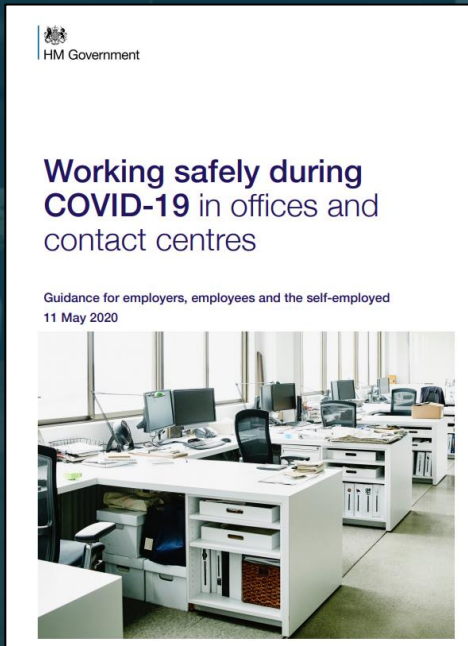


Returning to a safe workplace



MEET | WORK | VISIT

Working safely during COVID-19 in offices and contact centres

Guidance for employers, employees and the self-employed
11 May 2020



Government guidelines:

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5eb97e7686650c278d4496ea/working-safely-during-covid-19-offices-contact-centres-110520.pdf>

Introduction:

Many governments, including that of the UK, are in the process of implementing new guidelines to permit a safe re-opening of the workplace. While uncertainty still exists, the current consensus is that social distancing rules may be required for 1-2 years minimum.

This 2m society will require companies to put systems in place that will support the maintenance of social distancing and ultimately keep their employees safe whilst supporting the business' key activities and work processes.

Recently the UK government released a document to outline these challenges and provide guidelines for organisations and employees on how they can achieve a safe return to work (see left). This document sets several recommendations that will likely form the backbone of modern office settings and highlights how office management solutions such as GoBright can support this change.

1.1 Managing risk

Objective: To reduce risk to the lowest reasonably practicable level by taking preventative measures, in order of priority.

Employers have a duty to reduce workplace risk to the lowest reasonably practicable level by taking preventative measures. Employers must work with any other employers or contractors sharing the workplace so that everybody's health and safety is protected. In the context of COVID-19 this means working through these steps in order:

- In every workplace, increasing the frequency of handwashing and surface cleaning.
- Businesses and workplaces should make every reasonable effort to enable working from home as a first option. Where working from home is not possible, workplaces should make every reasonable effort to comply with the social distancing guidelines set out by the government (keeping people 2m apart wherever possible).
- Where the social distancing guidelines cannot be followed in full, in relation to a particular activity, businesses should consider whether that activity needs to continue for the business to operate, and if so, take all the mitigating actions possible to reduce the risk of transmission between their staff.
- Further mitigating actions include:
 - Increasing the frequency of hand washing and surface cleaning.
 - Keeping the activity time involved as short as possible.
 - Using screens or barriers to separate people from each other.
 - Using back-to-back or side-to-side working (rather than face-to-face) whenever possible.
 - Reducing the number of people each person has contact with by using "fixed teams or partnering" (so each person works with only a few others).
- Finally, if people must work face-to-face for a sustained period with more than a small group of fixed partners, then you will need to assess whether the activity can safely go ahead. No one is obliged to work in an unsafe work environment.
- In your assessment you should have particular regard to whether the people doing the work are especially vulnerable to COVID-19.

The recommendations in the rest of this document are ones you should consider as you go through this process. You could also consider any advice that has been produced specifically for your sector, for example by trade associations or trades unions.

If you have not already done so, you should carry out an assessment of the risks posed by COVID-19 in your workplace as soon as possible. If you are currently operating, you are likely to have gone through a lot of this thinking already. We recommend that you use this document to identify any further improvements you should make.

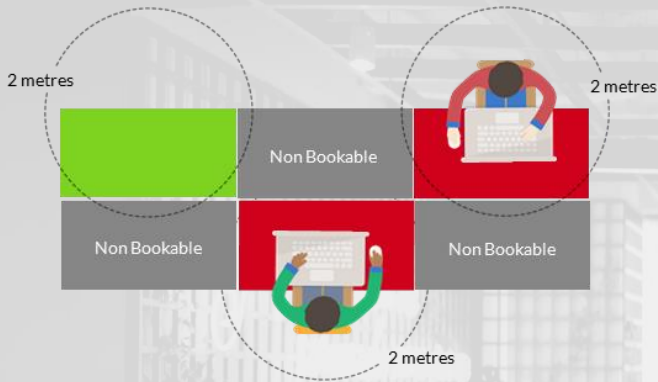
How can you maintain social distancing in the workplace?

