

Background

NICVA shut the building to the public on Wednesday 18 March due to the impact of the spread of COVID19. All staff commenced temporary home working. Lockdown was announced by the Government on 23/03/20. All tenants commenced home working.

This paper contains the risk assessment of the NICVA building associated with any return to the workplace in future. In the course of this document, the phrase 'return to work' will largely mean a return to the place of work, ie. the NICVA building.

Timescales for some form of 'return to work'

The 5 step plan released by the NI Executive on 12 May 2020 (Coronavirus Executive Approach to Decision-Making) does not contain timescales for reopening of workplaces such as NICVA however it states the following:

- Stage 3: Phased return to office and onsite working subject to risk assessment. Work that can be done from home should be done from home.
- Stage 5: All able to return to work subject to mitigations. Remote working still strongly encouraged and maintained where possible.

Alongside the continuation of home working, we know also that social distancing is recommended and will continue to need to be observed with any return to work plan therefore this will form a big part of the risk assessment.

CIPD Guidance

At present the CIPD advise that employers consider the following three questions when considering the return to work (at this time):

- **Is it essential?** If people can continue to work from home they must continue to do that for the foreseeable future. If they cannot work from home, is their work deemed essential or could the business continue to use the Government's Job Retention Scheme for longer, giving them the time needed to put safety measures and clear employee guidance and consultation in place?

- **Is it sufficiently safe?** Employers have a duty of care to identify and manage risks to ensure that the workplace is sufficiently safe to return to. Employers should take their time with gradual returns to work to test health and safety measures in practice and ensure they can work with larger numbers before encouraging more of their workforce back.

Is it mutually agreed? It's vital that there is a clear dialogue between employers and their people so concerns, such as commuting by public transport, can be raised and individuals' needs and worries taken into account. There will need to be flexibility on both sides to accommodate different working times or schedules as ways of managing some of these issues.

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Other sources of guidance

We recognise that we are assessing risk about something that is new to us all. In conducting this for NICVA the following sources have been reviewed for guidance:

[NIBusinessinfo COVID 19 A Practical Guide to Making Workplaces Safer](#)

[CIPD Returning to the workplace guide](#)

[HSENI Coronavirus Risk Assessment Template](#)

Assumptions

- Staff will continue to work from home where possible for the foreseeable future in line with the NI Executive plan
- Staff will avoid public transport if possible and will be encouraged to cycle, walk or drive to work. Safe bike parking and free car parking already available.
- Consideration of resuming work in the building will take into account the following:
 - The necessity of it
 - Any benefits of it to all or some of the staff (home working can be isolating, lonely and challenging for many)
 - That a deep clean of the building and all contact surfaces has been completed (completed w/c 03 August 2020)
 - Hygiene measures (all products on order) and cleaning regimes in place
 - That social distancing can be implemented and that actions listed below have been completed – eg. Signage, hand hygiene requirements are in place etc

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NICVA COVID 19 Risk Assessment for returning to the workplace

This risk assessment below follows the HSENI template developed for dealing with returning to the workplace and Covid 19.

- NICVA's Risk Assessment was carried out by Úna McKernan, Alex Hastings and Michael Montgomery on 01 July 2020.
- A follow up to the risk assessment was carried out on 04 August 2020 with Alex Hastings, Michael Montgomery, Susan Coffey and Paula Fitzpatrick.
- The risk assessment identified a list of purchases to support hygiene and distancing measures identified.
- A written protocol for all staff and tenants has been produced to set out actions from the risk assessment and required ways of working/behaving to ensure the controls identified are maintained by all.

Principles of staying safe underpinning NICVA's Risk Assessment follow public health guidance:

NICVA's COVID 19 Risk Assessment uses public health guidance as the basis of the mitigations and approaches for minimising risk and staying safe at work. The information is contained in the links below and follow two key principles:

- Social distancing at 2 metres which NICVA has assessed as possible in the spaces within the NICVA building
- Good hand hygiene practice which includes regular washing and avoiding touching face, nose, mouth and eyes

NICVA's Workplace Guidance Protocols are devised to outline the policies, practices and behaviours required to support these.

At work or in the course of work, it is expected that the above criteria will be met to uphold the health and safety of all. In exceptional circumstances if the above criteria cannot be satisfactorily fulfilled, other appropriate mitigations may be put in place in line with public health advice. An example of this could include the wearing of a face covering. NICVA will have a supply of disposable face coverings which may be used by staff if conditions as set out above are not possible.

