



## MVAM COVID-19 Response – Returning to the Office

### 1. Introduction:

Everyone needs to assess and manage the risks of COVID-19. As an employer, Mole Valley Asset Management (MVAM) also has a legal responsibility to protect our workers and others from risk to their health and safety. This means we need to identify the risks faced in the workplace and do everything reasonably practicable to minimise them, recognising MVAM cannot completely eliminate the risk of COVID-19.

Any feedback or questions about this report can be directed to your line manager or to Craig Harper – [craig@mvam.com](mailto:craig@mvam.com) or Rachel Rigby – [rachel@mvam.com](mailto:rachel@mvam.com). As the people who use the facilities the you are often the best people to understand the risks in the workplace and will have a view on how to work safely, please feel free to share these comments with us.

#### 1.1. Who this guide is for?

This guide is for all employees and visitors to Mole Valley Asset Management Offices.

#### 1.2. What is this guide for?

This guide will detail the steps that MVAM will be taking to protect people from coronavirus (COVID-19) in the workplace, for example by putting in place social distancing measures, staggering shifts and providing additional handwashing facilities.

#### 1.3. How are MVAM assessing the risks?

As an employer, MVAM must protect people from harm. This includes taking reasonable steps to protect our workers and others from coronavirus. This is called a risk assessment and it will help MVAM to manage risk and protect people.

MVAM have:

- Identified what work activity or situations might cause transmission of the virus;
- Thought about who could be at risk;
- Decided how likely it is that someone could be exposed;
- Act to remove the activity or situation, or if this is not possible, control the risk.

Mitigating actions provided by MVAM if you choose to work in the office:

- 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);
- Finally, if people must work face-to-face for a sustained period with more than a small group of fixed partners, then you will need to assess whether the activity can safely go ahead.

No one is obliged to work in an unsafe work environment.

#### **1.4. Equality in the workplace**

It is MVAM's objective to ensure that everyone in our workplace is treated equally. To do this we are being mindful of the particular needs of different individuals. It is breaking the law to discriminate, directly or indirectly, against anyone because of a protected characteristic such as age, sex or disability.

We have prepared this guide taking into account the particular circumstances of those with different protected characteristics.

We are endeavouring to make sure that any steps taken by MVAM do not have an unjustifiable negative impact on some groups compared to others, for example, those with caring responsibilities or those with religious commitments.

## **2. What is social distancing?**

It is government guidance that everyone must maintain social distancing in the workplace wherever possible. Social distancing measures are steps you can take to reduce the social interaction between people. This will help reduce the transmission of Coronavirus (COVID-19). They are:

- Avoid contact with someone who is displaying symptoms of Coronavirus (COVID-19);
- Avoid non-essential use of public transport, varying your travel times to avoid rush hour, when possible;
- Work from home, where possible;
- Avoid gatherings with friends and family. Keep in touch using remote technology such as phone, internet, and social media;
- Use telephone or online services to contact your GP or other essential services;
- If you are out for a walk or exercise, please remember to keep at least 2 metres between you and others.

## **3. Who should go to work?**

To decide whether you should be at work you need to think about:

- Where and how your work is carried out, consider if there are jobs and tasks that can be changed to reduce risk;
- Identify whether you can work from home – if you can, you should;
- Have you got appropriate equipment needed to work safely and effectively at home (for example laptops, mobile phones, video conferencing equipment);
- MVAM keep in regular contact with people working from home, making sure you discuss their wellbeing and helping them to feel they are still part of the team in the morning call;

- Where it is not possible to work from home, there is guidance on social distancing and hygiene (handwashing with soap and water often, for at least 20 seconds) which should be followed;
- The minimum number of people needed to carry out work tasks safely.

### 3.1. Protecting people who are at higher risk

- People who are classed as clinically extremely vulnerable (shielding) must not work outside the home;
- If there is someone in the household who is shielding, then employees should work from home;
- Employees at increased risk must work from home, either in their current role or an alternative role;
- If you need to self-isolate, please inform your manager as soon as possible.

