



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



DIOGELU CYMRU
KEEP WALES SAFE



Keep Wales Safe – at work in offices and contact centres

COVID-19: Workplace guidance for employers, employees and the self-employed

7 July 2020



Document updates

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Introduction

This document is to help employers, employees and the self-employed in Wales understand how to work safely during the COVID-19 pandemic, keeping as many people as possible 2 metres apart from those they do not live with.

To tackle the spread of COVID-19, the Welsh Government introduced the [Coronavirus Regulations](#) imposing strict restrictions on gatherings, the movement of people, and the operation of businesses (some of which have been required to close temporarily). The Welsh Government prioritises the protection of people, and with this aim, it is now following a cautious approach to easing restrictions and reopening businesses. The safety, health, and well-being of everyone is of paramount importance to us.

The Regulations require a person responsible for carrying on work (except for a business specifically listed in Part 4 of Schedule 1) to take all reasonable measures to ensure that a distance of 2m is maintained between any persons on the premises where the work is carried out (except between two members of the same household, or a carer and the person assisted by the carer). This requirement is referred to in this document as the “physical distancing duty”. A “premises” includes any building or structure and any land and therefore includes both indoor and outdoor locations.

How to use this guidance

Under regulation 7A, the Welsh Government has issued [Statutory Guidance](#) and [supplementary guidance](#) on taking all reasonable measures to maintain physical distancing in the workplace which all businesses and individuals subject to the physical distancing duty must have regard to. This document builds on these requirements with practical advice as well as signposting other sector-specific and other relevant guidance.

This guidance aims to help employers, employees and the self-employed in offices and contact centres. It gives practical considerations of how safe practices could be applied to your business and operation. Each business will need to translate these into the specific actions it needs to take depending on the nature of the business including the size and type of business, how it is organised, operated, managed and regulated.

In the event of any discrepancy between this guidance and the Statutory Guidance, you should have regard for the Statutory Guidance. This guidance is not a substitute for legal advice, which you should consider obtaining where necessary, nor does it supersede any legal obligations including in relation to health and safety, employment or equalities.

What do we mean by ‘offices and contact centres’?

Indoor environments such as offices, contact centres, operations rooms and similar premises.

Introduction (continued)

It is important that as a business or an employer you continue to comply with your existing obligations including those relating to individuals with protected characteristics. Failure to comply with the relevant public health legislation could result in enforcement action by the relevant authorities.

This document contains guidance to take into account when complying with these existing obligations. When considering how to apply this guidance, take into account agency workers, contractors and other people, as well as your employees and anyone else on the premises.

To help you decide which actions to take, you must carry out an appropriate COVID-19 risk assessment, just as you would for other Health and Safety related hazards. This risk assessment must be done in consultation with the recognised trade union or, if there isn't one, a representative chosen by workers.

We expect that this document will be updated over time. This version is up to date as of 7 July 2020. You can check for updates at [Keep Wales Safe - at work](#).



Key principles

Workplaces in Wales

The Welsh Government has adopted five principles for safety at work. They are summarised below but the full text is available at [Keep Wales Safe - at work](#).

1. Care: Our health and well-being comes first

Everyone should ensure the health, safety and well-being of their employees and contractors, and anyone else on the premises is paramount

The COVID-19 outbreak is a new and fast-moving situation for everyone. It will be challenging, worrying, and potentially stressful for many.

In terms of workforce: workers are only allowed to return to the workplace if it is not reasonably practicable for them to work from home.

Additionally, securing childcare and finding a safe way to travel to and from work may be difficult and a source of anxiety. Employers should be mindful that this could pose a barrier to an employee's safe return to work.

The COVID-19 pandemic poses health risks to everyone, but for certain vulnerable people, there is an increased risk of becoming seriously ill. It is also evident that certain members of our community, such as those from black and minority ethnic backgrounds, are impacted more than others. We do not yet have the evidence as to why groups are impacted more than others, so employers should take extra care to safeguard vulnerable employees.

There is more information on vulnerable groups and social distancing here: [COVID-19 social distancing guidance for everyone in Wales](#). The online [COVID-19 Workforce Risk Assessment Tool](#) is a two-stage risk assessment for NHS and Social Care workers, which is suitable for use for all staff who are vulnerable or at risk of contracting COVID-19, including people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds.

Employers and business operators are still under legal obligations to ensure the decisions they make in response to COVID-19 do not directly or indirectly discriminate. You should not make biased assumptions and use those to disadvantage workers or block them from the job market.

2. Comply: The laws that keep us safe must be obeyed

Employers and business operators must continue to fulfil their legal duties under new and existing health and safety laws, including maintaining and protecting the health, safety and well-being of employees and contractors, customers, and visitors.

In Wales – as outlined above - the [Coronavirus Regulations](#) require all persons responsible for carrying on a business or responsible for work being carried out (except for businesses listed in [Part 4 of Schedule 1](#) of the Regulations) at a premises to take all reasonable measures to ensure that a distance of 2m is maintained between any persons on the premises (except between two members of the same household, or a carer and the person assisted by the carer). Further details are available in the [Statutory Guidance](#) and [supplementary guidance](#) on taking all reasonable measures to maintain physical distancing in work settings.

Key principles (continued)

3. Involve: We all share the responsibility for safe work

Employers and business operators are required by law to protect their employees, and others, from harm. Employees and contractors also have a duty of care for their own safety and those of others on the premises. This is a shared responsibility.

