



TEMPLATE DOCUMENT: Working safely with Coronavirus

Introduction:

This document may be used to set out the workplace policy on managing Coronavirus in the workplace safely. When creating a policy, the business circumstances, its requirements and assessment of risk from COVID-19 transmission must be thoroughly considered first. Any policy must be fair, reasonable and proportionate.

This policy template is suitable for all businesses, **except for those operating in the health and social care sector**, this is whilst we wait further government guidance on how these workplaces are to manage COVID-19 moving forward.

The matter of mandatory vaccinations is complex in terms of employment legislation, with the main challenge being around whether it aligns to article 8 of the Human Rights Act. Although consideration must also be given to the Equality Act 2010, Employment Rights Act 1996 and the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (section 2 and 7). For this reason, this policy is to be used on the basis that as an employer, you encourage voluntary take up of the vaccination and do not mandate it as a condition of employment.

In terms of workplace testing, it may be appropriate to mandate, depending on the business context. Before deciding on whether to make testing mandatory, then consider whether the approach will be:

- Compliant with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK GDPR
- It is reasonable, fair, and proportionate in the circumstances.
- Consideration being given to other measures that may be in place and whether all other alternative options may have been exhausted.

Legal considerations:

The following pieces of legislation apply to this policy:

- UK GDPR
- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act, article 8
- Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974
- Workplace Health, Safety and Welfare Regulations 1992
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007

How to generate your policy:

Throughout the policy, you will see icons and highlighted areas (see key below). The icons used are for guidance on how to amend the document and should be deleted from the final document, together with any non-applicable optional clauses.

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Key:

			
INFORMATION	ACTION	OPTIONAL	WARNING
This icon demonstrates the text is for information only.	This icon means you need to make an amendment to the text.	This icon means the advice provided is optional.	This icon means the text is important. Please take note of the advice.

Any text you find highlighted should be amended to **suit your customisations** and/or removed from the document.

Customising your policy:

In addition to the text emphasised with icons and highlights, you can also amend the font, margins and footer information to suit your needs.

All fonts used throughout the document are set in the Styles panel (under the Home Tab in Word 2007+). To change the font settings, right click on the style and click *Modify*. Make the appropriate changes and click OK. Your document will automatically update wherever that style is used.

To remove the icons, click on them and press delete.

You will find a checklist of customisations at the end of the document. Please run through this once you have completed your customisations. You will also need to **delete this page by clicking Insert -> Cover Page -> Remove Current Cover Page**. You should delete this prior to updating your table of contents, to ensure that the page references are all correct.

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1 Purpose

- 1.1 In our continuous commitment to health and safety, we recognise and accept our responsibility as an employer to maintain, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety and health of our employees and of other persons who may be affected by our activities.
- 1.2 This policy sets out how we intend to manage COVID-19 safely in the workplace.



<We advise that the policy is non-contractual in order to minimise the risk of a breach of contract claim, and also to enable ease of updating.>

- 1.3 We reserve the right to keep our COVID safety measures under continuous review and to adapt, add or remove any of the measures where reasonably necessary.
- 1.4 This policy is not contractual but aims to set out how we normally deal with such issues.

2 Scope



- 2.1 <Tailor to suit the range of workers in your business.> This policy is applicable to all employees and workers and therefore applies to everyone in the organisation.



- 2.2 **Optional** All visitors to our site including and other third parties will be required to follow our guidance as set out in our visitor declaration.

