

# PHYSICAL DISTANCING IN THE WORKPLACE

# Development and Regeneration Services

## PHYSICAL DISTANCING IN THE WORKPLACE GUIDANCE

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### SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

The post Lockdown phase of the COVID-19 pandemic will require a phased approach to the re occupation of buildings.

The requirements for physical distancing will remain which will mean that initial occupation levels will be significantly reduced from the pre lockdown state and will require to be managed safely and effectively for the protection of staff and visitors.

This document aims to provide information for Services on how national health and safety guidance restrictions will apply when buildings re open.

While the document relates to office accommodation, principally within the city centre, the general guidance should apply to all council premises with specific proposals being developed by Services for non-office buildings across the council's estate commensurate to their service delivery needs.

This guidance will be applied as an initial response and will be subject to review as national guidelines are updated/amended.

In preparing this document the following has been taken into account:

- Dept. for Business, Energy & Industry Strategy; 11<sup>th</sup> May 2020: **“Working safety during Coronavirus (Covid-19)”**
- Health Protection Scotland, 19 May 2020: **“Covid-19 Guidance for non-healthcare settings”**
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992
- The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992

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### SECTION 2: WORKPLACE DESIGN

#### GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Consideration will be required in the design of the revised office layouts against the requirement for physical distancing between offices users. The following will provided a route to optimising office capacity whilst minimising the potential for close contact and keeping staff and visitors safe.

##### 1. Building Entrance and Exit

- Where possible within workplaces, entrances and exits to and from buildings should be one directional. This will be different from the ways that buildings are currently used in many cases. Before re occupying premises in increased numbers, where possible/practical, some entrance and exit doors may be re-designated in order to allow this approach to be adopted.

##### 2. Physical Space between desks

- The 2 metre distancing will be applied within the desk sets. This will mean that it will not be possible for staff to work alongside each other as is currently the case. A vacant desk will be required between adjacent desks and seating positions will be required to maintain a 2 metre distance.

##### 3 Circulation space between desks

- Where pods of desks are adjacent, a circulation route will be marked to allow occupants of desks to move to and from desk sets while maintaining a 2 metre distance wherever possible.

##### 4 Desk use policy

- Staff will not necessarily be using their usual desks. Services should identify individuals with specialist DSE equipment and make every effort to allow them to use their own workspace, or where this is not possible due to social distancing restrictions, ensure arrangements are in place for individuals to move relevant equipment to identified work areas.
- Desks will require to be kept clear and staff will be required to wipe down desks at the end of their working day with wipes provided. This will apply to keyboards and telephone handsets also.
- Cleaning staff will also be deployed on a heightened frequency for cleaning of the work area on a daily basis, particularly reception, toilet, kitchen and rest areas

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### **5 Circulation spaces within the floor**

- Routes of circulation in aisles within floors will require to maintain a 2 metre space from adjacent desk in pods wherever possible
- Distance marking will be put in place in communal areas such as stationery, printing and mail hubs.

### **6. Tea prep and break out areas.**

- Distancing criteria will be applied in tea hub areas within one way systems being applied where practical. This will be managed through the use of floor and wall signage.
- Where a one way system is not achievable, tea prep areas will be reduced to single use only with signage displayed, adopting a one in one out approach to ensure social distancing is maintained.
- The seating areas in coffee hubs will be taken out of use in both hard and soft seating areas. Where appropriate, staff should be encouraged to eat and drink at their desks, this will ensure that physical distancing is in place at all times.
- Where possible designated rest areas will be provided where physical distancing requirements can be ensured

### **8 Circulation between floors.**

- Separation marking will be applied in the stairwell to route traffic up and down at different sides of the stair.
- Where practicable one way systems may be put in place
- Lifts should generally only be used in exceptional circumstances, for example where there are mobility requirements and limited to one or maximum of two occupants depending upon the capacity of lifts to achieve safe distancing of users

### **9 Meeting Rooms**

- The capacity of meeting rooms must take cognizance of the requirement to maintain 2m distancing including when accessing and egressing

### **10 Toilet Facilities**

- Existing Washrooms facilities will be available for use by the reduced staff numbers. General distancing measures and signage will be put in place in accordance with National guidelines.
- Cleaning arrangement of toilets will be amended in order to ensure that infection control measures are enhanced

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### SECTION 3: IT REQUIREMENTS

The amended desk layouts will require Services to assess desk usage to take account of the IT needs of individuals using the desks

Services' requests for amendments to their IT needs should be coordinated through their SIT Business Partner

### SECTION 4: SUPPLIES AND GOODS REQUIREMENTS

The procurement of goods, services and works are required to comply with the Council's Standing Orders in order to ensure the risk of supplier challenge to the Council is mitigated and best value is achieved.

The amended working practices will mean that critical goods/supplies to support physical distancing within buildings will be required e.g. hand sanitiser gel, hand wipes, masks, Office signage and outdoor hand sanitiser stations.

Services should refer to the Council's procurement pages to identify if a contract exists for the items required, link as follows <http://connect.glasgow.gov.uk/article/23803/Procurement> [corporateprocurement@glasgow.gov.uk](mailto:corporateprocurement@glasgow.gov.uk) or contact the CPU who will be able to advise accordingly.

### SECTION 5: RISK ASSESSMENT

Before any return to the workplace, Services will require to carry out appropriate risk assessments. The building re occupancy risk assessment and manager's check list can be accessed here (provide link)

It is evident from the requirement to maintain physical distancing wherever possible that there will be a reduction in the capacity of offices.

Consequently Services will require to make an assessment of their own work areas and layouts in planning for post lockdown and should consider:

- 1 Prioritising occupancy – Considering staff who have limited or no capability to carry out their function from home.
- 2 Rotation – Rotating staff working from the office on a phased basis. This could take the form of a shift basis or on planned days and could include staggered working times for staff coming into the buildings.
- 3 Meeting the public - Reception areas will have distancing provisions applied and it is envisaged that public access will be restricted. This could mean that access to council buildings will be by invitation only.

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### Section 6: NEXT STEPS

- 1 The application of the distancing principles on the floorplates of the city centre office accommodation have been produced and shared with services to guide their risk assessment.
- 2 Guidance will be subject to review in accordance with national guidance updates.

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#### **Appendix 1 – Indicative layout plan**



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