Maintain regular and meaningful communication with employees and with the recognised trade union or, if there isn't one, a representative chosen by workers (including their health and safety committee, if this exists). This should identify and deal with risks before anyone re-starts work, and manage risks in the workplace on an ongoing basis. Staff should be involved with implementing control measures and reporting risks to protect workers and visitors.

4. Adapt: We will all need to change how we work

The Regulations place a duty on those responsible for work to take all reasonable measures to ensure that 2m distance is kept between all people respect of any premises where work is carried on, and to implement robust hygiene measures.

Consultation and communication between employers, employees and trade unions will help to identify the essential hygiene protocols, equipment and measures that are needed to keep the workplace safe from COVID-19 and limit its transmission. All workplaces are different, but there is a growing body of industry specific guidance and examples of good practice available to draw upon.

5. Communicate: We must all understand what to do

It is essential that there is clear, precise and constant communication between employers, employees, the self-employed, trade unions and visitors and anyone else on the premises about the reasonable and proportionate actions taken regarding workplace safety. It is important that everyone gets the same message and same instruction. Employers and business operators should ensure that communications are accessible for all.

The aim is to give clear communications and assurance of the management of COVID-19 risk in the workplace.

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1.1 Managing risk

Objective: That all employers and business operators carry out a COVID-19 risk assessment.

Everyone needs to assess and manage the risks of COVID-19. As an employer or business operator, you also have a legal responsibility to protect employees and contractors; and anyone else on the premises from risk to their health and safety. This means you need to think about the risks they face and do everything reasonably practicable to minimise them, recognising you cannot completely eliminate the risk of COVID-19.

You must make sure that the risk assessment for your business addresses the risks of COVID-19, using this guidance to inform your decisions and control measures. A risk assessment is not about creating huge amounts of paperwork, but rather about identifying sensible measures to control the risks in your premises. Your risk assessment will help you decide whether you have done everything you need to. There are interactive tools available to support you from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) at [Managing risks and risk assessments at work](#).

Employers have a duty to consult the workforce on health and safety. You can do this by listening and talking to them about the work and how you will manage risks from COVID-19. The people who do the work are often the best people to understand the risks and will have a view on how to work safely. Involving them in making decisions shows that you take their health and safety seriously. You must consult with the health and safety representative selected by a recognised trade

union or, if there isn't one, a representative chosen by workers. As an employer, you cannot decide who the representative will be.

At its most effective, full involvement of your workers creates a culture where relationships between employers and workers are based on collaboration, trust and joint problem solving. As is normal practice, workers should be involved in assessing workplace risks and the development and review of workplace health and safety policies in partnership with the employer.

Employers and workers should always come together to resolve issues. If concerns still cannot be resolved, see below for further steps you can take.

If an individual is concerned about the safety measures in any premises where a business is carried on or the service provided, then they can report this to the Public Protection services of the relevant local authority (which include environmental health and health and safety). Where the enforcing authority, such as your local authority, identifies employers or business operators who are not taking action to comply with the relevant public health legislation and guidance to control public health risks, they will consider taking a range of actions to improve control of workplace risks. For example, this would cover businesses not taking all reasonable measures to ensure the 2m distancing requirements.

How to raise a concern:



Contact your employee representative.



Contact your trade union or association if you have one.



Use the HSE form available at <https://www.hse.gov.uk/contact/concerns.htm>



Contact HSE by phone on 0300 790 6787.

1.1 Managing risk

Objective: To reduce risk to the lowest reasonably practicable level by taking preventative measures, in order of priority.

Employers and business operators have a duty to reduce workplace risk to the lowest reasonably practicable level by taking preventative measures.

A person responsible for carrying on a business or providing a service must work with any other employers or contractors sharing a premises so that everybody's health and safety is protected.

All risks must be assessed, with meaningful discussion with staff and/or their recognised trade union, before re-commencing work. Risk assessments should include those working from home. If you are required by law to have a written risk assessment (where there are five or more employees) then significant findings must be written down and control measures put in place. Risk assessments are a legal requirement for pregnant women, no matter the size of the business and further [guidance](#) is available for employers of pregnant women.

From a staffing perspective, in the context of COVID-19 this means working through these steps in order:

- Where it is reasonably practicable for a person to work from home then they must not be leaving home for their work. The most effective way of ensuring physical distancing it is to enable some or all staff to work from home, some or all of the time. There is an expectation that employers should be as flexible as possible and make adjustments wherever that is possible. This may include issuing staff with laptops or mobile phones and facilitating communication from wherever members of staff may be.
- Where working from home is not reasonably practicable, you should take all reasonable measures to maintain a physical distance of 2m between those on the premises.

- Where reasonable measures cannot be taken and where closer working is required, it is important that other measures are considered, for example:
 - Minimising the level of interaction.
 - Using physical barriers.
 - Increased hygiene, environmental cleanliness and providing reminders about the importance of hygiene.
 - Washing hands well for 20 seconds with soap, or alcohol based hand gels, and drying thoroughly before and after close contact.
- If people must work face-to-face for a sustained period with more than a small group of fixed partners, then you will need to assess whether the activity can safely go ahead. No one is obliged to work in an unsafe work environment.
- In your assessment you should have particular regard to whether the people doing the work are especially vulnerable to COVID-19.
- You should ensure those with symptoms are not present on the premises.

If you are currently operating, you are likely to have gone through a lot of this thinking already. We recommend that you use this document to identify any further improvements you should make. You must review the measures you have put in place to make sure they are working. You should also review them if they may no longer be effective or if there are changes in the workplace that could lead to new risks.

