

Lifting the coronavirus lockdown: Scottish Borders Council Policy on safe working during the COVID-19 pandemic

Introduction

As the coronavirus (COVID-19) lockdown is eased, we recognise that our organisation needs to reinstate services where possible and adapt to new ways of working where required. We will not return to the way we used to work and the long term approach to how we operate will be focussed on mobile and homeworking with far fewer buildings being reopened. When we reopen a building it will be on the basis of 4 days per week to allow for deep cleaning and 72 hours without occupancy to ensure the Covid 19 virus is not present. This policy explains the changes to our working environment and new ways of working.

These adaptations have been informed by our COVID-19 risk assessment, the results of which can be found on [link to SBC webpage}. We have consulted with the Trades Unions representatives about the changes.

We encourage you to let us know if you have any concerns, have identified any potential risks, or have any suggestions for further adaptations we can make - you can do this by raising concerns or making suggestions to your line manager in the first instance or the HR department askhr@scotborders.gov.uk.

In advance of any Council buildings being reopened or Services being restarted

Business Continuity and Health and Safety Colleagues will be meeting with Managers to plan for phase 1 and future phases as we move through the route map.

We will have identified the minimum number of staff needed to operate safely and effectively, whilst maintaining social distancing, in our work locations.

During each stage of the recovery process we are asking staff to attend the workplace only where their role requires their physical presence. If at all possible employees will continue to work from home.

Agreement should be made with line managers before any staff make plans to return to a workplace.

Staff with serious underlying health conditions who have been advised to shield against coronavirus should continue to do so for the duration of their shielding period. Staff in other vulnerable groups, such as pregnant staff and those aged 70 or over, continue to be consulted individually about potential adaptations to their role.

If you or someone you live with has coronavirus symptoms or you or someone in your household has been contacted under the Test, Trace and Isolate process and have been asked to self-isolate, you must self-isolate as advised.

It is absolutely essential that if you or anyone you live with develops:

- New continuous cough OR fever OR loss of / change in sense of smell or taste

you do not attend work and self-isolate in accordance with the Government's guidance at www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection.

In line with our sickness absence reporting procedure, you should notify your line manager by telephone before you are due to start work, or as soon as possible if that is not practical.

Travel to and from work

We encourage staff to minimise their use of public transport, by walking or cycling where possible. If travelling by car, you must not car-share with anyone outside your household.

Where you need to use public transport, please think about social distancing, where possible staying two metres away from others and avoiding touching surfaces. If you can, wear a face covering on public transport.

Staff using public transport may find it helpful to refer to the Government's guidance at www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers and www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering.

You should wash your hands thoroughly when you arrive at work, using the handwashing facilities or hand sanitisers provided. You should also wash your hands thoroughly as soon as you get home from work.

Working patterns for staff attending the workplace

To reduce the risk of infection spread, we have introduced the following measures:

- Our changes to working patterns are based on our COVID-19 risk assessment and the suggestions in the Government's guidance on returning to a range of different types of work in [Working safely during coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#). Examples include:
 - staggering the workforce's start/end times and breaks;
 - using "fixed teams or partnering" so each person works with only a few others;
 - rotating groups of staff, for example via a shift system or short-time working; and
 - removing hot-desking arrangements.

You should speak to your line manager if you have any specific needs around your working patterns, for example because of childcare responsibilities or travel difficulties.

Hygiene and cleanliness

General measures

To reduce the risk of infection spread, we have introduced the following measures:

- Our hygiene and cleaning measures are based on the COVID-19 risk assessment and the suggestions in the Government's guidance on returning to a range of different types of work in [Working safely during coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#).
- We are:
- installing additional hand sanitisers, including at entrances and exits;
- cleaning work areas and equipment frequently;
- having signage and posters to provide regular reminders to staff to maintain hygiene standards;
- removing waste and belongings from the work area at the end of shifts and

#Playing your part

While we are taking these stringent additional measures, we would like to remind you to play your part by:

- washing your hands often and thoroughly;
- avoiding touching your face, particularly your eyes, nose and mouth; and
- coughing or sneezing into a tissue, and binning it safely and immediately, or into your arm if a tissue is not available.
- Do not share stationary such as pens

Social distancing measures

General measures

While at work, you must maintain social distancing of two metres wherever possible. To assist with social distancing, we have introduced the following measures:

- Our social distancing measures are based on the COVID-19 risk assessment and the suggestions in the Government's guidance on returning to a range of different types of work in [Working safely during coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#).
- workstations will be spaced out;
- floor markings to help staff to maintain social distancing;
- installing screens or barriers to separate staff from each other;
- working back to back or side to side (rather than face to face) where possible;
- introducing one-way systems to reduce instances of staff having to pass each other in close proximity; and
- having signage and posters advising on limits to numbers entering specific areas such as lifts, break areas, toilets, showers and changing rooms.

You should continue to practice social distancing in common areas, including at workplace entrances and exits/in lifts/in break areas/in toilets, showers and changing rooms].

Meetings

As part of our social-distancing measures, staff should conduct meetings remotely where possible. When physical meetings are absolutely necessary and have been risk assessed:

- only essential participants should attend the meeting;
- meetings should be kept as short as possible;
- social distancing of two metres should be maintained throughout;
- objects such as stationary should not be shared
- meetings should be held in a well-ventilated room whenever possible
- Hand sanitisers are provided in meeting rooms and areas where meetings frequently take place
- Surface cleaner (spray or wipes) and towels will be provided so that surfaces like meeting tables and chairs can be cleaned by meeting attendees before and after meetings; and
- Floor markings are also provided to help staff to maintain social distancing.

Customers and visitors

To reduce the risk of infection spread, we have introduced the following measures:

- Our hygiene and cleaning measures are based on the COVID-19 risk assessment and the suggestions in the Government's guidance on returning to a range of different types of work in [Working safely during coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#).
- restricting the number of customers allowed in at any one time, bearing in mind the space available and the need to maintain social distancing;
- introducing other infection-control measures for customers, such as contactless-only payments and screens or barriers to separate staff from customers;
- suspending customer services that cannot be undertaken without contravening social-distancing guidelines;
- providing clear guidance to visitors to our premises, such as delivery staff;
- allowing for non-contact deliveries, for example via pick-up and drop-off points; and
- changing delivery patterns, for example ordering supplies less often but in larger quantities.

Personal protective equipment (PPE)

Our approach to additional PPE

In line with our COVID-19 risk assessments, the use of additional PPE is detailed in the PPE Guidance {include online link} Any required PPE will be provided for you.

You should continue to wear the PPE you normally require to carry out your work, including safety helmets/gloves/eye protection/high-visibility clothing/safety footwear.

Face coverings

The use of a face covering (which is not considered PPE) is a matter of individual choice. If you choose to use a face covering, you must follow the Government's advice at www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering. This advice includes that you:

- wash your hands thoroughly before putting a face covering on and after removing it;
- change your face covering if it becomes damp or if you have touched it; and
- change and wash your face covering daily.

The use of a face covering is not a replacement for observing our social distancing guidelines.