



National Audit Office

DATA - APPLICABLE

Doc ref: Form 2.0 Version 10

RISK ASSESSMENT:

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Risk Assessment for Working Safely at the NAO Office, Newcastle, London

Number of appendices 0

<b>Activities:</b> Working Safely at Newcastle during Covid-19	<b>Location:</b> St Nicholas Building, Newcastle	<b>Name of person completing the generic baseline RA:</b> Christine Bass <b>Name of person preparing a site/person/task specific RA:</b> Christine Bass
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<b>Who is exposed to the hazards listed below?</b> X NAO Employees X Others: Visitors, Contractors, Tenants, Young Persons, New & Expectant Mothers, Persons with Disabilities	<b>Environment:</b> X NAO Office <input type="checkbox"/> External Areas <input type="checkbox"/> Other off- site working, clients premises
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Support in completing the risk assessment can be found here: [Guide to carrying out Risk Assessments](#)    Key: H = HIGH RISK, M = MEDIUM RISK, L = LOW RISK

The Government Guidance Document <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/offices-and-contact-centres> has been followed whilst writing this Risk Assessment  
Protocols for working safely at Newcastle have been developed from this risk assessment and will be provided to everyone working in Newcastle office

HAZARD	RISK EVALUATION		SAFETY CONTROL MEASURES	H/M/L	Check
A Hazard is something that has the potential to cause harm	What is the risk (probability & severity) of the hazard causing harm or damage?	H/M/L (before)	All of the safety control measures set out below should be in place. If not, identify those which require implementing by using the check column to the right. Add any hazards not identified in this generic assessment in the space at the bottom of the form and follow the risk assessment process	(after = residual risk)	
Spread of Covid-19	Risk of contracting Covid-19 from colleagues or visitors whilst at work	<b>H</b>	<b>Hand Washing</b> Hand washing facilities with soap and water in place. See hand washing guidance <a href="https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/best-way-to-wash-your-hands/">https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/best-way-to-wash-your-hands/</a>  Drying of hands with disposable paper towels. <a href="https://www.nursingtimes.net/news/research-and-innovation/paper-towels-much-more-effective-at-removing-viruses-than-hand-dryers-17-04-2020/">https://www.nursingtimes.net/news/research-and-innovation/paper-towels-much-more-effective-at-removing-viruses-than-hand-dryers-17-04-2020/</a>  Gel sanitisers available at the entrances to the NAO office and available meeting rooms.  Employees to be reminded on a regular basis to wash their hands for 20 seconds with water and soap and the importance of proper drying with disposable towels. Also reminded to catch coughs and sneezes in tissues – Follow Catch it, Bin it, Kill it and to avoid touching face, eyes, nose or mouth with unclean hands. Tissues will be made available throughout the workplace.	<b>L</b>	



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Posters have been displayed throughout the workplace <https://www.nsfh.nhs.uk/Find-help/Documents/Coronavirus%20Print%20Friendly%20A4%20Poster.pdf>

<https://www.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/media/33429304/nhs-hand-wasing-technique.pdf>

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5eb97d30d3bf7f5d364bfbb6/staying-covid-19-secure.pdf>

Notices have been displayed in toilets reminding staff to close the toilet lid before flushing.

**Cleaning**

Frequently cleaning and disinfecting objects and surfaces that are touched regularly particularly in areas of high use such as door handles, light switches, handrails, lift buttons and reception area using appropriate cleaning products and methods. The kitchen and tea point will be cleaned regularly and staff asked to clean items they have touched after each use – antibacterial wipes will be provided.

A Housekeeper will be present during the daytime to clean regularly touched surfaces within the NAO office and the landlord will be increasing cleaning within common areas

Toilets are cleaned by the landlord who will increase cleaning during the daytime

See information below from Landlord guidance document

A limited number of desks will be open and the evening cleaning regime will be changed so that each workstation which is in use will receive a full sanitising clean every evening (including IT kit, chair and any other surface which may be touched).

Wipes are provided for wiping down DWP terminals which may be used by more than one person. The office protocol explains the need to wipe the terminal and this will be re-iterated to terminal users.



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Showers will be cleaned after use by the Housekeeper.

**Waste Disposal**

Different types of bins will be removed from desk areas and a central waste disposal point will be created in the main kitchen. Waste will be collected daily and disposed of by the cleaning team and the bins will be cleaned

**Social Distancing**

Social Distancing -Reducing the number of persons in any work area to comply with the 2-metre (6.5 foot) gap recommended by the Public Health Agency  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing>

Work schedules reviewed including start and finish times, working from home etc. to reduce number of workers on site at any one time.

