



# Working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19)

Risk assessment

**This document details what can cause harm, the significant risks involved and what methods of work should be in place to keep our people safe and well. More guidance on how to do this is available in the Health & Safety handbook.**

**Description of the process / task / equipment**

BT Policy is to comply with all other aspects of health and safety at work legislation and the requirement to manage and control workplace risks, including protecting colleagues and others from the risk of COVID-19 infection in the workplace.

All work during the coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic must adhere to the controls and risk mitigation processes outlined in this document.

All CU/CFU's are required to create/include, own, control, review, consult and communicate risk assessments specific to the hazard presented by COVID-19.

**What could cause harm or ill-health? What are the hazards?**

Access equipment	<input type="checkbox"/>	Enclosed / confined space	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lifting equipment	<input type="checkbox"/>	Slips, trips, falls	<input type="checkbox"/>
Animals	<input type="checkbox"/>	Equipment	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lighting levels	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sun / UV light	<input type="checkbox"/>
Asbestos	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ergonomics e.g. kneeling	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lone working	<input type="checkbox"/>	Temperature extremes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bacteria/virus	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Excavations	<input type="checkbox"/>	Manual handling	<input type="checkbox"/>	Vehicles / mobile plant	<input type="checkbox"/>
Body fluids	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Falling objects	<input type="checkbox"/>	Moving parts of machines	<input type="checkbox"/>	Vermin / disease	<input type="checkbox"/>
Burns / scalds	<input type="checkbox"/>	Falls from height	<input type="checkbox"/>	Noise	<input type="checkbox"/>	Vibration	<input type="checkbox"/>
Debris	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fire / Explosion / Hot work	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pressure systems	<input type="checkbox"/>	Violence	<input type="checkbox"/>
DSE	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fragile surfaces	<input type="checkbox"/>	Radiation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Water	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dust / fumes / vapours / gas	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hand / Power tools	<input type="checkbox"/>	Railway rolling stock / aircraft	<input type="checkbox"/>	Weather (wind/rain/ice)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Electricity	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hazardous substance / waste	<input type="checkbox"/>	Restricted access	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wet surfaces	<input type="checkbox"/>
Electricity HV	<input type="checkbox"/>	High pressure pipelines	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sharps	<input type="checkbox"/>	Work around people	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**Anything else?**

In addition to this BT Group generic risk assessment the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (B.E.I.S) has issued guidance documents to assist in the understanding of how to work safely during the coronavirus pandemic.

The guides apply to: England (see guidance for Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland for variants applicable to the devolved nations)

There are work sector guides (references below). It is noted that BT Group activities incorporate more than one type of workplace. Consistent with the intent of the guidance CU/CFU's may need to use one or more of the BEIS documents in the creation of COVID secure workplaces.

Further updates to (existing) and extended guidance are anticipated and so it is essential that CU/CFU risk assessments continue to include these documents within source references.

Stress and mental wellbeing – due to concerns for health whilst working during current COVID-19 pandemic.

**Frequency and duration of exposure - How long is it likely to take and how often are we going to do it?**

Whilst in the workplace, travelling between workplaces, attending business events and overnight (work related) stays during periods of coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic.

## Potential harm & residual risk evaluation

Risk is the likelihood of harm happening and is calculated by multiplying 'Likelihood' and 'Severity'

