

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

Groups:

- **Clinically extremely vulnerable - CEV (shielding)** – have received a letter from the Government instructing them to self-isolate until end June 2020. They will no longer be required to shield after 1st August, provided attending a Covid-secure workplace.
- **Living with someone who is shielding** – where possible to work from home when shielding in operation, where this is not possible, to follow social distancing
- **Clinically Vulnerable - CV – Those that are 70+, pregnant or have specific health issues that put them at higher risk.** Ideally where possible to work from home, where this is not possible, to follow social distancing
- **Living with someone who is clinically vulnerable** - Ideally where possible to work from home, where this is not possible, to follow social distancing
- **Self-Isolating** – Any team member that is exhibiting symptoms of Covid-19 (high temperature, persistent dry cough, loss of smell/taste), or has been tested positive for same and currently required to self-isolate

Hazard	Risk Level – Likely to occur	Hazard Level – if does occur	Consequences	Specific Individuals at Risk	Specific individual Controls - Current	Suggested additional controls
<p>Home Working</p> <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 						
<p>Physical Health – poor posture due to inappropriate equipment – desk / chair / wrist guard / foot rest etc.</p>	<p>Low / medium for those without suitable equipment</p>	<p>Low / medium for those without suitable equipment</p>	<p>Physical discomfort / increased fatigue</p> <p>Aches to joints, muscles, back, neck and shoulders</p>	<p>Those without suitable office equipment,</p> <p>Those with physical issues</p> <p>All TMs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 19/3 updated home working policy sent to all TMs • 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 • Provided office chairs from Balens for TMs that request 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.). Will continue to be in contact • Sent reminder e-mails to look after posture, take regular breaks etc. (repeating on periodic basis) • Sent reminder e-mail to advise if require any additional equipment / physical support (repeating on periodic basis) • Continued review Health and Safety Executive (HSE) advice and guidance • HR called and ran through questionnaire with all Team Members • Continue to flag DSE requirements to all TMs 	<p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional Furniture - requirements if home working continues for protracted period. • Consider working in the office

<p>Poor mental Health – due to feelings of isolation etc.</p>	<p>Low / medium – depending upon underlying wellbeing of individual</p>	<p>Low / medium May become high depending upon other factors</p>	<p>Low mood & moral, may lead to longer term Mental Health issues</p>	<p>Those who already have mental health issues Those living alone All TMs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Westfield Health – Mental Health options flagged to all TMs, plus option for Doctor Line • Directors daily e-mails, light hearted, keeping in contact – inc noting Mental Health and Wellbeing specifically • MS Teams – For Managers and team members to keep in touch • Managers to keep in regular contact with Team Members • Services & HR contacted Team Members by phone / e-mail to check how they are and will continue to do so • HR in regular contact with all Furloughed workers • 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 • HR called and ran through questionnaire with all Team Members • Continue to flag Mental Health and Wellbeing as important for all TMs • Actively promote engagement with all Team Members i.e. MacMillan cakes, Halloween Competition etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider working in the office
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Office working – Phase 2 – as at October 2020

Increase office working to accommodate team members that require training / additional supervision

- To follow Government guidance at all times
- Implemented September 2020
- Aim to limit numbers to no more than 25% of workforce, but not necessarily all in the offices at the same time
- Note – In August 2020 Government updated advice for Office workers to return to offices where possible. In September 2020 this was rescinded, with Office workers again being urged to work from home where possible, in order to stem the spread of Covid-19, due to increasing numbers of infection around the country.

