



NEW WAYS OF WORKING REOPENING OF OFFICES

West Malling— July 2020 v.10



INTRODUCTION

The last few months have been a time of change and challenge for us all, in both our personal lives and in our work lives. We are incredibly proud of your adaptability, perseverance and effort whilst we moved to home working and for maintaining business as usual as the crisis unfolded.

The West Malling office has been operating over the lockdown period, and I am very grateful to those of you who have come in and gone above and beyond to help our clients. The next stage for the Kings Hill office will be to open-up to more people should they want to come in or feel they need to. Over the course of the next few weeks and months, as restrictions hopefully ease further, we will move toward more office working but retain flexibility in how we operate as individuals and as a firm.

The health and wellbeing of everyone remains our priority, and we have worked to make the office as safe as we can – but a safe environment relies on the actions of everybody; from regular hand washing, and social distancing, to speaking up and feeling comfortable to raise any issue or concern with your manager, Facilities, HR or a member of the Executive Board.

This will be a gradual and evolving transition; the first phase of which is voluntary, for those that need to be in the office. Over the course of the next few weeks and months, as restrictions hopefully ease further, we will move toward more office working but retain flexibility in how we operate.

This pack is designed to give you information on how the office will be set up, information about the building, what protocols are in place, and the actions we need you to take. It is a comprehensive document which I urge you to read in its entirety, it is essential that everyone coming in to the office knows what protocols will be in place so they can fulfil their role in keeping it a safe environment for all.

This is a new situation for us all so please keep feeding back to the workplace team on your experiences as we enter this new phase on workplace@geraldeve.com

If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to speak to me, or a member of the Executive Board.

We really do look forward to seeing you soon.



Simon Rees

YOU AND YOUR FAMILY

Your health, and your family's, will always be the number one priority. We have worked to make the office as safe as we can, but you also play a very important part in keeping it safe and clean, reducing the risk to yourself, your family and your colleagues.

SHOULD I COME TO THE OFFICE?

We want everyone to feel confident about coming back to the office. However, there are some circumstances when you should **not** come into the office:

- If you are exhibiting any symptoms of COVID19 or are living with someone that is, or if you are self-isolating
- If you are deemed to be an extremely vulnerable person (you have been informed that you should be shielding or living with someone that is)
- If you are a member of a vulnerable group, you should work from home, if it is essential for you to come into the office a further risk assessment needs to be undertaken (this includes individuals with underlying or chronic health conditions, over 70 years old, a weakened immune system, pregnant, or a BMI of over 40).
- Please note guidance is frequently updated, it is important that you familiarise yourself with the information available at: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance>

WHAT TO DO IF I FEEL UNWELL AT THE OFFICE?

- If you start to feel symptoms of COVID19 in the office you should inform your line manager and a member of HR immediately and go home, avoiding public transport
- If you are unable to go home immediately you should go to the designated and signed isolation area and stay away from others
- You should then follow NHS guidance on testing, and track and trace protocol
- If you are unwell, and unable to come to the office for any illness, or have had to leave the office, please make sure any absence is recorded in Cascade

TRACK & TRACE

- If you are contacted by NHS, usually by text, to say you have been in contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID19 please follow their instructions to self-isolate for 14 days and inform HR and your line manager immediately. If you are in the office you should go home, avoiding public transport
- We will ask you who you have had close contact with during your time in the office
- Your desk, and areas you have been to, will be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected
- For more information please see <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/nhs-test-and-trace-if-youve-been-in-contact-with-a-person-who-has-coronavirus/>

Any data relating to your health will be kept confidential and stored securely, and only kept for as long as relevant. If a positive test of COVID19 is present, the identity of that individual will only be shared when, and where, absolutely necessary, and only to those that need to know for their own health & safety.

KEEPING HEALTHY

New protocols are in place to reduce the risk of COVID19, these include enhanced cleaning regimes in the office as well as the provision of hand sanitiser. You are responsible for your own hygiene, please follow the below when in the office:

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for 20 seconds, especially when you arrive into the office
- Use hand sanitiser regularly if you are not able to wash your hands
- Avoid touching your face
- Use tissues for sneezing or coughing, and dispose of these straight away
- Do not share equipment (such as chargers or stationery)
- Avoid touching door handles where possible
- Maintain social distancing and keep interactions brief

MY FAMILY

We understand many of you may have caring responsibilities, and this impacts your working day, as well as the ability to come into the office if you wanted to. As school holidays also approach you may need to change your current working arrangement to help over the summer.

There are a range of options that might help, including changing your working pattern, your working hours, taking holiday or parental leave, or reducing your days temporarily. As everyone has different circumstances please speak with your manager and HR to discuss how we can support you.