1.2 Sharing the results of your risk assessment

We would encourage all businesses to demonstrate to their workers and customers that they have properly assessed their risk and taken appropriate mitigating measures. If possible, you should publish this information on your website particularly where you are an employer with over 50 workers. Below you will find a notice that you may wish to display in your workplace or on your premises to show that you have followed this guidance.

Staying COVID-19 Secure in 2020

We confirm we have complied with the Welsh Government's guidance to managing the risk of COVID-19

FIVE KEY STEPS TO KEEPING SAFE AT WORK

- ✓ We have carried out a **COVID-19 risk assessment** and shared the results with the people who work here
- ✓ We have taken practical measures to protect your workplace by implementing **cleaning, handwashing and hygiene procedures**
- ✓ We are ensuring that where it is **reasonably practicable people work from home**
- ✓ We have taken all reasonable measures to ensure that **a 2m distance is maintained** in the workplace
- ✓ We will actively implement the **Test, Trace, Protect** programme in the workplace

Employer _____ Date _____

Who to contact: _____ Your Health and Safety Representative
(or the Health and Safety Executive at www.hse.gov.uk or 0300 003 1647)



2. Who should go to work

Objective:

Ensuring that where it is reasonably practicable, people work from home.

Steps that will usually be needed:

- Staff must work from home if it is reasonably practicable for them to do so. Consider who is needed to be on-site; for example:
 - Workers in roles critical for business and operational continuity, safe facility management, or regulatory requirements and which cannot be performed remotely.
 - Workers in critical roles which might be performed remotely, but who are unable to work remotely due to home circumstances or the unavailability of safe enabling equipment.
- Planning for the minimum number of people needed on site to operate safely and effectively.
- Monitoring the well-being of people who are working from home and helping them stay connected to the rest of the workforce, especially if the majority of their colleagues are on-site.
- Keeping in touch with off-site workers on their working arrangements including their welfare, mental and physical health and personal security. Other businesses to which employees may need to travel will be subject to a similar duty to ensure 2m distance is kept between people on premises when work is being carried out.
- Providing equipment for people to work at home safely and effectively, for example, remote access to work systems.

2.1 Protecting people who are at higher risk

Objective: To protect extremely vulnerable and vulnerable people.

- Currently, [extremely vulnerable individuals](#) (shielded) have been strongly advised not to work outside the home.
- [Vulnerable people, who are at higher risk of severe illness](#) (for example, people with some pre-existing conditions, see definition in Appendix), have been asked to take extra care in observing physical distancing and should be helped to work from home, either in their current role or in an alternative role.
- If vulnerable (but not extremely vulnerable) people cannot work from home, they should be offered the option of the safest available on-site roles, enabling them to stay 2m away from others. If they have to spend time within 2m of others, you should carefully assess whether this involves an acceptable level of risk. As for any workplace risk you must take into account specific duties to those with [protected characteristics](#), including, for example, expectant mothers who are, as always, entitled to suspension on full pay if suitable roles cannot be found. Particular attention should also be paid to people who live with extremely vulnerable people

Steps that will usually be needed:

- Providing support for workers around mental health and well-being. This could include advice or telephone support.
- See [current social distancing guidance](#) for advice on who is in the extremely vulnerable and vulnerable groups.
- See [current guidance for shielded individuals](#) that need particular consideration.

2.2 People who need to self-isolate

Objective: To make sure individuals who are advised to stay at home under [existing social distancing guidance](#) do not physically come to work. This includes individuals who have symptoms of COVID-19, those who live in a household with someone who has symptoms and those who are advised to self-isolate as part of the Welsh Government's [Test, Trace, Protect programme](#).

Steps that will usually be needed:

- Enabling workers to work from home while self-isolating if appropriate.
- See current guidance for employees and employers relating to [statutory sick pay due to COVID-19](#).
- See [current self-isolation guidance](#) for people who have symptoms and those who live with others who have symptoms.
- Workers who develop COVID-19 symptoms at work should be sent home to self-isolate, and their workplace cleaned in accordance with [guidance for cleaning in non-healthcare settings](#).

2.3 Equality in the workplace

Objective: To treat everyone in your workplace equally.

- In applying this guidance, employers should be mindful of the particular needs of different groups of workers or individuals.
- It is unlawful to discriminate, directly or indirectly, against anyone because of a protected characteristic such as age, sex, disability, race or ethnicity.
- Employers also have particular responsibilities towards disabled workers and those who are new or expectant mothers.

Steps that will usually be needed:

- Understanding and taking into account the particular circumstances of those with different protected characteristics.
- Involving and communicating appropriately with workers whose protected characteristics might either expose them to a different degree of risk, or might make any steps you are thinking about inappropriate or challenging for them.
- Considering whether you need to put in place any particular measures or adjustments to take account of your duties under the equalities legislation.
- Making reasonable adjustments to avoid disabled workers being put at a disadvantage, and assessing the health and safety risks for new or expectant mothers.
- Making sure that the steps you take do not have an unjustifiable negative impact on some groups compared to others, for example, those with caring responsibilities or those with religious commitments.





3. Physical distancing at work

Objective:

To take all reasonable measures to ensure a 2m physical distance is maintained, including while arriving at and departing from work, while in work and when travelling between sites.