The default position is that everyone will work at home unless presence in the office has been agreed – this means there should be adequate desks and facilities whilst maintaining social distancing. Staff will not be allowed to ‘pop in’ to work in the office

Only one person at a time will be allowed in the kitchen, tea point, server room, post and store rooms.

Staff will not use adjacent or opposite desks and desks will be allocated so as to avoid ‘passing traffic’. Chairs and desks which are not to be used will be identified by tape/signs. Desks will be allocated to individuals who have been given permission to work in the office – there will be no hot desking and staff will not be allowed to just turn up to work in the office.

We will continue to use remote ways of meeting, however a physical meeting of up to 4 people may now take place in Tyne. The meeting room must be booked in advance and the Protocols for using the meeting room must be followed by the meeting organiser and attendees. The meeting room will be cleaned by the housekeeping team between meetings. Sanitiser is available in the meeting room. Tables and chairs will be marked as ‘available’ or ‘not to be used’.



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The breakfast bar, prayer room and the smoking shelter are closed. Tea point and kitchen will remain open and fridges will be available for storing food. Limited seating is available in the kitchen and staff reminded via notices to maintain social distancing and one person at a time to use the table. All areas will be cleaned after use (i.e. taps, handles, etc.) and wipes will be provided for this.

Staff to be reminded of the importance of social distancing both in the workplace and outside of it – posters are displayed throughout the workplace. Management checks to ensure this is adhered to.

Perspex screens fitted to the reception desk along with signage reminding people to social distance.

**Trainees using the office for exams of study**

Trainees who request to study or take exams in Newcastle will be allocated an individual meeting room to study in. The rooms will be cleaned after use by the housekeeping team. Trainees are issued with a set of instructions as well as the risk assessment and protocols for the office

**Landlord Information for Common Areas of St Nicholas Building**  
**Entering the building**

There is a signposted one-way system:

Right door towards centre stairwell - access to all floors.

Left door towards lifts.

Central revolving door – Exit only.

Access for motorists and cyclists using the underground parking area will remain via the basement door, except for those using rear yard parking who will enter via the front building doors.

Colleagues **MUST** call the BPR Security team based at the London Office on Ext. 7913 when they **ARRIVE** and when they **LEAVE** site.

**Stairwells**



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The central stairwell is for entering / travelling up within the building.  
The North stairwell will exit to the basement ONLY, and not via the main entrance.  
The South stairwell is for leaving / travelling down within the building and exits via Westgate Road.

**Exiting the building**

Lifts down to lobby – leave via central revolving door.  
North stairwell down – exits via basement  
South stairwell down - comes out onto Westgate Road on the West side of the building

Rear door into rear car park - exit only before 6pm. After 6pm and all out of hours rear door returns to exit and entry as it is the only door to give access to the building via our building fobs.

The Building Manager will assist with social distancing and traffic flow where possible.

Until further notice the smoking area and shelter at the rear of the building is suspended.  
Smokers will be asked to respect social distancing and move away from the entrances at ALL times.

**Main Building Reception:**

Visitors signing in book removed. Reception team will check visitors in/out.  
Signage and floor marking will be in place to remind of social distancing of 2m at all times.  
A Perspex screen will be fitted at reception desk.

A free-standing hand sanitiser will be in place in reception area. Occupiers will be encouraged to use this when entering the building.

There will be social distancing signage installed throughout the building, in all communal areas, including lifts, WC's, stairwells, cycle store and reception area.



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**Lifts:**

Instruction given to adhere to social distancing measures and maintain a 2m distance within the lift if using with 1 other person or use the stairs.

Landlord suggests the use of face masks to prevent infection whilst using the lift facility.

**Stairwells:**

Social distancing of 2m or 8 steps is advised.

Central stairwell – travelling up within the building.

North and South stairwells – travelling down within the building.

**WC's:**

Female

Alternate hand wash basins will be put out of use to allow distancing whilst using them.

Paper towels will be provided.

Male

Out of 4 urinals, central 2 will be closed off to allow for distancing,

Alternate hand basins out of use.

Paper towels will be provided.

Notices in place to ask users to close toilets seat for flushing in line with government guidelines.

A clinical waste bin will be placed in the WC on each floor for the disposal of paper hand towels.

**Cycle Store – Basement:**

Users are asked to maintain social distancing. Sanitiser will be applied to cycle racks to ensure they are cleaned daily.