### 3.2. Vulnerable Individuals

Clinically extremely vulnerable people will have received a letter telling them they are in this group or will have been told by their GP. Guidance on who is in this group can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-andprotecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-onshielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>

### 3.3. Clinically Extremely Vulnerable Individuals

Clinically vulnerable people include those aged 70 or over and those with some underlying health conditions, all members of this group are listed in the 'clinically vulnerable' section here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/full-guidance-on-staying-at-home-and-away-from-others/full-guidance-on-staying-at-home-and-awayfrom-others>

## 4. Working from Home

If you are choosing to work from home MVAM will provide the following:

- Equipment to enable you to work at home safely and effectively, for example, remote access to work systems;
- Monitoring the wellbeing of people who are working from home and helping them stay connected to the rest of the workforce, especially if the majority of their colleagues are on-site. This is done by daily team calls each morning and 9:10am and also calls from line managers and other team members as required;
- Keeping in touch with off-site workers on their working arrangements including their welfare, mental and physical health, and personal security.

For more details please see the document MVAM Docs/Staff Information/Working from Home Guide.

## 5. Working in the Office

If you decide to work in the office the following is a guide to how to approach this.

### 5.1. Before coming to the office

When you decide to return to the office please let the team know even via the daily call or via the MVAM WhatsApp group. This will allow us to plan for the number of people on site to operate safely and effectively.

## 5.2. Getting into and leaving work

Employees should think about:

- Identifying where they can travel alone in their own transport (or walk, or cycle if it is safe to do so); when getting to and from work to maintain social distancing;
- Staggering arrival and departure times so people can keep to the 2m social distancing rules by not using entry/exit points at the same time;
- Handwashing facilities will be provided (running water, soap and paper towels) at entry/exit points. People should be able to wash their hands when they get to work and leave.

## 5.3. Public transport

Please consider all other forms of transport before using public transport. If you still have to use public transport, please follow the following guidance:

- Before and during your journey, check with your transport operator for the latest travel advice on your route;
- Travel may take longer than normal on some routes due to reduced capacity and social distancing measures. Allow sufficient time if your journey involves changes between different forms of transport;
- Plan ahead by identifying alternative routes and options in case of unexpected disruption;
- If you can, travel at off-peak times. Your transport operator can advise on off-peak times. Your employer may agree alternative or flexible working hours to support this;
- Where possible, book your travel online through your transport provider's ticketing app or website. Consider contactless payment to buy tickets;
- Taking a less busy route and reducing the number of changes (for example between bus and train) will help you keep your distance from others. Public Health England recommends keeping a 2m distance from other people, where possible. Where this is not possible you should keep the time you spend nears others as short as possible and avoid physical contact;
- Try to start or end your journey using a station or mode of transport you know to be quieter or more direct. For instance, walk the first or last mile of your journey, or alight at an earlier station, where this is possible;
- If you can, wear a face covering if you need to use public transport.

## 5.4. Entering the office

When entering the office please use both entry points to reduce congestion

There will be handwashing facilities, or hand sanitizer where not possible, at entry/exit points and where there are touch-based security devices such as keypads.

## 5.5. Work area

When you are in the office you should continue to maintain social distancing wherever possible. To do this:

- Workstations are assigned to an individual and should not be shared. If they need to be shared, they should be shared by the smallest possible number of people;
- Do not use workstations directly next to another person, please try and stagger the seating;
- Signage is provided to remind people to keep a 2m distance;
- Work areas should be cleaned frequently, for example, cleaning at the end of each use if equipment is shared between people or between shift changeovers;

- Bank card readers and Fortinet password generators should not be shared;
- Common objects and surfaces that are touched regularly will be cleaned daily.