Meeting Spaces

Social distancing may require a change to the capacity of a meeting space (as chairs are removed etc.). Room capacity in GoBright can be amended, if the room layout has changed and resulted in a lower capacity (if chairs are removed for example) – this ensures when staff need to book a room, the rooms shown in the search results accurately reflect the number of people the room can support. This is important to avoid unsafe overcrowding in rooms.

Specific rooms can also be 'closed' to booking entirely if required. The panel outside the room can be set to sleep automatically during this closed period, ensuring power savings and offering a clear visual view that the room is unavailable (as no light is displayed).





Office Desks

Keeping 2m distance in many cases will require specific desks to be made unbookable. With pressure on remaining space, a booking system for desks becomes necessary.

Desks that remain in use can be given an availability status via GoBright's Desk Connect. Employees can book desks in advance of commuting (via GoBright portal or mobile app), or whilst at the office. The check in feature will ensure desks are released automatically in the event of no shows.

It is possible to set desks as 'closed' (made non bookable) in GoBright, preventing them from being visible to those searching for a desk in the portal/mobile app. Closed desks are also invisible on the interactive map. This ensures no confusion during the booking process and guarantees provision of a safe space. Closed desks can be easily re-enabled as rules change.



Visitor Management

While visitor numbers to office spaces are likely to be reduced, as visitors are able to join remotely, there will still be instances where onsite visitation may be required.

GoBright's visitor management allows for elimination of traditional sign in process for visitors – speaking up visitor processing and eliminating risk of queues.

The pre-registration feature allows reception to see how many visitors are due to come in (if there is a policy on maximum number of daily visitors). Pre-registration also vastly reduces check in process, eliminating risk of queues, as details are already known.

To improve hygiene, touching the screen can be eliminated entirely, by the receptionist signing in the pre-registered visitor direct in the GoBright portal (receptionist's PC). Alternatively, the organisation can use QR codes for visitors to reduce (but not eliminate) use of the screen (if unmanned reception).

Signing out can also be done via receptionist (if manned), or via QR code (if unmanned).

Minimising face to face working where possible

HM Government

3.3 Workplaces and workstations


Objective: To maintain social distancing between individuals when they are at their workstations.

- For people who work in one place, workstations should allow them to maintain social distancing wherever possible.
- Workstations should be assigned to an individual and not shared. If they need to be shared they should be shared by the smallest possible number of people.
- If it is not possible to keep workstations 2m apart then businesses should consider whether that activity needs to continue for the business to operate and if so take all mitigating actions possible to reduce the risk of transmission.


Steps that will usually be needed:

- Review layouts and processes to allow people to work further apart from each other.
- Using floor tape or paint to mark areas to help workers keep to a 2m distance.
- Only where it is not possible to move workstations further apart, arranging people to work side by side or facing away from each other rather than face-to-face.
- Only where it is not possible to move workstations further apart, using screens to separate people from each other.
- Managing occupancy levels to enable social distancing.
- Avoiding use of hot desks and spaces and, where not possible, for example, call centres or training facilities, cleaning workstations between different occupants including shared equipment.

Green markers to limit desk usage and maintain social distancing



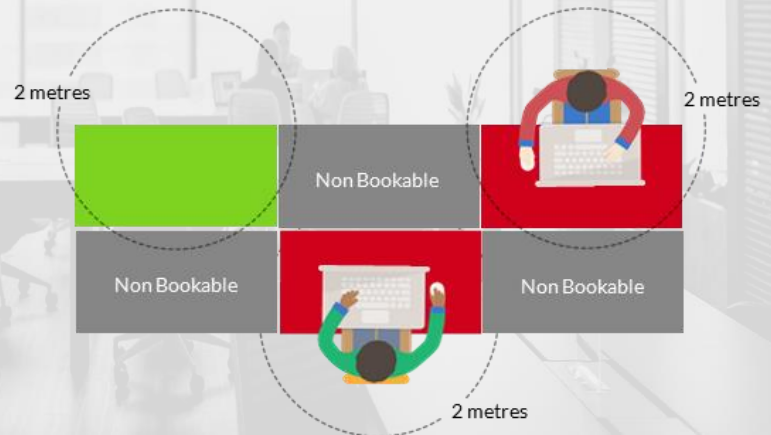
Floor plan and signage to enable social distancing and safe working in office



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To comply with face to face guidance, it may be necessary to close off desks that directly face another 'open' desk. With GoBright, desks can be strategically 'closed' as to ensure that desks that are still available do not face each other. This also overcomes the need to physically reposition furniture or implement screens between spaces.

The below diagram highlights a suggested layout, with specific desks closed to booking to enforce this guidance:



Staggering arrival and departure times

To avoid the risk of overcrowding in certain areas of the building (e.g. entrances), it may be necessary for a organisation to issue guidance on specific arrival and departure times for staff.