- You must take all reasonable measures to ensure a 2m physical distance is maintained (please see the appendix for more information on the [Coronavirus Regulations](#)).
- You should undertake an assessment of what reasonable measures can be taken and keep this under periodic review. In your assessment you should have particular regard to whether the people doing the work are especially vulnerable to COVID-19.
- Where reasonable measures cannot be taken and where closer working is required, it is important that other measures are considered, for example:
 - Minimising the level of interaction.
 - Using physical barriers.
 - Increased hygiene, environmental cleanliness and providing reminders about the importance of hygiene.
 - Washing hands well for 20 seconds with soap, or alcohol based hand gels, and drying thoroughly before and after close contact.
 - Ensuring those with symptoms are not present on the premises.
- Physical distancing applies to all parts of the premises, not just the place where people spend most of their time, but also entrances and exits, outdoor spaces at the premises, break areas, canteens and similar settings. These are often the most challenging areas to maintain physical distancing.

3. Physical distancing at work (continued)

- Workplace cafes/canteens may remain open where both (1) there is no practical alternative for staff at that workplace to obtain food; and (2) all reasonable measures are taken to ensure that a distance of 2m is maintained between any person using the canteen.
- Where possible, staff should be encouraged to bring their own food, and to wash and dry their hands before and after consuming food.

3.1 Coming to work and leaving work

Objective: To maintain physical distancing, on arrival and departure and to ensure handwashing upon arrival.

Steps that will usually be needed:

- Staggering arrival and departure times at work to reduce crowding into and out of the premises, taking account of the impact on those with protected characteristics (this will also help reduce demand and overcrowding on public transport at key times).
- Providing additional facilities or parking such as bike-racks to help people walk, run, or cycle to work where possible.
- Limiting passengers in corporate vehicles, for example, work minibuses. This could include leaving seats empty.
- Limiting the number of exit and entry points into and out of the premises. Consider having separate entrance and exit points if possible.
- Providing more storage for workers for clothes and bags.
- Using markings and introducing one-way flow at entry and exit points.
- Providing handwashing facilities, or alcohol based hand gel where not possible, at entry/exit points and not using touch-based security devices such as keypads.
- Maintaining use of security access devices, such as keypads or passes, and adjusting processes at entry/exit points to reduce risk of transmission. For example, cleaning pass readers regularly and asking staff to hold their passes above pass readers rather than touching them.
- See the [Welsh Government's guidance on travelling to and from work](#).

3.2 Moving around buildings and worksites

Objective: To maintain physical distancing while people travel through the premises.

Steps that will usually be needed:

- Reducing movement by discouraging non-essential trips within premises, for example, restricting access to some areas, encouraging use of radios, telephones or other electronic devices, where permitted, and cleaning them between use.
- Restricting access between different areas of a premises.
- Reducing job and location rotation.
- Introducing more one-way flow through premises.
- Reducing maximum occupancy for lifts, providing alcohol based hand gel for the operation of lifts, regularly cleaning lift buttons and encouraging use of stairs wherever possible.
- Making sure that people with disabilities are able to access lifts.
- Managing use of high traffic areas including corridors, lifts turnstiles and walkways to maintain physical distancing.

Example lift practices



3.3 Workplaces and workstations

Objective: To maintain physical distancing between individuals when they are at their workstations.

- For people who work in one place, workstations should allow them to maintain physical distancing.
- Workstations should be assigned to an individual and not shared. If they need to be shared they should be shared by the smallest possible number of people.
- Where closer working is required you should have undertaken an assessment of what reasonable measures could have been taken and keep this under periodic review. In your assessment you should have particular regard to whether the people doing the work are especially vulnerable to COVID-19.

Steps that will usually be needed:

- Review layouts to ensure that workstations are 2m apart.
- Where it is not possible to move workstations further apart:
 - use screens to separate people from each other, and/or
 - arrange people to work side by side or facing away from each other rather than face-to-face
- Using floor tape or paint to mark areas to help workers keep to a 2m distance.
- Managing occupancy levels to enable physical distancing.
- Avoiding use of hot desks and spaces and, where not possible, for example, call centres or training facilities, cleaning workstations between different occupants including shared equipment.

Markers to limit desk usage and maintain physical distancing



3.4 Meetings

Objective: To reduce transmission due to face-to-face meetings and maintain physical distancing in meetings.

Steps that will usually be needed:

- Using remote working tools to avoid in-person meetings.
- Only absolutely necessary participants should physically attend meetings and should maintain 2m separation throughout.
- Avoiding transmission during meetings, for example, do not share pens and other objects.
- Providing alcohol based hand gel in meeting rooms.
- Holding meetings outdoors or in well-ventilated rooms if possible.
- For areas where regular meetings take place, using floor signage to help people maintain 2m physical distancing.
- Providing signage outside meeting rooms stating maximum occupancy.

Aiding physical distancing and cleaning in meetings



3.5 Common areas

Objective: To maintain physical distancing while using common areas.

Steps that will usually be needed:

- Working collaboratively with landlords and other tenants in multi-tenant premises to ensure consistency across common areas, for example, receptions and staircases.
- Staggering break times to reduce pressure on the staff break areas or places to eat and ensuring physical distancing is maintained in staff break areas.
- Using safe outside areas for breaks.
- Creating additional space by using other parts of the premises that have been freed up by remote working.
- Installing screens to protect staff in receptions or similar areas.
- Workplace cafes/canteens may remain open where both (1) there is no practical alternative for staff at that workplace to obtain food; and (2) all reasonable measures are taken to ensure that a distance of 2m is maintained between any person using the canteen. Where possible, staff should be encouraged to bring their own food, and to wash and dry their hands before and after consuming food.
- Reconfiguring seating and tables to maintain spacing and reduce face-to-face interactions.
- Encouraging staff to remain on-site and, when not possible, maintaining physical distancing while off-site.
- Regulating use of locker rooms, changing areas and other facility areas to reduce concurrent usage.
- Encouraging storage of personal items and clothing in personal storage spaces, for example, lockers and during shifts.

