

Health and Safety Risk Assessment Form for Balens Ltd – Ref Covid 19

As at 26th August 2021

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/guidance-for-employers-and-businesses-on-coronavirus-covid-19>

- All legal restrictions were lifted by UK Government for England on 19th July 2021, however Government made it clear that individuals and businesses needed to take responsibility with regards to the continued Risks regarding the Covid-19 pandemic.
- In order to protect staff, Directors have agreed an interim period of hybrid working with part time in the office, part time working at home, whilst the risk of Covid-19 is still present. This policy will be reviewed regularly, with checks regarding Team Members’ home working set up and effect on individuals, managers, clients and the business as a whole to be evaluated, in order to inform long term policy.
- Given the rise in local infection rates through July 2021, a pause in return to the office was agreed by Directors, with the aim for interim hybrid working to commence on 31st August 2021. This pause allowed for more Team Members to have their second vaccine if they choose, and for new Government regulations regarding the requirements to self-isolate if double vaccinated to be brought in on 16th August 2021 – see details [Guidance for contacts of people with confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection who do not live with the person - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- Local Covid-19 infection rates are regularly reviewed at: [Worcestershire COVID-19 situation dashboard | Worcestershire County Council](#)

Hazard	Risk Level – Likely to occur	Hazard Level – if does occur	Consequences	Specific Individuals at Risk	Specific individual Controls - Current	Suggested additional controls
Home Working <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team Members working in their own homes – as per Government guidelines 23/03/2020 • Note: No formal Risk Assessment or suitability of equipment / facilities of individuals homes was carried out prior to Team Members (TMs) being sent to work from home, as this was Government directed policy • However, Team Members have been regularly contacted and asked if there are any equipment needs regarding home working set up, and equipment has been provided where required. • A systematic review is planned from 1st September 2021, that will determine what each individual’s home set up is, and future requirements regarding this if a long term hybrid policy be brought into force. 						
Physical Health – poor posture due to inappropriate equipment – desk / chair / wrist guard / foot rest etc.	Low / medium for those without suitable equipment	Low / medium for those without suitable equipment	Physical discomfort / increased fatigue Aches to joints, muscles, back, neck and shoulders	Those without suitable office equipment, Those with physical issues All TMs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated home working policy sent to all TMs 19/3/20 • Laptop, separate mouse and Swyx headset supplied to all TMs that require this ref home working, all with access to Balens systems and network • Conducted survey of what equipment is available for TMs at home March and August 2020 • Provided office chairs from Balens for TMs who requested this, plus additional office support equipment (2nd Screens, laptop risers, separate keyboard, foot rests, wrist guards etc.) • CS - Contacted all by e-mail to check how doing / getting on and if any issues (inc. physical, mental health, etc.), plus reminder e-mails to look after posture, take regular breaks, any additional equipment requirements / physical support etc. • Continued review Health and Safety Executive (HSE) advice and guidance 	Consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional Furniture requirements • Working in the office full time

					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TMs working in the office where H&S impacts of home working are considered excessive. • Plan for full review of home office set up re longer term working from home – September 2021 	
Poor mental Health – due to feelings of isolation etc.	Low / medium – depending upon underlying wellbeing of individual	Low / medium May become high depending upon other factors	Low mood & moral, may lead to longer term Mental Health issues	Those who already have mental health issues Those living alone All TMs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Westfield Health – Mental Health options flagged to all TMs, plus option for Doctor Line • Managers to keep in regular contact with Team Members, inc via MS Teams – Team members will be working interim hybrid working pattern • Services & HR contacted Team Members by phone / e-mail to check how they are and will continue to do so • TMs with mental health issues, and/or living alone that require additional support, to work in the office for specified periods • Continued review Health and Safety Executive (HSE) advice and guidance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider working in the office full time

Office working – Phase 3 – with effect from 31st August 2021

Increase office working to start general staff return to the office

- To follow Government guidance at all times – UK Government removed all limits on social contact from 19th July 2021
- Balens to operate interim period of hybrid working, where numbers within the office continue to be limited whilst Covid-19 pandemic still causing concerns. Staff will be in 2 – 3 days a week, and work from home for remainder of time.