GoBright permits room and desk spaces to be booked out specific dates/times. This allows staff to choose when they come in at their discretion, based on how busy the office is during a specific period. Alternatively, the organisation can set specific start/end times to groups employees.

Building/facilities managers can use occupancy data to monitor business days/or hours in office in real time, and issue guidance to employees on designated start/finish times accordingly.



HM Government

3.1 Coming to work and leaving work

Objective: To maintain social distancing wherever possible, on arrival and departure and to ensure handwashing upon arrival.

Steps that will usually be needed:

- Staggering arrival and departure times at work to reduce crowding into and out of the workplace, taking account of the impact on those with protected characteristics.
- Providing additional parking or facilities such as bike-racks to help people walk, run, or cycle to work where possible.
- Limiting passengers in corporate vehicles, for example, work minibuses. This could include leaving seats empty.
- Reducing congestion, for example, by having more entry points to the workplace.
- Providing more storage for workers for clothes and bags.
- Using markings and introducing one-way flow at entry and exit points.
- Providing handwashing facilities, or hand sanitiser where not possible, at entry/exit points and not using touch-based security devices such as keypads.
- Defining process alternatives for entry/exit points where appropriate, for example, deactivating turnstiles requiring pass checks in favour of showing a pass to security personnel at a distance.

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Minimising use of touch-based devices in office

5.2 Keeping the workplace clean

Objective: To keep the workplace clean and prevent transmission by touching contaminated surfaces.

Steps that will usually be needed:

- Frequent cleaning of work areas and equipment between uses, using your usual cleaning products.
- Frequent cleaning of objects and surfaces that are touched regularly, such as door handles and keyboards, and making sure there are adequate disposal arrangements.
- Clearing workspaces and removing waste and belongings from the work area at the end of a shift.
- Limiting or restricting use of high-touch items and equipment, for example, printers or whiteboards.
- If you are cleaning after a known or suspected case of COVID-19 then you should refer to the [specific guidance](#).

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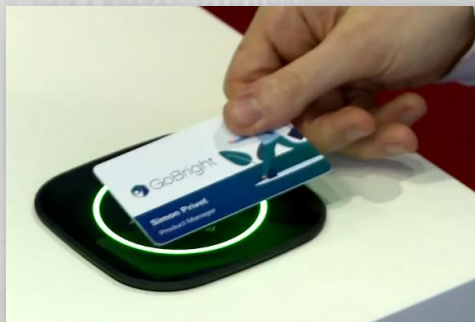
Room booking can be done via mobile app and GoBright portal (and Outlook plugin if room booking). Booking from map kiosk and booking from room touch screen can be temporarily disabled (and re-enabled as rules change). These screens can still be left on for display of availability information, but no longer require touch.

Room booking and desk booking can be done via mobile app and GoBright portal (and Outlook plugin if room booking). Booking from map kiosk and booking from room touch screen can be temporarily disabled (and re-enabled as rules change). These screens can still be left on for display of availability information, but no longer require touch.



For meeting room displays, check in and room release automation can be changed to sensor-based detection, rather than from room screen button, to maintain a contactless check in/check out process. Alternatively, check in can be disabled entirely.

For desk booking, both check in methods are contactless - Check in and desk release can either be done via sensor automation, or via RFID check in, hold card close to the Desk Connect (taking care not to physically touch it).



3.2 Moving around buildings and worksites

Objective: To maintain social distancing wherever possible while people travel through the workplace.

Steps that will usually be needed:

- Reducing movement by discouraging non-essential trips within buildings and sites, for example, restricting access to some areas, encouraging use of radios or telephones, where permitted, and cleaning them between use.
- Restricting access between different areas of a building or site.
- Reducing job and location rotation.
- Introducing more one-way flow through buildings.
- Reducing maximum occupancy for lifts, providing hand sanitiser for the operation of lifts and encouraging use of stairs wherever possible.
- Making sure that people with disabilities are able to access lifts.
- Regulating use of high traffic areas including corridors, lifts turnstiles and walkways to maintain social distancing.

Example lift practices

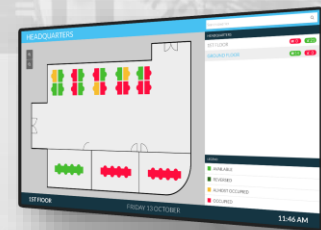


Restricting access to certain areas of the building

Restricting access comes in two forms – the first is to implement specific routes through the building (e.g. one way system for narrow corridors). The other is a complete restriction of access (such as shutting off a floor).

Rooms and desks can be made non bookable in specific areas. This can either be actioned by closing specific desks in GoBright, or closing locations (specific floors, areas, or even entire buildings) from being booked (and become invisible when searching).

For creating specific routes through the building, GoBright's Wayfinder can be used to give direction guidance to specific rooms, in line with any implemented routes set up. The background of the interactive map can also be updated with visual arrows to help with guidance.



