**Introduction**

This guidance document has been created to help managers and those responsible for developing, amending and reviewing risk assessments. Services that have continued to operate during this crisis and those that are starting to plan to reopen following the easing of lockdown, it is important that established risk assessments and safe working procedures must now consider the Coronavirus as a risk in the workplace. In the absence of a suitable risk assessment, managers must ensure they now develop a suitable assessment as part of the permission to return to safe operation. Risk assessments need to be shared with employees, trade unions and other health and safety representatives.

Bradford Council is a very large diverse local authority so the exposure risk to Coronavirus will differ across the organisation from one service to another, for example health and social care, construction, front line services, our back office support and schools. Despite these differences, the logical approach to assessing and managing the risk of Coronavirus remains the same.

As you read through this guide it will prompt you to think about the risk and effect of Coronavirus in the workplace and offer examples of suitable controls required to manage that risk. The subheadings will help with the layout and recording of the risk assessment. The  [Risk Assessment Form Template](https://www.bradford.gov.uk/hands/index.asp?a=Risk%20Assessment)  can be used to record the assessment information. There is [additional guidance](https://www.bradford.gov.uk/hands/index.asp?a=Risk%20Assessment) available to help users understand the risk assessment process.

A risk assessment in itself does not control risk; it is the actions of everyone involved applying the controls that will help to mitigate the risk to keep the workplace safe. Involving your employees, trade unions and other safety representatives in the assessment process will help create successful safe working controls and practices.

One of the management controls required is to routinely review the effectiveness of a risk assessment and the implemented controls. It is important to ensure these controls are kept under constant review and improved as the knowledge about the virus, its transmission and its control develops.

**Risk Assessment**
As an employer, we must to take reasonable steps to protect people (employees and others) from harm, this includes Coronavirus. The following bullet points outline the risk assessment process that will help to manage risk and protect people.
You must:

* identify what work activity or situations might cause transmission of the virus
* think about who could be at risk
* decide how likely it is that someone could be exposed
* act to remove the activity or situation, or if this isn’t possible, control the risk

**Hazard**
Risk assessments must now identify the Coronavirus as a hazard and on the assessment you need to briefly describe how it is spread e.g.

* in minute water droplets that are expelled from the body through sneezing, coughing, talking and breathing
* be transferred to the hands and from there to surfaces
* it can survive on surfaces for a period after transfer (depending on such things as
the surface type, its moisture content and temperature)

If the virus is transferred from one person to another via close contact, whilst many may suffer a mild infection effect and survive, for others it may prove fatal, so this virus should be considered as a **high** risk hazard.

**Don’t forget to note who may be affected by the virus in the workplace.**

**Likelihood of Exposure**
Consideration must be given to how staff may be exposed to the virus and the current management controls which both the Government and the Council has implemented, **working from home, social distancing 2m and regular hand washing.** Thesemust be adhered to where ever possible.

The following pages will help you to consider the various aspects of your workplace, working activities and the potential risk of exposure to the virus. Under each subheading are examples of suitable controls, which can be implemented to mitigate the risk. It is not a definitive list. Decisions about what control measures are required need to be realistic, reasonable and proportionate to the risk faced.

**Who should go to work?**
Think about where and how your work is carried out,

* consider if there are jobs and tasks that can be changed to reduce risk; identifying everyone in your service who can work from home – if they can,
	+ providing equipment needed for employees to work safely and effectively at home (for example laptops, screens, specialist equipment provided as part of reasonable adjustments, mobile phones, video conferencing equipment);
	+ keep in regular contact with employees working from home, making sure you discuss their wellbeing and helping them to feel they are still part of the workforce;
	+ Ensure that flexible or homework and or lone working assessments are competed for those who no longer work in the office. This includes, remote, virtual and peripatetic workers and those in dispersed teams;
* where it is not possible to work from home, the governments guidance on
**social distancing 2m and hygiene (hand washing with soap and water often, for at least 20 seconds) should always be followed;**
* the minimum number of people needed to carry out work tasks safely

**Protecting people who are at higher risk**
Think about:

* planning for clinically extremely vulnerable (shielding) workers who may not work outside the home;
* planning for people working at home who have someone shielding in their household;
* helping workers who live with someone who is shielding to come to work where social distancing rules can be adhered to;
* helping workers at increased risk to work from home, either in their current role or an alternative role;
* where people at increased risk cannot work from home, offering them the safest available roles;
* planning for workers from BAME groups who may be disproportionately affected by Coronavirus;
* planning for people who need to self-isolate

**Getting into and leaving work**
Think about:

* identifying where people can travel alone in their own transport (or walk, or cycle if it is safe to do so) when getting to and from work to maintain social distancing;
* staggering arrival and departure times so people can keep to the **2m social distancing r**ules by not using entry/exit points at the same time;
* providing hand washing facilities (running water, soap and paper towels) at entry/exit points. People should be able **to wash their hands** when they get to work and leave. If this is not possible, provide hand sanitiser

**Work Places and Working Areas**
For council buildings and assets please liaise with the Facilities Management Team regarding changes to building arrangements due coronavirus.
Think about how you can organise your work area so that you can keep people 2m apart, where possible:

* physically arrange work areas to keep people 2m apart;
* where appropriate mark areas using floor paint or tape to help people keep a 2m
distance;
* provide signage to remind people to keep a 2m distance;
* avoid people working face-to-face, for example working back to back or side-by-side
* remove hot desking wherever possible
* make use of meeting rooms as additional work space or reduced capacity