Potential harm – what could happen? Or why you believe it couldn't	L	S	Risk rating
<b>Risk Exposure.</b> Through work activity BT Group colleagues, customers and members of the public should not be placed at any greater risk of exposure, to COVID -19, than when outside of the work environment.	2	3	6
<b>External Guidance.</b> BT Group colleagues, must follow Government guidelines to reduce the risk to the lowest reasonably practicable level by taking preventative measures, in order of priority.	2	2	4
<b>Roles and Responsibility</b> for health and safety are detailed in the <u>BT Group Health &amp; Safety Handbook</u> . COVID specific risk assessments form an <u>element</u> of the Group, CU, CFU's safety management systems.	2	1	2
<b>Public health is devolved</b> in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales; consideration must be given alongside local public health and safety requirements and legislation in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Refer to the advice to businesses in other parts of the UK in the guidance set by the Northern Ireland Executive, the Scottish Government and the Welsh Government.	2	1	2
<b>Risk Assessment.</b> COVID-19 is a workplace hazard. Line Managers must manage it in the same way as other workplace hazards. This includes: Completing a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks of COVID-19 in the workplace; Identifying control measures to manage that risk. Note: the HSE <u>advises</u> that a <u>generic risk assessment</u> is unlikely to be specific or detailed enough. For example, it might not identify adequate ventilation requirements or sufficient cleaning controls for particular areas and circumstances.	2	1	2
<b>Transmission.</b> The main way of spreading COVID-19 is through close contact with an infected person. When someone with COVID-19 breathes, speaks, coughs or sneezes, they release particles (droplets and aerosols) containing the virus that causes COVID-19. These particles can be breathed in by another person.  Surfaces and belongings can also be contaminated with COVID-19, when people who are infected cough or sneeze near them or if they touch them.	2	3	6
<b>People who need to self-isolate.</b> BT Group colleagues must follow applicable Government guidelines when displaying <u>symptoms</u> of COVID-19. All risk assessments must inform Line Managers to ensure that <u>individuals who are advised to stay at home under existing government guidance</u> do not physically come to work.  This includes: individuals who are <u>entering the UK</u> from other <u>countries</u> (where required to do so) as well as those testing positive for COVID-19. Individuals that have been in close contact with others who have tested positive for Coronavirus may be contacted by <u>test and trace</u> . Specific guidance exists for those:  i) <u>Individuals living with a person who has tested positive for COVID-19, Stay at Home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19).</u>  ii) <u>Individuals that have been in close contact with, but do not live with, a person who has tested positive for COVID-19, this may include people in their support bubble.</u>  Colleagues must self-isolate immediately if they show any symptoms of COVID-19 and <u>book a PCR</u> test as soon as possible, even if they are fully vaccinated.  Individuals <u>advised to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace</u> must do so – it is the law.  The devolved nations have differing requirements applicable to those identified as close contacts of others diagnosed with COVID-19. As follows:  <u>UK Government requirements</u>  <u>Northern Ireland</u>  <u>Scotland</u>  <u>Wales</u>	2	3	6

Potential harm – what could happen? Or why you believe it couldn't	L	S	Risk rating
<p><b>Those at higher risk of COVID-19</b></p> <p>The Govt has published guidelines for those at higher risk of adverse outcomes from COVID-19. Line Managers should give extra consideration to people at higher risk and to team members facing mental and physical health difficulties. Individuals who are clinically extremely vulnerable are no longer advised to shield. Managers should continue to support these workers by discussing with them their individual needs and supporting them in taking any additional precautions advised by their clinicians.</p> <p>The Public Health England report <a href="#">Disparities in the risk and outcomes of COVID-19</a> shows that some groups of people may be at more risk of being infected and/or an adverse outcome if infected.</p> <p>The higher-risk groups include those who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are older males</li> <li>• have a high body mass index (BMI)</li> <li>• have health conditions such as diabetes</li> <li>• are from some Black, Asian or minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds</li> </ul> <p>Some pregnant workers will be at greater risk of severe illness from coronavirus Managers must take this into account in their risk assessment. For more detail refer to the <a href="#">Vulnerable Worker Guidance</a> in the BT health &amp; Safety handbook.</p>	3	3	9
<p><b>Re-Opening.</b> BT Group work sites/workplace that have been closed or partially operated, during the COVID pandemic must be subject to a risk assessment (for all sites, or part of sites), prior to restarting work.</p>	2	1	1
<p><b>Emergencies:</b> Safety must continue to be prioritised with respect to workplace accidents, security and other incidents Government guidance expressly states that in an emergency, for example, an accident, provision of first aid, fire, or break-in, people do not have to comply with social distancing guidelines if it would be unsafe.</p> <p>People involved in the provision of assistance to others should pay particular attention to sanitation measures immediately afterwards, including washing hands.</p>	2	3	6
<p><b>Ventilation.</b> The requirement to ensure there's an adequate supply of fresh air (ventilation) in enclosed areas of the workplace has not changed during the pandemic. Adequate ventilation reduces how much virus is in the air. The risk from aerosols is greater in areas that are poorly ventilated. The priority for building risk assessments is to identify areas of the workplace that are usually occupied, and poorly ventilated. The priority for the risk assessment is to identify areas of the workplace that are usually occupied and poorly ventilated.</p>	2	3	6
<p><b>Social Contact.</b> COVID-19 can still be spread through social contact. This risk can be mitigated by reducing the number of people colleagues come into contact with.</p> <p>As far as possible, Putting in place measures to reduce contact between people, particularly between customers and workers. Where practical, measures could include:</p> <p>reducing the number of people each person has contact with by using 'fixed teams or partnering' or 'cohorting' (so each person works with only a few others)</p> <p>reviewing layouts, using screens or barriers to separate people from each other, or using back-to-back or side-to-side working, instead of face-to-face (screens are only likely to be beneficial if placed between people who will come into close proximity with each other)</p>	2	3	6