3.3 Workplaces and workstations

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Steps that will usually be needed:

- Review layouts and processes to allow people to work further apart from each other.
- Using floor tape or paint to mark areas to help workers keep to a 2m distance.
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- Avoiding use of hot desks and spaces and, where not possible, for example, call centres or training facilities, cleaning workstations between different occupants including shared equipment.

Green markers to limit desk usage and maintain social distancing



Floor plan and signage to enable social distancing and safe working in office



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Managing Occupancy levels to enable social distancing

Room occupancy levels should be amended to reflect the current maximum number the room can safely support. Employees searching for a room will now be shown only rooms that support their required numbers.

Further detail on this can be found on [Page 3](#).



For Facilities Managers, understanding current and historical occupancy data is key to setting workplace advice. GoBright analytics can be used to monitor live or historical data on room desk use. This makes it possible to understand where the levels are currently, and any trends (busiest days/working hours).

First consideration should be closing desk spaces to ensure 2m distance between desks spaces remaining. This will immediately reduce capacity of building, ensuring overoccupancy is not possible. As desks would be booked in advance, staff numbers in the building are easily managed (as they won't travel to the building if there is not a desk available beforehand).

Facilities managers can also monitor the effects of the changes in the GoBright analytics – where they can monitor occupancy rates. This data can then be used to adapt current workplace policies (such as a staff rota, or advice on who should be coming in, if the occupancy close to maximum for example).



Avoiding hot desking, or implementing cleaning routines between desk use

Hot desking can still be used safely, if hygiene protocols are in place. Desks that are booked for the day are viewable in the GoBright portal, allowing cleaning staff to monitor where desks have been used. To ensure there is a consistent window where cleaning can take place, it is advisable to allow fixed booking slots only (AM session, PM session, or All Day). Cleaning can then take place on desks between the AM and PM sessions, based on desks that were booked that day according to portal (so cleaning of desks unnecessarily is cut).

(Upcoming feature – 1st September 2020) – Desk needs cleaning status, visible light indicates desk requires cleaning before it can be used again. This provides a visual (purple) indication of when a desk should/should not be used and allows for hot desks to be used dynamically (no fixed start/end times etc.).

HM Government

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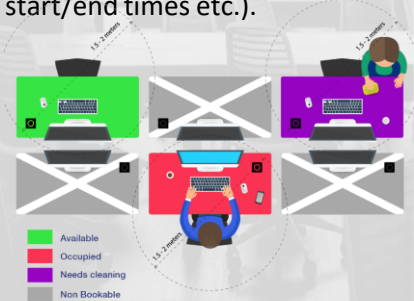
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Floor plan and signage to enable social distancing and safe working in office

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3.4 Meetings

Objective: To reduce transmission due to face-to-face meetings and maintain social distancing in meetings.

Steps that will usually be needed:

- Using remote working tools to avoid in-person meetings.
- Only absolutely necessary participants should attend meetings and should maintain 2m separation throughout.
- Avoiding transmission during meetings, for example, avoiding sharing pens and other objects.**
- Providing hand sanitiser in meeting rooms.
- Holding meetings outdoors or in well-ventilated rooms whenever possible.
- For areas where regular meetings take place, using floor signage to help people maintain social distancing.

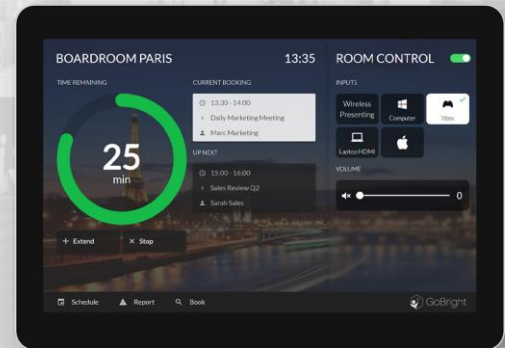
Aiding social distancing and cleaning in meetings



Avoiding transmission during meetings, such as avoiding sharing equipment or other objects

Within meeting spaces, a common challenge is minimising common areas of touch (remote controls, on/off switch of display etc.)

GoBright's AV Room control allows for the automation of certain AV elements when a meeting starts/checked into (screens turning on automatically, setting to correct AV input etc.). This not just cuts the amount of touch required, but also reduces the amount of equipment preparation time as these task become automated.



We hope this document has provided some useful guidance on how to provide systems within your organisation's workplace to ensure a safe return to work for your employees and visitors.

Smart Presentations Limited are an accredited reseller and integrator for GoBright, offering professional services to deliver these solutions successfully within your workplace.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss your possible requirements and offer guidance for effective collaboration within your meeting environments.



Making Collaboration Work:
Driving productivity through innovative technology

Smart Presentations Limited

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