**[Company]**

**Coronavirus Workplace Policy**

INSTRUCTIONS: Tailor as required inserting your company name and date policy effective to. Amend text for your preferences/policy by adding, deleting or changing sections. Once done delete this instruction text before publishing to all employees.

As you're aware, the coronavirus risk is increasing by the day. We have a responsibility to make sure we all stay safe and healthy and that we don't pose a risk to our friends and family. We also have a moral responsibility as a social citizen to minimise our contribution towards spreading the virus. And, we have a responsibility to our customers to continue providing our service, and to our investors to make sure we weather this storm.

So, we'd like to explain what we're doing to keep you safe and for the business to be able to run efficiently if team members need to work from home. We'll outline what equipment you can use when working from home, what equipment and accessories we'll provide, and what working hours you should keep. We'll also explain your rights during these unusual times.

Any policies described in this document that conflict with our existing workplace policies will override those existing policies until 30 April 2020.

**KEEPING YOU INFORMED**

During a pandemic or crisis, we'll keep the team informed about related health risks. As a business, we've undertaken the following measures:

* We've ensured all team contact details are up to date.  We've ensured all team next-of-kin contact details are up to date.
* We've introduced a backup communication plan in the event normal means of communication cannot be access (e.g. everyone will have each other's phone details in case email is down).
* We've appointed someone in the business to keep us updated with the latest government advice.

If you would like to change your contact details at any time please speak to your manager.

**WORKPLACE HYGIENE**

In the event of a pandemic we'll take steps to ensure that there is good hygiene in our workplace (based on the facts and science of the pandemic itself) and that our working practices do not pose undue risks to the team.

As a business, we've undertaken the following measures:

* We'd provided tissues and sanitising hand gel.
* We've encouraged the team to regularly wash hands with soap.
* We've increased the cleaning and disinfecting of hard surfaces.
* We'd provided disposable wipes around the office.
* We've communicated the benefits of preventative measures to the whole team.
* We've undertaken a risk assessment to identify high risk groups in the team (older workers, people with long commutes on public transport, etc.)

**TRAVEL TO HIGH-RISK AREAS**

For team members who are travelling to other locations and particularly high-risk areas or areas where travelling has been advised against, we have:

* Reviewed team travel insurance to discover whether there is cover for medical repatriation.
* Reviewed whether local care is available and suitable.
* Reviewed whether specialist travel protection should be taken out.
* Reviewed the current state of the virus in the relevant location.

If we decide to request that everyone should work at home, when we decide to stop that policy these health and safety measures will be put back into place for when you arrive back at work and will be undertaken on a regular basis to continue to protect your health and safety.

**WORKING AT HOME**

The WHO declared the outbreak of coronavirus (COVID-19) a Public Health Emergency of International Concern at the end of January. The main symptoms are a cough, high temperature and in severe cases shortness of breath. A minority of people will develop complications that may lead to hospitalisation, most often pneumonia.

In a stretching scenario there are estimates that up to one-fifth of the workforce may be absent from work during peak weeks.

The UK government is responding in a phased manner. The current emphasis has been moved to Delay which is an escalation from the Contain and Research phase. Public health advice includes regular hand washing, checking travel advice, following self-isolation advice if you have contracted the virus or have recently returned from a location that is high risk. Additional measures may be introduced in the near future (if they have not already) such as social distancing measures like avoiding large public gatherings and government sanctioned home working, if possible.

**SHOULD YOU WORK AT HOME?**

Whilst there is a lot of panic and concern regarding coronavirus currently, we do not believe our business will contribute to the spread of coronavirus by requiring healthy members of the team to come into work. So, for now it's business as usual. Of course that may change, we'll keep you updated.

If you are feeling sick or have been required by the NHS to self-isolate, do not come in. But, generally speaking, if you are well, we expect to see you at work as normal.

If you are self-isolating on a voluntary basis (e.g. the NHS have not specifically told you to self-isolate) and you cannot work from home due to your particular role, or we disagree with your decision, we reserve the right to not pay you for those missed days. If you have any specific concerns about coming into work, please discuss this with your manager and we'll try to come to an arrangement that works for both of us.

Where you cannot come into work, due to either civil emergency guidance or civil unrest (such as damage to transport infrastructure or similar) then you are expected to work from home and the rules below for working at home will apply.