3 The UK's position on COVID-19

- 3.1 It is the responsibility of each employer and individual to take necessary steps in protecting themselves and others from COVID-19.
- 3.2 The UK does not mandate vaccinations against COVID-19; however, it strongly encourages every person eligible to become fully vaccinated.
- 3.3 There is no legal requirement to self-isolate following a positive COVID-19 test but the government advises to remain at home and to avoid contact with other people for at least 5 full days and to continue following this guidance until the person has received two negative test results.
- 3.4 The Government urges anyone who has any Coronavirus symptoms to get tested. The [NHS website](#) provides information on what the current COVID-19 symptoms are.
- 3.5 The government advises that employers take the necessary steps to implement mitigations against the spread of the virus according to their place of work.
- 3.6 Testing for COVID-19 is available for certain risk groups. The [NHS website](#) provides information on how to book a test.
- 3.7 It is encouraged and advised that businesses and individuals adopt safe working practices:

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- To get vaccinated
 - Let fresh air in if you are meeting indoors or to meet outside
 - Wear face coverings in crowded and enclosed spaces especially when coming into contact with people you don't usually meet or when transmission levels are high
 - Try to stay at home when unwell
 - Testing when you have developed COVID-19 symptoms, or stay at home and avoid contact with other people if you have tested positive
 - Washing your hands and following advice to 'catch it, bin it, kill it'
- 3.8 The latest government advice can be found [here](#). If you require help with accessing this information, please contact your line manager in the first instance.
- 3.9 Information concerning the Coronavirus vaccination can be found on the [NHS website](#).
- 3.10 According to the [NHS guidance](#) on getting the COVID-19 vaccine, it is understood that the vaccine will reduce your chances of suffering from the COVID-19 disease, and where some people may still become infected, it will lessen the severity of the infection. The NHS state that the COVID-19 vaccine injection is safe and effective and provides the best protection against the virus.
- 3.11 We understand that a decision to have the vaccine will be a personal choice. Important factors such as religious beliefs, pre-existing medical conditions, pregnancy or breastfeeding and other personal circumstances may require your careful consideration.
- 3.12 Given the vast amount of information circulating in the public domain, some of which is misinformation, we recommend that only official sources are used for guidance around COVID-19 and the vaccination programme. Sources of further information can be found in section 11 of this policy.

4 Our position on COVID-19

- 4.1 Overall, it is the position of the Company, that we strongly encourage those who are able to take the COVID-19 vaccination to do so when offered.
- 4.2 We strongly encourage all employees follow the advice from NHS and the Government in regards to adopting safe behaviours.
- 4.3 We are committed to taking all reasonably practicable steps in order to reduce workplace risk from COVID-19 to the lowest level.
- 4.4 We respectfully require all those who fall in scope of this policy to co-operate with the company in reducing the risks of transmission of the virus, by adhering to our Covid safety working practices, as is reasonably necessary.

5 Our responsibilities

5.1 Health, safety, and welfare

- 5.1.1 We have a legal duty to protect the health, safety, and welfare of everyone in the workplace and to make appropriate arrangements to ensure this. Specifically, under the Health and Safety at Work Act, 1974, section 2, we are required to take all reasonable practicable steps to reduce workplace risks to their lowest level.
- 5.1.2 As part of our commitment to this duty, we fully support each person who is able, in getting vaccinated against the virus. This commitment is an addition to the measures put in place to ensure the workplace continues to be a COVID-secure environment.
- 5.1.3 Employees also have a legal duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act, 1974, section 7 to co-operate with the company as is reasonably necessary.
- 5.1.4 All staff, including those who have received the vaccine are reminded that they must continue to observe all safe working practices relating to the management of COVID in order to protect themselves and their families, colleagues and others who attend the workplace. Whilst the vaccination does not prevent transmission, it is understood that it will lessen the severity of the infection. This is particularly important as there may be some individuals in the workplace who are either unable to receive the vaccination or choose not to receive it.

5.2 Dignity and respect

- 5.2.1 We are committed to a workplace that treats everybody with dignity and respect. The COVID-19 pandemic is a challenging time for all, and we recognise the sensitivities that exist around this.
- 5.2.2 We expect our employees to be treated respectfully by their colleagues in relation to their decision on whether to be vaccinated. The company does not accept any bullying or harassment against an employee because of their decision.
- 5.2.3 The company is committed to ensuring that dignity and respect is offered to all those who we interact with.

6 **Optional** Personal data

Only include if the company requires temperature screening and/or lateral flow tests.

