**EMPLOYERS VACCINATION AND TESTING POLICY GUIDANCE**

****

The UK Covid-19 vaccines delivery plan was first published on the 11 January 2021.

The executive summary states: “Vaccines are a foundation of our way out of this pandemic and the best way to protect people from COVID-19, potentially saving thousands of lives.”

As businesses prepare for “The New Normal” of vaccinated employees, workplace testing and continued social distancing, we have prepared guidance to help you implement a vaccination policy and templates on:

* Vaccination policy for your business
* Covering letter to employees about the vaccination and testing policy
* Covid-19 workplace risk checklist
* Vaccine register for all staff

Review and edit as appropriate and refer to the <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus> website for further resources and please feel free to call us to discuss any specific issues you may have.

**Please note** these are examples only and should not be relied upon until you have confirmed contents with your advisors, solicitors and / or HR specialists or performed a check to make sure you are comfortable with sending employees a copy. Please review, edit, and add your details as appropriate. This policy note should be read in conjunction with the detailed legislation or regulations. No responsibility for loss occasioned by any person acting or refraining from action as a result of the material contained in this programme can be accepted by the authors or HSA & Co.

**VACCINATION POLICY**

Introduction

Please note this is an example and should not be relied upon until you have confirmed contents with your solicitors and / or HR specialists or reviewed Government guidance to your own satisfaction.

There are 14 industry specific “Working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19)” Government guides and you should have implemented workplace changes to reduce the risk of transmission already. If not see: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

Below is a template of suggested wording if you are going to introduce a vaccination policy in your business.

**COVID-19 VACCINATION AND TESTING POLICY FOR [NAME OF BUSINESS]**

Introduction

The UK Covid-19 vaccines delivery plan was published on the 11 January 2021. The executive summary states: “Vaccines are a foundation of our way out of this pandemic and the best way to protect people from COVID-19, potentially saving thousands of lives.”

Our policy on vaccinations

This policy statement allows [NAME OF BUSINESS] to outline its views on vaccinations and explains the role of and expectations on employees and ensures the workplace is as Covid secure as possible.

The business is aware of the Working safely during coronavirus guidelines published by HM Government and has undertaken a review dated [Date]. The actions taken to work more safely during Covid-19 can be seen here: [insert link to document]. The working safely guidelines are under regular review and we will update employees on workplace changes as appropriate.

COVID-19 is a reportable disease under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR).

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 obliges [NAME OF BUSINESS] to take reasonable steps to reduce any workplace risks. This duty gives the justification for encouraging our employees to be vaccinated to protect themselves and everyone else at the workplace.

The policy of [NAME OF BUSINESS] is to encourage all employees to have the vaccine when offered.

[NAME OF BUSINESS] acknowledges some employees cannot have the vaccine on medical grounds and specific measures will be taken to ensure the safety of these employees and others in the workplace. Please notify us if this is your situation. With your consent, we will take appropriate steps with regards to reinforcing a secure working environment, facilitating remote working where possible, or considering a different role.

For employees who are hesitant to have the vaccine on religious, spiritual or other grounds we encourage you to understand one of our roles is to act as a “gatekeeper” for the health and safety of all employees and we will encourage you to discuss your concerns with management and we will consider each case individually.

For employees who ultimately refuse the vaccine, or refuse to disclose whether they have had the vaccine, we will consider your reasons and discuss together ways to implement alternative solutions such as continued working from home, social distancing within the workplace, screens and the use of PPE. We may also be willing to consider changing your work responsibilities or role if this could enable you to work remotely or in a safer working environment.

It is the policy of [NAME OF BUSINESS] to maintain a register of employees who have been vaccinated. This is a voluntary procedure for employees, and we are encouraging you to confidentially share your vaccination details with us so we can judge the level of Covid-19 testing required at our workplace and other Covid-19 risk reduction measures. The information provided to us will be treated as securely as your payroll details and will not be released to anyone or anywhere without your express written consent.

Testing policy

Around 1 in 3 people with coronavirus don’t have symptoms, which means they could be spreading the virus in workplaces without knowing. Rapid testing detects cases quickly – in under 30 minutes – meaning positive cases can isolate immediately, breaking chains of transmission.

Our policy is to perform Workplace testing for Covid-19 regularly on employees (whether or not they have been vaccinated) and (if appropriate) visitors to the workplace per the government guidance. [NOTE: Decide on whether all employees to be tested or those not vaccinated]

Regular testing could be the difference between a workplace being able to stay open and operational, or needing to close due to a COVID-19 outbreak. It forms a crucial part of the government’s plan to ease restrictions gradually and safely as we get back to a more normal life.

[NAME OF BUSINESS] has registered with the Government to receive rapid workplace testing and we will be implementing the procedures as outlined above.

At all times we will refer to our duties in the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 which requires the employer to take all reasonably practicable steps to reduce workplace risks to their lowest practicable level.

If you have any concerns over the policies outlined above, please contact us to discuss matters confidentially.

[Name

Position

Date]

**TEMPLATE LETTER TO ALL EMPLOYEES OUTLINING THE FIRM’S VACCINATION POLICY AND ENCOURAGING ALL STAFF TO GET VACCINATED WHEN POSSIBLE**

This is an overview letter to accompany the Vaccination policy. Please review and edit as appropriate.