### 5.6. Meetings

If you need to hold a meeting please follow the below guidelines:

- Use remote working tools to avoid in-person meetings;
- Only absolutely necessary participants should attend meetings and should maintain 2m separation throughout;
- Avoiding transmission during meetings, for example, avoiding sharing pens and other objects;
- Hand sanitiser will be provided in meeting rooms;
- Hold meetings outdoors or in well-ventilated rooms whenever possible;
- For areas where regular meetings take place, use floor signage to help people maintain social distancing.

### 5.7. Moving around

- Only essential trips within buildings, sites and properties, maintaining social distancing as much as possible are allowed;
- Rotating between jobs and equipment should be minimised;
- The number of people using lifts and work vehicles will be limited;
- The number of people in high traffic areas including lifts, corridors, turnstiles, and walkways should be minimised;
- Mark areas using floor paint or tape to help people keep a 2 m distance.

### 5.8. Common areas

For common areas such as kitchens, toilets, showers, and changing facilities try to:

- Sit 2m apart at the table;
- Use the allocated toilets and sinks;
- Stagger breaktimes so that people are not using the kitchens at the same time to maintain social distancing;
- Use outside areas for breaks if the locations are suitable and it is safe to do so;
- Try to stay on-site during working hours.

### 5.9. Where you cannot keep a 2m physical distance, you need to think about how to keep common areas clean and prevent transmission by touching contaminated surfaces.

- Common areas, such as the kitchen and meeting room will be cleaned every evening;
- Individual desks, chair arms and phones should be wiped down by the user at the end of each day;
- A cubicle has been assigned to MVAM employees in the toilets;

### 5.10. Other items

The following additional facilities will be provided:

- Handwashing facilities that provide running water, soap and paper towels are available in the kitchen and toilets;
- Hand sanitiser is available in addition to washing facilities;
- There are posters in all relevant areas to increase awareness of good handwashing technique;
- There are posters providing regular reminders on avoiding touching your face and to cough/sneeze into your arm;
- Providing hand sanitiser in multiple locations in addition to washrooms;

### **5.11. Accidents, security and other incidents**

- In an emergency, for example, an accident or fire, people do not have to stay 2m apart if it would be unsafe.
- People involved in the provision of assistance to others should pay particular attention to sanitation measures immediately afterwards including washing hands.

### **5.12. Visitors**

Government guidance states that there is a need to minimise the number of unnecessary visits to offices. Steps that MVAM will be following are:

- Encouraging visits via remote connection/working where this is an option;
- Where site visits are required, site guidance on social distancing and hygiene should be explained to visitors on or before arrival;
- Limiting the number of visitors at any one time;
- Limiting visitor times to a specific time window and restricting access to required visitors only;
- Determining if schedules for essential services and contractor visits can be revised to reduce interaction and overlap between people, for example, carrying out services at night;
- Maintaining a record of all visitors if this is practical;
- Revising visitor arrangements to ensure social distancing and hygiene, for example, where someone physically signs in with the same pen in receptions.

### **5.13. Cleaning**

To keep the workplace clean and prevent transmission by touching contaminated surfaces the steps that will usually be needed are:

- Frequent cleaning of work areas and equipment between uses, using your usual cleaning products;
- Frequent cleaning of objects and surfaces that are touched regularly, such as door handles and keyboards and making sure there are adequate disposal arrangements;
- Clearing workspaces and removing waste and belongings from the work area at the end of a shift;
- Limiting or restricting use of high-touch items and equipment, for example, printers or whiteboards.;
- If you are cleaning after a known or suspected case of COVID-19 then you should refer to the specific guidance.

### **5.14. Hygiene – handwashing, sanitation facilities and toilets**

To help everyone keep good hygiene through the working day MVAM have done the following:

- Using signs and posters to build awareness of good handwashing technique, the need to increase handwashing frequency, avoid touching your face and to cough or sneeze into a tissue which is binned safely, or into your arm if a tissue is not available;
- Providing regular reminders and signage to maintain personal hygiene standards;
- Providing hand sanitiser in multiple locations in addition to washrooms;
- Setting clear use and cleaning guidance for toilets to ensure they are kept clean and social distancing is achieved as much as possible;
- Enhancing cleaning for busy areas;
- Providing more waste facilities and more frequent rubbish collection;
- Where possible, providing paper towels as an alternative to hand dryers in handwashing facilities.