Potential harm – what could happen? Or why you believe it couldn't	L	S	Risk rating
<p><b>Reducing risk for your customers, visitors, and contractors.</b></p> <p>Mitigation measures must ensure that visitors and contractors are controlled whilst on BT premises. BT Host procedures must ensure (in advance of any BT site visit) that visitors who display COVID-19 symptoms/feel unwell stay at home and do not attend the premises. Accountability for explaining the safety measures in operation to guests/visitors, contractors' rests with the BT Host arranging requiring their attendance in BT workplaces.</p>	2	3	6
<p><b>Reducing risk when working in other people's homes.</b> BT Group colleagues required to work in private houses/ homes should communicate with households prior to any visits to discuss how the work will be carried out to reduce risk for all parties.</p> <p>Control measures should include measures to reduce social/surface contact, cleaning and ventilation. For example: asking households to leave all internal doors open, to minimise contact with door handles. Identifying busy areas across the household where people travel to, from or through. Such as stairs and corridors and minimising movement within these areas. Taking breaks outside where possible. Limiting the number of workers within a small area.</p>	2	3	6
<p><b>Cleaning Workplaces</b> Suitable cleaning regimes for workplaces should be based on <u>risk assessment</u>. The risk assessment should identify what the cleaning regimes will look like giving consideration to, for example: frequently touched items/surfaces (e.g. door handles), work areas, workstations, shared communal areas, toilets, washrooms, showers, changing rooms, vehicles and equipment.</p>	2	3	6
<p><b>Cleaning workstations.</b> If possible, Workstations should be assigned to an individual. Where this is not possible, and they need to be shared, there should be ways to clean them between each user.</p>	2	3	6
<p><b>Cleaning products.</b> HSE guidance notes that: <i>"usual cleaning products should be effective. If you change your usual regime then check that products are suitable for the surface and environment. Clean cloths and other reusable cleaning products in soap and water after use."</i></p>	2	3	6
<p><b>Cleaning premises using fog, mist or UV treatment.</b> HSE guidance is: <i>"Fog, mist, vapour or UV (ultraviolet) treatments may be suitable options to help control the spread of coronavirus and disinfecting a larger space or room. Any use of these treatments for these purposes should form part of (a) risk assessment. Users must be competent and properly trained."</i></p>	2	3	6
<p><b>Cleaning because of a known or suspected case of COVID-19.</b> <u>GOV.UK guidance</u> should be followed.</p>	2	3	6