SPEAK UP

If you have any questions or feel that something is presenting a risk please let your manager, Facilities or HR know. If you feel uncomfortable about anything please say something – no one will take offense if you raise an issue or take a step back to keep your distance.

If you would prefer to send an email please do so to workplace@geraldeve.com

[For more information on health & wellbeing please click here](#)

YOU AND YOUR ENVIRONMENT

There will be new procedures in place to enable social distancing and protocols for communal areas as well as changes to desking. We want you to be prepared for what your day might look like:

TRAVELLING TO WORK

Avoid public transport if possible, if you can walk or cycle instead of public transport please do so, or use a private vehicle

Please note it is currently not advised to share a car with anyone outside of your household

If you have to use public transport, make sure you are travelling safely:

- You need to wear a face covering unless you are exempt from this; [Find out how to make a face covering](#)
- Keep 2 metres apart from others where possible
- Wash your hands before and after your journey
- Carry a hand sanitiser or use sanitiser points at the stations
- Use contactless payment
- Respect priority seating and wheelchair spaces
- Follow [government advice for safer travel](#) and [check the safer travel information sheet](#)

Arriving & leaving the office

To reduce the number of people entering the office at any one time, and to help with your commute, there will be flexibility in arrival and departure times to the office:

- Core hours have been introduced to give greater flexibility over your day
- Core hours will be 10am to 4pm – these are times we ask you aim to be in the office
- Please arrive and leave flexibly around these hours
- This does not apply on Fridays due to your different hours
- You are required to work your normal total number of hours to enable your tasks to be completed – but it no longer needs to be 9am – 5.30pm
- If you work designated shift times, speak to your manager first about what times are best for you to arrive and depart
- Please allow for social distancing in the car park and where possible leave spaces between cars

AT THE OFFICE

As you may want to arrive extra early, or stay late, on rare occasions you may find you are on your own, or one of a few, in the office for a short space of time. As such please familiarise yourself with the Lone Working policy and be aware of security protocols in the building.

Communal areas in the building:

- Visible signage will indicate if doors are entrance or exit only
- In corridors and the entrance please try to stay 2m away from other individuals, where this is not possible it is best to turn your face away whilst passing

Toilet facilities

- Whilst waiting please wait 2m from each other
- Do not congregate in the wash basin area
- Additional cleaning products are being provided by building management so you can wipe down areas after use
- Record sheets in the toilets will show you when it was last cleaned
- Always remember to wash your hands when leaving the toilet areas

Your desk:

- You will have been assigned a desk, this may not necessarily be the one you used to sit at, although where possible we will try to accommodate this
- Your desk will either be Yellow or Red: throughout the week only people designated the same colour desk will be present. There will be weekly rotations between red and yellow
- You must only come into the office on your allocated week – any attendance will therefore be every other week
- There will be signage on the floor indicating where your chair should be
- Only every alternate desk will be used, you should not move to another desk regardless of whether it is empty
- Please do not use desk fans as these may circulate droplets, if you are uncomfortable with the office temperature please speak to a member of Facilities
- Do not borrow anyone else's IT equipment or phone chargers

Clean Desk Policy

- We have learnt over the past few months that we do not require the paper we previously thought we needed
- To enable thorough cleaning and to move forward to become a paperless, tidier and more agile and environmentally sustainable workplace a Clean Desk Policy will now be in place
- Contractually we are required to maintain client confidentiality at all times, therefore it is incumbent on each of us to ensure that all sensitive and confidential data is secured, a clean desk policy is instrumental to this
- At the end of each day your desk must be cleared of all paper, files and documents – these need to be stored in cabinets or your pedestal which should then be locked
- If you require assistance in archiving documentation please contact fhelpdesk@geraldeve.com
- There should not be any belongings left under your desk
- Frequent and repeated breaches of the Clean Desk Policy may lead to disciplinary action
- We will be setting up a working group to help us create and sustain paperless offices – for more information or to take part please contact hfoley@geraldeve.com

Kitchen areas:

- An enhanced cleaning regime will be in place throughout the course of the day
- Please wipe down hard surfaces including worksurfaces and kitchen equipment after use
- Social distancing will need to be maintained in these areas
- Please bring in your own crockery and cutlery to use, clean these and keep them with you, to be stored away each evening. Personal items should not be stored in the kitchen
- Individuals can prepare their own drinks but please refrain from making colleagues drinks or doing the 'tea run'
- New arrangements for the storing and disposal of food in tea points and kitchens will be in place and clearly signed
- Food brought in and stored in fridges must be contained within Tupperware, or in its original packaging, and brought in and stored on a daily basis only
- The fridges will be cleaned each day and storing of condiments is no longer permitted
- Microwaves will not be in use

