilets, rest rooms and kitchens | Heavily used areas of the workplace are more likely to present an infection transmission risk  Essential for staff to wash hands regularly but also that toilets are kept clean and free of coronavirus contamination   * Increased risk of people coughing and touching door handles, taps, toilet flush handles, kettles, fridges, and cupboard door handles | Stress the need for staff to follow good hygiene practice, at all times, while at work (i.e. regular handwashing, using tissues and disposing of them appropriately, etc.).  Facilities to ensure that adequate hand cleaning resources are provided; all toilets to be supplied with adequate supplies of hot water, liquid soap, and paper towels.  Display handwashing instructions / posters throughout the workplace, especially in toilets and kitchens.  Place 60% alcohol hand gels at convenient places with instructions for use.  Increase environmental cleaning, especially in and around toilets and kitchens; special attention to be paid to frequently touched surfaces such as door handles and push plates, toilet flush handles, cupboard door handles, taps and handrails.  Increase toilets and kitchen inspections to check for cleanliness / adequate stock of soap, toilet paper and hand towels.  Encourage staff to wear face coverings whilst in common areas of the workplace – i.e. away from desk.  Working collaboratively with other occupiers to ensure consistency across common areas.  Create additional space by using other parts of the workplace or building that have been freed up by remote working.  Encourage storage of personal items and clothing in personal storage spaces (for example lockers). |

**Staffing levels**

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| **Business hazards associated with the coronavirus risk** | **Risks to staff / stakeholders / contractors / visitors** | **Control measures** |
| Low staffing due to high rates of staff sickness or staff having to self-isolate themselves at home | Staff may get sick with coronavirus  People who have symptoms must self-isolate for at least 10 days from when the symptoms started to prevent them from passing the virus on   * Those who live with others and where one person has symptoms must self-isolate as a household for 10 days from the day the first person in the house became ill. If anyone else in the household starts displaying symptoms, they need to stay at home for 10 days from when the symptoms appeared, regardless of what day they are on in the original 10-day isolation period | Staff who are sick or self-isolating, phone to inform their line manager.  Produce communications that no member of staff should come to the workplace if they are self-isolating, if they have symptoms or if they feel unwell.  Follow the NICE Track and Trace Policy. |

**Vulnerable staff**

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| **Business hazards associated with the coronavirus risk** | **Risks to staff / stakeholders / contractors / visitors** | **Control measures** |
| Vulnerable staff and staff in high risk categories | Some staff may have pre-existing conditions (e.g. chronic conditions such as diabetes or asthma) which render them more vulnerable to the dangers of the coronavirus infection  Some older staff may also be vulnerable to the effects of the virus  Some staff may be in a “high risk” category as defined by the Government (e.g. those who have had an organ transplant or those who are taking a medicine which weakens their immune system) and in need of special “shielding” arrangements  Pregnant women have also been advised to be extra careful and should be considered vulnerable   * Emerging evidence shows that black, Asian and minority ethnic communities are disproportionately affected by COVID-19 | Ensure all vulnerable or high-risk staff are adequately protected and supported  Managers and HR should be aware of staff who fall into vulnerable and high-risk categories so that they can ensure that they are given adequate support to enable them to comply with Government health recommendations.  No member of staff in a vulnerable or high-risk category should be expected to come to the workplace during the pandemic.  Managers should stay in touch with vulnerable or high-risk staff by phone or video call to ensure they are well and to prevent them from feeling isolated.  Pregnant women at whatever stage of pregnancy are classed at risk. The risk assessment for New and Expectant Mothers has been updated and incorporates guidance from the RCOG and the NHS  Managers supported to have sensitive and comprehensive conversations with their black, Asian and minority ethnic staff, recognising the long-standing context of their poorer experience in all parts of the public sector, especially within the NHS. They should identify any existing underlying health conditions that may increase the risks for them. Most importantly, the conversations should also, on an ongoing basis, consider the feelings of black, Asian and minority ethnic colleagues, particularly regarding both their physical safety, their psychological safety, and their mental health. |

**Business Continuity**

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| **Business hazards associated with the coronavirus risk** | **Risks to staff / stakeholders / contractors / visitors** | **Control measures** |
| Crisis management and business continuity hazards caused by the pandemic | * The pandemic threatens business continuity and the ability to deliver essential services to our customers | Establish overall coronavirus risk management team (Coronavirus Response Group and Gold Group)  Ask all teams / directorates to review and refresh business continuity plans as necessary.  Devise appropriate business recovery plans and keep under review. |

**Information**

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| **Business hazards associated with the coronavirus risk** | **Risks to staff / stakeholders / contractors / visitors** | **Control measures** |
| Hazards caused by lack of information or inaccurate information being circulated | * The pandemic is not only accompanied by a large amount of official guidance, some of which needs interpretation, but also by misinformation, rumour and “fake news” or “myths” | To ensure the safety and wellbeing of staff:   * Base business strategies on accurate information. * Give staff consistent and clear messages.   Coronavirus risk management team monitor official advice carefully and update all policies and procedures.  Brief leadership teams / managers and keep up to date.  Make managers aware of fake news and discourage the circulation of misinformation.  Keep staff informed. |

**Communication**

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| **Business hazards associated with the coronavirus risk** | **Risks to staff / stakeholders / contractors / visitors** | **Control measures** |
| Threat to effective communications | * The pandemic threatens communications with stakeholders / suppliers / customers | Follow specific plans for how and how often to communicate with stakeholders / suppliers / customers.  Senior management reviews all outward facing communications to ensure messages are consistent, clear and reflect the values of NICE.  Provide clear, consistent, and regular communication to improve understanding and consistency of ways of working.  Engage with workers through existing communication routes and employee representatives to explain and agree any changes in working arrangements.  Develop communication and advice for clients and occupiers prior to returning to site, especially around new procedures for arrival at work and anything workers are expected to bring with them to help maintain new safety or hygiene standards.  Engage with workers (including through Unions, or representative groups) to monitor and understand any unforeseen impacts of changes to working environments.  Awareness and focus on the importance of mental health at times of uncertainty. The government has published guidance on the mental health and wellbeing aspects of COVID-19.  Management promote mental health & wellbeing awareness to staff and offer whatever support they can to help including an open-door policy for those who need additional support.  Use simple, clear messaging to explain guidelines using images and clear language, with consideration of groups for which English may not be their first language.  Use visual communications, e.g. whiteboards or signage, to explain changes to schedules, breakdowns, or materials shortages to reduce the need for face-to-face communications.  Communicate approaches and operational procedures to suppliers, customers, or trade bodies to help their adoption and to share experience. |

**Cyber security**

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| **Business hazards associated with the coronavirus risk** | **Risks to staff / stakeholders / contractors / visitors** | **Control measures** |
| Cyber security risks | Cyber security threats often accompany a crisis, including computer viruses, phishing and scam emails and coronavirus related “ransomware”   * With NICE and individual staff more reliant than ever on digital communications and the internet, and with more staff working from home and using a variety of digital devices, the need to ensure the security and function or our digital systems is more important than ever | Review cyber security and surveillance infrastructure and ensure that all reasonable protection is in place  Circulate warnings to staff and managers of any credible cyber threats, especially scam emails and text messages.  Ensure that staff working from home and using remote-working systems are covered by cyber risk protections  Ensure any homeworking arrangements maintain standards of data protection and IT security  Ensure that existing cyber security systems do not interfere with the availability of critical safety information and updates relating to coronavirus.  Assess cyber risks to new supply chain connections developed during the pandemic. |