Potential harm – what could happen? Or why you believe it couldn't	L	S	Risk rating
<p><b>Hygiene: handwashing, sanitation facilities</b></p> <p><b>Washing Hands</b></p> <p>BT Group colleagues, must follow Government guidelines in every workplace maintaining hand and respiratory hygiene:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Wash your hands more often than usual, for 20 seconds using soap and water or hand sanitiser, particularly after coughing, sneezing and blowing your nose, before you eat or handle food, or when you get to work or arrive home</li> <li>2. Use hand sanitiser where there is no access to soap and hot water.</li> </ol> <p>Cover the mouth and nose when coughing and/or sneezing with a disposable tissues or the crook of the arm (not hands) if you don't have a tissue. Dispose of tissues into a disposable rubbish bag immediately. Then wash hands, immediately, with soap and water or use hand sanitiser where access to washing facilities is not available.</p> <p>The British association of dermatologists advise that everyone should follow government advice about washing hands, using soap and water, and drying them thoroughly, by patting them dry rather than rubbing. Once fully dry, apply a moisturiser. Do this every time you wash your hands and at other times if your skin feels dry. You might want to carry a small bottle around with you in the same way that we carry small bottles of hand gel for those times we cannot access soap and water. Rehydrate hands overnight with an emollient based moisturiser that'll trap in moisture. Wear gloves if you need to handle detergents or other cleaning products at home or in the workplace in line with local risk assessments.</p> <p><b>Hand sanitisers</b></p> <p>Use hand sanitiser where there is no access to soap and hot water.</p> <p>A hand-sanitiser should have a 60% or higher alcohol content to kill viruses effectively. The advice is to use hand sanitisers only when soap and water aren't available and apply moisturiser after use. If you develop severe sores, cracks, oozing or redness, contact your doctor who might need to prescribe medication to reduce inflammation.</p>	2	2	4
<p><b>Handling goods, merchandise and other materials, and onsite vehicles.</b> Risk assessments should consider the cleaning procedures for the parts of shared equipment people touch after each use. For example, all equipment, tools, vehicles pallet trucks and forklift trucks. Similarly consider establishing cleaning procedures for goods and merchandise entering the workplace/site/store.</p> <p>These assessments should continue to encourage people who handle goods and merchandise to wash their hands more often. Where this is not practical hand sanitiser should be provided.</p>	2	3	6
<p><b>Personal protective equipment (PPE)</b> PPE protects the user against health or safety risks at work. It can include items such as safety helmets, gloves, eye protection, high-visibility clothing, safety footwear and safety harnesses. It also includes respiratory protective equipment, such as face masks. Where individuals are already using PPE during work activity to protect against non-COVID-19 risks, they should continue to do so.</p> <p>Government guidance states that workplaces should not encourage the precautionary use of extra PPE to protect against COVID-19. The application of the other controls highlighted in this generic risk assessment must be applied to prevent the transmission of COVID-19.</p> <p>Specific Risk Assessments across the BT Group do identify certain scenarios where PPE is required, against the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Colleagues must adhere to the training and information they receive with regard to the use of PPE. For example: Donning (putting on), Doffing (taking off), storage, maintenance, disposal etc.</p>	2	3	6