Hazard	Risk Level – Likely to occur	Hazard Level – if does occur	Consequences	Specific Individuals at Risk
Potential introduction of Covid-19 into the offices and spread among TMs	Low given specific controls put into place and given low levels of local infection and all staff having had the opportunity to be double vaccinated	Low for TMs that have been double vaccinated. Medium - high – dependent upon risk factors for TMs that have not been vaccinated	TM becomes infected with Covid-19 Spread of Covid-19	TMs coming into the office and their family / friends if exposed when the TM returns home

Specific individual Controls – **From 31/08/2021**

If individual is symptomatic for Covid-19

- If a TM exhibits any symptoms of Covid-19 (high temperature, dry cough, loss of taste/smell etc), they are not to travel to the office/ must go home immediately, and get a PCR test to determine if have Covid or not. They are to advise Balens of the results of this test.
- If the TM tests positive, they must follow Government requirements regarding self-isolation – see [Stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-or-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19-infection)
- TMs who test positive, may continue to work whilst self-isolating at home, whilst they feel well enough to do so. Where TMs do not feel well enough to continue working, they need to contact their Team Leader / Manager following standard sickness reporting procedures.
- If the TM tests negative, they may attend the office on the day of their negative test, but are requested to continue to take regular lateral flow tests to ensure that they remain negative

If individual has come into close contact with someone who has tested positive for Covid-19

- TMs that have come into contact with someone who has Covid-19 they are to follow current Government guidelines regarding self-isolation, namely:
 - if they **have** been double vaccinated, and received their second vaccination more than 14 days previously, they are encouraged to take a PCR test, and regular lateral flow tests, but do not need to self-isolate. They are therefore able to attend the office on normal days in, but must advise Balens of their positive contact status.
 - If they **have not** been double vaccinated, or received their second vaccination less than 14 days previously, they are required to self-isolate (see details regarding self-isolation above). They are required to advise Balens of their positive contact status.
 - Full details may be found on the Government website at: [Guidance for contacts of people with confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection who do not live with the person - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/guidance-for-contacts-of-people-with-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19-infection-who-do-not-live-with-the-person)

General

- Team Members who wish to have vaccine will have had opportunity to receive this
- Continue to limit numbers within the office – Affinities and Commercial full Teams not in the office at the same time
- Socially distancing – no longer Government requirements but signage as reminder to remain in place as some staff may still have concerns
- TMs are encouraged to wash hands for at least 20 seconds regularly – signage is in place, single use paper towels in use
- CS aware of which teams will be coming into the office on which days
- Cleaning continuing – Tues, Thurs & Fri for general cleaning and Mon and Weds for High Touch areas only – cleaners have been instructed to pay particular attention to high touch areas
- Anti-bacterial wipes available for TMs to clean down high touch surfaces themselves, wipes placed in kitchen areas and print room for ease of access, spares kept in Services office
- Wall mounted hand sanitisation pumps have been purchased and installed by front and back doors, plus outside toilet facilities, with minimum 70% alcohol hand sanitisation gel
- Separate bottles of hand sanitiser have been purchased, with minimum 70% alcohol content for use as necessary in the offices, including within meeting rooms and kitchens
- 70% Alcohol rub spray available for additional cleaning of high touch areas including door handles plus anti-bacterial/viral cleaner provided in all kitchen areas
- 70% IPA Alcohol wipes are available for the cleaning of IT equipment where it is necessary for this to be shared (i.e. larger printer screens, franking machine and PCs for accounting & payroll purposes)
- Avoid sharing of equipment – inc, but not exhaustively – IT equipment, Swyx equipment, Computer docking stations have been installed for Ops Team desks, to allow for Team Members to bring in their laptops from home
- Keypad locks have been disabled
- Air filter system available within main office to purify air. Windows to be opened allowing for fresh air into building where practical
- Continued use of video conference technology to hold meetings where required. Where face to face meetings need to be held, aim to use larger meeting rooms with ventilation.
- Post-delivery is currently put through Balens post box, franked post is put into local post-boxes
- **One-way system** - has been set up for which stair cases to go up / down, to avoid meeting others in stairways / corridors – to be managed by individuals within Bridge House
- **Toilets** – signage in all facilities regarding washing of hands with soap and hot water provided.
- **Kitchen areas** – signage regarding washing of hands with soap and hot water provided. TMs responsible for own washing up.
- **Aircon** – uses a fresh air system and does not move air around building, only within the individual offices so spread considered low risk. Windows to be opened where practical, as virus spread has been shown to be less in open air
- **Face coverings** - whilst Balens support the right for team members to wear face coverings if they choose to, this is not a requirement within the offices. If this becomes a Government requirement, staff consultation will be sought regarding who will be in the offices and when