Lunch time:

- When possible please use the outdoor seating for your lunch times
- If you do go to local supermarkets via car at lunch time please do not offer to take others whilst guidance states to not share a car
- If you do pick up food for another person please wipe the packaging with sanitising wipes

ICT and Printers

- Avoid using your fingers to touch the screen – use clothing or a non-scratch implement
- Wipe printer screens with wipes provided
- Hand sanitiser and wipes will be available for wiping any printers or scanners

Personal belongings

- Please do not leave personal belongings such as coats in the office overnight. Anything you bring with you each day should be removed from the office

Deliveries

- No personal deliveries or personal post should come to the office
- Employees should keep couriers and work related deliveries to a minimum

Air Conditioning

- Ventilation is highly recommended - windows should be open to allow for fresh air, when this is not possible air conditioning will be adjusted to increase the ventilation rate in the building
- Please bring layers with you as the office may be cooler than normal

Dress Code:

- You should dress appropriately for your duties and work schedule for the day
- Please remember you are representing the firm and should be smart and presentable

Emergency evacuation & procedures:

- Should you need to evacuate the building due to a fire or other hazard please follow directions carefully
- Social distancing may not be possible whilst exiting the building but please try to maintain distance once outside the building
- Normal fire points will not be in use, you are recommended to disperse a safe distance away from the office but remain in the vicinity to hear when it is safe to return to the office
- On returning to the building once safe to do so please wash your hands

Coming in to the office for the first time

- Please speak to your manager if you would like to come into the office
- During this initial phase we will need a minimum of a week's notice to allocate a desk due to the rota system in place
- Please **do not turn up to** the office without speaking to your manager first

YOU AND YOUR TEAM

Each team will have different numbers of people in the office or working from home, this will mean we need to adapt as to how we work best together. Unlike in the past, where the majority were in the office, or all were working from home, a mix of both means we need to make sure we are communicating in the best way and keeping everyone up to date.

Rota scheme

- A weekly rota scheme is in place to enable social distancing in the office – split between Red & Yellow desks
- It is essential you do not move from your allocated desk. Please note it may not necessarily be your old desk
- You do not have to come into the office every day on your allocated week, but you cannot change weeks you are in the office

Team Meetings

- Some meetings now consist of members in the office and members from home, try to keep in mind that non-verbal cues are easier to read in person than they are virtually

Annual Leave

- As travel increases, and countries open their borders you may want to take some leave abroad
- Please speak to your line manager and book leave in advance, entering all leave into Cascade
- Please notify HR of your travel destination – this data will only be kept for a short amount of time to ensure we are aware of quarantine measures and any additional risks we need to take into account

New ways of working

- If you are back in the office, it doesn't mean you need to slip back into old ways!
- Think about what has worked well digitally that you could continue in the office
- Ask other teams what has worked well for them and could be used across other areas of the business to be more efficient and productive
- Just because a printer is now available – doesn't mean you need to print everything! We want to work in a paperless environment

YOU AND OUR CLIENTS

Supporting our clients is of the upmost importance, even if it is a call to say hello and keep in touch. Our clients will remember the advisors who showed empathy and who were there for them and this includes how we communicate with them about our safety protocols, our meeting arrangements and processing their data.

You may be asked to go to a meeting by a client. The risk of this should be assessed within your team, with virtual meetings being the first port of call. If you are required to go externally, and you are comfortable to do so please note the following information.

External Meeting protocol

- If you are requested to attend a client site, only do so if you feel comfortable and it is required
- All non essential travel should not take place; this includes travel to other offices

Data protection of Client Information

- To be COVID secure you may be asked by clients or building managers if you have any symptoms of COVID19, or are a member of a vulnerable group – this is standard procedure so please be honest, never feel under pressure to attend a meeting or office if you are feeling symptoms of COVID19
 - If you have any concerns about how they are handling your data, ask them what their data policy is
- Similarly, you may be required to ask this of clients, please only keep this information for as long as it is required. This information should not be transferred to anyone else at any time.
- For more information please read this [guide](#) from RICS
- And the Firms data protection policy which can be found [here](#)
- If you have any questions about data protection, or the handling of client data please speak to Gill Dixon (GDixon@geraldeve.com)

Thank you for reading this information – we know there is a lot to take in, and it will take time for new behaviours to become second nature, but it is essential for your own health, and that of your colleagues and family, that we all play our part in keeping the office a safe environment. We will update this and other documents in line with Government guidance developments. If you have any questions please contact workplace@geraldeve.com

For more information on H&S - please read our policies [here](#)