Under the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR you must have a valid lawful basis when processing personal data. There will also be additional special rules when handling special category data (i.e., medical records such as testing information). Where there is a public or legitimate interest then this will form the legal basis for lawful processing.

- 6.1 We recognise that testing will require the Company to hold sensitive personal data and we will do so in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR. The data that is held will be done so lawfully, fairly, and transparently.

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- 6.2 The company is committed to strong working practices to safeguard and protect personal data.
- 6.3 **Either** Where we need to **OR** When we process data in connection to employees COVID-19 testing, we shall do so lawfully in line with our obligations under the legislation. Data held will include the employees' full name and test result which is held for the purpose of the company being able to take all reasonable practicable steps to reduce workplace risks to their lowest level and to break the chain of transmission.
- 6.4 The data the company will then hold concerning an employee's COVID-19 testing, is deemed as special category data, and as such, the Company will put in place an additional safeguard.
- 6.5 For further information on how we manage data in line with the UK Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK GDPR please refer to our General Data Protection Policy.

7 Clinically extremely vulnerable

- 7.1 We especially encourage employees who are clinically extremely vulnerable who can receive the vaccine, to take up the opportunity of becoming fully vaccinated and any boosters that may be introduced.
- 7.2 We will take all reasonable practicable steps to reduce workplace risks to their lowest level and will make appropriate arrangements in the workplace to do so through our risk assessment process. We may therefore request appropriate medical advice from either Occupational Health, your GP or another medical specialist to further understand your health needs at work.
- 7.3 You also have a legal duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act, 1974, section 7 to co-operate with the company as is reasonably necessary.
- 7.4 If you have concerns about your health at work then you are required to speak to your line manager in the first instance and as soon as possible.

8 Pregnant employees and those returning from maternity leave

- 8.1 We are mindful that for some, there can be a level of anxiety about COVID-19 for their own health and that of their child. We have appropriate policies and procedures in place to support pregnant employees and those on return from maternity leave. You can read our [maternity policy/family friendly](#) policy about how we support the health and safety of soon to be and new parents.
- 8.2 Our pregnancy risk assessment helps us to ensure that risks are managed to their lowest level and will do this by making appropriate arrangements in the workplace. We will take all reasonable practicable steps to reduce workplace risks identified for you.

9 Business travel

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- 9.1 We encourage holding telephone or video conferences to conduct business related activities with **colleagues, customers, suppliers** wherever possible. However, we recognise that in some instances, face to face interaction is essential and business travel necessary. We ask that when attending other locations through the course of your work, that you continue to adhere with any COVID workplace safety measures that are in place.
- 9.2 If international business travel is essential then you will be required to adhere to any COVID restrictions that may be in place in that country, including any requirements to self-isolate on arrival in that country.
- 9.3 You will also be required to keep up to date with local COVID rules whilst overseas and to inform your line manager immediately if any changes are made.

10 Holidays

- 10.1 If you book an overseas holiday, then due to the evolving situation with COVID-19 and the possible implications on your employment, we recommend:
- Keeping your situation under review and read all official guidance before deciding whether you should travel abroad
 - Subscribe to travel advice email alerts for the UK, your destination, and any countries you plan to travel through
 - Check entry restrictions, testing and quarantining requirements
 - Contact the UK based embassy of your destination country if you need further guidance
 - Be prepared to comply with any changes in local COVID-19 restrictions in the country of destination
 - Keep in contact with your travel company/airline for any delays or changes to your return travel.
- 10.2 In the event that you experience delays in returning to the UK because of COVID-19 rules of the overseas country, and these delays go on to impact on your ability to return to work as planned, then it is essential that you contact your line manager as soon as possible.
- 10.3 We will, wherever reasonably possible, support employees who encounter delays in returning to the workplace as planned. This may include, depending upon business needs:
- allowing a further period of 5 days unpaid leave (prorated for part time employees)
 - allowing the use of additional annual leave of up to 5 days (prorated for part time employees)
 - or a combination of unpaid/annual leave with any time off in lieu that you may have accrued
 - working from home if feasible.