Common areas and appropriate signage to restrict access when physical distancing is not possible/practical



3.6 Accidents, security and other incidents

Objective: To prioritise safety during incidents.

- In an emergency, for example, an accident, provision of first aid, fire or break-in, people do not have to stay 2m apart if it would be unsafe.
- People involved in the provision of assistance to others should pay particular attention to sanitation measures immediately afterwards including washing hands.

Steps that will usually be needed:

- Reviewing your incident and emergency procedures to ensure they reflect the physical distancing principles as far as possible.
- Considering the security implications of any changes you intend to make to your operations and practices in response to COVID-19, as any revisions may present new or altered security risks.



WATCH YOUR STEP

WATCH YOUR STEP

A high-angle, close-up photograph of a woman with long brown hair and black-rimmed glasses. She is wearing a teal-colored, textured knit sweater. She is looking down at a white laptop computer. Her right hand is resting on the laptop's trackpad. The background is a plain, light-colored surface. A dark teal banner is overlaid on the middle of the image, containing white text.

4. Managing your customers, visitors and contractors

4.1 Manage contacts

Objective: To minimise the number of unnecessary visits to offices.

Steps that will usually be needed:

- Encouraging visits via remote connection/working where this is an option.
- Ensuring visitors are symptom free.
- Limiting the number of visitors on the premises at any one time.
- Limiting visitor times to a specific time window and restricting access to required visitors only.
- Determining if schedules for essential services and contractor visits can be revised to reduce interaction and overlap between people, for example, carrying out services at night.
- Maintaining a record of all visitors, if this is practical.
- Encouraging visitors to use alcohol based hand gel or handwashing facilities as they enter the premises.
- Revising visitor arrangements to ensure physical distancing and hygiene, for example, asking visitors to use their own pen to physically sign in.

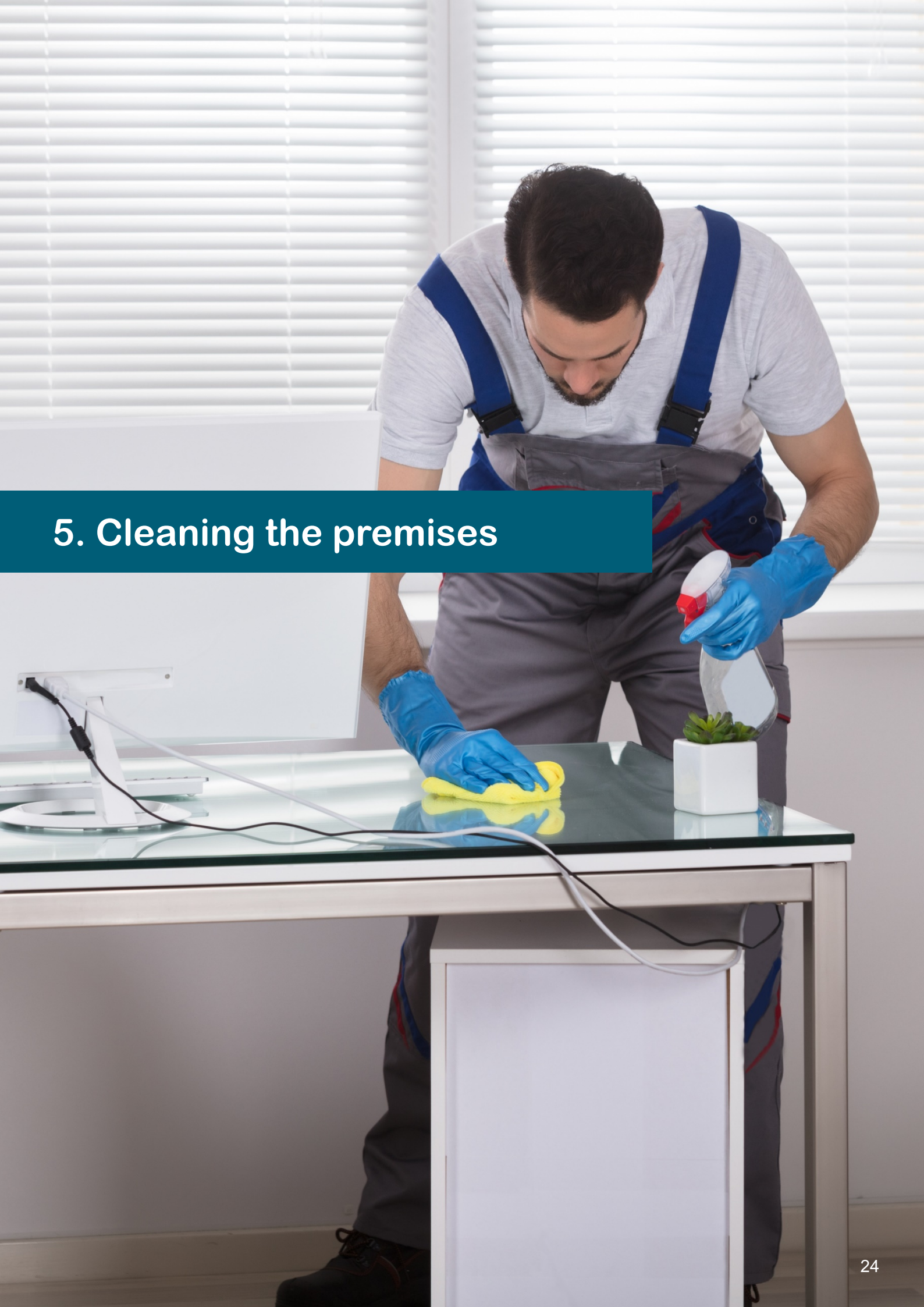
4.2 Providing and explaining available guidance

Objective: To make sure people understand what they need to do to maintain safety.

