

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Policy and Guiding Principles

V3 September 2021

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Signed:



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13th September 2021

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1. Policy Statement

- 1.1. The overriding purpose of this policy is for Learn Plus Us (LPU) to manage the working implications of COVID-19 and mitigate the risks to health and life of our staff, freelance associates, Apprentices and learners
- 1.2. This policy includes the measures we are actively taking to mitigate the spread of Coronavirus. You are required to follow all these rules, to sustain a healthy and safe workplace during the pandemic
- 1.3. This policy applies to all employees, Directors and freelance associates; we must respond responsibly and transparently to avoid unnecessary risk to health and life
- 1.4. This Coronavirus (COVID-19) policy is a live document, which will be updated as Government guidelines change. Any update to the policy will be uploaded to 'Breath' and an email alert will be sent to ensure you are always up to date
- 1.5. Our risk assessment strategy has evolved during pandemic but is focussed on identifying and minimising risks and ensuring Government guidelines and legislation are followed. Risk assessments include head office and training facilities and from an individual perspective health and household
- 1.6. All information disclosed in relation to your health and household members, where applicable to COVID-19, will be treated with strict confidentiality and retained on your HR file in compliance with GDPR

2. Policy Aims

- 2.1. To adhere to Government policy and guidance to mitigate the spread of the virus
- 2.2. Ensure all reasonable health, safety and hygiene interventions are in place in the workplace
- 2.3. Clarify roles and responsibilities
- 2.4. Provide clear instruction, procedures, and guidance, including reporting and communication
- 2.5. Make available current information from reliable external sources
- 2.6. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Health and Safety and Safeguarding Policies

3. Guiding Principles

- 3.1. Our primary guiding principle is to make decisions and take actions that have the safety and wellbeing of our colleagues at its core. Our 'working from home' during the pandemic policy has been flexed to allow people to work from the office and make employ rite visits, however most teaching, training and assessment remains virtual due to the types of employment venues.
- 3.2. We aim to minimise the risk of spreading the virus to learners, Apprentices and others within their workplace, including vulnerable services users.
 - 3.2.1. Colleagues that have been approved to work from the office, attend a meeting in the office or visit an external site are required to complete a lateral flow test the day before, if positive you must not attend the office or visit employers' sites. Boxes of tests and face coverings are available by request to Victor Stephenson-Henshaw or can be ordered on-line or collected from a local pharmacy.
 - 3.2.2. Whilst we cannot insist that people have both vaccines, we will need to comply with employers' policy and future legislation relating to the requirement to be double vaccinated to work in the health care sector
- 3.3. We will be further guided by our **Communicable Disease and Health and Safety policies**.
- 3.4. We will adhere to government policy and guidance to mitigate the spread of the virus.
 - a. We will adopt a safe and sure approach to relaxations.
 - b. We will keep changes to legislation and guidance under review and make recommendations to the Board as required.
 - c. We will use these guiding principles to inform decision making relating to changes in working practises.
- 3.5. We will ensure all reasonable health, safety and hygiene interventions are in place in the workplace.
- 3.6. Employee should not attend the office or an employer site of they have COVID19 symptoms.
- 3.7. We will ensure that leaners and Apprentices are not disadvantaged by our policy and procedures.

4. Background and Overview of COVID-19

- 4.1. COVID-19 is a new virus that is part of the Coronavirus family.
- 4.2. Started in China in the last quarter of 2019. The UK started reporting cases in March 2020, the spread of the virus was fast. There was an early move into self-isolation on 21st March 2020 and the full lockdown commenced on the evening of 26th March.
- 4.3. In the summer of 2020, a range of relaxations were introduced, including a risk rating via a 4-tier system. Working from home remained the Governments' approach through and was only changed on 19th July 2021.
- 4.4. Many restrictions have been lifted, it's now recommended that face coverings are worn in indoor public places, social distancing if possible and essential personal hygiene – hand washing, disposal of soiled tissues etc.