If the nature of your work means you believe you cannot work from home please discuss this with your manager and the company will make an individual decision as to whether you are expected to work or not.

**RULES FOR USE OF COMPUTERS AT HOME**

We are happy for you to use your own computers and devices while you work at home. If you do not have a suitable computer or would not like to use your own computer then we will provide you with appropriate company equipment.

The company will also provide any device accessories necessary for you to complete your work. This includes monitor, keyboard, mouse, headset or other accessories that would be reasonable to request.

**WORK-AT-HOME HOURS**

You're expected to work normal office hours while working from home, unless you've arranged alternate working hours with your manager.

**STAYING IN TOUCH WITH COLLEAGUES**

One of the biggest challenges of working from home is the lack of teamwork and camaraderie that creates a vibrant and productive team, so it's really important that we all make an effort to stay in touch with teammates and managers.

* Keep your team informed about your availability throughout the day. Your colleagues can't see that you're busy on something else, so if you can't action a request, quickly reply saying you're busy and a timeframe for when you'll respond.
* Managers will organise regular catchups with their team to understand what everyone is doing, and especially if there is a team project, to ensure deadlines and goals are being met. They'll also use those catchup sessions to communicate any changes to working priorities.
* The senior team will do a weekly standup session over a group video call to keep everyone updated on the latest work at home policy, business status, etc.
* Even though you're working from home you're still representing yourself to your colleagues and the business to our customers. So it's important you're business-presentable anytime you're speaking to a team member or customer on a video call. Washing hanging in the background isn't professional. So, find a space in your home with good lighting and a suitably professional background. And, you might want to set a virtual background, if supported by your video software.

**QUARANTINE AND PAY DURING THE CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK**

For those who cannot work at home because the nature of your work requires you to be on-site or otherwise physically at our offices but who are required to self-isolate or remain in quarantine in accordance with government guidelines, we will pay you statutory sick pay rates.

For those who voluntarily decide to self-isolate but who have no symptoms of illness (but who have not been requested to do so by the NHS) and who cannot or will not work from home, we reserve to right to not pay you for those days missed. If you are concerned about whether to self-isolate or not in this context, please speak with your manager.

**OTHER CHANGES TO WORKPLACE POLICIES**

Generally speaking, in light of coronavirus we will of course note your statutory and contractual rights but we will also review our other policies (such as those already mentioned above and those relating to sickness, absence or dependant leave, travel and homeworking) and procedures, considering how these might need to be modified.

For example, while our company sickness policy may require an employee to return to work as soon as they are feeling well enough, a person suffering from coronavirus should not return to work until they have received medical advice confirming that they are unlikely to be infectious.

We may need to give our team more time off to care for dependents than normal. The statutory rights to dependency leave are limited and designed to allow a carer to put in place arrangements for the care of a dependant. If dependants become very seriously ill, or care arrangements are hard to come by as a result of a coronavirus, it would generally be felt to be unrealistic for us to expect people to take only their minimum entitlements. While in normal circumstances this might lead to disciplinary action, the importance of enforcing the rules may dwindle in comparison to this potential crisis.

For all queries related to coronavirus or what the company’s current policy is on any particular matter, please contact your manager or a company director.

**INSURANCE IN THE EVENT OF CORONAVIRUS**

A few other points to consider regarding business travel insurance and keyman insurance:

* Corporate travel insurance might not cover trip cancellations if the company or the concerned employee cancels for fear of infection or disruption, rather than the cancellation occurring as a result of the airline’s decision or the government’s direction.
* Corporate medical cover for those abroad may not cover an infected employee if they are infected after travelling to a seriously affected region against official government advice.
* Keyman insurance may not pay out if the insured life ends because of travel contrary to public health or government advice.

**TAX CONSIDERATIONS IN THE EVENT OF CORONAVIRUS**

Businesses should be able to claim tax relief for some of the expenditure incurred as a result of coronavirus such as increased hygiene facilities, cleaning costs or hiring temporary staff to cover absences. Fixtures, such as more washbasins, should qualify for capital allowances for example. Other expenditure (such as antiseptic hand gel and more frequent cleaning of premises) will be deductible immediately.

If you're a member of the team that is responsible for incurring such expenses please keep a note of them in case we need to claim tax relief on these additional expenses. In particular please record full VAT receipts for this expenditure in the normal way.