Steps that will usually be needed:

- Providing clear guidance on physical distancing and hygiene to people on arrival, for example, signage, visual aids and before arrival, for example, by phone, on the website, by email. Consider the particular needs of those with protected characteristics, such as those who are visually impaired.
- Establishing host responsibilities relating to COVID-19 and providing any necessary training for people who act as hosts for visitors.
- Reviewing entry and exit routes for visitors and contractors to minimise contact with other people.
- Coordinating and working collaboratively with landlords and other tenants in multi-tenant sites, for example, shared working spaces.
- Informing visitors that they should be prepared to remove face coverings if asked to do so by police officers and staff for the purposes of identification.

5. Cleaning the premises



5.1 Before reopening

Objective: To make sure that any premises that has been closed or partially operated is clean and ready to restart, including:

- An assessment for all premises, or parts of premises that have been closed, before restarting work.
- Carrying out cleaning procedures and providing alcohol based hand gel before restarting work.

Steps that will usually be needed:

- ☐ Checking whether you need to service or adjust ventilation systems, for example, so that they do not automatically reduce ventilation levels due to lower than normal occupancy levels.
- ☐ Most air conditioning systems do not need adjustment, however where systems serve multiple buildings or you are unsure, advice can be sought from your heating ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) engineers or advisers.
- ☐ Opening windows and doors frequently to encourage ventilation, where possible.

5.2 Keeping the workplace clean

Objective: To keep the premises clean and prevent transmission by touching contaminated surfaces.

Steps that will usually be needed:

- ☐ Frequent cleaning of work areas and equipment between uses, using your usual cleaning products.
- ☐ Frequent cleaning of objects and surfaces that are touched regularly including door handles and keyboards, and making sure there are adequate disposal arrangements for cleaning products.
- ☐ Clearing workspaces and removing waste and belongings from the work area at the end of a shift.
- ☐ Limiting or restricting use of high-touch items and equipment, for example, printers or whiteboards.
- ☐ If you are cleaning after a known or suspected case of COVID-19 then you should refer to the [specific guidance for cleaning non-healthcare settings](#).

5.3 Hygiene – handwashing, sanitation facilities and toilets

Objective: To help everyone keep good hygiene through the working day.

Steps that will usually be needed:

- Using signs and posters to build awareness of good handwashing technique, the need to increase handwashing frequency, avoid touching your face and to cough or sneeze into a tissue which is binned safely, or into your arm if a tissue is not available.
- Providing regular reminders and signage to maintain hand hygiene standards.
- Providing alcohol based hand gel in multiple locations in addition to washrooms.
- Setting clear use and cleaning guidance for toilets to ensure they are kept clean and physical distancing is achieved as much as possible.
- Enhancing cleaning of busy areas.
- Providing more waste facilities and more frequent rubbish collection.
- Providing hand drying facilities – either paper towels or electrical dryers.

5.4 Changing rooms and showers

Objective: To minimise the risk of transmission in changing rooms and showers.

Steps that will usually be needed:

- Where shower and changing facilities are required, setting clear use and cleaning guidance for showers, lockers and changing rooms to ensure they are kept clean and clear of personal items and that physical distancing is achieved as much as possible.
- Introducing enhanced cleaning of all facilities regularly during the day and at the end of the day.

5.5 Handling goods, merchandise and other materials, and onsite vehicles

Objective: To reduce transmission through contact with objects that come onto the premises and vehicles at the site.

Steps that will usually be needed:

- Cleaning procedures for goods and merchandise entering the site.
- Cleaning procedures for vehicles.
- Introducing greater handwashing and handwashing facilities for workers handling goods and merchandise and providing alcohol based hand gel where this is not practical.
- Regular cleaning of vehicles that workers may take home.
- Restricting non-business deliveries, for example, personal deliveries to workers.

6. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and face coverings



6. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and face coverings

PPE protects the user against health or safety risks at work. It can include items such as safety helmets, gloves, eye protection, high-visibility clothing, safety footwear and safety harnesses. It also includes respiratory protective equipment, such as face masks.

Where you are already using PPE in your work activity to protect against non-COVID-19 risks, you should continue to do so.

At the start of this document we described the steps you need to take to manage COVID-19 risk in the workplace. This includes working from home and taking all reasonable measures to maintain 2m physical distancing on your premises. When managing the risk of COVID-19, additional PPE beyond what you usually wear is not recommended. This is because COVID-19 is a different type of risk to the risks you normally face in a workplace, and needs to be managed through physical distancing, hygiene and fixed teams or partnering, not through the use of PPE.

