

HEALTH AND SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM GUIDANCE REGISTER		Guidance	G029
 PRIFYSGOL ABERYSTWYTH UNIVERSITY	Use of Offices (COVID-19)	Issue	1
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Introduction

As an employer we have a legal responsibility to protect workers and others from risk to their health and safety. As a line manager this means we need to think about the risks employees face and do everything reasonably practicable to minimise them, recognising you cannot completely eliminate the risk of COVID-19.

The current Welsh Government notes that individuals should continue to work from home where possible. The advice also suggests that where the social distancing guidelines cannot be followed in full, in relation to a particular activity, businesses should consider whether that activity can be redesigned to maintain a 2m distance and if any further mitigating actions are required.

Further mitigating actions could include:

- further increasing the frequency of hand washing and drying (or sanitising) 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 maintaining social distancing
- 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).

Where and when is the request reasonable?

All staff should continue to work from home where possible, this will enable us to manage increased congestion and footfall in communal areas, stairwells etc. as well as the impact increased footfall has on other essential activities such as delivering 2 touch point cleaning. This is detailed in our [COVID-19 risk assessment](#).

However, we recognise there are a range of activities that need to be in person and on campus including, research, teaching, student support and other critical activities. However, all meetings should continue on a virtual platform, where appropriate.

When attending the campus for critical activities all staff will be able to access their office this will include breaks between teaching sessions.

Office use can also be considered for those staff experiencing isolation or internet issues. However, such requests need to be approved by Heads of Department to ensure minimal footfall in each work area and access should be infrequent and necessary. Using the workplace in a planned assessed approach will continue to support staff and maintain our infection control measures on campus.

Face coverings will not be required in single use offices. You should not accept any unplanned visitors to your office and meetings should be held virtually, where possible. Please ensure your face covering is put back on to travel through corridors to kitchens, toilet facilities and exiting the facilities.

You can find out more information in the Use of Face Covering Guidance.

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Use of multiple occupancy offices, even where social distancing can be adequately, all staff sharing an office will be expected to use a face covering (unless exempt) to minimise the risk of aerosol infection to protect colleagues.

Please ensure use of multiple occupancy offices (occupied by more than one person) is staggered where possible and limited to minimum time necessary to complete the job required. Please can managers and HoDs ensure the footfall and access is managed appropriately and minimised as much as possible. If there are breaches of this guidance we may have to re-institute tighter control measures and access to buildings.

Please keep personal spaces clean and uncluttered using the wipes/products which we will provide in all buildings. Personal belongings should be stored away and minimise loud noises which will require people to shout over them. Workstations in use need to be at least 2 metres apart.

Control measures as detailed in the University risk assessment

Enhanced cleaning regimes are now in place across the campus including increased cleaning of surfaces which are touched frequently in buildings.

Back of house areas, including individual and open plan offices, are not cleaned on a set schedule, other than waste management services. Requests for office cleaning or products for self-cleaning can be made via our online form or by e mailing facilities@aber.ac.uk.

Office cleans will be completed once all of the increased cleaning regimes have been fulfilled for the day, touch point cleaning in communal areas must take priority for our teams at this current time.

Some meeting and teaching spaces are not currently cleaned, this is indicated by a temporary notice and contact email should access to these rooms be essential. Wherever possible all staff should avoid using non-essential rooms when onsite.

Use of communal spaces (eg making coffee etc)

Please ensure all staff limit use of communal spaces, wear a face covering, wash and dry hands (or sanitise) when entering and exiting the room and clean touched surfaces after use. Please complete our online form or e mail facilities@aber.ac.uk for additional supplies of sanitiser or cleaning products etc.

Other ways we can work together

- Encouraging storage of personal items and clothing in personal storage spaces, for example, desks and/or lockers
- Staggering break times to reduce pressure on the staff break rooms or places to eat and rearranging furniture to ensure social distancing is maintained in staff break rooms.
- Use of cleaning products before and after use, such as the kettle handle or wall mounted kettle tap, fridge/microwave handles etc.
- Encourage using our outdoors areas for welfare breaks.

Please remember we all share the responsibility to maintain a safe working environment.

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Staff Illness

If someone becomes unwell in the workplace with a new, continuous cough; high temperature; and/ or the loss or a change in their normal sense of smell or taste they should be sent home and advised to follow the advice [to stay at home](#). Please ensure this is recorded immediately on ABW and all staff understand the importance of informing their line manager.

They must also stay home if a member of their household (or extended household) becomes unwell with these symptoms, or if they are contacted as part of the Test, Trace, Protect programme.

We need to actively implement Test, Trace, Protect in the workplace. Test, Trace, Protect (TTP) works by:

- testing those people who have COVID-19 symptoms and asking them to isolate whilst taking a test and waiting for a result
- tracing those individuals who have been in close contact with the person who has tested positive for COVID-19, requiring them to take precautions and self-isolate (for 14 days), working from home if able.
- All staff can access a test by contacting Public Health Wales on 119 or via an [online report](#)

Advice

Welsh Government Advice

<https://gov.wales/test-trace-protect-guidance-employers>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/offices-and-contact-centres>

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-08/keep-wales-safe-at-work-five-key-steps.pdf>