

Committee	Dated:
Establishment Committee	28th May 2020
Subject:	Public
Return to work	
Report of:	For Discussion
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Report author:	
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Summary

1. This report summarises the work being done to bring back the next phase of workers back into the workplace. We are following Government guidance on who should return to work which is only those who cannot work from home, and Public Health England and the Health and Safety advice on safe working environments.

Recommendations

2. Members are asked to discuss this report.

Background

3. At the start of lockdown on 24th March only essential workers were able to come into the workplace. To facilitate our essential front line workers, we issued 800 letters to staff to enable them to travel. We cannot completely eliminate all risks for our front line workers, but we needed to do everything reasonably practicable to minimise them by following Public Health England guidelines.

Where we are now

4. The government advice has not changed in essence but there has been some relaxation on people returning to work if they cannot work from home. The government advice is there are five 5 steps to working safely:
 - **Carry out a COVID-19 risk assessment**
 - **Develop cleaning, handwashing and hygiene procedures**
 - **Help people to work from home**
 - **Maintain 2m social distancing, where possible**
 - **Where people cannot be 2m apart, manage transmission risk**

Carrying out a COVID-19 risk assessment

5. We will be carrying out COVID-19 risk assessments in all work places, in consultation with workers, unions and the networks. The results will be placed on our website, shared with the staff who work in these areas and we will publish the results outside the buildings for the public and visitors. Risk assessments have already been carried out at the Guildhall, Walbrook Wharf, the Mansion House, Central Criminal Court and will be ongoing.
6. The generic office assessment is being used by departments, and City Surveyors are leading on building assessment and embedding their 'good practice model'. (See Appendix 1 for FM back to work guide and Appendix 2 for workplace design guide).
7. We are finalising a process for risk assessing the return of staff who are more vulnerable for different reasons – medium risk including pregnancy, disability and also considering the emerging issues around risk to the BAME community. This is being done with our Occupational Health Team.
8. There is some confusion about PPE and face coverings. The government guidance is that where PPE is not necessary now, then when other groups return to work it should not be necessary for them. Also that PPE should be reserved for Health and Essential Workers where required. Staff are likely to be concerned about the use of public transport and potentially working, even at a safe distance, without face coverings. This is an issue being discussed.

Develop cleaning, handwashing and hygiene procedures

9. We will be in contact with all staff before returning to work with guidelines on behaviours and the new hygiene guidelines, these include the mandatory use of hand sanitisers at touch points across the workplace. Desk wipes will also be provided.
10. All door handles inside and out, lift panels, hand rails, taps, soap dispensers, tables in break out areas, communal photocopiers and reception counters will be cleaned continuously. The Guildhall complex will be deep cleaned prior to occupation and this includes desks, kitchens etc.

Help people working from home

11. The HSW Guidance has been adapted and all staff working at home are carrying out risk assessments on their working arrangements, including whether they have the right equipment. The City Corporation's pool of (over 100) DSE assessors and coordinators are supporting managers and signing off assessments. Where necessary, equipment is being provided and adaptations are being made to support staff. Working collaboratively with City Surveyors, via the Home Working Group. A catalogue of equipment and further guidance has been developed and disseminated to allow staff to have suitable ergonomic equipment. Appendix 2

12. In addition to the DSE assessments we have a number of guides to working safely from home and working with laptops and these include a checklist.
13. At present we have a number of Well Being initiatives from Power Hours' to virtual Mental Health First Aiders. The intranet has numerous links to resources from Jo Wicks to the NHS Mental Health Wellbeing Guide.
14. We have undertaken a Covid 19 all staff survey in relation to working from home seeking information on what has worked well and what the barriers have been, also seeking feedback on mental health and wellbeing. There will be departmental action plans on the results. The headline results should be available in time for this Establishment Committee.
- 15. Maintaining 2m social distancing where possible and managing the transition.**
16. The City Surveyor will be monitoring building capacity over the first few weeks of workers (those few who cannot work from home) returning to the work place. We will be asking departments to consider different working hours to avoid busy public transport periods.
17. City Surveyor is advising on controlled people flow around the building and using stairs, and using 2 – 4 metre interval markings.
18. Fire evacuations will continue as normal. If the fire alarm sounds employees must evacuate the building as quickly and safely as possible and once outside the building, disperse and await instruction via text to re-enter the building.
19. We are also planning staggered entries to make sure the main entrances are not congested, reducing lift capacity and closing some lifts.

Prioritising Staff returning to the Workplace

20. Each Chief Officer has written a recovery plan setting out the groups of staff needed to return and in which order. However, we are following Government guidance and all staff able to work from home will remain doing so. Individual Chief Officers will not determine the order in which staff return to workplaces. This will be managed in a corporate way, taking into account the need for the work to be undertaken in the workplace rather than at home and compliance with the Risk Assessments. This will be led by the City Surveyor and the Director of Human Resources as the thematic officer leads and have and will meet with the Chair of the Establishment Committee and the Chair of CASC. Reporting regularly to the Establishment Committee.

Summary

21. Overall we are doing everything possible for the safe working of our employees whether in the offices or at home. The basic principle will still apply as per government guidance, those who are able to work at home effectively should still do so, for their own safety and the safety of others

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