 

CODE OF CONDUCT

Nuffield Department of Surgical Sciences – COVID-19 Pandemic

The following code of conduct is designed for members of staff working in the Nuffield Department of Surgical Sciences and external visitors for building/equipment maintenance, to provide an overview for us to remain a safe environment to work in during these difficult circumstances.

The safety, mental health and wellbeing of all staff is of paramount importance. Things will be different for a while and this document will be adapted as guidance from the government and the university changes over the next few months. We will all have to be patient and understanding of the situation. Please read this document and act sensibly when at work, failure to do so may put the safety of yourself and others at risk. Any non-compliance should be reported to either the Departmental Administrator (Joke Snoeck), the Health and Safety Officer (Adam Lambert) or the Laboratory and Facilities Manager (Jessica Doondeea).

The NDS is located over a number of sites, this document relates to work being carried out for the Return to On-Site Working at Level 5 and 6, John Radcliffe Hospital. In addition to the two main corridors where the offices are and the TRIG group laboratories, laboratory 6400 (Robot and Johnson laboratories) has been opened – a one way system has been introduced there. The level 5 office space will be opening soon and the space either side of the Interaction room will be restricted so that staff keep to the side where their desk is located.

Other sites may adapt this document for their specific purposes if necessary.

As people are gradually re-introduced back to work, rules may need to be adapted so feel free to feed back any concerns, comments or suggestions.

Reference - Return to On-Site Working: Guidance for Departments (version 9, 3rd September 2020)

The University have further information on their website: https://www.ox.ac.uk/coronavirus

Specific Site Instructions

John Radcliffe

1. Entrance and exit to the department should be through the Academic Block and the North staircase/lifts - the OUH Trust has limited the lifts to two people at a time.
2. It is not possible to implement a one-way system, please be respectful of other people’s space and take care when passing by.
3. The Seminar Room layout will change and become a temporary break out space, numbers are limited. Be mindful of this, break times may need to be staggered to observe social distancing. Staff with no access to offices should store coats and bags there. The door will need to be kept open so that people can see if there is space to enter. Please ensure the TRIG corridor door therefore remains closed. Do not rearrange the furniture in the Seminar Room, the current layout is on purpose to maintain social distancing.
4. Waste disposal continues as normal.
5. General Purpose
	1. All staff that are able to work from home should continue to do so until further notice. If this is not possible, have discussions with your line manager.
	2. No staff will be forced to return to work at this time. Discuss with your line manager if you have concerns about working within the building.
	3. It is recognised that staff may be prevented from coming to work due to childcare responsibilities during potential school/nursery closures, and/or the feasibility of public transport options. Staff should contact their line managers to review their individual situations.
	4. All other health and safety policies are still in effect; these rules are in addition to them.
	5. Currently only work approved by the Head of the Department can be carried out.
	6. There are signs in the department to support staff compliance to maintain social distancing and to remind you to wash your hands frequently.
	7. Overnight work is discouraged unless absolutely essential and the lone working policy should be followed and a risk assessment will need to be completed.
	8. Non-compliance may lead to access being revoked and disciplinary action taken.
6. Access and new working arrangements
	1. A building risk assessment has been completed to ensure that it is safe to occupy.
	2. Risk assessments will need to be completed detailing what activities are to be carried out, by whom and what precautions need to be implemented. These will be reviewed by the Safety Committee and authorised by the Departmental Administrator.
	3. There will be limited numbers of people in the department at any one time in order to maintain social distancing of 2m. The Clustermarket calendar booking system is in place and it is essential for our records that numbers are monitored. A rota and staggered hours will be necessary to reduce the number of staff onsite. Please abide by this, failure to do so may compromise the chances of other staff members to carry out their work.
	4. Staff may need to be flexible about time to allow work to be accommodated.
	5. If there is need for a meeting to take place, please use a suitable space that can hold the number of participants while still maintaining social distancing. Those organising the meeting must keep a log of date, time location and who has attended the meeting. Touch points must be wiped before and after the meeting.
	6. Any training will be subject to maintaining a safe working environment and will only be performed on a 1:1 basis if absolutely necessary with appropriate PPE, and will not be performed in groups.
	7. Food must not be consumed in laboratories.
	8. Lab coats must not be shared amongst users; where possible ensure lab coats are labelled with your name they should be hung up on individual coat hooks. When required please put in the laundry basket for cleaning as usual.
	9. Desk fans are not permitted for use.
	10. It may not always be possible to maintain 2m distance, in such instances a hierarchy of control can be considered:

