

## **Department of Chemistry: Risk assessment for operating in the time of COVID-19**

### **Risks**

1. The key risk is the transmission of COVID-19 between those working in the Department.
2. There is also a risk that those working in the Department will be infected during their journeys to and from work.

### **Key steps to mitigate these risks**

1. Those who are clinically vulnerable, pregnant or have a member of their household who is still shielding are advised to seek advice from their medical professional and/or complete the individual assessment with their PI or line manager..
2. Those with symptoms of COVID-19 are excluded from the Department and they must request a swab (PCR) test according to the procedures advertised on the University website ([link](#)). Those requesting a test must report this, and in due course the outcome of the test, to the Department so that the appropriate action can be taken.
3. Adherence to the 'track and trace' procedures, and any subsequent instructions, operated by PHE.
4. Adherence to social distancing rules including the use of one-way systems and room occupancy limits.
5. Use of appropriate PPE.
6. Enhanced cleaning and sanitizing regimen.

### **Further details of mitigation steps**

#### ***Suspected infection***

1. Members of the Department who show symptoms of COVID-19 are expected to remain at home and request a swab (PCR) test according to the procedures advertised on the University website ([link](#)). Those requesting a test must report this, and in due course the outcome of the test, to their line manager or PI.
2. Instructions from the PHE 'track and trace' procedure must be followed.
3. Return to work in the Department is only permitted after consultation with the line manager or PI following a negative test or the completion of the required period of isolation.
4. In the event of a member of the Department testing positive members of the Department will co-operate with the 'track and trace' procedure and follow the instructions given. Further steps, such as closing an area or deep cleaning, will be taken following guidance from PHE and/or University H&S.

#### ***Building occupancy and social distancing***

1. Line managers and PIs will determine who should work in the building and under what conditions. The over-riding principle governing these decisions is the need to maintain social distancing at all times, including when moving around laboratories.
2. One-way systems will be in operation for most corridors and frequently used entrances/exits; elsewhere 'corridor etiquette' will apply.
3. Lifts must not be used unless goods are being transported or the person is unable to use the stairs.
4. Screens will be installed in areas of frequent face-to-face contact (e.g. stores), along with floor markings as appropriate.

5. Departmental services (e.g. analytical) will develop local practices to ensure social distancing and minimising the chances of infection: these must be complied with.
6. Casual and social visitors are not permitted; permitted visitors must comply with local rules and are the responsibility of their hosts.

#### ***PPE, cleaning and sanitizing***

1. There will be an enhanced program of cleaning and sanitizing in all public areas. Cleaning/sanitizing materials will be available for members of the Department to use in their own areas.
2. Appropriate PPE will be provided to those whose working practices require it.
3. Face coverings will be provided for members of the Department using public transport to travel to work and those traveling on public transport are recommended to travel outside busy times.
4. From 14<sup>th</sup> September face coverings must be worn in all public areas and circulation spaces within the building.
5. Laboratory coats must be 'bagged' when not in use according to the published procedures.
6. Members of the Department will be reminded (posters, notices, emails) of the need for frequent hand washing and to avoid touching surfaces wherever possible. Hand wash stations and sanitizing stations will be placed strategically throughout the building and at building entrances/exits.
7. Eating is not permitted in research areas or offices: the Cyber Café and BMS foyer may be used for this purpose, subject to maintaining social distancing.

#### ***Air conditioning and fans***

1. Wall or ceiling mounted air conditioning units which simply circulate chilled air are a particular cause for concern due to the risk of droplets/aerosols being circulated for long periods.
2. Offices or laboratories with such air conditioning units turned *on* may only be occupied by one person at a time. A period of time (approx. 15 minutes) must be left between one person vacating the room and the next person using it. This period can be reduced to 5 minutes if users wear face coverings at all times when in the room.
3. The use of fans must be treated in the same way as air conditioning units, i.e. when turned on the room may only be occupied by one person at a time.

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