The exception is clinical settings, like a hospital, or a small handful of other roles for which Public Health Wales advises use of PPE. For example, first responders and immigration enforcement officers. If you are in one of these groups you should refer to the advice at:

<https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/latest-information-on-novel-coronavirus-covid-19/information-for-healthcare-workers-in-wales/>

Unless you are in a situation where the risk of COVID-19 transmission is very high, your risk assessment should reflect the fact that the role of PPE in providing additional protection is extremely limited. However, if your risk assessment does show that PPE is required, then you must provide this PPE free of charge to workers who need it. Any PPE provided must fit properly.

More information on PPE in Wales: [Coronavirus and personal protective equipment \(PPE\)](#).

6.1 Face coverings

There are some circumstances when wearing a face covering may be marginally beneficial as a precautionary measure. The evidence suggests that wearing a face covering does not protect you, but it may protect others if you are infected but have not developed symptoms.

A face covering can be very simple and may be worn in enclosed spaces where physical distancing isn't possible. It just needs to cover your mouth and nose. A face covering is not the same as the surgical masks or respirators used by healthcare and other workers as part of higher specification PPE. Similarly, face coverings are not the same as the PPE used to manage risks like dust and spray in an industrial context. Supplies of PPE, including face masks, must continue to be reserved for those who need them to protect against risks in their workplace, such as health and care workers, and those in industrial settings like those exposed to dust hazards.

It is important to know that the evidence of the benefit of using a face covering to protect others is weak and the effect is likely to be small, therefore face coverings are not a replacement for the other ways of managing risk, including minimising time spent in contact, using fixed teams and partnering for close-up work, and increasing hand and surface washing. These other measures remain the best ways of managing risk in the workplace and the Welsh Government would therefore not expect to see employers relying on face coverings as risk management for the purpose of their health and safety assessments.

Wearing a face covering is optional and is not required by law, including in the workplace. A three-layer face covering is recommended for the public for short-term use where other controls, such as social distancing, are not possible. This could include on public transport. If worn, effective face coverings should have a water repellent outer layer if possible, and are comprised of 3 layers of different fabrics, which are non-stretchy. They should fit well with no air gaps around sides and under chin. They are not a substitute for other preventative measures, such as social distancing. Where 2m physical distancing can be maintained in Wales we do not recommend wearing a face covering. We do not recommend that they are compulsory; however, we do support the public's right to choose whether or not to wear them.

6.1 Face coverings (continued)

Employers should support their workers in using face coverings safely if they choose to wear one. This means telling workers:

- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds, or use hand sanitiser, and dry thoroughly before putting a face covering on, and after removing it.
- When wearing a face covering, avoid touching your face or face covering as you could contaminate them with germs from your hands.
- To not hang a face covering from the neck or pull down from the nose
- Change your face covering if it becomes damp or if you've touched it.
- Continue to wash your hands regularly.
- Change and wash your face covering daily.
- If the material is washable, wash in line with manufacturer's instructions. If it's not washable, dispose of it carefully in your usual waste and help keep Wales tidy.
- Practise physical distancing.

You can make face-coverings at home and can find guidance on how to do this and use them safely on [Face coverings: COVID-19](#).

7. Workforce management

A man with short brown hair and glasses, wearing a blue and white checkered shirt, is sitting at a desk in profile, looking towards the left. He is working on a computer. On the desk, there is a black computer monitor, a black office telephone, a black mouse, a keyboard, and a glass of water. There are also several colorful sticky notes (red, yellow, pink) on the desk. The background shows a window with blue vertical blinds, and a white structural beam is visible in the upper left corner. The lighting is bright, suggesting a sunny day.

7.1 Shift patterns and working groups

Objective: To change the way work is organised to create distinct groups and reduce the number of contacts each employee has.



Steps that will usually be needed:

- As far as possible, where staff are split into teams or shift groups, fixing these teams or shift groups so that where contact is unavoidable, this happens between the same people.
- Identifying areas where people directly pass things to each other, for example office supplies, and finding ways to remove direct contact, such as using drop-off points or transfer zones.

7.2 Work-related travel

7.2.1 Cars, accommodation and visits

Objective: To avoid unnecessary work travel and keep people safe when they do need to travel between locations.

Steps that will usually be needed:

- Minimising non-essential travel – consider remote options first.
- Encouraging those travelling for essential journeys to consider walking or cycling as an alternative to vehicles.
- Minimising the number of people outside of a household travelling together in any one vehicle, using fixed travel partners, increasing ventilation when possible and avoiding sitting face-to-face.
- Cleaning shared vehicles between shifts or on handover.
- Where workers are required to stay away from their home (including outside of Wales), centrally logging the stay and making sure any overnight accommodation meets physical distancing guidelines.

7.2 Work-related travel

7.2.2 Deliveries to other sites

Objective: To help workers delivering to other sites such as branches, or suppliers' or customers' premises to maintain physical distancing and hygiene practices.

Steps that will usually be needed:

- Putting in place procedures to minimise person-to-person contact during deliveries to other sites.
- Maintaining consistent pairing where two-person deliveries are required.
- Minimising contact during payments and exchange of documentation, for example, by using electronic payment methods and electronically signed and exchanged documents.

7.3 Communications and Training

7.3.1 Returning to Work

Objective: To make sure all workers understand COVID-19 related safety procedures.

Steps that will usually be needed:

- Providing clear, consistent and regular communication to improve understanding and consistency of ways of working.
- Engaging with workers (including through trade unions or employee representative groups) through existing communication routes to explain and agree any changes in working arrangements.
- Developing communication and training materials for workers prior to returning to site, especially around new procedures for arrival at work. Consider referring to the Welsh Government's [Tool Kit](#), or relevant Trade Union training.