Potential harm – what could happen? Or why you believe it couldn't	L	S	Risk rating
<p><b>Face coverings</b> are mainly intended to protect others and not the wearer. When used correctly they cover the nose and mouth, which are the main sources of transmitting coronavirus (COVID-19). Face coverings are not classed as personal protective equipment (PPE) because there is no need to conform to a manufacturing standard and they do not provide protection for work risks such as dust and spray</p> <p>Face coverings <b>are not</b> a replacement for the other ways of managing risk, including minimising time spent in contact, using fixed teams and partnering for close-up work, and increasing hand and surface washing. These other measures remain the best ways of managing risk in the workplace.</p> <p>There are some circumstances when wearing a face covering is still required as a precautionary public health measure across the devolved nations. As different rules exist in different parts of the UK, reference must be made to the relevant websites and risk assessments should reflect the public health regulations and guidelines for the nation you are in.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">England</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Northern Ireland</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Scotland</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Wales</a></li> </ul> <p>Where colleagues choose to wear a face covering, they should be supported in using them safely. Colleagues should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser before putting on face coverings. They should also do this before and after removing them</li> <li>• avoid touching their faces or face coverings. Otherwise, they could contaminate them with germs from their hands</li> <li>• change their face coverings if they become damp or they've touched them</li> <li>• continue to wash their hands regularly</li> <li>• change or wash their face coverings daily</li> <li>• if the material is washable, to wash it in line with manufacturer's instructions. If it's not washable, to dispose of it carefully in their usual waste</li> </ul> <p>A face covering guide is available as a video, via learning home reference number <b>BTGHSFC001</b>.</p>	2	2	4
<p><b>Outbreaks in the workplace.</b> Risk assessments should include a plan in case there is a COVID-19 outbreak. This plan should nominate a single point of contact (SPOC) where possible. The SPOC should lead on contacting the PfS helpdesk to arrange for workplace cleaning and then report each case to the Safety Consultancy Helpdesk (Mon-Fri 09:00 – 17:00) on 0800 077 8588 (UK) or 01473 552 524 (UK from mobile phones).</p> <p>Full procedural details are published on the <a href="#">BT intranet</a>.</p>	2	1	2
<p><b>Work Related Travel in Vehicles.</b> The objective is to keep people safe when they travel between locations. Risk assessments should consider people travelling together in any one vehicle to, wherever possible: use fixed travel partners, not to sit face-to-face and clean shared vehicles between shifts or on. Switch ventilation systems on to improve ventilation while people are in the vehicle and set to drawing fresh air in, and not recirculating air. Windows can also be opened (partially if it's cold). Heating should also be left on to keep the vehicle warm. For vehicles that carry different passengers clear the air between different passengers, so the vehicle is aired before anyone else gets in. Opening doors where it is safe to do so will help to change air quickly as will opening windows fully for a few minutes.</p> <p>For more information on ventilation in vehicles read the <a href="#">HSE guidance</a>.</p>	2	3	6

Potential harm – what could happen? Or why you believe it couldn't	L	S	Risk rating
<p><u>If at any time whilst travelling for work, colleagues begin to exhibit signs of coronavirus, they MUST:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Go straight to their vehicle and isolate themselves.</li> <li>• If travelling - stop at a safe location and remain isolated in their vehicle</li> <li>• Remain in the hotel room</li> <li>• <u>Telephone 111</u> for advice – colleagues must advise are onsite at or travelling to/from a customer site</li> <li>• Telephone their manager to advise and update them on the advice given by 111</li> </ul> <p>Their manager must immediately contact their CU/CFU Safety Team for advice.</p>	4	2	8
<p>It is recommended that all CU/CFU's establish regular communications with colleagues and their representatives through existing channels for the purpose of ensuring individuals are kept up to date with how health, safety and wellbeing measures are being implemented or updated. The HSE provides guidance on <u>communication</u>.</p>	2	1	2

