

A Changing World: Risk Management, Planning and Response in a Post Covid World

**Stuart Robertshaw ACII, Tech IOSH
Chartered Insurance Risk Manager
Robertshaw Technical
Insurance Services
Dewsbury**

Learning Objectives

- Areas to consider when opening up after full or local lockdown
- How to deal with a COVID-19 outbreak
- Procedures for bringing staff back to work particularly vulnerable staff
- Planning for the future



Risk Management

Health & Safety

Fire Safety

Security

Business Continuity

Cyber

Today's Webinar

Today we will only be considering Covid-19 and how to manage it within the workplace

Otherwise we'll be here all week!

WHAT LAW APPLIES?

- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (risk assessment)
- Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996
- Covid-19 Guidance Documents

History!

- Rewind to Christmas Day 2019 – who had heard of Coronavirus or Covid-19?
- Fast forward 3 months and “the bad cold” resulted in a national lockdown, part of a worldwide response to the worst virus in a century!
- Offices, factories, shops, pubs and clubs fell silent, massive queues outside supermarkets and a world shortage of pasta and toilet rolls!
- Reopening of shops and offices started in June and July over 3 months of lockdown.

During Lockdown

- People worked from home if possible
- Many workers furloughed
- We discovered Zoom!

BUT!

- Speedily assembled work areas at home – suitable?
- Mental Health
- Connectivity
- Human interaction

As Lockdown Ended

- Rush to reopen particularly shops
- Workers nervous about returning
- Pubs and restaurants
- Shortage of raw materials in manufacturing
- Price of PPE, hand sanitiser and gloves rocketed and became in short supply
- They think its all over!... Seaside trips!

Issues on reopening - Premises

- Water Systems – legionella
- Air conditioning systems – legionella
- Lifts – statutory inspection
- Plant such as compressors and forklift trucks – statutory inspections
- Fire extinguishers – serviced?
- Vermin
- Waste – items left or forgotten on lockdown
- Alarms and emergency lights – tested/ working

Issues on reopening – Premises continued

- Electrical safety – particularly if answer to vermin was yes
- Gas safety
- Carparks and grounds – who's used them during closure and for what!
- Layout of workplace – one way systems, passing areas, width of corridors
- PPE and items required – masks, spit screens around desks, spacing, hand sanitiser, antibacterial wipes, cleaning regimes

Issues on reopening – Premises continued

- Signage – language, guidance for hand washing, reminders what to do, reminders of symptoms
- Removing as far as possible frequently touched items that are unnecessary – clocking in machines, keeping doors open where possible, windows open for ventilation.
- Vehicles – have they been parked up for the period – check tyres, brakes, levels, vandalism/theft damage if left on premises.
- Supply items to vehicles for sanitising after each driver if multiple users

Issues on reopening - People

- **Covid-19 questionnaires – know who is coming back and what potential problems they could bring**
- **Who's vulnerable?**
- **Underlying medical conditions – who do they live with – who do they look after?**
- **How do people get to work – public transport, car sharing.**
- **Anyone had Covid-19 whilst off? Current condition?**

Local lockdown

- **Some areas in local lockdown with varying restrictions where rise in cases is causing concern – Greater Manchester, West Yorkshire, Calderdale locally.**
- **If travel abroad to a country with infection rate of more than 20 per 100,000 then individual would have to self isolate for 14 days on return to this country**
- **UK infection rates.....**

Local lockdown continued

- Per 100,000 –

Leeds - 73

Bradford - 74

Bolton - 193

Anyone fancy a day trip to Bolton??

Local lockdown continued

- **To give some idea of how the rates are increasing, in my area of Kirklees –**

4th September – active cases – 70

11th September – active cases – 230

14th September – active cases – 372

15th September – active cases – 521

Almost a 750% increase in 11 days!

Whats happening?

- Non-compliance?
- Lack of correct use of protections – masks worn incorrectly, however, wearing a mask does NOT stop you getting the virus – it stops you GIVING IT to someone – sense of false security!
- Sticking to the Guidance – washing your hands, keep 2m apart, wear a face covering
- You can thank me for this later – to the tune of the wheels on the bus...
- Hands and face and give some space.....

Whats happening? continued

- **Whats it like when out shopping now? – 2m distance?**
- **Parties/ Illegal Raves**
- **No surprise the largest number of positive Covid tests is in 20 to 40 year olds.**
- **50% of people asymptomatic**
- **Most contagious 1 -2 days BEFORE symptoms**
- **Clubs and leisure facilities operating**
- **The “6” rule from last Monday**
- **BUT pubs, restaurants, worship premises, retail, gyms.....**

Covid-19 Risk Assessment

- **Premises can only open and operate if they are "Covid Secure"**
- **This means they have to have carried out a Covid-19 Risk Assessment which is suitable and sufficient**
- **HSE are actively carrying out inspections only looking at Covid measures – as a minimum this is the document they want to see and it must pass the suitable and sufficient test to be accepted.**

Covid-19 Risk Assessment continued

What should it contain?

- Reference to having checked for clinically vulnerable people – employees/ customers/ family – Covid Questionnaire
- How do employees get to work?
- Procedures and controls – partitions, one way systems, sanitisation and cleaning procedures and evidence
- Social distancing – 2m unless other controls in place

Covid-19 Risk Assessment continued

- Masks/ face shields/ gloves – training
- Antibacterial wipes, gels or sprays around the workplace
- Canteen areas
- Hand washing facilities
- Signage
- Procedures

What if someone develops symptoms or tests positive?

