

Covid-19 Returning to Work Guiding Principles

Effective from 14 September 2020

Overarching Principles

- These principles apply to all SCC services and buildings, excluding schools.
- This is the agreed corporate approach, whilst recognising the principles will need to be applied on a service by service basis according to the nature of the work and the personal circumstances of individuals.
- Service level risk assessments must be reviewed and updated prior to 14 September 2020. They should be checked on a regular basis to ensure they are in line with any updated guidance.
- Individual risk assessments must be completed for any member of staff in the [NHS “vulnerable” categories](#) in advance of a return to the workplace. This includes BAME staff members.
- This is the council’s current approach in response to Government and Public Health guidance. The position will be reviewed on a regular basis and/or as any changes are made to guidance at a national level.

Working Practices – Staff working in or with our communities

- The service specific approach is particularly important for our customer facing teams, e.g. social care (including face to face meetings with vulnerable residents and home visits), customer service points, libraries, highways, etc.
- We will rigorously apply Public Health guidance to the way our customer facing staff work, in particular those who undertake home visits; this includes but is not limited to the provision of appropriate PPE as relevant to the role/circumstance.
- Staff attending any workplace, residential or community setting must familiarise themselves with any workplace and/or personal risk assessment for that setting and ensure they comply with social distancing and other risk mitigations in place.
- Where staff are attending a residential or community setting we will group or cohort staff wherever possible to limit the number of different people each individual may come into contact with.

Working Practices – Office Based Staff

- Office based staff may continue to work from home where they are able to do so.
- It is though important for those who have been working from home to have regular face to face time with colleagues and their line manager; it is anticipated that this can be managed within one day a week.
- We are therefore enabling office based staff to work from an SCC building for **one/maximum two days a week**, (except where staff have a pre-agreed arrangement with their line manager); this is to facilitate collaborative working and must be agreed locally in advance by line managers.

Working Practices – All Staff

- A maximum of 40% of work stations will be available in a SCC building at any one time. Managers will be expected to restrict the people in their teams working from a SCC building accordingly and consider roles/personal circumstances when deciding who comes into the workplace.

Page 41 Staggered start/finish times should be considered for staff coming into the workplace to reduce the number of people in at any given time and to help avoid peak travelling times on public transport.

- Staff must familiarise themselves with specific building instructions on [Jive](#) prior to going into the workplace.
- Staff will need to reserve seating in their appropriate service or team area through Manhattan before going to a workplace, apart from staff in the Contact Centre.

Property Considerations

- Workspace occupancy will be monitored by the AEOS system through staff passes when entering/exiting a SCC building.
- Regular and appropriate cleaning, in line with Covid-19 Public Health guidance, is undertaken in all SCC buildings used by staff and visitors.
- Deep cleaning is undertaken in all occupied SCC buildings each weekend in addition to “regular” daily cleaning.
- Plexiglass screens are in place in all areas where face to face contact is necessary.
- Social distancing restrictions are in place in all workplaces, including additional measures such as ‘one in, one out’ in communal areas, (e.g. toilets, kitchens, lifts, corridors and stairways). 2m tape/markings/floor plates are in place in communal areas.
- Where necessary, office layouts (e.g. seating and tables) have been reconfigured to maintain spacing and move face to face interactions to an absolute minimum.
- Wherever possible, SCC buildings have one entry and a separate exit point.
- Hand sanitation is provided at entry, exit points and throughout the buildings.
- Soap, water and paper towels are provided at all washbasins/sinks to enable staff to practise regular hand hygiene.
- There should be limited use of high-touch items and shared office/communal equipment.
- Where SCC teams share SCC buildings, access/social distancing must be agreed at a local level, overseen by Exec Directors.
- Where SCC teams share buildings with partner organisations, access/social distancing will be agreed at a local level.

Miscellaneous

- Meetings can be virtual or in-person depending on the nature of the meeting; the aim being to be as productive as possible. For this reason, hybrid meetings are discouraged. Attendees at in-person meetings must ensure they adhere to the social distancing measures in place.
- Meeting rooms need to be booked in advance through Manhattan and numbers of attendees kept within the room capacity restrictions; Reception staff within SCC buildings will arrange meeting room layout to ensure social distancing and to monitor the number of people in the building to prevent overcrowding.

Staff training will be virtual by default for the foreseeable future.

Walking/cycling is preferable to travel by car where possible. Car sharing is actively discouraged. Where public transport is used a face covering should be worn in line with Government guidance.

- Where uniformed staff are working from SCC buildings they should change into/out of uniforms on site using appropriate changing areas. Shower facilities may be used, although wherever possible personal clothing, towels, etc. must not be left on site unattended.
- Any member of staff who is symptomatic, confirmed Covid-19 positive or who has been contacted through the Test and Trace system must immediately self-isolate in accordance with Government guidance. If the member of staff has been working at an SCC office/ building and/ or working in close proximity with other SCC colleagues, their line manager should notify Public Health at healthprotection@surreycc.gov.uk.

Our role as Leaders

- We will ensure all our staff are aware of and adhere to these principles and will lead by example.
- We will manage by trust, enabling people to be at their most effective.
- We will recognise that not everyone may feel comfortable returning to the workplace and understand that our role is to reassure our staff that measures are in place to protect them.
- We will check in on our teams regularly and be alert for warning signs around people's mental and physical wellbeing.
- We will actively encourage our staff to have regular breaks during the day.
- We will encourage clear boundaries between work and home life and promote the importance of people having time off to recharge; this includes the necessity for people to use their annual leave.
- We will objectively look at the way we work –our systems, processes and working culture, challenging ourselves to do things differently, (whilst recognising there will be some regulatory parameters we need to work within).

Our Roles as Employees

- We will follow these principles and advice from Facilities Management (whether SCC or partner organisations) with regard to using local workspaces.
- We will not remove signage or alter the layout of a socially distanced workspace.
- We will ensure that we take responsibility for keeping ourselves and our colleagues safe by keeping office based working to a minimum and adhering to the social distancing guidance, regular hand washing, use of hand sanitiser, etc.
- We will be polite and courteous to all colleagues and respect people's roles in keeping us safe.
- We will ensure our line managers are aware of our movements in order to keep the volume of staff in workspaces manageable and avoid over-crowding.
- We will feel confident in addressing any relaxed behaviour which might put people at risk.

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