Potential harm – what could happen? Or why you believe it couldn't	L	S	Risk rating
<p><b>Tests and vaccinations.</b> Anyone with coronavirus symptoms can get a <u>free NHS test</u>. <u>Individuals who do not have symptoms of COVID-19 can access testing free of charge at home or at a test site.</u></p> <p>It's important that workplace measures, however, to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission are established and adhered to, even if colleagues have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>received a recent negative test result</li> <li>had the vaccine (either 1, 2 or 3 doses)</li> </ul> <p>Even if you're vaccinated, you could still catch the virus or pass it on. Doing rapid tests helps to protect yourself and others.</p> <p><b>When to take a rapid lateral flow test</b></p> <p>Regular asymptomatic testing is an important public health measure which helps identify cases not otherwise identified and so helps protect ourselves and each other. BT supports public health measures and recommend that colleagues continue with regular asymptomatic testing in line with government guidance in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.</p> <p>Colleagues should conduct tests, prior to leaving home/place of stay, when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Before socialising and travelling.</li> <li>• Mixing with people in crowded enclosed spaces.</li> <li>• Visiting someone who is at higher risk of getting seriously ill from COVID-19</li> <li>• When having been in close contact of someone with COVID-19 – please refer to the relevant government guidance in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.</li> </ul> <p>Colleagues who have had a positive PCR test in the last 90 days should refer to local testing guidance.</p> <p>BT colleagues who do not have symptoms of COVID-19 can access testing free of charge through <u>BT, Government or community sites</u>.</p> <p>Report rapid lateral flow test results the day you or someone in your household takes the test, on the <u>Gov.UK website</u>, no matter what the result is.</p> <p><b>Government guidance is that people must have a PCR test if they have symptoms of COVID-19, and should also arrange a follow-up PCR test after a positive Lateral Flow Test.</b></p> <p><u>Get a free PCR test to check if you have coronavirus (COVID-19) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</u></p> <p><b>Under certain conditions and circumstances Lateral Flow Tests may be used to reduce self-isolation periods for individuals. The <u>applicable guidance</u> must be adhered to and workplace/task risk assessments reviewed and adjusted if this process is adopted before these individuals return to work.</b></p> <p>More details are found in the links below.</p> <p><a href="https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing/regular-rapid-coronavirus-tests-if-you-do-not-have-symptoms/">https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing/regular-rapid-coronavirus-tests-if-you-do-not-have-symptoms/</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19/test-and-protect/coronavirus-covid-19-get-a-test-if-you-do-not-have-symptoms">https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19/test-and-protect/coronavirus-covid-19-get-a-test-if-you-do-not-have-symptoms</a></p> <p><a href="https://gov.wales/get-rapid-lateral-flow-covid-19-tests-if-you-do-not-have-symptoms">https://gov.wales/get-rapid-lateral-flow-covid-19-tests-if-you-do-not-have-symptoms</a></p> <p><u>Northern Ireland – Department of Health: rapid tests</u></p>	2	1	2

**Likelihood**

- 5 – Occurs repeatedly/event only to be expected
- 4 – Not surprising when happens / will occur
- 3 – Could occur sometimes
- 2 – Unlikely, though conceivable
- 1 – So unlikely, probability close to zero

**Severity**

- 5 – Death
- 4 – Long absence / loss of limb etc
- 3 – Results in 3+ days absence from work
- 2 – Injury requiring medical treatment
- 1 – No medical treatment required

	5	5	10	15	20	25
	4	4	8	12	16	20
	3	3	6	9	12	15
	2	2	4	6	8	10
	1	1	2	3	4	5
Likelihood	0	1	2	3	4	5

**Note – Variants of Concern and response to NPI’s (Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions).**

This generic risk assessment outlines the controls and mitigations for application to the arrangement of workplaces, specific tasks, and activities. Throughout this COVID-19 pandemic Variants of Concern (VOC’s) may occur. For example, the Omicron VOC raises serious concerns due to its reported significant growth advantage and potential immune escape compared to the Delta variant.

In order to respond to such situations, the UK Government, Devolved Administrations, and Local Authority continue to maintain contingency plans. Should these plans be enacted (even for short periods) it is likely that NPI’s applicable to both the workplace and workplace activity will be strengthened, such as working from home where practicable, the reintroduction of social distancing and some measures being mandated in law (e.g., the wearing of face-coverings in certain situations). The strengthening or mandating of these controls will require existing risk assessments to be reviewed, re-issued, and re-communicated to BT colleagues. BT Group CMO Office will continue to monitor, communicate, and similarly revise BT Minimum standards specific to COVID-19 and associated generic assessments.

## Controls in place / working methods / procedures / safe systems - thinking about Safe People, Safe Plant, Safe Place

All work during the COVID-19 pandemic must develop controls and procedures consistent with this generic assessment.