- Everyone should know the symptoms – make sure all staff do! If they get a symptom they must not come in to work
- They must self isolate and arrange a test
- They must tell their employer of this
- Acting fast is vital to containing any possible outbreak – this is where the procedures in place and the planning beforehand is worth its weight in gold!

What if someone develops symptoms or tests positive?

- **Identify who the person has had close contact with in the previous 48 hours, within 2m for at least 15 minutes, if unsure on time and distance treat as if they have!**
- **Send them home and instruct to self isolate for 14 days or until the person thought to have Covid-19 has had test results back.**

What if someone develops symptoms or tests positive?

- Sanitise the area, antibacterial wipes or a bleach solution, fogging
- Leave for 72 hours if possible
- When the individual gets tested, if it is positive they must stay at home for 10 days and self isolate
- If anyone else develops symptoms they must get a test – if positive the 10 days starts from the date of the test

What if someone develops symptoms or tests positive?

- The Government has produced a number of sector specific Action Cards with action to do lists on them, get one and fill in the telephone number of PHE who looks after your area.
- If more than one individual has Covid-19 ring the number, the sooner PHE are involved the better support that is given or available.
- Acting fast – within hours not days is vital – be ready
- Initially PHE and the local EHO will be involved – they will want to know what steps you've taken and have you identified and segregated those involved – they will inform HSE who will visit

Case Study

- **Manufacturer gets a phone call at 9am on Monday morning, advising employee tested positive at the weekend.**
- **By 930am, with our involvement, area the person worked in was identified and 5 employees in same area sent home told to self isolate as a precaution.**
- **Area segregated and cordoned off, left for 72 hours**
- **Wednesday morning one of sent home employees confirms they tested positive**

Case Study continued

- Wednesday lunchtime EHO acting on behalf of PHE arrives on site, test and trace identified outbreak. Wednesday afternoon HSE arrives on site to look at controls.
- Thursday morning a number of staff don't arrive for work advising they feel exposed.
- Covid-19 Risk Assessment in place, HSE happy with measures and EHO/PHE confirm happy with how the outbreak is being managed, no further attendance on site

Case Study continued

- Letter sent to all staff reassuring them as to the control measures in place – PHE/ EHO/ HSE receive a copy. Confirm happy with situation.
- Over the next 4 days remainder of staff sent home test positive – PHE/ EHO confirm still happy with measures – no other staff advise of symptoms and all staff temperature tested every morning.
- Daily calls between PHE, EHO and HSE enable business to remain open due to control measures and management of situation

Case Study continued

- Friday morning, courier contacts client advising they had heard about “major” outbreak and refusing to pick up collections – contact made, correct facts given and copy of the Risk Assessment supplied – courier reinstates collections within the hour.
- In view of Chinese whispers decision made between PHE/ EHO and company to issue Press Release, issued Monday morning
- Press turn up on site Monday afternoon

Case Study continued

- Story run on local news on television and appears in local press, all reassured due to PHE/ EHO statement – site remains open, no further positive tests or staff with symptoms
- Whilst all this going on toolbox talks to staff to reassure and guidance given to reinforce control measures.
- Multiple testing offered – catch 22!
- 14 days after first positive and PHE/ EHO close file, outbreak contained and over, site open throughout.

Outcome

- Consultant exhausted!!!!
- Prompt
- Confident and open, particularly with press
- Adequate controls – suitable and sufficient Risk Assessment and everyone knew the action plan
- Good communication with all stakeholders – PHE, EHO, HSE and staff.
- 3 other local companies in the area that had outbreaks in same industry were forced to close for 14 days.

Cause of outbreak

Very early on in the outbreak it was identified that the employees involved not only worked in same area but shared 2 cars into work, car sharing was the most likely cause of the outbreak as all other control measures on site were observed!

Summary

In an outbreak:

- Enforcing authorities will be involved – PHE, EHO, HSE
- Press may take an interest
- This can be overwhelming for staff, Managers and Directors who may have had little contact with official authorities/ press before.
- To coin a phrase stay calm get support and follow your procedures – most importantly ensure a suitable and sufficient Risk Assessment is in place drawn up by a competent person

The future

- **Increasing infection rates = increased local lockdowns**
- **Potential for Regional lockdowns – M62 corridor?**
- **Worst case total lockdown – Christmas?**
- **Winter flu add to second spike**
- **Keeping up to date with Guidance – 50 to 60 emails a day currently with changes**
- **Will conferences, live events such as annual dinners ever return?**
- **Impact of opening up sporting events**
- **All could add to the spread**

The future

- Businesses need to be prepared for home working – systems, equipment - dual stations?
- Support for staff, know who is comfortable working from home and who isn't – mental health, support
- Any need for large office spaces any more?
- Staff feel supported
- New way of working – do you need to spend an hour in the car driving to see someone then an hour driving back? Zoom, Facetime etc

The future

- Work life balance
- More family time
- Flexible working
- Less risk commuting
- 21st century problems do I use Zoom, Facetime, Messenger Live, WhatsApp Live, Microsoft Teams.....



A Changing World: Risk Management, Planning and Response in a Post Covid World

THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR TIME

ANY QUESTIONS??

And don't forget

**Hands and face and give some
space.....**