### **5.15. Handling goods**

To reduce transmission through contact with objects that come into the workplace and vehicles at the worksite the steps needed are:

- Cleaning procedures for goods and merchandise entering the office;
- Introducing greater handwashing and handwashing facilities for workers handling goods and merchandise and providing hand sanitiser where this is not practical;
- Restricting non-business deliveries, for example, personal deliveries to workers.

### **5.16. PPE (Personal Protective Equipment)**

PPE protects the user against health or safety risks at work. It can include items such as safety helmets, gloves, eye protection, high-visibility clothing, safety footwear and safety harnesses. It also includes respiratory protective equipment, such as face masks.

- Where you are already using PPE in your work activity to protect against non-COVID-19 risks, you should continue to do so;
- When managing the risk of COVID-19, additional PPE beyond what you usually wear is not beneficial. This is because COVID-19 is a different type of risk to the risks you normally face in a workplace, and needs to be managed through social distancing, hygiene and fixed teams or partnering, not through the use of PPE;
- If people would like to wear PPE they should do so.

### **5.17. Work-related travel**

To avoid unnecessary work travel and keep people safe when they do need to travel between locations MVAM will follow these steps:

- Minimising non-essential travel – consider remote options first;
- Minimising the number of people travelling together in any one vehicle, using fixed travel partners, increasing ventilation when possible and avoiding sitting face-to-face;
- Where workers are required to stay away from their home, centrally logging the stay and making sure any overnight accommodation meets social distancing guidelines;
- Put in place procedures to minimise person-to-person contact during deliveries to other sites.

### **5.18. Communication and training**

To enable information, communication and training to MVAM employees we will be:

- Providing clear, consistent and regular communication to improve understanding and consistency of ways of working;
- Engaging with workers and worker representatives through existing communication routes to explain and agree any changes in working arrangements;
- Developing communication and training materials for workers prior to returning to site, especially around new procedures for arrival at work;
- Ongoing engagement with employees to monitor and understand any unforeseen impacts of changes to working environments;
- Awareness and focus on the importance of mental health at times of uncertainty. The government has published guidance on the mental health and wellbeing aspects of coronavirus (COVID-19).
- Using visual communications, for example, whiteboards or signage, to explain changes to reduce the need for face-to-face communications.
- Communicating approaches and operational procedures to suppliers and clients to help their adoption and to share experience.

## 6. Feeling unwell

If you feel unwell and cannot come to work, for any reason, please call your line manager as soon as possible.

### 6.1. What to do if you think you have COVID-19

If you have symptoms of coronavirus infection, however mild you need to let your line manager know. They will then contact you regularly to check how you are.

- You must then stay at home and do not leave your house for 7 days from when your symptoms started.
- If you live with others and you're the first in the household to have symptoms of coronavirus, then you must stay at home for 7 days, but all other household members who remain well 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.
- When you come to the end of the 7 days of self-isolation and if you feel fine you are now able to return to work as long as you feel well enough to return. The cough symptom may linger for longer than 7 days, but this does not require you to continue your isolation.
- If you are in the middle of the 7 days of self-isolation and I feel much worse please contact NHS 111 via their website, if not available call NHS 111 – this number is likely to be very busy. If you are acutely unwell dial 999 (inform them that you are isolating).
- If you are at the end of the 7 days of self-isolation and do not feel any better contact NHS 111 via their website, if not available call NHS 111.
- If you develop symptoms after the normal isolation periods, we will normally assume that this is a new infection and you will need to start the isolation process again unless you tested positive for COVID-19 previously. Please contact your line manager to let them know.
- If you have tested positive for coronavirus, please let your line manager know and self-isolate for 7 days from the start of your symptoms. As long as you are feeling better by day 8 you may return to work. The cough may persist, but this does not require you to continue your isolation.
- If you have recently tested positive for COVID-19, isolated for 7 days and recovered from symptoms, but now have new symptoms of cough and/or fever it is very unlikely that these symptoms are due to a new infection of COVID-19 coronavirus. If you feel too unwell to work, please contact your line manager. You will not be required to self-isolate as a possible coronavirus case.
- If a family member has tested positive for coronavirus you will be required to self-isolate as a household for 14 days from the onset of the household member's symptoms. Your family member must isolate for 7 days. On day 15 you may return to work as long as you have not had symptoms. Please let your line manager know if this is the case.
- If you are at work and have developed a new continuous cough and/or raised temperature you must let your line manager (or similar) know and self-isolate immediately. Please leave the office by a quiet and well-ventilated route (preferably outside), drive yourself home and follow the advice from the NHS.
- If you have already isolated for 14 days and been at work for a week, now another family member has symptoms, you will need to self-isolate again. The problem is that we cannot be sure which family member actually has COVID-19. If you come into work, you may be passing on the virus. Please contact your line manager to discuss the situation.