**Safe system of work (SSOW):** Through scenario planning and risk assessment CU/CFU's risk assessments have identified specific SSOW, with respect to COVID-19, for colleagues to adhere to. It is important individuals discuss the details of these SSOW with their line managers in-order to ensure that through work activity BT Group colleagues, customers and members of the public are not placed at any greater risk of exposure, to COVID -19, than when outside of the work environment.

**Stress** – any concerns please talk to your manager or the safety team. Support is also available via <https://www.yourwellbeing.bt.com> and the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) on 0800 917 6767.

Ventilation into the building should be optimised to ensure a fresh air supply is provided to all areas of the facility and increased wherever possible. Ventilation systems should provide an adequate supply of fresh air with the objective of using ventilation to mitigate the transmission risk of COVID-19.

**Air Conditioning Systems** - HSE guidance. Good ventilation, along with keeping your workplace clean and frequent handwashing, can help reduce the risk of spreading coronavirus (COVID-19).

When the Government published the Safer Working Guidance a review within BT PFS of ventilation was conducted, as follows:

- Due to the current low occupancy of our estate, approx. 40% of usual levels at max demand, those buildings utilising mechanical ventilation are deemed to be providing adequate fresh air by design as the ventilation system mixes extracted air with fresh air.
- If any areas are identified as having pockets of stagnant air within occupied spaces, this will be addressed by increasing circulation of outside air and this can be done with the assistance of desk fans. The risk of transmission through the use of desk fans is extremely low.
- The use of temporary or mobile air conditioning systems is deemed acceptable for additional cooling or heating where required as they operate on 100% recirculation. The risk of transmission by air conditioning systems is extremely low.
- A large portion of the office estate uses DX cooling (typically the ceiling or wall mounted AC units) which operate on 100% recirculation and HSE guidance advises that the risk posed by these systems is extremely low, so their continued use is satisfactory.

### For the Operational Estate:

- Within BT Technology we employ a number of cooling technologies. These include Adiabatic cooling units, Fresh Air Units, packaged FADX units and CRAC (Computer Room Air Conditioning) units.
- All systems use a fresh air supply either directly (over 90% of our units) or via a fresh air make up system. The systems using direct fresh air are optimised to ensure the maximum fresh air is provided wherever possible, with minimum fresh air ventilation rates at all times.
- In all instances the cooling and ventilation rates are sized to meet equipment loads, and hence in the operational estate the ventilation rates are far in excess of the recommended values for occupied spaces.
- Cooling in operational areas is always room-specific, and there are no systems that circulate air in different rooms.

Within our operational estate we also operate a rigorous documented maintenance program for monitoring and managing filter replacement in accordance with manufacturer instructions.

**Ceiling and Desk Fans** - BT has considered via its risk assessment approach and believes the following approach is suitable and sufficient.

**Desk fans in open plan Call Centres** – The air conditioning should be maintaining the ambient temperatures adequately. If someone believes they require a desk fan this should be discussed with their line manager and if required, a local desk fan can be supplied as a last resort. The fan should be located to affect the person and not the surrounding area. The person may be required to relocate desks in order to achieve this aim.

**Desk fans in small enclosed office areas** - in these situations, it is normally better to open doors (**exception** - fire doors are not to be kept open, unless they have the appropriate auto close technology) and windows if at all possible. If required, the principles mentioned above should be followed.

**Desk fans in technical floor areas (exchanges)** – It is not anticipated that a desk fan would be a problem as any desk / workstation are likely to be single desks and very few persons are present at any one time.

Desk or ceiling fans should not be used in poorly ventilated areas.

**Portable air coolers / heaters including floor fans** - These are likely to be required when the air conditioning system is faulty. These would be considered on a case-by-case basis and sited to minimise the risk of spreading any potential Covid 19 droplets that may be present.

**Large air coolers for whole exchange / switch floors or local racks/ servers.**

These are to be provided under the control of a risk assessment. The risk assessment will consider the siting of the unit and anyone who may be affected by its installation.

