COVID-19 General workplace safety risk assessment

This risk assessment is being used during the planning process for a return to work of some staff to the college's physical campuses in June 2020 and then for a September 2020 opening and then the Government's new response to the pandemic post 19 July 2021. It identifies the control measures that are being put in place to protect employees and others from the risk of coronavirus infection.

NOTE: separate return to work assessments on the usual health and safety concerns such as legionella, hazardous substances, work equipment, etc. have been completed separately.

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Job title: Director of HR & Student Support Services

Assessment Date: 28 May 2020

Review date(s): 29 May 2020 / 5 June 2020 / 25 June 2020 / 6 July 2020 / 3 August 2020 / 29 September 2020 / 5 November 2020 / 10 December 2020 / 17 December 2020 / 6 January 2021 / 2 March 2021 / 30 March 2021 / 14 May 2021 / 6 August 2021 / 8 October 2021 / 30 November 2021 / 10 December 2021 / 17 December 2021 / 4 January 2022 / 10 January 2022 / 14 January 2022 / 25 January 2022 / 1 March 2022

Business type/location: General Further Education College / Lincoln, Newark & Gainsborough

Business hazards associated with the coronavirus pandemic	Potential risks to workers caused by hazards	Control Measures	Further actions required
Infection Prevention, Cleaning and Staff Safety			
The organisation must ensure their safety by making premises "COVID" secure – unsafe workplace premises raise the risks of virus transmission	There is a direct threat to staff health and wellbeing from transmission of the COVID-19 coronavirus while at work People can catch the virus from others who	Despite the fact that the government announced on 21 February 2022 that most of the remaining legal rules in place to protect the public against COVID-19 will end, the	**Regular workplace posts and updates will continue as appropriate.** **General Risk assessment updated as required until 1 April 2022**

	are infected in the following ways: • virus moves from person-to-person in droplets from the nose or mouth spread when a person with the virus coughs or exhales • the virus can survive for up to 72 hours out of the body on surfaces which people have coughed on, etc. • people can pick up the virus by breathing in the droplets or by touching contaminated surfaces and then touching their eyes or mouth	organisation must still ensure that it complies with its duty to provide a safe and healthy workplace / working conditions for staff in the workplace during the coronavirus pandemic by: • Communicating safety procedures to all staff and managers; these set out how staff should behave and the precautions they must adopt during the pandemic to keep them safe e.g. ensuring good hygiene practices, maintaining appropriate cleaning regimes, keeping occupied spaces well ventilated & following public health advice on testing, self-isolation & managing confirmed cases of COVID-19	**when the requirement for every employer to explicitly consider COVID-19 in their risk assessments will be removed.** **Consultation meetings with trade union local representatives take place as and when required.** **New guidance issued to staff and students on 23 February 2022 to explain from Thursday 24 February 2022, the government removed the legal requirement to self-isolate following a positive covid test. However, staff are still advised to stay at home and avoid contact with people for at least 5 full days and then to follow the guidance of 2 negative tests on consecutive days.**

Homeworking, Hot-desking and Equipment Sharing			
Staff working together in workplace premises inevitably raises the risk of virus transmission. Hot desking and the sharing of equipment present hazards that raise the risk of virus transmission further	There is a direct threat to staff health and wellbeing from the transmission of the COVID-19 coronavirus while at work.	The Government's strategy of "living with covid" requires the public to take personal responsibility for their actions by being vaccinated. From 24 February 2022, there is no legal duty to self-isolate although people are still 'advised' to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for at least 5 full days and then continue to follow the guidance until they have received two negative test results on consecutive days. There is no legal duty to notify your employer if you test positive. If you're fully vaccinated and a close contact, there's no longer an	**The College has launched a flexible working policy and therefore some staff will continue to work remotely on occasion.** **Staff are still reminded to maintain hygiene regimes.**