## Hierarchy of Control

The basis of all working plans will be to reduce COVID-19 transmission between individuals by applying the requirements and guidance set out by the UK Government. The following hierarchy of control must be applied:

1. Individuals must not work on-site, if experiencing COVID-19 symptoms.
2. Individuals must not work on-site if they or anyone else in their household is self-isolating.
3. Individuals must not work on-site if a risk assessment, including the outcome of [discussions following an individual vulnerability assessment](https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/guidance-on-supporting-staff-with-concerns-about-on-site-working), identifies that an individual is at an increased risk that cannot be appropriately mitigated by other means.
4. Social distancing guidelines must be followed, including, where possible, maintaining a 2 metre distance from others. Specifically:
	1. Ensure the number of people on-site at any one time enables an effective implementation of control measures.
	2. Individuals must be regularly reminded to maintain good personal hygiene e.g. washing hands with soap and water or using hand sanitiser often, for at least 20 seconds.
	3. Cleaning regimes must be enhanced to ensure contact points that are touched regularly are periodically cleaned and procedures are in place to reasonably clean down areas or surfaces if an individual who has been in work reports symptoms.
	4. Work activities should be planned to reduce mixing of people to make sure that, as far as possible, an individual only meets a limited number of other people whilst in the workplace, to reduce the risk of cross-infection.
	5. The University’s [policy on face coverings](https://www.ox.ac.uk/coronavirus/health/face-coverings) must be adopted.
	6. Where the 2 metre distance cannot be maintained, especially for periods longer than 15 minutes, the risk assessment must determine whether a closer distance is required, and vital. The reasons for reducing the distance below 2 metres (with a minimum of 1 metre) should be documented, along with appropriate mitigations[[1]](#footnote-1). Such mitigations may include:
5. Modifying the activity to maintain as much distance as possible.
6. Keeping the activity time involved as short as possible.
7. Using screens or barriers to separate people from each other.
8. Using back-to-back or side-to-side working (rather than face-to-face) whenever possible.
9. Reducing the number of people that each person has contact with by using “fixed teams or partnering” (so each person works with only a few others).
10. Increasing the frequency of hand washing and surface cleaning in that localised area.
	1. If, after the above measures have been fully assessed, there is still considered to be a residual risk, then the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) will be adopted.
	2. Specific guidance, including on social distancing, for non-laboratory teaching space is available on the [RTOSW SharePoint site](https://unioxfordnexus.sharepoint.com/sites/rtosw/).
	3. Local contingency plans for use in the event of COVID-19 cases must be in place, in line with the University’s guidance and business continuity planning protocols.
	4. Please note that under the NHS Test and Trace system, a ‘contact’ is *‘a person who has been within 2 metres of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 for more than 15 minutes’*; such contacts are required to self-isolate for 14 days. In considering a specific potential need for students and/or staff to undertake activities at a distance of less than 2 metres from each other, departments should weigh up the risks to those individuals and recognise that more people will need to self-isolate in the event of a positive test result than if 2 metres distance is maintained.

