



**Working safely in our offices during COVID 19 pandemic Procedure.**

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**Version 1**

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**Tech IOSH**



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## Working safely in our offices during COVID 19 pandemic.

### 1.0 Introduction

This document is to assist all SOWGA employees who work in our Pulborough and Yate offices understand how to work safely during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. This information has been prepared by using information provided by Public Health England (PHE) and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

We expect that the information provided in this safety alert will be updated over time. This version is up to date as of 18th May 2020.

### 1.1 Relaxation of Lockdown restrictions and the COVID 19 pandemic.

Now that the Government have taken steps to relax the lockdown restriction, risk of contracting COVID 19 has not decreased. We must stay alert to the virus and continue to maintain and follow the recommended control measure. Complacency and disregard of these control measures will put you, your family and others at risk.

### 1.2 Symptoms

The most common symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, or loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

For most people, coronavirus (COVID-19) will be a mild infection.

### 1.3 What to do if you or others in your family have symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19)

- if you live alone and you have symptoms of coronavirus illness (COVID-19), however mild, stay at home for 7 days from when your symptoms started.
- if you live with others and you or one of them have symptoms of coronavirus, then all household members must stay at home and not leave the house for 14 days. The 14-day period starts from the day when the first person in the house became ill.
- it is likely that people living within a household will infect each other or be infected already. Staying at home for 14 days will greatly reduce the overall amount of infection the household could pass on to others in the community.
- For anyone in the household who starts displaying symptoms, they need to stay at home for 7 days from when the symptoms appeared, regardless of what day they are on in the original 14-day isolation period.

### 1.4 “STAY ALERT” Guidelines

The Government have now issued new guidelines to control the spread of COVID 19 as a part of their “Our Plan to Rebuild” COVID 19 recovery strategy. These control measures are:

- Stay at home as much as possible.
- Work from home if you can.
- Limit contact with other people.
- Keep your distance while out. (Keep 2m apart where possible)
- Wash your hands regularly for 20 seconds.



## SOWGA – Health and Safety

In addition to these control measures the Government advise the following guidance,

- Avoid Public transport, where possible.
- Drive, cycle or walk where possible to avoid close contact with others.
- Wear Face coverings in enclosed areas, such as Public Transport, shops or in close contact (within 2m) with people other than your own household.

### **2.0 Working safely in our offices.**

SOWGA offices in Pulborough and Yate will reopen on the 18<sup>th</sup> May 2020, however access will be restricted and limited to maintain social distancing measures. Office staff will continue to work from home, other than times when they are required to attend the offices for work purposes.

Those employees who fall into the “vulnerable” category should continue “shielding” at home.

Any employee who has concerns with returning to the Pulborough and Yate office, should speak to their line manager, HR or myself.

### **2.1 Control Measures to prevent the spread of COVID 19 within our offices.**

For the purposes of the control measures listed below, “Office” relates to both the Pulborough and Yate offices, unless otherwise stated.

#### **2.1.1 Social Distancing**

*Objective: To maintain 2m social distancing wherever possible.*

If office staff can carry out their work from home, they should work from home.

The number of people allowed to work in our offices at anytime are:

Yate Office.

- Main office area - 2 people.

Pulborough.

- 1<sup>st</sup> Floor area – 6 people
- Ground Floor Boardroom – Working at table – 2 people. Sitting away from table 3 people.
- Ground Floor Long Office - 2 people.

Where the social distancing guidelines cannot be followed in full in relation to an activity, we need to take further control measures to reduce the risk of COVID 19 transmission.

These control measures will include:

- Increasing the frequency of hand washing and surface cleaning.
- Keeping the activity time within the 2m social distance as short as possible.
- Using back-to-back or side-to-side working (rather than face-to-face) whenever possible.
- Wear face coverings.
- Install screens between people.



## SOWGA – Health and Safety

### 2.1.2 Entering and leaving the building.

*Objective: To maintain social distancing wherever possible, on arrival and departure.*

When entering the building, do not touch any surfaces and wash your hands immediately with soap for 20 seconds or use alcohol-based hand sanitiser.

Only one person to enter the building at a time. Staggering arrival and departure times at work to reduce crowding into and out of the office. Do not congregate at the entrance.

When leaving the building, repeat the process and wash your hands with soap for 20 seconds or use alcohol-based hand sanitiser.

### 2.1.3 Moving around the office and common areas.

*Objective: To maintain 2m social distancing wherever possible while persons move around the office.*

Movement around the Pulborough office.

- Reception – No more than two people at any one time.
- Kitchen - No more than one person at any one time.
- Rest Room - No more than one person at any one time. Stagger meal breaks. Use safe outside areas to consume food while maintaining social distancing.
- Toilets – One in, one out.
- Staircase – No more than one person on the stairs at any one time.

Signage at entrance of all ground floor rooms regarding occupancy levels. To assist movement around our offices, all doors, other than the front entrance door, fire exits, warehouse doors and toilet cubical doors are to held open during the working day and closed at the end of the day or during an emergency. The risk of transmission of COVID 19 from door handles is high. By leaving doors open, door handles are not required to be touched, the risk of transmission is reduced.

Movement around Yate office.

Due to the size and open plan nature of the Yate office, social distancing must always be maintained while moving around the office.