**Resources: UK Government**

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-coronavirus-restrictions-what-you-can-and-cannot-do>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19#who-is-clinically-extremely-vulnerable>

[COVID-19: guidance on shielding and protecting people defined on medical grounds as extremely vulnerable - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/908434/Disparities\\_in\\_the\\_risk\\_and\\_outcomes\\_of\\_COVID\\_August\\_2020\\_update.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/908434/Disparities_in_the_risk_and_outcomes_of_COVID_August_2020_update.pdf)

For advice to businesses in other nations of the UK please also see guidance set by the **Northern Ireland Executive**, the **Scottish Government** and the **Welsh Government**.

**Northern Ireland**

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) | nidirect](#)

**Scotland**

<https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/>

**Wales**

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) | Topic | GOV.WALES](#)

**HSE**

[Cleaning, hygiene and handwashing to reduce coronavirus \(COVID-19\) transmission \(hse.gov.uk\)](#)

[Disinfecting using fog, mist and other systems during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) pandemic \(hse.gov.uk\)](#)

[Face coverings and face masks during the coronavirus pandemic - HSE](#)

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/working-safely/talking-to-your-workers/communicating-information-guidance.htm>

[S0789 EMG Role of Ventilation in Controlling SARS-CoV-2 Transmission.pdf.aspx \(cibse.org\)](#)

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/assets/docs/talking-with-your-workers.pdf>

[https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/coronavirus.htm?utm\\_source=hse.gov.uk&utm\\_medium=refferal&utm\\_campaign=coronavirus&utm\\_content=home-page-banner](https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/coronavirus.htm?utm_source=hse.gov.uk&utm_medium=refferal&utm_campaign=coronavirus&utm_content=home-page-banner)

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/using-ppe-at-work-coronavirus.htm#non-healthcare-business>

**NHS**

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-how-it-works>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/maintaining-records-of-staff-customers-and-visitors-to-support-nhs-test-and-trace>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-workplace-guidance>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/best-way-to-wash-your-hands/>

**BT**

<https://www.yourwellbeing.bt.com/coronavirus.html>

[https://hr.bt.com/en-wish\\_3rdParty/safety-wellbeing/safety](https://hr.bt.com/en-wish_3rdParty/safety-wellbeing/safety)

<https://www.yourwellbeing.bt.com/coronavirus/resources.html#cmo-weekly-update>

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Document owner: HSWB CoE

Review frequency 180 Days

Version	Date of review	Description of changes
3	28 May 2020	Initial publication of generic template
4	6 July 2020	Additional links to UK, Northern Ireland Executive, Scottish Govt Welsh guidance documents. Updated content of generic assessment.
5	4 Aug 2020	Additional links to UK, Northern Ireland Executive, Scottish Govt Welsh guidance documents. Updated content of generic assessment to reflect changes in UK Gov. Guidance
6	25 Aug 2020	Additional links to UK, Northern Ireland Executive, Scottish Govt Welsh guidance documents. Updated content of generic assessment to reflect changes in UK Gov. Guidance
7	5 Nov 2020	Additional links to UK, Northern Ireland Executive, Scottish Govt Welsh guidance documents. Updated content of generic assessment to reflect changes in UK Gov. Guidance.
8	1 Dec 2020	Update includes Tiered system of local restrictions in England and the link to the advice for those that are clinically extremely vulnerable.
9	22 Dec 2020	Risk Assessment reviewed against B.E.I.S following move to Tier4 England. Not published
10	23 Dec 2020	Risk Assessment reviewed following Welsh Gov Statement regarding shielding.
11	27 Jan 2021	National Lockdown and restrictions across devolved nations. HSE guidance ventilation reviewed, PHE Sector action cards included. Symptoms reviewed and PHE definition of close contact. Internal BT process added for reporting any confirmed COVID-19 cases.
12	27 Aug 2021	Re-written following review.
13	21Dec 2021	Re-written following changes to UK Gov., Devolved Administrations guidance documents.
14	20 Jan 2022	Amendment to testing information, due to changes in guidance.