Reference - Return to On-Site Working: Guidance for Departments (version 9, 3rd September 2020)

1. Department responsibilities
	1. Staff returning to working on-site can discuss their individual circumstances (including health needs and caring responsibilities) and any concerns they may have with their line manager or HR. They should also be encouraged to use the COVID-19 vulnerability self-assessment tool (<https://occupationalhealth.web.ox.ac.uk/covid-19-vulnerability-assessments>)
	2. Cases where staff are finding it particularly difficult to work from home (and would like to return on-site), after all reasonable attempts have been made to address those difficulties and support remote working, if it is operationally feasible for them to return on-site given the current restrictions that are in place. However, this is subject to government guidelines which currently state that people should work from home if they are able to.
	3. The department are liaising closely with the University Safety Office and the Oxford University Hospital Trust to allow staff to return to work. Formal approval will be required before this can happen.
	4. Risk assessments will be carried out to ensure staff are able to work as safely as possible, however there may need to be some restrictions applied to how you work.
	5. The department has cleaning, handwashing and hygiene procedures in line with guidance.
	6. We have taken all reasonable steps to help people work from home.
	7. All reasonable measures have been put in place to maintain a 2m distance.
	8. Additional sprays and wipes have been sourced for essential extra cleaning requirements.
	9. Hand sanitisers have been placed in the department.
	10. Work activities should be planned to reduce mixing of people to make sure that, as far as possible, an individual only meets a limited number of other people whilst in the workplace, to reduce cross-infection.
2. Your responsibilities
	1. In line with government guidance issued, all University staff, students and contractors working on OUH NHS FT sites are required to wear a face mask\* at all times in hospital space (e.g. common areas, corridors, shops, wards etc.) and in University space. As our University departments open in line with the University’s Return to Onsite Working (RTOSW) programme, departments will provide face masks for staff and students in agreed locations within University spaces. In the meantime, University staff and students should obtain masks from the mask containers at the hospital’s main entrances and reception areas. Staff and students should not enter the hospital without a mask. *\*A face mask is different to a face covering – a face mask is a surgical mask, whereas a face covering is usually made out of fabric and is not designed for use in healthcare settings.* Further information about the University’s Face coverings policy can be found at: https://www.ox.ac.uk/coronavirus/health/face-coverings
	2. Upon entering your work space all staff will immediately wash and sanitise their hands following the PHE recommended guidance, in the nearest available washroom.
	3. If you use the hand rails on the stairs, please wash/sanitise your hands immediately afterward.
	4. Face masks should be worn if training on instruments where close proximity is required and for procedures that need more than one person to be in close proximity.
	5. Hand sanitiser are available. Staff are reminded to wash and sanitise their hands regularly throughout the day.
	6. Before and after work, you will need to factor in time to clean/wipe down equipment and surfaces that you have used.
	7. Staff must clean shared items immediately after use e.g. fridge/freezer door handles or cupboards you may have opened.
	8. Staff returning from overseas may be subject to a legally required quarantine period and they are not permitted to come on site until such quarantine period is completed.
	9. If you have concerns that individuals are not following procedures and putting others at risk please inform your line manager, the Health and Safety Officer or the Laboratory and Facilities Manager.
	10. If you need to travel for work purposes, please refer to: Nuffield Department of Surgical Sciences (NDS) guidelines and risk assessment for business travel and fieldwork during COVID-19.
3. Vulnerable groups
	1. The government updated its guidance on 13 Aug 2020 for people who are categorised as Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (previously referred to as those who were ‘shielding’). People in this category are currently advised not to shield. Staff members who have concerns about returning to work can complete the vulnerability assessment or contact Occupational Health.
4. Travelling to and from work
	1. Current government guidance for safe travel is that walking or cycling is the preferred option, with public transport or car use where this is not possible.
	2. The University has set up a Temporary Permission To Park (TPTP) scheme. **From 13 July 2020**, all applications for a TPTP must be made by staff and approved by departments using an online application system. This requires applicants to fill in a simple online form which is automatically emailed to a nominated departmental permit administrator to either accept or reject. If successful, the applicant can print the TPTP permit at home, or in the department on their first day at work. Successful applicants will be automatically added to the TPTP mailing list in order to receive updates on where they should park, availability on different sites, and other relevant travel information. Full details including access to the application form and a list of the nominated departmental permit administrators that applicants are required to enter into the form are available at <https://travel.admin.ox.ac.uk/car/permits>.
	3. Car parks available for those based at OUH sites: Old Road Campus multi-storey car park or Old Road Campus gravel car park
5. Students
	1. Students should be willing and able to return.
	2. The student’s primary supervisor should confirm that they can support the student to return.
	3. The department (via the relevant DGS, and with authorisation from the Head of Department) should confirm that it can support the student’s return.
	4. If required, the student should confirm that they have accommodation arranged that they can return to (either in college or privately).
6. Face Masks