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Read Guidance on Staying Safe Outside your home from NI Direct [here](#)

Read Guidance on Hand Washing and Hand Hygiene from NI Direct [here](#)

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What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed?	Controls Required	Additional Controls	Status of Action and by who?	Action by when ?	Date completed
<p>OVERALL HAZARD The overall hazard is the risk of the spread of Covid-19 Coronavirus:</p> <p>Leaving/entering the building</p> <p>Access to 1st/2nd floors</p> <p>Corridors</p> <p>Offices</p> <p>Meetings</p> <p>Break times and communal areas</p>	<p>Staff, tenants, visitors, contractors, cleaners and those within those groups who are vulnerable or clinically extremely vulnerable.</p>	<p>These will be listed below under each section relating to the hazard area. Controls at each point will include a mix of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hand Hygiene - Cleaning - Implementing social distancing to include limiting close contact with others and with hard surfaces - PPE 	<p>In each of the hazard areas identified specific control measures in relation to the areas identified will be listed.</p>	<p>See below</p>	<p>See below</p>	<p>See status of action column</p>

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<p>Reception area, Reception services and Foyer</p>	<p>As above, including specifically Reception staff who meet/greet visitors and see staff coming and going.</p>	<p>Social distancing for those arriving to the building</p> <p>Social distancing for staff accessing Reception Services</p> <p>Social Distancing and Hand Hygiene for those who need to enter Reception eg. Caretaker to use work station, staff providing Reception cover</p> <p>Cleaning</p>	<p>Signage (eg, sticky signs indicating where to stand) to be placed on floor to enable 2m distance from Receptionist and the visitor reporting to Reception..</p> <p>Clear Perspex screen to be installed at the Reception desk to create barrier between Receptionist and visitors. Should allow for sound travel so normal volume of speech required.</p> <p>Staff should not enter Reception to log in and out for the purposes of staff availability and daily fire register. Reception staff should do this from 9am and those arriving for work pre 9am should email Reception to inform them they are in. This is important to reduce number of people in Reception and non essential contact with hard surfaces.</p> <p>Hand sanitiser available at both entrances to the Reception area.</p> <p>Ensure 2 m distance from others.</p> <p>Open Reception window to increase ventilation</p> <p>Staff covering reception should bring their own laptop and headset</p>	<p>2m distancing floor stickers in place</p> <p>Bespoke perspex screens fitted</p> <p>Protocol includes new procedure for the in/out board ie email Reception</p> <p>2m distancing floor stickers in place</p> <p>Headsets received for all Reception staff</p>		
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		Chairs and poseur tables	<p>and the phone handset/keypad should be sanitised by the person finishing their shift using anti bacterial wipes.</p> <p>All door handles to be cleaned morning, noon and towards the end of the day.</p> <p>Chairs spaced out at 2m apart. Wooden arms of recliner chairs to be cleaned regularly through the day by Caretaking staff. Poseur tables to be removed to avoid multiple use throughout the day.</p>	<p>Poseur tables removed by MM during deep clean</p> <p>Chairs spaced out at 2m</p>		
Lift Access to first/second floors and Stairwells	As above	<p>Social distancing</p> <p>Cleaning regime</p>	<p>All staff and visitors encouraged to avoid using lift if possible and take stairs. Where that is not possible, access is limited to one person in the lift at a time (with the exception of someone requiring assistance).</p> <p>Cleaning regime to include cleaning of all buttons in the lift and all handrails on stairwells and door push pads etc.</p>	Included in protocol		
Ground floor kitchen	Caretaking staff and others occasionally requiring access	Social Distancing	<p>Caretaking staff only permitted to use the ground floor kitchen. Ideally one Caretaker in the kitchen at one time. If more than one then 2m distance should be maintained.</p> <p>Hatch to have Perspex screen</p>	<p>Bespoke perspex screen fitted</p> <p>Visors and disposable</p>		