		expectation to test for 7 days. Anyone who isn't fully vaccinated won't have to self-isolate if they are a close contact of someone with the virus.	
Workplace Social Distancing			
Effective social distancing is a key element in reducing the transmission of COVID-19	Social distancing refers to people being required to maintain a distance from each other of 2 metres wherever possible or 1 metre with risk mitigation. Social distancing effectively puts people at a safe range from anyone coughing. The main route of virus transmission is through droplets exhaled or coughed by an infected person	There is no legal requirement to social distance.	**Staff are encouraged to use their judgement and to still social distance when they are indoors and in large groups or working in a situation where close contact is unavoidable.**
Higher Risk Areas of the Workplace			
Some areas of the workplace may present a higher risk than others – this may include areas such as staff toilets, staff rooms and areas where there is poor ventilation	Heavily used areas of the workplace are more likely to present an infection transmission risk Essential for staff to wash hands regularly but also that toilets are kept clean and free of coronavirus contamination. Areas of poor ventilation can increase the risk of the spread of COVID-19	Ensure higher-risk high traffic areas of the workplace are COVID-19 secure by applying appropriate safety precautions, including: • Stressing the need for staff to follow good hygiene practice at all times while at work (i.e. regular handwashing, using tissues and disposing of them appropriately, etc.) • Managers ensuring that adequate hand	**Staff will continue to be reminded of the "standard public health advice" by improving ventilation, asking staff to regularly wash their hands and, for the time being, to wear masks in enclosed spaces.**

		cleaning resources are provided; all toilets to be supplied with adequate supplies of hot water, liquid soap and paper towels	
		• Printing handwashing instructions/posters and displaying throughout workplace, especially in toilets	
		• Toilet doors fitted with foot operated door openers	
		• Increasing environmental cleaning, especially in and around toilets and restrooms and staff rooms; special attention to be paid to frequently touched surfaces such as door handles, toilet flush handles, light switches, etc.	
		• Increasing toilets/washrooms inspections to check for cleanliness/adequate stock of soap/toilet paper, etc.	
		• Where possible, providing paper towels as an alternative to hand dryers in handwashing facilities	
		• CO_2 monitors have been issued.	
		• Ventilation systems have all been switched so they do not re-circulate air within a building.	

		They will either extract the air out or put fresh air in.	
Clinically Extremely Vulnerable, Clinically Vulnerable and Higher Risk Staff			
Some staff may have pre-existing medical conditions which render them more vulnerable to the dangers of coronavirus infection	Those who are classified by PHE as being at greater risk from COVID-19 include people in the vulnerable (moderate risk) and extremely vulnerable (high risk) categories. Vulnerable (moderate risk) people include those who: • are 70 or older • are pregnant • have a lung condition such as asthma, COPD, emphysema or bronchitis (not severe) • have heart disease, diabetes, chronic kidney disease or liver disease (such as hepatitis) • are taking medicine that can affect the immune system (such as low doses of steroids) • are very obese Extremely vulnerable (high risk) people include those who: • have had an organ transplant • are having chemotherapy for cancer, including immunotherapy	CEV people are advised, as a minimum, to follow the same guidance as everyone else. Additional precautions deemed appropriate should still be considered. Specific government guidance is available for pregnant employees.	**Staff in the CEV "high risk" category will continue to be supported when discussing flexible working options.**

	• are having an intense course of radiotherapy for lung cancer • have a severe lung condition (such as severe asthma or severe COPD) • are taking medicine that makes them much more likely to get infections (such as high doses of steroids) • have a serious heart condition and are pregnant		
Staff Health and Staffing Levels			
Low staffing levels due to high rates of staff sickness or staff having to self-isolate themselves at home due to coronavirus symptoms	Staff may get sick with coronavirus infection. From 24 February 2022, there is no longer a legal duty to self-isolate having tested positive for COVID-19. Adults and children are still 'advised' to remain at home if they test positive. The NHS Test and Trace system is being wound down.	The following safety arrangements should apply to staff health or staffing levels: • Staff who are sick should contact HR and those self-isolating should apply for special leave if they are unable to work from home. • Make sure that communications go out that no member of staff should come to work if they are self-isolating or if they have COVID-19 symptoms or if they feel unwell.	**Website continually updated to provide both staff & students with the relevant guidance.** **Guidance also issued via workplace and all staff emails.**
Premises Access and Travel			