Face masks will be provided by the department and OUH as the OUHFT have stated that clinical or non-clinical staff need to wear a face mask when at work, and when moving between different areas. This applies to staff working in all hospital sites.

In the hospital, mask containers will be placed at the main entrances of the hospital sites with volunteers to hand them out. Masks are also available from main reception areas, consider taking two at a time on your way in. How to wear a face mask:

* Wash or sanitise your hands before putting it on
* Ensure the mask goes up to the bridge of your nose and all the way down under your chin
* Tighten the loops or ties so it's snug around your face
* Avoid touching your face, or the parts of the mask that cover your nose and mouth
* Wash or sanitise your hands before taking it off
* Use the ear loops to take the mask off and wash or sanitise your hands afterwards.

There is no set time, nor recommended number of masks you should use each day. It all depends on what you are doing.

However, if your mask gets dirty, wet or damaged, or if you touch the inside of it, then you should change to a new one

If you work in a non-clinical area, dispose of the mask in the domestic waste bins (these are lined with black bin liners).

If you are working alone you will not be expected to wear a mask - but when you leave the private work area to move through the hospital building, you should put on a face mask.

A COVID-secure area is one where:

* social distancing can be maintained at all times, with staff two metres apart
* staff have easy access to hand washing and/or hand sanitising facilities
* the area is regularly cleaned.

Staff do not necessarily need to wear a mask if all of these conditions are met at all times, however this needs to be risk assessed.

Once a face mask is removed from the face, it should be thrown away and replaced with a new mask due to the risk of contamination of hands/surfaces with respiratory droplets.

Face masks are for use on hospital premises and should be disposed of before leaving the hospital. Face coverings should be worn on public transport.

1. Staff displaying COVID-19 symptoms and testing
	1. If a member of staff develops COVID-19 symptoms while at work, they should go home immediately and remain there for at least 10 days from when their symptoms started. Line managers should be informed. Follow government guidelines and self-isolate.
	2. If a member of staff develops symptoms whilst in the building, they should leave immediately, notifying their line manager (via email if safer) and identifying who they have been in contact with and locations they have been in the building recently.
	3. Staff must not come onto site if anyone in their household is experiencing any symptoms.
	4. Staff should follow the local ‘Protocol for suspected cases amongst staff and students in the NDS’
	5. All staff who report COVID-19 symptoms must arrange to be tested via the NHS or University Early Alert System – testing sites located at the Radcliffe Observatory Quarter or the Old Road Campus.

Further information: <https://www.ox.ac.uk/coronavirus/health/covid-testing>

* 1. If staff are tested via the EAS, the results of the test will be shared with their department. Staff who are tested via NHS Test and Trace, should notify their department’s single point of contact (SPOC) of the results. This will ensure that support can be provided and immediate action taken to protect others if necessary.
	2. Cleaning staff will be notified to deep clean any affected areas.
1. Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations

An incident report is required under RIDDOR (the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013) when:

* An unintended incident at work has led to someone’s possible or actual exposure to coronavirus. This must be reported as a dangerous occurrence.
* A worker has been diagnosed as having COVID 19 and there is reasonable evidence that it was caused by exposure at work. This must be reported as a case of disease.
* A worker dies as a result of occupational exposure to coronavirus.