Risk	Risk Level – Likely to occur	Hazard Level – if does occur	Consequences	Individuals at Risk	Control Measures and processes
Team Member within office becomes ill – potentially has brought infection into the office	Low, whilst local infection levels low	Low if TM has been double vaccinated, May be medium / high if not	Individual may become ill May infect others within office	All that attend offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standard sickness policy applies for all TMs regardless of start date. If Team Member is showing Covid-19 symptoms (dry cough, high temperature, loss of smell/taste), to go home and get tested – see notes above TM to advise Team Leader and Balens HR Balens HR to advise other TMs that have been in contact with the individual, that there may be a risk and to self-isolate / take lateral flow tests if double vaccinated, as appropriate – see notes above.

General Controls – and time-line of actions

- Follow Government Guidance and the Law as this develops and changes - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/offices-and-contact-centres>
- Follow Health and Safety Executive Guidance as this develops and changes - <https://www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/workers/home.htm>
- Where Deep Cleaning is required following a confirmed outbreak of Covid-19 follow Government guidance - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings>

Who is at Risk - General

Staff Members - including pregnant staff, temporary staff, volunteers/interns and work experience staff – see notes at start of document with regards to different categories of risk. Separate risk assessment to be conducted for pregnant staff but this risk assessment still applies.

Visitors to Building - Trades people if required

Groups specifically identified by the Government as being at higher risk:

- Pregnant employees** – follow Government advice – see [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): advice for pregnant employees - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-pregnant-employees)
- Clinically extremely vulnerable - CEV (shielding)** - Will have been advised of status via NHS or GP, and received a shielding letter in the past. Shielding advice was paused on 1st April 2021, see - [Guidance on protecting people who are clinically extremely vulnerable from COVID-19 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/protecting-people-who-are-clinically-extremely-vulnerable-from-covid-19).
- Living with someone who is shielding** – There are no specific requirements for those living with someone who is CEV – See also notes above
- Clinically vulnerable** – There is currently no additional requirements for those that have been classed as Clinically Vulnerable – see also HSE Guidance - [Protect vulnerable workers - Working safely during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) pandemic \(hse.gov.uk\)](https://www.hse.gov.uk/guidance/protect-vulnerable-workers-working-safely-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-pandemic)

Additional notes:

- Policy has been adopted in consultation with staff, including through H&S staff reps. Plans will continue to be reviewed as circumstances and guidelines change
- Policy is displayed on Balens Website as per Government guidelines <http://www.balens.co.uk/news/balens-health-and-safety-risk-assessment-form-ref-covid-19.aspx> - link sent to all Team Members
- Government 'Covid Secure workplace' notice has been completed and is displayed on front door <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5eb97d30d3bf7f5d364bfbb6/staying-covid-19-secure-accessible.pdf>