Hazard Introduction of Covid-19 into the offices and spread among TMs	Risk Level – Likely to occur Low given specific controls put into place and low numbers attending office	Hazard Level – if does occur Medium - high – dependent upon risk factors for TMs in the offices	Consequences TM becomes infected with Covid-19 Spread of Covid-19	Specific Individuals at Risk TMs coming into the office and their family / friends if exposed when the TM returns home
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Specific individual Controls – Current as at 16/10/2020

- No more than 15 - 20% of staff in offices at any one time, with note that staff to only attend building if necessary.
- Socially distancing – 2m apart / separate offices – signage is in place – Government have updated advice from 4th July that 1m + mitigation factors is acceptable, where 1m is not possible – see below for mitigation factors
- TMs are encouraged to wash hands for at least 20 seconds regularly – signage is in place, single use paper towels in use

- TMs are aware that if they exhibit 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 to self-isolate for a period of 7 days – see also **Covid-quick guide for Balens Office TMs**
- All those who have specific issues / received Government letters to self-isolate (shielding) have been strongly advised to work from home – where it is *absolutely necessary* for someone within this category to attend Bridge House, as required for the specific task, their role and skill and they have volunteered to come into the office to carry out this task, they will comply with other H&S Measures (2m distancing, handwashing / sanitisation & ensuring only in the building as required for the specific task). NOTE – separate Risk Assessment has been carried out for this instance
- CS aware of who is coming into the building each day and monitor necessity. TMs that attend the offices on a regular basis are considered to be generally low risk (i.e. not CV, CEV or living with same). All TMs to advise CS in advance if planning to attend the premises. NOTE – No individual to attend if believe have any symptoms of Covid-19
- Limit physical contact where possible with high touch areas & increase cleaning of same
- 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 where appropriate within meeting rooms and kitchens
- Individual bottles of hand sanitiser with 70% alcohol, purchased for all TMs who are in the offices, to have and use at their desk
- 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, office supplies, cutlery and crockery. Computer docking stations have been installed for Ops Team desks, to allow for Team Members to bring in their laptops from home
- Do not enter smaller offices, when someone is using these. Stay in doorway, and maintain social distancing
- Internal doorways kept open (noting fire safety), to reduce door contact. 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
- Use of video conference technology to hold meetings, rather than face to face. Where face to face meetings need to be held, larger meeting rooms with ventilation must be used (Training Room, BITS room, Bridge Hall)
- Front door currently locked, to ensure security of building. Signage provided for deliveries, to contact mobile number for CS to ensure people into the building are minimised
- Post-delivery is currently put though 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. One in, one out system to be in operation, where lights on = facilities in use. Bins provided outside of the toilets to allow TMs to turn off light switches using paper towels. Signage installed and request that TMs close toilet lids prior to flush
- Kitchen areas – 2m social distancing with signage to this effect, signage regarding washing of hands with soap and hot water provided. TMs responsible for own washing up. Separate kettles requested for different teams – on order
- Most staff are not eating at offices, and if do, stay at desks. TMs to avoid making drinks for other people
- Where staff have been asked to support the business by coming back into the office, and they have expressed anxiety regarding this, this has been respected and issues not forced where they can continue to work from home – this policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis
- Consulted on Health and Safety controls with those that are working regularly within Bridge House, requested feedback on same and actioned feedback
- H&S representatives volunteered from TMs to assist process and consult on H&S issues re Covid-Secure workplace. Signed off Phase 1 and phase 2 controls, discussed and agreed current controls for phase 2. Meetings held as required with H&S Reps, to discuss updates to H&S requirements and measures in place
- Operational Teams generally split, with Affinities attending on a Monday, Wednesday and Friday, and Commercial Team Members attending on a Tuesday and Thursday. Where attending on same day, using different rooms.
- Where possible training & supervision will be operated remotely i.e. via online platform, screen sharing etc.

- Where 'in person' training is required, individuals will be grouped within training teams, to limit the number of individuals they are in contact with – considerations include splitting when different teams attend the offices, what rooms the teams use, etc. Side by side working is considered less risky than sitting opposite.
- **Desks** - Have considered which desks may be used to ensure 2 m social distancing – see separate plan – have ensured separate people coming in on different days / weeks, however need to ensure that TMs don't mix desks and/or equipment. Note – Government advice has been updated to allow for 1m+ from 4th July
- **Where Team Members move to different desks** – these will be thoroughly cleaned with suitable sanitiser
- Additional Swyx telephone headsets to be purchased as required, to ensure TMs are not required to bring these in from home (ref set up requirements under desks & for IT) / no sharing of equipment*
- **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
- Possibly entry through front door & exit through back, dependent upon numbers within the building
- Staggered start times for those that are arriving – to ensure no cluster at back door on arrival
- **Lift** – do not use, unless absolutely necessary i.e. for transport of heavy / awkward objects
- Team Members who require the use of public transport to get to work – TMs to follow Government guidelines with regards to face coverings whilst using any public transport
- Face coverings - whilst Balens support the right for team members to wear face coverings where practical, this is not a requirement within the offices. If this becomes a Government requirement, staff consultation will be sort regarding who will be in the offices and when
- Operational Teams generally split, with Affinities attending on a Monday, Wednesday and Friday, and Commercial and Claims Team Members attending on a Tuesday and Thursday