- If you are required to self-isolate but I feel that I am fit to work from home, please contact your line manager and they will provide the setup to allow you to work from home.
- If you have received a message from the Government/Primary Care telling you that you must stay at home for 12 weeks, please let your line manager know and they will arrange for you to work from home, if that is appropriate.

## 6.2. What we will do if there is a suspected case of coronavirus at MVAM our work?

If there is a suspect case at MVAM we will:

- immediately identify persons who may have recently come into close physical contact;
- advise all affected employees to:
  - self-isolate for 7 days if infected and 14 days if you have been in contact with a person with suspected COVID-19;
  - monitor their health, including doing temperature checks twice daily;
  - adopt good personal hygiene;
  - see a doctor immediately if they are unwell;
  - inform line managers immediately, and stay at home on sick leave even if the symptoms are mild
- for those who do not recover, or conditions worsen we would advise that they contact NHS 111 or their doctor, returning to the same doctor for further treatment if necessary.
- the team will be updated of the outcome of tests for any suspect cases.

## 7. Questions or concerns:

You may have concerns about returning to work. If you do, please talk to your line manager or another person who you feel will listen. If you can let us know the following, it would be helpful:

- what are your specific concerns and what can we put in place to reassure you?
- how can work be restructured to allow more people to work from home or remotely?
- think about the tasks you do in your workplace and whether they need to be done in work or if they can be done another way or from home.
- what could be put in place to help with any of the issues you have talked about?
- think about what you can do yourself, and what else could be done by your line manager and your business or organisation.

## 8. Risk assessment

**Company name:** Mole Valley Asset Management  
**Assessment carried out by:** Rachel Rigby (Office Manager)  
**Date assessment carried out:** 18 May 2020

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing to control the risks?	What further action do you need to take to control the risks?	Who needs to carry out the action?	When is the action needed by?	Done
Spread of COVID-19 Coronavirus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff</li> <li>Visitors to the premises</li> <li>Cleaners</li> <li>Contractors</li> <li>Vulnerable groups – Elderly, Pregnant workers, those with existing underlying health conditions</li> <li>Anyone else who physically comes in contact with you in relation to your business</li> </ul>	<b>Hand Washing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hand washing facilities with soap and water in place.</li> <li>Stringent hand washing taking place.</li> <li>See hand washing guidance.</li> <li><a href="https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/best-way-to-wash-your-hands/">https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/best-way-to-wash-your-hands/</a></li> <li>Drying of hands with disposable paper towels.</li> <li><a href="https://www.nursingtimes.net/news/research-and-innovation/paper-towels-much-more-effective-at-removing-viruses-than-hand-dryers-17-04-2020/">https://www.nursingtimes.net/news/research-and-innovation/paper-towels-much-more-effective-at-removing-viruses-than-hand-dryers-17-04-2020/</a></li> <li>Staff encouraged to protect the skin by applying emollient cream regularly</li> <li><a href="https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/emollients/">https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/emollients/</a></li> </ul>	<p>Employees to be reminded on a regular basis to wash their hands for 20 seconds with water and soap and the importance of proper drying with disposable towels. Also reminded to catch coughs and sneezes in tissues – Follow Catch it, Bin it, Kill it and to avoid touching face, eyes, nose or mouth with unclean hands. Tissues will be made available throughout the workplace.</p> <p>To help reduce the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) reminding everyone of the public health advice - <a href="https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/news/covid-19-coronavirus">https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/news/covid-19-coronavirus</a></p> <p>Posters, leaflets and other materials are available for display.</p>	MVAM Team & other visitors	Ongoing	