**Crowd Management:**

Landlord has assured every effort will be made to ensure continuous movement, however, note that this may prove difficult in areas of limited space,



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They will advise of any peak times to be avoided so that social distancing can be adhered to. Signage, floor markers will indicate where occupiers may queue in the event of waiting to access an area.

**Cleaning:**

Prior to re-occupancy cleaning specialists will undertake a deep clean of all communal areas within the building. Where resources allow extra cleaning will be carried out throughout each day. Strong focus on contact surfaces – door handles, handrails, lift buttons.

A clinical waste bin is provided within the bin store area.

Occupiers are advised to provide a clinical waste bin in their domain also – gloves, face masks, wipes, sanitisation cloths etc should be collected in this bin and sealed before transfer to the main bin area for the building.

External cleaning – external building area will be sanitised regularly. Door handles, intercoms, proximity readers and touch pads in all areas including car park and cycle store.

**Contractor access – Landlord request:**

Landlord will ensure safe working practises have been implemented by all contractors attending site. If access is required to our floor they will wear PPE, including gloves and facemasks. Intrusive maintenance inspections will be completed outside normal working hours to reduce physical contact with others.

**Post Deliveries:**

Reception team will direct deliveries to our floor upon arrival. Occupiers expecting large deliveries are asked to inform building management in advance.

Landlord recommends occupants identify a designated area within their office space to sanitise deliveries before distribution. Deliveries of personal items has been prohibited to minimise exposure form external parties.

**Wearing of Gloves**



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Where Risk Assessment identifies wearing of gloves as a requirement of the job (e.g. cleaning), an adequate supply of these will be provided. Staff will be instructed on how to remove gloves carefully to reduce contamination and how to dispose of them safely.

Contractors and staff who are handing items over to others must use wipes to sanitise the item and wear gloves during the handover.

Staff are reminded that wearing of gloves is not a substitute for good hand washing

**Respiratory Protective Equipment (RPE) and Face Coverings**

Updated Dec 23 2020 – a face covering which covers the mouth and nose must be worn in all areas when moving around the building – they may be taken off when seated at a work station

Where RPE is a requirement for risks associated with the work undertaken (risks other than COVID) the following measures will be followed-

Tight-fitting respirators (such as disposable FFP3 masks and reusable half masks) rely on having a good seal with the wearer’s face. A face fit test will be carried out to ensure the respiratory protective equipment (RPE) can protect the wearer. Wearers must be clean shaven.

**Testing for asymptomatic COVID**

Staff who will be working in the office are encouraged to test regularly using freely available Lateral Flow (LF) Tests. These can be accessed via [Regular rapid coronavirus \(COVID-19\) tests if you do not have symptoms - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus/covid-19/regular-rapid-tests).

- If the LF test is positive the individual should then go for a PCR test to confirm. [Get a free PCR test to check if you have coronavirus \(COVID-19\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/get-a-free-pcr-test-to-check-if-you-have-coronavirus-covid-19). Whilst awaiting the PCR test result it must be assumed that the individual has COVID and they should isolate and not come to the office
- Staff are instructed to inform HR Service Desk of a positive LF test result as soon as possible. This must be followed up with the PCR test result as soon as possible.
- If the PCR test is negative the individual can return to the office.





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If a LF test shows a positive response and the person has been in the office in the past 72 hours NAO will contact all those who have been working in the office and ask them to stay home until a PCR test has been completed. If the PCR test comes back positive a full sanitising clean will be undertaken of the areas in the office they have accessed.

**Symptoms of Covid-19**

If anyone becomes unwell with symptoms of Covid-19 in the workplace they will be isolated in the first aid room and arrangements will be made for them to go home. Areas of the office the unwell staff member has accessed will receive a full sanitising clean by staff wearing appropriate PPE. Others who may have come into contact with the unwell person will be informed.

Staff who are unwell must follow the stay at home guidance.

If a staff member becomes unwell with symptoms of COVID or tests positive for COVID after having been in the office they must inform the HR Service desk and their line manager immediately. If the staff member has been in the office in the past 72 hours, the office will be closed.. The individual must inform HR service desk the outcome of their COVID test. If the test is positive, the offices will receive a full sanitising clean by staff wearing appropriate PPE and HR will assist with the NHS Test and Trace procedures if necessary and will inform other NAO staff who may also be affected. The facilities team will inform the landlord if necessary.