5. The Company's Responsibilities and Procedures

- 5.1. Health and Safety – Whilst we are addressing COVID-19 through a discreet policy and working procedures, it does fall under the general Health and Safety at Work Act and therefore the **Health and Safety Policies** should be read in conjunction with this policy. The company has a duty to provide a safe and healthy working environment for all employees.
- 5.2. Communicable Diseases – Whilst we are addressing COVID-19 through a discreet policy and working procedures, it does also fall within the **Communicable Diseases policy** and therefore this must be read in conjunction with this policy. The company has a duty to provide a safe and healthy working environment for all employees and this includes mitigation against communicable diseases.
- 5.3. Risk Assessment – The company has carried out **COVID-19 Risk Assessments (Coronavirus Office Risk Assessment, LPU-Coronavirus Risk Assessment-Mobile Workers)**, which is relevant to all employees and can be found on Breath, alongside this policy. We have utilised all published Government guidance for the FE sector and office workers.
- 5.4. **New and Expectant Mothers Risk Assessment** – It has been well documented that expectant mothers are more vulnerable in relation to COVID-19 and therefore we will carry out this specific risk assessment with all new and expectant mothers.
- 5.5. Communication – Effective communication of policy, procedures, risk assessments and any changes are not only the organisation's responsibility, but also the best way to keep teams and individuals up to date. We will use team meetings, emails for urgent information and Breath for ease of access to current information and guidance.
- 5.6. Wellbeing – We have a duty of care to incorporate wellbeing into our Health and Safety strategies. We take this very seriously; HR heads up this area and is accessible to all colleagues in addition to line managers. We have an employee assistance package through Benestar which includes support in this area.
- 5.7. Head Office Workers
 - a. Consider the available space across the 4-room suite, our policy is to have a maximum of 10 people in the office at any one time.
 - b. Social distancing is advised.
 - c. Face coverings aren't mandatory in the office or communal areas of the building.
 - d. Working arrangements for head office workers and teams will be agreed in advance to ensure the rule of 10 is complied with.
 - e. Colleagues that have been approved to work from the office or attend a meeting in the office are required to complete a lateral flow test the day before, or for those working full time in the office twice a week.
 - f. General safety measures such as hand washing, not sharing equipment or utensils are still in place.
 - g. You must not come to the office if you have any COVID-19 symptoms.
- 5.8. Home/Field Workers
 - a. Our policy has moved to a more blended learning approach, however due to employers being cautious a large proportion of teaching, training and assessment is being delivered virtually and therefore there are still high levels of 'working from home'.
- 5.9. Team Meetings
 - a. Regular team meetings should be held virtually via Microsoft Teams.

- b. We understand the need for some face-to-face team meetings, we have several new team members that have never met their colleagues and there is a clear benefit from seeing people to bring a team together to focus on their goals and objectives, have some fun and develop new relationships:
- 5.10. Employees, freelancers, and other contractors
 - a. The company is accountable and has a duty of care to provide a healthy and safe working environment under the **Health and Safety at Work Act 1974** (H&SAW)
 - b. Once the risk assessment and mitigations have been documented, agreed and implemented we will display the COVID-19 Secure poster
 - c. Where reasonably practicable the company will agree with you, our employees working arrangements that might include working from home, working from the office, working at employer sites and/or external training premises.

6. Employee, Freelancer and Other Contractor Responsibilities

- 6.1. It is your legal responsibility to adhere to and to comply with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1972.
- 6.2. It is your responsibility to follow this policy, procedures, risk assessments.
- 6.3. You must read the Health and Safety policies and Communicable Disease Policy, alongside this policy.
- 6.4. Read updates that the company send to you.
- 6.5. It is your responsibility to follow the Government guidance in relation to COVID-19.
- 6.6. You are responsible for your own safety and safety of others, if you have any COVID-19 symptoms you must not come to the office, attend a face-to-face meeting or visit employer sites. You are required to take a COVID PCR test and confirm the results.
- 6.7. You must show respect to other people with differing views about face coverings, as these are no longer mandatory in the office.
- 6.8. When visiting an external site, you must follow their COVID-19 policy and procedures.

7. External Group Face to Face Training

- 7.1. Our policy is to permit face to face classroom session held in our training room at head office or in a rented meeting room in the same building. We do not hire rooms elsewhere.
- 7.2. Tutors must do a COVID-19 lateral flow test the night before the 1st day and for course over 3 days 2 a week. Should the result be positive you must inform their manager immediately so that the tutoring can be covered by a colleague, and you must not attend the office or training. Additionally, you must take a COVID-19 PCR test and inform us of the result once received.
- 7.3. All learners must take a COVID-19 lateral flow test and bring evidence of a negative result to the 1st day and the 3rd day for courses that last a week. If learners arrive and don't have the evidence we will supply them with a testing kit for them to take the test on the premises and show us the result. Should the test be positive they will be sent home immediately and advised to take a PCR test. If a learner refuses to take the lateral flow test they will be sent home and exited from the programme.
- 7.4. Tutors will remain at least 1 metre from the attendees.
- 7.5. Learners will have their own equipment and stationary, none of which will be shared.
- 7.6. Hand sanitisers and ant-bac wipes will be available at key entry and exit points.
- 7.7. Face coverings aren't required, but should a learner wish to wear one this is allowed.
- 7.8. We advise learners to avoid close contact, shouting and touching others.
- 7.9. Learners are instructed that if they feel unwell with Covid-19 symptoms they should inform the teacher and go home, where they can take a lateral flow test.
- 7.10. Learners use the signing in book, which doubles as a register for health and safety and we will use this in the event that someone tests positive for COVID-19 and we need to inform the other attendees.

- 7.11. We will continue to deliver some training session virtually via Microsoft Teams.
- 7.12. Social distancing of 1 metre should be achievable, there must be adequate ventilation/air extraction and equipment shouldn't be shared.

8. Holidays

- 8.1. Government policy and guidelines regarding overseas travel is regularly updated based upon the COVID-19 risk on a country-by-country basis. You must follow the current Government guidance upon your return and inform the company of your situation with regards to work.
- 8.2. If you must quarantine / self-isolate and you are able to perform you usual working duties from home or the allocated hotel, this is what we would expect to agree with you for the designated period. However, if you are unable to perform your usual work duties and no other suitable work can be allocated to you, you will be asked to either take as annual leave (holiday) or authorised unpaid leave.