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing to control the risks?	What further action do you need to take to control the risks?	Who needs to carry out the action?	When is the action needed by?	Done
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gel sanitisers in any area where washing facilities not readily available</li> </ul>	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19</a>  Staff to be reminded that wearing of gloves is not a substitute for good hand washing.			
		<b>Cleaning</b> Frequently cleaning and disinfecting objects and surfaces that are touched regularly particularly in areas of high use such as door handles, light switches, reception area using appropriate cleaning products and methods.	Rigorous checks will be carried out by line managers to ensure that the necessary procedures are being followed.	MVAM Team	Ongoing	
		<b>Social Distancing</b> Reducing the number of persons in any work area to comply with the 2-metre gap recommended by the Public Health Agency <a href="https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/news/covid-19-coronavirus">https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/news/covid-19-coronavirus</a> <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-social-distancing-and-for-vulnerable-people">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-social-distancing-and-for-vulnerable-people</a>  Taking steps to review work schedules including start & finish times/shift patterns, working from home etc. to reduce number of	Staff to be reminded on a daily basis of the importance of social distancing both in the workplace and outside of it.  Management checks to ensure this is adhered to.	MVAM Team	Ongoing	

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing to control the risks?	What further action do you need to take to control the risks?	Who needs to carry out the action?	When is the action needed by?	Done
		<p>workers on site at any one time. Also relocating workers to other tasks.</p> <p>Redesigning processes to ensure social distancing in place.</p> <p>Conference calls to be used instead of face to face meetings.</p> <p>Ensuring sufficient rest breaks for staff.</p> <p>Social distancing also to be adhered to in the kitchen and toilet areas.</p>				
		<p><b>Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)</b> Public Health guidance on the use of PPE to protect against COVID-19 relates to health care settings. In all other settings individuals are asked to observe social distancing measures and practice good hand hygiene behaviours.</p>		MVAM Team	Ongoing	
		<p><b>Symptoms of COVID-19</b> If anyone becomes unwell with a new continuous cough or a high temperature in the workplace, they will be sent home and advised to follow the stay at home guidance. Line managers will maintain regular contact with staff members during this time.</p>	Internal communication channels and cascading of messages through line managers will be carried out regularly to reassure and support employees in a fast-changing situation.	MVAM Team	Ongoing	

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing to control the risks?	What further action do you need to take to control the risks?	Who needs to carry out the action?	When is the action needed by?	Done
		<p>If advised that a member of staff or public has developed COVID-19 and were recently on our premises (including where a member of staff has visited other workplace premises such as domestic premises), the management team of the workplace will contact the Public Health Authority to discuss the case, identify people who have been in contact with them and will take advice on any actions or precautions that should be taken. <a href="https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/">https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/</a></p>	<p>Line managers will offer support to staff who are affected by Coronavirus or has a family member affected.</p>			
		<p><b>Mental Health</b>  MVAM will promote mental health &amp; wellbeing awareness to staff during the Coronavirus outbreak and will offer whatever support they can to help. Reference: <a href="https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/">https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/</a>  <a href="http://www.hseni.gov.uk/stress">www.hseni.gov.uk/stress</a></p>	<p>Regular communication of mental health information and open-door policy for those who need additional support</p>	<p>MVAM Team</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	