11 Risk Assessment

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- 11.1 We conduct risk assessments in order to assess risks to the health and safety of employees as well as individuals not in our employment (such as visitors, guests, contractors, and anyone entering the workplace). Our risk assessment includes an assessment of the risks associated with COVID-19. We therefore continue to monitor the risks that arise from the virus so that we can reduce workplace risks to their lowest level.
- 11.2 Our risk assessment also considers those who may be clinically extremely vulnerable.
- 11.3 You will find the latest copy of our risk assessment at [insert location]. If you need assistance in accessing the document, please speak with your line manager.
- 11.4 Our risk assessments are always subject to review and so we may at any given time, be required to either add to our existing COVID safety measures, remove them or adjust how we manage them. We will communicate in advance providing reasonable notice about any changes to our measures.

12 Appointments

12.1 Time off for vaccine appointments

- 12.2 Time off for vaccine appointments must be agreed with your manager in advance, and you should give them as much notice as possible. You may be required to produce confirmation of the appointment.
- 12.3 **Either:** Reasonable paid time off will be given for you to attend your appointment. **OR** Appointments should normally be arranged outside of your working hours or, if this is not possible, at the beginning or end of your working day.
- 12.4 Time off may be requested from annual holiday entitlement, or alternatively, time off in lieu, or unpaid leave may be granted.
- 12.5 Reasonable time off will be granted to support you having the vaccine.

12.6 Vaccine appointments for a dependent

- 12.7 If someone depends on you for care who needs your support to attend a vaccination appointment for themselves, then time off may be granted. Arrangements for leave should be discussed and agreed with your line manager in advance.

<Note the following section provides examples of measures that could be introduced to mitigate against the risk of COVID-19. Any measures you introduce should be identified via your company risk assessment, and you are able to justify that the measure is justified, proportionate and reasonable.

13 **Optional** COVID-19 temperature screening

- 13.1 We reserve the right to conduct or require COVID-19 screening on any person working <specify area of work/roles>. Temperature screening is in place as one of our measures for ensuring workplace risks from COVID-19 are at their lowest and in preventing the spread of the Coronavirus.

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- 13.2 Everybody entering our premises will be required to undertake a temperature test. Where the temperature is 37.8°C or above, entry will not be permitted.
- 13.3 If the temperature is 37.8°C or above, you will be reasonably asked to return home and to self-isolate in line with government advice. Ensure that you inform your manager of the situation. Medical advice should be sought if you have concerns or if symptoms get worse.
- 13.4  Where self-isolation is required because you are sick due to COVID-19 and/or have one or several of the known key symptoms associated with the virus, then **either** depending upon your eligibility, you may be entitled to statutory sick pay **or** in accordance with your contract of employment, depending on the circumstances, you may be entitled to company sick pay.
- 13.5 Should you attend work when we reasonably believe you should follow government advice on COVID-19 by self-isolating, we will require you to return home.
- 13.6 An unreasonable refusal to comply with our temperature screening policy, this may be regarded as a disciplinary matter and dealt with under our disciplinary procedure.

14 **Optional** COVID-19 lateral flow tests

- 14.1   It is our priority and duty to protect the health, safety and welfare of our employees and other people who might be affected by our business. Given the seriousness and impact of COVID-19, we deem the use of lateral flow tests **Either** to be essential **Or** to be carried out when **[insert the terms including frequency, in which you require testing such as when meeting other people they do not usually meet/meeting in crowded indoor space or if the local community are experiencing particularly high infection levels]**. This measure will help the company to keep risks associated to COVID-19 to their lowest level.
- 14.2 Lateral flow tests must be carried out before attending the work premises. Should you test positive, you will be required to self-isolate with immediate effect in line with government advice **[Option]** and continue to work from home if this is feasible and you are well enough to do so.
- 14.3  The company will cover the cost of all lateral flow tests, and they will be made available **[insert how they are to be provided to your employees]**.
- 14.4 An unreasonable refusal to carry out a lateral flow test may be regarded as a disciplinary matter and dealt with under our disciplinary procedure.
- 14.5 All matters relating to testing, test results and management communications will be treated in a confidential manner and in line with our data protection policy.
- 14.6 Where an employee tests positive, the company will be required to inform the wider workforce of a positive case, in line with government guidance. Names of those who have a positive result will not be disclosed.