Staff who are required to attend for work must be given safe access to the workplace	Travel to and from work may lead to greater risk of virus transmission	Chris Witty recommended that, going forward, employers follow "standard public health advice" by improving ventilation, asking staff to regularly wash their hands and, for the time being, to wear masks in enclosed spaces.	**Assessments will continue for clinically vulnerable staff in terms of travel arrangements where necessary.**
Cases of Possible Infection On-site			
People becoming unwell while on-site or a symptomatic person using a site	High risk of transmission	If a member of staff becomes unwell in the workplace with coronavirus symptoms, the advice is to work from home if possible to avoid the spread of infection.	**Staff continue to be offered the ability to test themselves at home twice each week (3 to 4 days apart) whilst stocks last.**
Business Continuity			
Crisis management and business continuity hazards caused by the pandemic emergency	The crisis threatens business continuity and ability to deliver essential services to our customers	Managers should refer to business continuity policies and procedures.	**General COVID-19 Risk Assessment will continue to be reviewed until 1 April 2022.**
Information			
Hazards caused by lack of information or inaccurate information being circulated	The pandemic has been accompanied by a large amount of official guidance, some of which needs interpretation, and by misinformation, rumour and "fake	The following safety arrangements should be applied to mitigate risks caused by misinformation and "fake" news (this does not include accurate / peer-	**Comms will continue as necessary.**

	news" or "myths". If these are allowed to gain traction within the organisation, they can obscure and confuse vital health and safety measures.	reviewed scientific guidance): • To ensure the safety and wellbeing of staff business strategies must be based on accurate information and staff must be given consistent, simple and clear messages • Coronavirus risk management team to monitor official advice carefully and update all policies and procedures. Ensure leadership teams/local managers are briefed and kept up to date • Managers to beware fake news and discourage the circulation of misinformation • Keep staff informed – key messages include the need for unwell staff or homeworking staff to stay at home, for frequent handwashing and for social distancing	
Communication			
Threat to effective communications	The pandemic crisis threatens communications with clients/customers/ suppliers – such communications are vital in the reestablishment of business activities and procedures after lockdown	The following safety arrangements should be applied to mitigate risks to communication systems: • Senior management to review all outward facing communications (e.g. on college website, etc.) to ensure	

		messages are consistent and clear • Managers to revise communications strategies and plans • Devise specific plans for how and how often to communicate with clients/customers/ suppliers	
Cyber Security			
Cyber-security risks	Cyber-security threats often accompany a crisis, including computer viruses, phishing and scam emails and coronavirus related "ransomware" With the organisation and individual staff more reliant than ever on digital communications and the internet, and with more staff working from home and using a variety of digital devices, the need to ensure the security and function of our digital systems is more important than ever	The following safety arrangements should be applied to mitigate cyber risks: • Review cyber security and surveillance infrastructure and ensure that all reasonable protection is in place • Circulate warnings to staff and managers of any credible cyber threats, especially scam emails and text messages • Ensure that remote access to college systems uses multi-factor authentication to protect against unauthorised access • Ensure that staff are aware of college IT and Data Protection policies and that they apply equally to office and home working • Ensure that existing cyber-security systems do not interfere with the availability of critical safety information	**Guidance and updates provided by the Director of IT & Information Management as necessary.**

		and updates relating to coronavirus • Assess cyber risks to new supply chain connections developed during the crisis	

Assessor:				
Name		**Sign**		
Position			**Date**	

Authorised By;				
Name		**Sign**		
Position			**Date**	