Cases where individuals develop symptoms of COVID-19 in the workplace are not necessarily reportable. There needs to be a specific work activity that has taken place that might have reasonably caused the exposure. For example, individuals working directly with known COVID patients where prescribed control measures were known to fail or needle-stick exposure to human tissue from known COVID patients in the laboratory. Further information on reporting requirements are available on the HSE’s website.

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/riddor-reporting-further-guidance-coronavirus.htm#dangerous-reportable>

If you believe a work-related incident has resulted in any of the above, then you must notify the Safety Office immediately at enquiries@safety.ox.ac.uk. The Safety Office will determine if the incident is indeed reportable and if so, undertake the reporting in line with University policy.

1. Personal hygiene
	1. All staff are encouraged to wash their hands with soap for 20 seconds or more regularly throughout the day, with complete hand drying and use of hand sanitiser. This is especially important on arrival into the building, before and after using toilet facilities, and before leaving the building.
	2. To reduce the spread of germs when you cough or sneeze, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue, or sneeze into your elbow (not your hands) if you don’t have a tissue, and throw the tissue in the bin immediately. Then wash your hands or use a hand sanitiser immediately afterwards.
2. Shared space and facilities
	1. Utilise stairs as far as possible.
	2. Reduce maximum occupancy in lifts, ideally single occupancy, unless otherwise stated.
	3. If more than one person is permitted, then mark the standing positions on the lift floor.
	4. Encourage waiting outside shared toilets, where 2m distances cannot be maintained.
	5. Shared equipment will be limited to one person at a time e.g. printers, photocopiers, binding machines.
3. Deliveries, post and visitors
	1. Deliveries will continue as normal but there will be no admin staff to receive goods and notify you of arrival.
	2. As there will be reduced staff in the department, if you notice something has been delivered and are able to put it in a safe place and notify the individual please do so. OUH staff will deliver to the table outside the Admin office as usual. A trolley near the mailboxes will be placed for deliveries to be moved to if you see something there. This is to reduce the need for staff to access the skills lab and ensure your goods are left in a secure area. Staff must wash their hands after handling delivered items.
	3. If you have a temperature sensitive parcel, please make arrangements with the courier by providing a mobile number so they can contact you on delivery.
	4. Notify your line manager if you are expecting important mail that needs collecting, it can be opened and scanned by those accessing the building currently.
	5. No outside visitors to the building.
	6. Only essential maintenance work that has been authorised can take place.
4. Emergency procedures
	1. During an emergency situation, the normal health and safety procedures will apply and it will not be possible to maintain social distancing. In the event of an emergency, you should leave by the nearest available escape route.
	2. With a limited number of staff in the department we are working with Microbiology to maintain a First Aid presence on level 6 – for minor injuries.
	3. For more serious incidents, phone the hospital on 2222 for medical assistance.
	4. As of the 1st June the reporting of accidents and incident for the University changes to the online procedure IRIS (Incident Reporting and Investigation System).
5. Ventilation
	1. Air conditioning units need to be kept on in places where equipment needs to be maintained.
	2. If there are more than two people occupying a space and it is not essential for the air conditioning unit to be on – turn it off where possible.
	3. If you are able to, keep a 2m distance from the unit and angle the vents so that they are not directed to anyone.

1. HR issues
	1. The safety and welfare of our staff is paramount.
	2. If anyone feels that there is pressure to come back into the building and does not want to, or does not feel comfortable with a working situation should contact HR.
2. Security
	1. Always carry your card with you – do not let anyone else into the department without a card.
	2. Do not allow others to use your card/key fob.
	3. Key fob access will be monitored in conjunction with the booking system.
	4. Please report unknown people in the department to the Laboratory and Facility Manager.
1. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-reopening-buildings-and-campuses/higher-education-reopening-buildings-and-campuses [↑](#footnote-ref-1)