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- 14.7 If you develop symptoms whilst at work and you need to carry out a test which then returns positive, you will be required to leave the workplace immediately without returning to the workstation so that you can follow government advice by staying at home and avoiding contact with other people. **[Optional]** and continue to work from home if this is feasible and you are well enough to do so.



- 14.8 Where self-isolation is required because you have one or several of the known key symptoms associated with COVID-19, you have tested positive or you feel unwell with suspected COVID-19, then **either** statutory sick pay will be awarded where eligible **or** in accordance with your contract of employment, depending on the circumstances, you may be entitled to company sick pay.

15 **[Optional]** Face coverings

- 15.1 **[Either]** If employees wish to wear face coverings whilst at work, they may do so. All employees must respect an individual's personal choice.

- 15.2 There may be occasions or certain areas within the business where we would advise the wearing of a face covering. For example, this may be [examples could include, in person team meetings, events where social interaction will take place with people we do not normally work with, or work activities in an enclosed crowded space]. **[Or]** Following a review of our risk assessment, we believe it necessary that all employees wear face coverings when at work (unless there is a reasonable reason for not doing so) and these will be provided.

16 **[Optional]** Home working

- 16.1 If an employee self isolates because they have any of the main COVID symptoms or have tested positive for COVID but are well enough to work, we will support working from home during the period of isolation.

- 16.2 Self-isolation must be for 5 full days and must continue until you have received two negative lateral flow tests.

17 **[Optional]** Staggered shifts and break times

- 17.1 To ensure that the numbers of employees working and taking breaks at any given time is kept to a minimum to limit the transmission of the virus, the company operates staggered shifts and break times. Details of your shift and break times will be communicated to you by your line manager.

18 Further support and information

- 18.1 **[Optional]:** Employee Assistance Programme [insert name of provider, contact number, operating times and any password or user ID that may be required when calling]



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18.2 Due to the vast amount of information circulating in the public domain, some of which is misinformation, we recommend that only official sources are used for guidance around COVID-19 and the vaccination programme.

- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) vaccine – NHS guidance](#)
- [The UK Government COVID-19 Vaccination Programme](#)
- [Priority groups for Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) vaccination: advice from the JCVI](#)

18.3 Any queries or comments about this policy should be addressed to <specify whom>.

18.4 If you wish to talk to somebody in confidence other than your line manager about the company's workplace COVID measures, then you can speak to [offer alternative route for escalations], who will help to answer questions you have on why the company is required to implement them.

18.5 Should you not be happy with how any concern has been addressed or resolved, then you can escalate the concerns more formally, through the company's Grievance Policy.

19 Related policies and documents

<Tailor your list as appropriate to the policies and documents in place within your business – the list below contains only suggestions:>

- Absence due to illness or injury
- Corporate Social Responsibility
- Data Protection Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Holidays and Other Absences Policy
- Bullying and Harassment
- Diversity Policy.

The above list is not exhaustive.

20 Policy owner

This policy is owned and maintained by <specify whom eg "the Managing Director">.

21 Policy review date

Date last reviewed:

Checklist

Upon completion of customisations please ensure you have:

- ✓ customised all relevant text and removed pink highlighted text
- ✓ removed all icons
- ✓ removed the front cover (see instructions on front cover)
- ✓ updated the Table of Contents at the front of the document (highlight the ToC and press F9 or right click and update entire table)
- ✓ diarised a reminder to review and update the policy
- ✓ removed this checklist!