

## Welcome!

Thanks for downloading my free guide offering business owners like you support in terms of returning to the workplace. So why have I done this?

As a business owner you're probably thinking things like this...

- How do I get people back to work who have been fully furloughed?
- What if some of my team are refusing the vaccine?
- What if people don't want to come back to work?
- What if people have been working throughout the pandemic and are experiencing burnout?
- How will my team cope with hybrid working (part at home, part on site)?
- How do I get my physical workplace ready for a return to work?

I wanted to do a guide that helps you with your team and help you make the decisions that are right for your business.

Read on to see my top tips for managing this situation...

## Things to do before the workplace re-opens

- Acknowledge that there are different people who have different circumstances/thoughts about the same situation. Some will be really keen to return to work full time, others may want to stay as homeworkers full time so are reluctant to return. You need to work out an empathetic way of acknowledging all these differing needs, whilst still getting them to buy into what your business needs are.
- Try to allow flexible/hybrid working if it's possible – if you don't chances are another employer will. We have seen less movement in the job market in the past year due to Covid, but once lockdown ends, it's predicted that there will be movement from people who have been biding their time. Use this time to work out who your "flight risk" might be and put measures in place to retain the people that you want to.
- Speak to your team **now** before a return to work starts if you haven't already done so to find out what their needs/wants are and if these can be accommodated.
- Make sure you keep good engagement with your workforce, acknowledge their issues.

## No jab, no job?

- Be aware that it is not a legal requirement to have the jab so if you attempt to enforce a "no jab, no job" policy there's a strong chance you would lose a legal case brought against you. The only possible exception would be if you had a role where there was a genuine occupational requirement to do this e.g. working in a care environment with vulnerable service users or similar. You need to identify if you have any roles that might meet these requirements and speak to the individuals involved. If they refuse the jab then it's a case of looking to see if there are alternative roles they could work in, or adjustment to be made to their current role – **subject to their agreement.**

## Ongoing Engagement

- Hopefully you will consider ditching the annual staff survey if you haven't already. I find these types of exercises are time consuming, take months to discuss and therefore become less meaningful than doing **ongoing regular temperature checks/pulse surveys** with your workforce and acting quickly on the results. I'd also consider conducting **stay interviews**. E.g. rather than waiting until someone leaves and doing an exit interview, find out how they are now in the hope you will spot any issues before they escalate.
- Putting welfare measures in place to support a return to work.

## Returning to a physical workplace

- I've written a policy template for you to use which is attached here.
- You should also conduct a risk assessment to identify what may cause harm and take reasonable steps to prevent it.
- Talk to your staff about when you plan to reopen the workplace e.g. in stages?, in teams?
- How any working from home (part/full) arrangements may continue
- If someone is a permanent home worker changing the location in their contract of employment (as a base for claiming travelling expenses)
- If someone is anxious about returning to the workplace because they are worried about catching Coronavirus, or at high risk of getting a severe illness, are a carer, or living with someone advised to stay at home by a Doctor because they have a serious health condition – you should listen to any concerns and take steps to protect everyone. This could include offering extra car parking if possible so people avoid public transport, keeping someone on Furlough/Flexible Furlough leave, or arrange for people to work different hours to avoid peak time travel.
- If someone is refusing to come back but doesn't have a valid reason you could consider allowing them to use up holiday or take unpaid leave, but you are not obliged to do this. Remember people may be suffering psychologically as a result of the events of the last year rather than physically.

## Remember, before bringing anyone back at all consider:-

- 1) Is it essential?
- 2) Is it sufficiently safe?
- 3) Is it mutually agreed?

## Need further help?

If you're still unsure how to implement all of these things in your workplace I can help with all of the above.

Here's some of the things I've successfully achieved for clients:-

- Written Return to the Workplace policies
- Coached managers through difficult people issues
- Successfully helped introduce flexible working practices into the workplace
- Helped companies carry out activities to engage their workforce
- Pulse surveys

[Book a free 30 minute Zoom call with me here](#) to have a no obligation chat to see if we can work together to help you achieve what you want in your business.

## WORKPLACE SAMPLE COVID 19 AND SOCIAL DISTANCING POLICY

### 1. About this policy

- 1.1 We are committed to ensuring the health and safety of staff and anyone affected by our business activities, and to providing a safe and suitable environment for all those attending our premises.
- 1.2 This Workplace Social Distancing Policy ("policy") is designed to protect the health and safety of our employees, agency workers, consultants, self-employed contractors, visitors and clients / customers
- 1.3 This policy applies to all employees, agency workers, consultants and self-employed contractors ("staff").
- 1.4 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment or any contract for services and we may amend it at any time. We will continue to review this policy to ensure it is achieving its aims.

### 2. Responsibility for implementing the policy

- 2.1 The JOB TITLE has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and has day-to-day responsibility for health and safety matters.
- 2.2 Managers have a specific responsibility to ensure the application of this policy and all members of staff are responsible for supporting colleagues in implementing it.

### 3. Your responsibilities

- 3.1 All staff share responsibility for achieving safe working conditions. You must take care of your own health and safety and that of others, observe applicable safety rules and follow instructions.
- 3.2 You should wash your hands on arrival at the office each day.
- 3.3 You shall bring personal PPE with you to work including a suitable face covering.
- 3.4 Follow the current advice from government in regards to measures to prevent spread of COVID 19 at work and outside of work.
- 3.5 Only come into work if you are well and no one in your household is self-isolating.
- 3.6 You should report any health and safety concerns immediately to your line manager.
- 3.7 Failure to comply with this policy may be treated as misconduct and dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure.



## 4. Communal areas

4.1 Where you are unable to adequately social distance you are expected to use face covering.

4.2 Signage will be installed as appropriate to remind staff of these measures and restrictions.

## 4.3 Working Hours and Location

4.4 We encourage staff to avoid face to face meetings wherever possible and instead should utilise technology such as Microsoft Teams or Zoom. However should face to face meetings be unavoidable the duration of these should be kept to a minimum and participants should remain 1 metre+ apart at all times. Meeting rooms will have a limit on the amount of people allowed in at any one time to maintain acceptable social distancing.

4.5 The office is the primary place of work. In order to maintain flexibility and social distancing you may ask you to have a temporary second work place which is your home. You are responsible to ensure that your home environment is fit for purpose and in accordance with DSE guidelines. You should therefore carry out an assessment and check that this is in line with the guidelines. Where this is not the case you should raise this with your manager.

## 5. Hygiene

5.1 We will increase the frequency of cleaning procedures to ensure all areas in particular, touch points are disinfected as often as is feasible.

5.2 You should wash your hands with soap and water as often as possible and for a minimum of 20 seconds every time. To help with this, where possible, we will provide additional handwashing facilities and/or hand sanitisers.

## 6. Foreign Travel

If the government guidance dictates a mandatory isolation period for the country you have visited you should not return to the office until this has passed.

INSERT ANY OTHER AGREED ARRANGEMENTS

## 7. Sickness Absence due to Covid-19

7.1 We reserve the right to carry out non-invasive random temperature checks on staff to ensure that their temperature does not fall within the range where they are more likely to be susceptible to Covid-19. *OPTIONAL:* To this effect we will be asking people to have their temperature checked every time they onto our premises. This will be done by an automated camera.