Objective: To make sure all workers are kept up to date with how safety measures are being implemented or updated.

7.3 Communications and Training

7.3.2 Ongoing communications and signage

Steps that will usually be needed:

- Ongoing engagement with workers (including through trade unions or employee representative groups) to monitor and understand any unforeseen impacts of changes to working environments.
- Awareness and focus on the importance of mental health at times of uncertainty. The Welsh Government has published [guidance on the mental health and well-being aspects of COVID-19](#).
- Using simple, clear messaging to explain guidelines using images and clear language, with consideration for Welsh language standards, groups for which Welsh and English may not be their first language and those with protected characteristics such as hearing or visual impairments.
- Using visual communications, for example, whiteboards or signage, to explain changes to schedules or breakdowns without the need for face-to-face communications.
- Communicating approaches and operational procedures to suppliers, customers or trade bodies to help their adoption and to share experience.



8. Inbound and outbound goods

Objective:

To maintain physical distancing and avoid surface transmission when goods enter and leave the site.

Steps that will usually be needed:

- Revising pick-up and drop-off collection points, procedures, signage and markings.
- Minimising unnecessary contact at gatehouse security, yard and warehouse. For example, non-contact deliveries where the nature of the product allows for use of electronic pre-booking.
- Considering methods to reduce frequency of deliveries, for example by ordering larger quantities less often.
- Where possible and safe, having single workers load or unload vehicles.
- Where possible, using the same pairs of people for loads where more than one is needed.
- Enabling drivers to access welfare facilities when required, consistent with other guidance.
- Encouraging drivers to stay in their vehicles where this does not compromise their safety and existing safe working practice, such as preventing drive-aways.

Where to obtain further guidance

COVID-19: what you need to do

<https://gov.wales/coronavirus>

Support for businesses during COVID-19

<https://businesswales.gov.wales/coronavirus-advice/>

General guidance for employees and employers during coronavirus (COVID-19)

<https://gov.wales/workplace-guidance-employers-and-employees-covid19>

Appendix

Definitions

Common Areas	The term 'common area' refers to areas and amenities which are provided for the common use of more than one person including canteens, reception areas, meeting rooms, areas of worship, toilets, gardens, fire escapes, kitchens, fitness facilities, store rooms, laundry facilities.
Extremely vulnerable people	Extremely vulnerable people will have received a letter telling them they are in this group, or will have been told by their GP. Find out more in the guidance on shielding .
Vulnerable people	Vulnerable people include those aged 70 or over and those with some underlying health conditions, all members of this group should strictly follow social distancing guidance .

Appendix

Additional Information

UK Health and Safety Executive (HSE)	<p>The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has produced a short guide called Working Safely during the COVID-19 Outbreak.</p> <p>The Health and Safety Executive has also produced useful advice for employers and their staff about how to work safely from home during the pandemic.</p>
Support for Business	<p>Business Wales provides further support for businesses in Wales – including details of the Financial Support and Grants available.</p>
In-Work Support	<p>There are a number of Welsh Government funded programmes ready to help people returning to work and facing urgent issues affecting their well-being and welfare. The In-Work Support Project provides support to employed and self-employed people with mental health conditions. The Project also has a package of support available to SMEs in North Wales delivered by Rhyl City Strategy, and delivered in South West Wales by Swansea Bay University Health Board Well-being through Work.</p>
Healthy Working Wales	<p>The Healthy Working Wales website brings together advice on a wide range of useful topics, including self-isolation, shielding and protecting vulnerable people, medical certification, close working with others, critical workers requiring PPE and testing, and more. The website also signposts to links through to Public Health Wales How are you doing?' campaign website and the Society of Occupational Medicine Returning to the Workplace after the COVID-19 Outbreak Toolkit.</p>
Time to Change Wales	<p>Time to Change Wales helps people who face difficult conversations about mental health and stigma in the workplace, with a strong focus on how to show kindness during COVID-19. In their words: “Now, more than ever, it’s important we show kindness to one other. Giving and receiving acts of kindness can help to improve mental well-being by creating positive feelings.”</p>
Equality and Human Rights Commission	<p>The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has also produced COVID-19 guidance for employers, which assist them when making difficult decisions to take account of their obligations under the Equality Act. More information can be found at COVID-19 Guidance for Employers.</p>

Appendix

Additional Information

<p>Restarting or operating your business</p>	<p>The Coronavirus Regulations impose a number of restrictions on businesses and other services – these are continually reviewed as we gradually unlock our economy.</p> <p>If you are permitted to operate your business you must do so safely in a way that complies with any restrictions imposed by the Coronavirus Regulations, in addition to other legal obligations imposed on employers (such as health and safety legislation).</p> <p>Workers are only allowed to return to the workplace if it is not reasonably practicable for them to work from home.</p>
<p>Physical Distancing</p>	<p>The Coronavirus Regulations impose a legal requirement on those responsible for work to take all reasonable measures to ensure a 2m distance is maintained between persons on premises where work is carried out (except between two members of the same household, or a carer and the person assisted by the carer).</p> <p>Guidance has been produced to help people understand what “taking all reasonable measures” means, and what to do if it is not possible to maintain a distance of 2m in certain circumstances. You must have regard to the Statutory Guidance and supplementary guidance on taking all reasonable measures to maintain physical distancing in the workplace.</p> <p>Failing to comply with the physical distancing duty in Wales is an offence, which on conviction may lead to a fine.</p>

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<https://gov.wales/workplace-guidance-employers-and-employees-covid19>

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