

Coronavirus (Covid-19) Recovery Plan Policy

In addition to The Downes continuity recovery planning policy, the organisation recognises the need to have a separate pandemic recovery plan and procedure. The reason for this is that a general continuity recovery plan focuses on a short-term recovery programme. The effects of the pandemic could last many months.

The following procedure sets out the contingency measures that the organisation will bring into effect in response to the current coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic.

The procedure aims to ensure that The Downes will be able to operate its business to the best of its abilities during the pandemic while protecting, as far as is reasonably possible, its employees.

Procedure

- The Downes will follow all official guidance relating to the pandemic and how to run businesses in a “Covid-secure” manner. All risk mitigation measures adopted will be based on best practice and will be designed to comply with our understanding of current restrictions.
- Departmental managers are responsible for ensuring that employees understand the organisation’s pandemic recovery plan policy and procedure. Employees are responsible for familiarising themselves with the procedure and should speak to their departmental manager should they have any questions.
- The Downes will identify a Coronavirus Pandemic Crisis Management Team. The team will consist of employee representatives from throughout the organisation and will include members of both senior and middle management. Occupational health representation will be provided.
- The Coronavirus Pandemic Crisis Management Team will be tasked with keeping Covid-19 risk assessments and business continuity plans updated.
- Where identified through the risk assessment process, this organisation will enable office-based staff and managers to work from home where practicable and appropriate. This will save them from having to attend the office and use public transport. Homeworking status will be kept under review.
- Staff who attend the office will be encouraged to maintain a “social distance” of at least 2 metres from each other wherever possible. Where this is not possible, additional risk mitigation measures should be employed, such as wearing masks or face coverings or using screens. Office chairs should be arranged so that staff do not face each other and adequate ventilation should be maintained. Equipment should not be shared. Room occupancy limits will be defined and areas such as corridors will be marked out so that “one-way” routes can be followed

- Start and leave times may be staggered as required. This should prevent staff having to queue to enter or leave the premises.
- General workplace cleaning will be increased, especially frequently touched surfaces, and hand hygiene will be supported by the provision of alcohol-based hand sanitisers in each room. Staff will be encouraged to pay strict attention to respiratory hygiene and use tissues to catch any sneezes and coughs.
- Staff who are considered vulnerable due to pre-existing health conditions will be encouraged to discuss their working arrangements with their line manager and with an occupational health professional if required. Reasonable adjustments will be made to ensure that such staff feel safe while at work.
- The Downes will support the need for staff with symptoms of Covid-19 to self-isolate themselves at home. It is aware that this may lead to higher than normal sickness absence rates. As a contingency measure, employees will be cross-trained in various functions to ensure that adequate cover is provided in different roles.
- Online meetings and training should be supported wherever possible. Meetings and training that cannot be carried out online should be arranged with full support for social distancing, hand hygiene, etc.
- A pandemic communications strategy will be developed to ensure that employees are provided with up-to-date and accurate information on the status of the pandemic. Information will be provided to employees via the organisation's Intranet, e-mail and, where possible, through team meetings. As well as other important information, employees will be briefed on the symptoms of the virus and who to contact should they believe they, or a colleague, has the virus. Employees will also be provided with instructions regarding personal hygiene to avoid spread of the virus.
- The Downes' leave and absence policies will be continuously developed as the status of the pandemic changes. The leave policies that will be developed include the organisation's sick leave policy and bereavement policy.
- Employees are encouraged to follow the latest Government advice with regard to the coronavirus at all times. Staff with concerns about their safety or about the behaviour of colleagues should approach their line manager.

Review

The above policy and procedure will be continuously reviewed and updated to take account of the changing status of the pandemic.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Policy review date: _____

Updated by P Thomas 30/09/2021