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		Good Hygiene practice	<p>Visors should be worn by Caretaking staff when engaging with visitors.</p> <p>Use of gloves and aprons already in place and should be regularly changed.</p> <p>Hand washing/drying to occur on entering the kitchen. Hand sanitiser available also.</p>	<p>face masks received</p> <p>Hand washing signs placed on wall</p>		
First Floor kitchen	All NICVA staff	<p>Social Distancing</p> <p>Cleaning</p> <p>Hand Hygiene</p>	<p>No more than 7 people in the kitchen at one time. Either break and lunch times to be staggered OR use training room for staff break/lunch times</p> <p>Allow for 2m distancing by giving way to those leaving the kitchen.</p> <p>Cleaning regime to include regular cleaning throughout the day – eg. Mid morning, after lunch, end of day</p> <p>All staff to use antibacterial wipes to clean table after use.</p> <p>After accessing fridge, all staff must wipe the fridge handle/door with antibacterial wipes and wash hands. All hard surfaces touched to be wiped down.</p>	<p>Decision required.</p> <p>Anti bacterial wipes in place</p> <p>Sanitising station set up outside kitchen</p>		

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		<p>Crockery, cutlery and equipment</p> <p>Door Guard System</p>	<p>Hand sanitiser to be used on entering the kitchen. Hand washing to be carried out before leaving the kitchen. Hand soap and disposable towels to be available at all times.</p> <p>Hand Hygiene signage from Public Health Agency to be placed in kitchen to remind and encourage good practice.</p> <p>Microwave and toaster removed from Kitchen.</p> <p>Staff and tenants to bring their own crockery/cutlery to work OR to use the same supply from NICVA which is washed before and after use and removed from the kitchen to be kept by the same individual at their workstation.</p> <p>Kitchen cupboards must not be used to store crockery or food items.</p> <p>Door Guard System in place on 2nd floor kitchen door deemed a high traffic area – keeps fire door open with a door stop linked to fire alarm. Reduces regular touching by multiple people of push plate and door handle and increases ventilation. If fire alarm sounds, door will automatically close.</p>	<p>Hand washing signs from PHA website in place</p> <p>Completed as part of deep clean</p> <p><i>Door Guard System ordered on 4 Sept for 20 doors throughout NICVA</i></p>		
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<p>Second Floor kitchen</p>	<p>All NICVA staff and 2nd floor tenants</p>	<p>Social Distancing</p> <p>Cleaning</p> <p>Hand Hygiene</p> <p>Crockery, cutlery and equipment</p> <p>Door Guard System</p>	<p>No more than 1 person in the kitchen at a time. Allow for 2m distancing by giving way to those leaving the kitchen.</p> <p>Cleaning regime to include regular cleaning throughout the day – eg. Mid morning, after lunch, end of day</p> <p>Hand sanitiser to be used on entering the kitchen. Hand washing to be carried out before leaving the kitchen. Hand soap and towels to be available at all times</p> <p>Hand Hygiene signage from Public Health Agency to be placed in kitchen to remind and encourage good practice.</p> <p>Microwave and toaster removed from Kitchen.</p> <p>Staff and tenants to bring their own crockery/cutlery to work OR to use the same supply from the kitchen which is washed before and after use and removed from the kitchen to be kept by the same individual at their workstation.</p> <p>Kitchen cupboards must not be used to store crockery or food items.</p> <p>Door Guard System in place on 2nd</p>	<p>A4 hand washing signs printed from PHA website in place</p> <p>Sanitising station set up outside kitchen</p> <p>Completed as part of deep clean</p>		
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			<p>floor kitchen door deemed a high traffic area – keeps fire door open with a door stop linked to fire alarm. Reduces regular touching by multiple people of push plate and door handle and increases ventilation. If fire alarm sounds, door will automatically close.</p>	<p><i>Door Guard System ordered on 4 Sept for 20 doors throughout NICVA</i></p>		
<p>Corridors</p>	<p>All NICVA staff, visitors and tenants</p>	<p>Social Distancing</p>	<p>Staff, tenants and visitors to be aware of 2m social distancing. There are glass panels in the corridor connecting doors and on each floor there is a wide passing space at the middle (the bridge on 1st floor and the central area near 2nd floor kitchen). Staff to be aware of anyone else in the corridor and allow safe passing.</p> <p>Corridor windows to be opened to increase ventilation. Signage to remind of 2m social distancing</p> <p>No long conversations to take place in corridors.</p>	<p><i>PHA 2m social distancing posters to be laminated and placed on corridor doors/walls</i></p>		
		<p>Hand Hygiene</p>	<p>Use sanitising stations mid-way in corridor when passing through</p>	<p>Sanitising station set up outside kitchen – mid way through corridor</p>		
		<p>Cleaning</p>	<p>Windows to be opened where possible to increase ventilation.</p> <p>Regular cleaning throughout the</p>	<p>Protocol includes give way practice and no long chats</p>		

