

# Rescare: Working during the coronavirus pandemic

## A General principle

In essence, the main duties require employers to take as much care for employees and others affected by the business as is reasonably practicable.

Reference from the website below:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/offices-and-contact-centres>

## B The steps we are asked to take are:

### 1. Complete a COVID-19 risk assessment

Complete a risk assessment, considering the reasonable adjustments needed for staff and customers with disabilities. Share it with all your staff.

### 2. Clean more often

Especially surfaces that people touch a lot. You should ask your staff and your customers to use hand sanitiser and wash their hands frequently.

### 3. Remind your visitors to wear face coverings where the law says they must

This is especially important if your customers are likely to be around people they do not normally meet. Some exemptions apply.

### 4. Make sure everyone can maintain social distancing

Make it easy for everyone to do so by putting up signs or introducing a one-way system your customers can follow.

### 5. Provide adequate ventilation

This means supplying fresh air to enclosed space where people are present. It can be natural ventilation through windows, doors and vents, mechanical ventilation using fans and ducts, or a combination of both.

### 6. Take part in NHS Test and Trace

Keep a record of all staff and contractors for 21 days.

### 7. Turn people with COVID-19 symptoms away

Staff members or customers should self-isolate if they or someone in their household has a persistent cough, a high temperature or has lost their sense of taste or smell. If someone is self-isolating, employers must not ask or make them come to work. It's an offence to do this.

### 8. Consider the mental health and wellbeing aspects of COVID-19 for yourself and others

## Other things to be aware of:

### Work from home unless it's unreasonable for you to do so

Office workers who can work from home should do so.

### Arrange workspaces to keep staff apart

Consider using barriers to separate people and introduce back-to-back or side-by-side working.

### Reduce face-to-face meetings

Encourage calls or video conferences to avoid in-person meetings with external contacts, or colleagues outside someone's immediate team. Do this wherever possible.

### Reduce crowding

Consider how many people can be in each space while remaining socially distant and consider using booking systems for desks or rooms. Reduce the maximum occupancy for lifts.

## Communicate and train

Make sure all staff and visitors are kept up to date with the safety measures.

## C Implementation: Updated 16<sup>th</sup> December 2021

### 1 Working in the office

In order to eliminate the risk of person to person transmission from 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020 staff and trustees have been working much of the time from home in order to manage Rescare business with as little disruption as possible. Now we are using the office a bit more, no-one will visit the office if they have symptoms which might indicate coronavirus infection until the full recommended isolation period has elapsed. We are keeping a record of all staff and visitors' contact details so they can be contacted if necessary.

We have just two people who regularly use the office at 19 Buxton Road in normal circumstances. Visitors and volunteers are by appointment. We are cautiously using the office taking the precautions outlined below, however the much of our work is still from staff and trustees' and volunteers' homes

Both regular users use private cars as does the once a week volunteer so the problems of potential infection on public transport to work are thus mostly avoided.

From September the office has been used about three days a week. This means we can continue to check the premises are safe and we have been collecting the post. From mid June one person working in each office at a time has been our rule in terms of social distancing. We increase ventilation by opening windows and the rear door when anybody else is in the office. Visitors (which we are keeping to a minimum) will be required to wear face masks as will staff when visitors are present.

In terms of cleanliness to prevent surface contamination:

The offices and kitchen/lavatory areas have been thoroughly cleaned during the period of lock downs, and taps, handles and switches given attention on each occasion. This thorough cleaning once a week has now been recommenced. In addition, each office user will:

- Use frequent hand washing
- Take advantage of the hand sanitiser provided
- Clean the lavatory and kitchen sink area after use (cleansers are in situ)
- Use paper not linen towels
- Wipe handles, switches and taps
- Ensure the bins are clean

We consider the risk to the office users from contaminated surfaces when visiting the office has therefore been reduced to as low a level as practicable

We will continue to use Zoom links for Trustee and member forum meetings and conducted a virtual AGM in September 2021.

The planned Christmas face to face Trustee party on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2021 has been cancelled.

### 2 Working away from the office

We keep in touch trustees, staff and volunteers by regular Zoom calls, together with catch-ups by phone and email. In addition staff and volunteers have easy access to support from the office operations trustee, the treasurer, company secretary and our chair. We ensure there is immediate access to support for helpline volunteers. The member of staff working from her home in the Gateshead area has been supplied with suitable technical equipment to support these contacts.

### **3 When we have befrienders visiting members**

The same principles apply when volunteers are visiting members, their safety and that of the people they visit are paramount.

No-one will visit a Rescare member if they have symptoms which might indicate coronavirus, or if they have been asked to isolate, until the full recommended period has elapsed. If asked to take a coronavirus test (either lateral flow or PCR) we expect our volunteers to comply.

We will take note of the vaccination status of volunteers.

We are keeping a record of all volunteers and members who have been visited so they can be contacted if necessary. As the visits are arranged, we will ask the member and their family to let us know of any symptoms or requests to isolate.

A visit should take place with as much ventilation as possible, social distancing and masks should be maintained in line with any current government guidance.

We will encourage the use of hand sanitiser before and after the visit

A record of the precautions taken during the visit is part of the support and monitoring process

**We will keep all these precautions and practices under review.**

***Katie Booth 16/12/2021***