**Where you cannot keep a 2m physical distance, you should think about:**

* assigning one person per work area, with their own equipment;
* reducing the number of people in the work area;
* assigning and keeping people to shift teams (sometimes known as a cohort, working group or bubbles), that is people on the same shift working in the same teams, to limit social interaction with others;
* keeping the number of people working less than 2m apart to a minimum;
* using screens to create a physical barrier between people

**You need to think about how to keep the work area clean and prevent
transmission by touching contaminated surfaces. Consider the following:**

* decide on how frequently you need to clean the work area, equipment and vehicles, for example cleaning at the end of each use if equipment is shared between people or between shift changeovers;
* identify objects and surfaces that are touched regularly and decide how frequently you clean them;
* provide hand sanitiser for people getting in and out of vehicles or handling deliveries, if they are unable to wash their hands

**Moving around the workplace or work area**
Think about how people travel through work environments**.**

* Permit only essential trips within buildings, sites and properties, to maintain social distancing as much as possible
* Restrict the amount that people rotate between jobs and equipment
* Limit the number of people who use lifts and work vehicles
* Reduce the number of people in high traffic areas including lifts, corridors, turnstiles, lobbies and walkways
* Where appropriate mark areas using floor paint or tape to help people keep a 2m
distance
* Consider introducing temporary pedestrian walkways to allow people to maintain social distancing when moving around or single direction walkways
* Having different entry and exits points

**Communal Areas**
Review the common areas used by your service including lobbies, corridors, break out areas, print rooms, canteens, toilets, showers, and changing facilities. Think about:

* physically moving tables/chairs so they are 2m apart;
* staggering break times so that people are not using break rooms, canteens, rest areas or changing facilities at the same time to **maintain social distancing 2m;**˜
* where this is not possible, creating additional space for people to take their breaks in;
* where appropriate marking areas using floor paint or tape to help people keep 2m
distance;
* using outside areas for breaks if the locations are suitable and it is safe to do so;
* encouraging workers to stay on-site during working hours;
* none sharing of cups, plates and cutlery

**Where you cannot keep a 2 m physical distance, you need to think about how to keep common areas clean and prevent transmission by touching contaminated surfaces. Think about:**

* how frequently you need to clean the common areas of your business;
* identifying objects and surfaces that are touched regularly and decide how frequently you clean them;
* setting clear guidance for the use of rest areas, toilets, showers and changing facilities to make sure they are kept clean

**Good Hygiene**
**Think about:**

* ensuring that you have hand washing facilities that provide running water, soap and paper towels;
* providing hand sanitiser in addition to washing facilities;
* using signs and posters to increase awareness of good **hand washing technique (20 sec);**
* providing regular reminders on avoiding touching your face and to cough/sneeze into your arm;
* providing hand sanitiser in multiple locations in addition to washrooms;
* setting clear guidance for the cleaning of toilets, showers and changing facilities to make sure they are kept clean;
* setting clear guidance on how to handle goods, merchandise and materials and when cleaning procedures need to be followed

**Information and Guidance**
**Think about:**

* providing people (including workers and others) with information on procedures, guidance or ways of working that have been introduced;
* sharing this information with them before they start work;
* sharing this information with others who are not your workers (for example visitors, customers or contractors), where required; this could include signs or notices;
* how you will pass information and guidance to people who don’t have English as their first language and others who may struggle with written and verbal communication;
* holding conversations with your workers, listening to and acting on their concerns;
* wellbeing of staff and access to additional support

**PPE (personal protective equipment)**
Continue to provide the PPE that you normally use to protect employees, for example exposure to wood dust, flour, welding fume, silica dust, medical need.

Only consider additional PPE when the above control measures listed in this guide are not enough to control the risk e.g. close work and or intimate care. Remember that incorrectly applied/worn PPE will not offer the protection it is designed for and be worthless.

**Face Coverings**From the beginning of the Autumn terms staff and pupils Yr 7 and above need to wear face coverings whist in transitional and communal areas of their school. Pupils also need to wear face covering while on school and or public transport.

**First Aid**Managers need to review their first aid needs assessments and arrangements for their service area, as it likely that there will be reduced staff numbers in the workplace including availability of first aiders.

**Fire and Emergency Arrangements**Managers need to review their fire risk assessments and emergency arrangements to ensure they remain valid and considers reduce workplace capacity. It is noted that social distancing does not have to be adhered to during an emergency evacuation until the designated place of safety has been reached.

**Additional Guidance**

The BEIS has produced specific workplace safety guidance for a number of different industries and sectors and are a useful aide to the risk assessment process. You can find details at [www.gov.uk/workingsafely](http://www.gov.uk/workingsafely).

HSE’s latest news and advice on coronavirus [www.hse.gov.uk/news/coronavirus.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/news/coronavirus.htm)

DfE - Schools Guidance – [Implementing Protective Measures Educational Settings](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings)

Occupational Safety team website (risk assessment/flexible /homeworking/lone working /display screen equipment) - [www.bradford.gov.uk/hands/](http://www.bradford.gov.uk/hands/)

Employee Health and wellbeing Website (support services available/useful information and guidance documents) - [Link](http://intranet.bradford.gov.uk/working-day/health-and-well-being-support/health-and-wellbeing-advice-and-support1)

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