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		Door Guard System	<p>day should be carried out on door handles and push plates.</p> <p>Door Guard System in place on a number of corridor doors deemed high traffic areas – keeps fire doors open with a door stop linked to fire alarm. Reduces regular touching by multiple people of push plates and door handles and increases ventilation. If fire alarm sounds, doors will automatically close.</p>	<p><i>Door Guard System ordered on 4 Sept for 20 doors throughout NICVA</i></p>		
Toilet facilities	All NICVA staff, tenants and visitors	<p>Hand Hygiene</p> <p>Cleaning</p> <p>Social Distancing</p>	<p>Hand soap and towels must be available at all times. Caretakers responsible for stock check and replenishing in all facilities</p> <p>Signs to be placed near sinks / on toilet doors to remind of the importance of hand washing and how to do it effectively</p> <p>Regular cleaning regime to be implemented particularly on contact surfaces, door handles, toilet flush, door locks etc.</p> <p>Ground floor ladies - 2 toilets and 2 sinks out of use to ensure distancing and ease of regular cleaning. In toilets on first and second floors, no more than 2 individuals in at a time. If two cubicles occupied, a 3rd individual should exit and wait for</p>	<p><i>A4 signs printed from PHA website to be laminated and placed on washroom walls and toilet doors</i></p> <p>Tape in place to block off sinks/toilets out of use</p>		

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		Door Guard System	<p>the facilities to be vacated by one individual before entering.</p> <p>Only one urinal in use at one time</p> <p>Door Guard System in place on outer of 2 doors to enter toilet facilities on all 3 floors. These doors deemed high traffic areas – keeps fire doors open with a door stop linked to fire alarm. Reduces regular touching by multiple people of push plates and door handles and increases ventilation. If fire alarm sounds, doors will automatically close.</p>	<p><i>Door Guard System ordered on 4 Sept for 20 doors throughout NICVA</i></p>		
Printer area	All NICVA staff and tenants	<p>Social distancing</p> <p>Cleaning</p> <p>Hygiene</p>	<p>Only one person to stand by and use the printer at one time. Library area is spacious and allows for easy social distancing.</p> <p>Cleaning wipes and bin to be positioned by printer for it to be wiped before and after use.</p> <p>Hand sanitiser to be available and used before and after use.</p>	<p><i>Sanitising station to be set up near printer including pedal bin</i></p>		
Meetings	All staff and visitors	Social Distancing	Where possible, Microsoft Teams should be used to enable social distancing. Where this isn't possible, meetings should take place in larger meeting rooms with 2m between each participant. If temperature allows, open windows.			

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		Hygiene	Tissues (and bin) and hand sanitiser to be included in or outside every meeting room that is likely to be used.			
Offices	All staff and tenants	Social Distancing	Where possible, desks should be 2m apart. Same people to work in the same office each day. Cleaners and Caretaking staff only permitted to move freely between offices and only when necessary for cleaning and maintenance etc.	All NICVA workstations comply with 2m social distancing.		
		Hand Hygiene	Individual hygiene packs to be provided to all individuals (NICVA staff and tenants) to include hand sanitiser, tissues and antibacterial wipes.	Individual desk boxes and contents in place on all desks		
		Cleaning	Regular cleaning of door handles and contact surfaces by Caretaking staff and cleaners. Offices must be kept tidy, including clear desk policy and clear floor space to enable regular cleaning. Staff responsible for cleaning their own workstations and other contact surfaces daily. Staff to remove their own waste from workstation bin at the end of each day and place waste in central	Clear desk and tidy office policy set out in protocol document Pedal operated, soft close bins in place at sanitising		

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			bin (located outside kitchens on 1 st and 2 nd floors)	stations mid way in corridors		
Leaving the building	All staff, tenants and visitors	Hand Hygiene Social Distancing	Hand washing to take place before leaving the office and use sanitiser at Reception Staff to avoid entering the Reception area and should alert Receptionist that they are leaving the building so the in/out board and fire record are up to date Those leaving the building to give way to those entering and to ensure 2m distance.	Automatic sanitiser dispensers in place 2m floor stickers in place <i>Posters to be placed on walls</i>		

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