### 2.1.4 Working at desks.

*Objective: To maintain social distancing between individuals when they are at their desks.*

Occupancy levels are to be managed to enable social distancing. A desk map will be provided to assist the Office Manager, Paula Weller in allocating desks.

Desk should be assigned to an individual and not shared. Where possible, the desk allocated to the employee before the COVID 19 Pandemic should continue be used.

People sitting at desks should aim to maintain 2m distance from other persons. People should not sit face to face but should sit back-to-back or diagonally whenever possible.

Where two persons are required to work at the same desk for assistance or training purposes, the time should be limited to the shortest time possible and face coverings worn.



## **SOWGA – Health and Safety**

If two desks are occupied next to each other, side by side or face to face, screens are put in place to separate them from each other.

### **2.1.5 Meetings, Visitors and Training**

*Objective: To reduce transmission due to face-to-face meetings and maintain social distancing in meetings.*

Use video conference software to conduct meetings and training with people outside of the office.

If face to face meetings or training must be held outside the building or in the Ground Board Boardroom. Meetings of more than three people are not permitted. Only one to one training is allowed. Only the necessary participants should attend, and they should always maintain 2m social distancing.

Do not sharing pens and other objects during meetings to avoid transmission.

If visitors are required to attend the office, only one person is allowed into the building at anyone time. They must wash or sanitise their hands on arrival and be taken straight into the Ground Floor Boardroom.

The 1<sup>st</sup> floor area, Ground floor Long Office, kitchen and rest area are out of bounds to all visitors.

### **2.1.6 Accidents, emergencies, and other incidents.**

*Objective: To prioritise safety during incidents.*

In an emergency, such as an accident or fire, people do not have to stay 2m apart when exiting the building as this would be unsafe. Once outside the office, they should maintain social distancing at the assembly point.

People involved in the provision of assistance to others should pay attention to sanitation measures immediately afterwards including washing hands.

### **2.1.7 Managing contractors**

*Objective: To minimise the number of unnecessary visits to offices.*

Only essential compliance maintenance is to be completed during the COVID 19 Pandemic. All other contractor maintenance should be rescheduled if possible.

The number of contractors attending our offices at any one time is to be limited to two persons.

Contractors attending our offices must provide a COVID 19 Risk Assessment for the work that they are undertaking, and the control measures they will be taking to prevent the spread of COVID 19.

Always maintain 2m social distancing with contractors.

Contractor must wash or sanitise their hands on arrival.

Do not sharing pens and other objects to sign paperwork or electronic equipment to avoid transmission.

The 1st floor area, Ground floor Long Office, kitchen and rest area are out of bounds to all visitors.



## SOWGA – Health and Safety

### **2.1.8 Deliveries.**

**Objective:** To reduce transmission through contact with objects that come into the workplace.

Persons delivering parcels or equipment are not allowed to enter the office building.

Delivery persons should call office using door call pad and state the delivery they are making. They should be asked to leave the delivery outside the entrance door to one side.

If face to face discussion is required, always maintain 2m social distancing.

Disposable gloves are to be worn when handling goods.

All deliveries are to be held in reception or the Wearhouse. Any deliveries taken up to the 1<sup>st</sup> Floor should be wiped down with disinfectant wipes.

All packaging is to be disposed of once goods have been removed.

### **2.1.9 Cleaning.**

**Objective:** To keep the workplace clean and prevent transmission by touching contaminated surfaces.

Office cleaning to be increased to daily by contract cleaners.

All desks, door handles and banisters to be wiped down daily by contract cleaner.

Employees are to wipe down phones and keyboards each day with disinfection wipes at the end of each day.

All cups and dishes are to be washed daily.

Signage to be placed around office to remind employees to maintain personal hygiene standards.

Hand sanitiser and soap to be provided.

### **2.1.10 Ventilation.**

**Objective:** Provide fresh air to the building and prevent stagnant air.

Male and female toilet windows are to be opened during the working day to allow ventilation. To be closed at the end of the working day.

Windows on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor should be opened where possible and allowing for weather conditions to provide fresh air circulation. To be closed at the end of each day.

All Air Conditioning units are to be run on low speed.

Filters are to be cleaned as per frequencies set by SFG 20.



### 3.0 Key Points for reducing the spread of COVID 19 within our Offices.

1. If you can work from home, you should continue to do so.
2. Only attend the office with permission from the office manager.
3. Wash your hands, with soap for 20 seconds or use alcohol-based hand sanitiser.
4. Maintain social distancing. Aim to keep 2 metre (6 Feet) away from other people.
5. When coughing and sneezing, cover mouth and nose with flexed elbow or tissue – discard tissue immediately into a closed bin.
6. Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth.
7. Limit contact with other SOWGA employees, visitors, delivery drivers and contactors.
8. If close working is required, face coverings must be worn by both persons.
9. Keep in touch using remote technology such as phone, internet, and social media.
10. Clean surfaces, key boards and phones daily.

For further Guidance see:

- *“Our Plan To Rebuild: The UK Government COVID 19 Recovery Strategy”* Document.
- *“Working Safely during the coronavirus COVID 19 Offices and contact centres”*

These is available at [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

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**“SAFETY FIRST AND FOREMOST”**