If there are two or more confirmed cases of COVID of staff who have worked in the office and transmission is likely to have occurred in the workplace the local Health Protection Team will be informed

PHE North East Health Protection Team,  
Floor 2 Citygate, Gallowgate,  
Newcastle upon Tyne,  
NE1 4WH

Phone: 0300 303 8596 option 1



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			<p>Staff who are unwell will be advised to follow the stay at home guidance.</p> <p>Line managers will maintain regular contact with staff members during this time and will offer support to staff who are affected by Coronavirus or has a family member affected.</p> <p><b>Ventilation systems</b> The building's ventilation system does not recirculate air. The building receives a fresh air supply via air handling units (AHUs). From there, the outside air is taken in, filtered and delivered to the floors. The "used" air is then extracted from each floor and expelled outside by the same AHU but using extract ducting.</p>		
Lack of first aid cover	Lack of first aid cover leading to inadequate response to accidents or medical incidents	<b>M</b>	<p>There may not be a first aider in the office, however first aid boxes are available and there will be an Appointed Person who will take charge of an emergency.</p> <p>Anyone requiring first aid will be required to wear a face mask (if their injury or illness allows) to protect anyone giving first aid as the 2m social distance is likely to be breached. First aider to wear disposable gloves before treating a casualty. St John Ambulance and Resuscitation Council UK updated advice for first aiders will be communicated.</p> <p><a href="https://www.sja.org.uk/get-advice/first-aid-advice/covid-19-advice-for-first-aiders/">https://www.sja.org.uk/get-advice/first-aid-advice/covid-19-advice-for-first-aiders/</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.resus.org.uk/media/statements/resuscitation-council-uk-statements-on-covid-19-coronavirus-cpr-and-resuscitation/covid-community/">https://www.resus.org.uk/media/statements/resuscitation-council-uk-statements-on-covid-19-coronavirus-cpr-and-resuscitation/covid-community/</a></p>	<b>L</b>	
Fire or other emergency situation requiring the building to be evacuated	<p>Risk of an uncoordinated or delayed evacuation due to lack of fire wardens.</p> <p>Risk that we would not know which staff members are present in the building</p>	<b>H</b>	<p>All NAO staff will be required to follow the Out of Hours Security Protocol at all times – this means phoning BPR security on arrival and departure from the building.</p> <p>Evacuation procedures will be updated if necessary to reflect the changing situation and will be communicated to staff who are in the building.</p> <p>Landlord has distributed a Re-Occupancy Guidance Brief to all tenants in which it states as per guidance issued by National Fire Chiefs Council evacuation protocols for</p>	<b>L</b>	



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			<p>the building will not change. They state whilst social distancing measures may be impacted during an evacuation, by following government guidelines on maintaining hygiene at Assembly Points evacuations can be managed.</p> <p>Staff will be instructed to maintain appropriate social distancing at the assembly point and in evacuation routes.</p> <p>Staff who would require assistance to evacuate and have a PEEP (Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan) will be considered on an individual basis and a plan established before they can work in the office.</p>		
Mental ill health	Risk that staff suffer from mental ill health as a result of returning to the workplace	M	<p>NAO will continue to promote mental health &amp; wellbeing awareness to staff and will offer whatever support they can to help.</p> <p>Employee Assistance Programme is in place to support staff and Merlin has details of how to get support.</p> <p>Mental Health First Aiders will continue to provide support via phone, email, etc.</p>	L	
Contracting Covid-19 whilst commuting to Newcastle	Increased risk of contracting Covid-19 due to decreased number of trains making it more difficult to social distance	H	<p>Staff are advised to follow the Government advice and avoid using public transport if possible.</p> <p>Staff are aware of local car parks which can be used for private vehicles should they choose to drive to work.</p> <p>Bicycle storage areas and showers are available for staff who cycle to work.</p> <p>NAO staff will be reminded to follow government advice relating to the use of public transport <a href="https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers">https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers</a> and will be reminded of the risks of travelling by public transport during discussions around whether they can work in the office.</p>		
Lone Working due to low staff occupancy of the building	Injury or illness and inability to call for help. Security risk from intruders	M	<p>If only one member of staff is present in the office they will follow the <a href="#">out of hours security protocol</a> and will contact BPR security on arrival and departure.</p> <p>BPR security will monitor security cameras for Newcastle office.</p>		



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Having reviewed the hazards and risks, the level of risk and the key risks, I believe that if the control measures identified are applied NAO will, so far as is reasonably practicable, have met the requirements of this assessment.

**Assessment made by:**

Print: ...Daniel Lambauer.....Signature:...

..... Dated: ... 26 April 2021.....

**Note:** Document AD 5.0 'Guide to carrying out Risk Assessments' should be read before completing this Risk Assessment.