

Policy on Safe Working During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Introduction

As the coronavirus (COVID-19) lockdown continues to ease, we are aiming for UCCF to return to normal operations, where possible, and adapt to new ways of working as required. This policy explains the changes to our office working environment and new ways of working.

These adaptations have been informed by UCCF's COVID-19 risk assessment, the results of which can be found on the UCCF website. We have also consulted with all office staff about the changes. The risk assessment will continue to be reviewed on a monthly basis and this policy updated accordingly, to reflect any further relaxation of safety measures (or their tightening in the case of a second spike) or the introduction of new measures.

We encourage staff to let us know if they have any concerns, have identified any potential risks, or have any suggestions for further adaptations we can make. Staff can do this by raising concerns or making suggestions to the Head of Human Resources, Facilities Manager or Executive Assistant to the Director.

In advance of your return

We are asking office staff to re-establish Blue Boar House (BBH) as their main place of work from Monday 14 September 2020. This might involve making plans to move back to Oxford for staff who have made social bubbles with households away from base, or the return of BBH IT equipment from home. Until further notice, making BBH your "main place of work" is taken to mean that full-time staff should work at least three out of five days each week in BBH from 14 September. (Part-time staff should liaise with their Team Leader about the number of days they should come in each week). This will enable us to establish a more normal use of the building without overstressing its capacity on any given day, so that we can continue observing safe social distancing.

Individuals with serious underlying health conditions who have previously been advised to shield against coronavirus, and those in other vulnerable groups (such as pregnant staff and those aged 70 or over) should talk to their Team Leader about their needs so that we can consider whether appropriate individual adaptations can be made to enable them to work in BBH.

Travel to and from work

We encourage staff to minimise their use of public transport, by walking or cycling where possible. If travelling by car, it is advised that where possible staff avoid car-sharing with anyone outside of their household.

Where staff need to use public transport, they must think about social distancing, where possible staying two metres away from others and avoiding touching surfaces. It is also now compulsory to wear a face covering on public transport.

Please refer to the Government's guidance on safe travel at www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers and www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering.

Staff should wash their hands thoroughly when arriving at work, using the handwashing facilities or hand sanitisers provided. Staff should also wash their hands thoroughly as soon as they arrive home from work.

Working patterns

To reduce the risk of infection spread, we are implementing the following measures:

- Staggering staff across lunch break shifts on days when most staff are in the office;
- Setting up screens between desks that face each other;
- Assigning staff to set desks to use when they are working in BBH;
- Relocating some staff in BBH to spare rooms (e.g. Woods room on the top floor, and DJ's or Barclay on the UCCF floor) to maintain social distancing.

Staff should speak to their Team Leader/Supervisor and the Head of Human Resources if they have any specific needs regarding their working patterns, for example because of childcare responsibilities or travel difficulties.

Hygiene and cleanliness

General measures

To reduce the risk of infection spread, we have introduced the following measures:

- Signs and posters to provide regular reminders to staff to maintain hygiene standards, particularly in food preparation areas;
- Asking staff not to prepare food or drinks for anyone else, and to consider bringing a packed lunch rather than preparing food on site;
- Suggesting staff bring in their own mugs and teaspoons to the office;
- Operating a 'one-in one-out' policy at tea-points;
- Requiring that dirty pots, cutlery and crockery are washed in the dishwashers, not by hand;
- Installing additional handwashing facilities/hand sanitisers, including at building entrances and exits, and swapping shared tea towels for paper towels in kitchen/food prep areas;
- Asking staff to clear their workstation and disinfect their desktop, keyboard, mouse, phone and chair armrests at the end of each working day;
- Asking that staff, except in exceptional circumstances, use their own desk when working in BBH;
- Keeping windows open at all times to maintain good ventilation through the building;
- Fitting new Dorgard devices to some office doors to minimise the need to touch handles/push-plates on high-use routes; and
- Allocating toilets, kitchen and canteen areas between UCCF and IFES. (UCCF staff should use the toilets and kitchen on floors two and three and take their lunch in Grubbs. IFES staff will use the toilets and kitchen on the ground and first floors and take their lunch in InterVarsity).

Playing your part

While we are taking these additional measures, we would like to remind staff to play their part by:

- Washing and sanitising your hands often and thoroughly;
- Avoiding touching your face, particularly your eyes, nose and mouth; and
- Coughing or sneezing into a tissue, and binning it safely, or into your arm if a tissue is not available.

Social distancing measures

General measures

While working in BBH, staff must actively maintain social distancing of two metres. To assist with social distancing, in addition to the measures detailed above, we have introduced the following:

- A one-way system in the corridors and areas of high footfall around the building;
- Signs and posters advising on limits to number of people and good health and safety practice when entering specific areas such as lifts, break areas, toilets, showers and changing rooms.

Staff should continue to practice social distancing in common areas, including the office entrances and exits; in lifts; in break areas; in toilets, showers and changing rooms.

Meetings

As part of our social-distancing measures, staff should conduct meetings remotely (e.g. via Zoom or a similar video conference platform), where possible. When physical meetings are necessary:

- Only essential participants should attend the meeting;
- Meetings should be kept as short as possible;
- Social distancing of two metres should be maintained throughout;
- Objects such as stationery should not be shared; and
- Meetings should be held in a well-ventilated room wherever possible.

Hand sanitisers are provided in meeting rooms and areas where meetings frequently take place. Floor markings are also provided to help staff maintain social distancing.

Customers and visitors

To reduce the risk of infection spread, we have introduced the following measures:

- Temporarily suspended room hire; and

- Strictly limited visitors to the building to only those necessary (e.g. contractors carrying out essential maintenance work). Please note that for the present, we are continuing our policy of not inviting external visitors for meetings in BBH.

Personal protective equipment (PPE)

Our approach to additional PPE

In line with our COVID-19 risk assessment, the use of additional PPE is not required as an infection-control measure while at work.

Face coverings

The use of a face covering in an office environment (which is not considered PPE) continues to be, at present, a matter of individual choice. In time, if the Government's guidance changes, we may (in consultation with staff) ask staff to wear a face covering.

For now if anyone chooses to use a face covering, they must follow the Government's advice at www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering. This includes:

- Washing hands thoroughly before putting a face covering on, and after removing it;
- Changing a face covering if it becomes damp or has been touched; and
- Changing or washing a face covering daily.

The use of a face covering is not a replacement for observing our social distancing guidelines.

If you or someone close to you has coronavirus symptoms

It is absolutely essential that if a **staff member or anyone they live with, or are in a support bubble with**, develops a:

- Fever, particularly a high temperature (i.e. a temperature of 37.8 degrees or over);
- Continuous cough; or
- Loss of sense of taste or smell,

that they do not attend work and self-isolate in accordance with the Government's guidance at www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection.

This instruction also applies if a **staff member has been told by NHS Test and Trace that they have been in contact with someone who has coronavirus.**

In line with UCCF's *Sickness Absence Procedures and Policies*, the staff member should notify their Team Leader/Supervisor by telephone before they are due to start work, or as soon as possible if that is not practical (no later than 10am), and email the Head of Human Resources (hr@uccf.org.uk).