* Requires consultation with IT & Ops Managers at time of implementation regarding specific equipment requirements

Office working – Phase 3

Proposal to increase office working where:

- Government guidance changes and this is now considered to be an acceptable option and/or
- Contact tracing has been well established, with good levels of testing and/or
- Levels of risk within Worcestershire are considered to be low or very low and/or
- Obvious that individual's wellbeing is being severely impacted by home working and/or
- Business culture / productivity being severely impacted by home working

Requires input from Directors and Managers regarding timing and logistics for this.

Hazard	Risk Level – Likely to occur	Hazard Level – if does occur	Consequences	Specific Individuals at Risk
Introduction of Covid-19 into the offices and spread among TMs	Will be dependent upon external factors (such as the levels of virus within the local community) Low - medium given specific controls put into place and low numbers attending office	Medium - high – dependent upon risk factors for TMs in the offices	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

- Returning to the offices will be required, but will only be instigated when Hazard levels are considered low, and thus Risk level will be low. Our primary control mechanism, as per Government Guidance, is for TMs to continue to work from home.

- Controls as noted for Phase 2.

Proposed additional controls – for Discussion with reps

- Deep cleaning of offices prior to return of greater numbers of Team Members
- **Screens** – at the ends of desks (roller banners) and between any desk where TMs will be required to sit opposite each other with less than 2m social distancing (clear Perspex screens mounted on top of desk dividers). Screens have been considered as a Risk Control measure. Plans for phase 2 will not require TMs to sit in desks that are less than 2m distance apart or opposite one another. The option to use screens will continue to be reviewed dependent upon risk requirements, business need and Government advice, but is not deemed to be a necessary Risk Control factor for phase 2.
- **Desks** – option to open and close desks depending upon which Team Members are coming in – e.g. **A** comes in and uses her desk week 1, **B** comes in and uses his desk, next to **As**, in week 2 etc.

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 numbers to office are limited	Medium, depending upon transition levels	Individual may become ill May infect others within office May have to close offices, with all working from home again	All that attend offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard sickness policy applies. • If Team Member is showing Covid-19 symptoms (dry cough, high temperature, loss of smell/taste), to go home / stay home and self-isolate for a period of 7 days. • TM to advise Team Leader and Balens HR • Balens HR to advise other TMs that have been within the office within the last 2 – 3 days, that there may be a risk if they have come into contact with the affected individual and to self-isolate as appropriate. • Deep cleaning of offices to ensure all removal of Covid virus from the building

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>
- Staff to only attend offices if absolutely necessary, until Government advice changes
- Where Deep Cleaning is required following a suspected or confirmed case 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

Visitors to Building - Trades people if required

Additional notes:

- Policy has been adopted in consultation with staff through H&S staff reps. Plans for phase 2 and 3 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>

- 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>
- Mitigation factors for 1m + from 4th July have been defined by the Government as:
 - further increasing the frequency of hand washing and surface cleaning
 - keeping the activity time involved as short as possible
 - using screens or barriers to separate people from each other
 - using back-to-back or side-to-side working (rather than face-to-face) whenever possible
 - reducing the number of people each person has contact with by using 'fixed teams or partnering' (so each person works with only a few others)
- Guidance provided for all Team Members as to what to do in various scenarios regarding Covid-19 – Covid-quick guide for Balens Office TMs