**COVERING LETTER TO EMPLOYEES**

Dear [employee name],

**COVID-19 VACCINATION AND TESTING POLICY**

We are sure you are as pleased as we are with the successful UK vaccine roll out which aims for all adults to have been offered the first dose by the 31 July 2021. Vaccines are the start of our way out of this pandemic and the best way to protect us all from COVID-19.

As we prepare for the UK “post vaccination” environment it is clear individuals and businesses will need to live with Covid-19 long term and we will all have to continue taking preventative measures to reduce transmission and the risk of illness in our population.

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 obliges employers to take reasonable steps to reduce any workplace risks; this duty gives employers justification for encouraging their employees to be vaccinated to protect themselves and everyone else at the workplace.

We encourage all employees to take advantage of having the vaccine and our policy is attached which explains our views on vaccinations and explains the role of and expectations on employees to ensure the workplace is as Covid secure as possible.

It is also an appropriate time to consider [BUSINESS NAME]‘s policy for Covid-19 testing in the workplace. We have now registered for rapid testing kits and we will be implementing regular testing in our workplace shortly.

If you have any questions regarding our vaccination and testing policy, please contact me and we can discuss these together.

Stay safe!

Best wishes

[Name

Position

Date]

**PERFORMING A RISK ASSESSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE**

**Introduction**

As an employer, you have a legal responsibility to protect workers and others from risk to their health and safety, including from the risks of COVID-19.

COVID-19 is a hazard in the workplace and, as such, should be managed 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 and identifying control measures to manage that risk.

There are 14 industry specific “Working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19)” Government guides and you should have implemented workplace changes to reduce the risk of transmission already. If not see: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

**Managing risk**

Here is an example “generic” checklist from the guides referred to above. This will help you think about your own workplace and the safety procedures you should adopt.

1. Ensure employees and visitors who feel unwell stay at home and do not attend the premises.
2. Increase the frequency of handwashing and surface cleaning.
3. Anyone who can work from home should do so (during the current lockdown).
4. Social distancing (SD) guidelines set out by the government (2m, or 1m with risk mitigation where 2m is not viable) should be in place.
5. Where SD not practical in full, further mitigating actions should be taken such as increasing the frequency of handwashing 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).
6. Where the social distancing guidelines cannot be followed in full, even through redesigning 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 employees.
7. Take steps to avoid people needing to unduly raise their voices to each other.
8. 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.
9. In your assessment you should have regard to whether the people doing the work are especially vulnerable to COVID-19.
10. You must share the results of your risk assessment with your employees.
11. Health and Safety Executive (HSE) expect all businesses to demonstrate to their employees and customers that they have properly assessed their risk and taken appropriate measures to mitigate this. You should do this by displaying a notification in prominent places in your business and on your website.

**VACCINATIONS AND TESTING IN THE WORKPLACE CHECKLIST**

The checklist below is designed to enhance your existing risk assessment and guide you to the resources to assist you in redesigning procedures to accommodate regular testing and vaccinated employees and visitors.

**COVID-19 VACCINATION AND TESTING RISK ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST**

1. Register your interest by 31 March for free rapid tests for all businesses - <https://www.gov.uk/get-workplace-coronavirus-tests>
2. Review the working safely during coronavirus sector specific industry guide(s) – see link above.
3. If you have not done so previously, perform an initial assessment of workplace safety.
4. Use interactive HSE tools - <https://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/risk/index.htm>
5. Outline the further actions you need to take to make the workplace secure. These may include social distancing, partitions, PPE, one-way systems, rotating employees in any given area / time frame, deep cleaning and sanitization stations, visitor areas.
6. Document your risk assessment and procedures.
7. Confirm your internal workplace procedures are up to date and appropriate to help reduce transmission and maintain employee safety.
8. Update procedures if necessary and document your revised risk assessment.
9. Implement a testing policy for employees and visitors – a sample, all, non-vaccinated or combination? Note your reasons for the policy and document.
10. If employees have been working from home discuss the return to the workplace with them in advance to address their concerns and expectations.
11. Send vaccination and testing policy statement to all employees.
12. Note questions and discuss with employees individually any concerns.
13. Obtain employee consent for their information to go on internal register.
14. Note any non-consenting employees for additional covid-19 safety procedures e.g. regular testing (if applicable).
15. Consider new procedures for employee safety for those who cannot or will not have the vaccine.
16. Document all conversations regarding the policy on personnel records.
17. Consult your HR specialist to check your actions are compliant with employment law or best practice until any new case law or legislation comes into force.

**TEMPLATE VACCINE AND TESTING REGISTER**

The Excel register allows you to record the date and type of vaccinations and employee consent to you maintaining their records. It also allows you to note the date of testing for Covid-19 through the Government’s free lateral flow coronavirus tests. See: <https://www.gov.uk/get-workplace-coronavirus-tests>



You can record this manually or use the excel spreadsheet above. The spreadsheet has been prepopulated with room for four Covid-19 test dates and results. Your business may need more for “at risk” individuals or where your business cannot socially distance and needs to rely on more testing.