

# Portal

## Social Distancing Guidance August 2021



# Social Distance Policy and Procedure

## Induction

This policy has been prepared in line with the Welsh Government “Alert Level Zero: guidance for employers, businesses and organisations” published on the 5<sup>th</sup> August 2021.

This policy and all related procedures are reviewed on an ongoing basis.

The aim of this policy is to reassure Portal team members that all current government guidelines are being followed to safeguard our employees and allow for a safe return to work whilst recognising that we cannot eliminate the risk of COVID-19.

It is important to stress the fact that this policy may be updated and adapted on a regular basis in line with Government guidance and updates.

As ever, we have a duty to provide a safe working environment to all our employees, however, you, as the employee, remain responsible for your own safety. As such, please report any concerns to your Line Manager in the first instance.

On the 7<sup>th</sup> August 2021 it was announced that Wales would move to Alert Level Zero. Where there has been a number of changes and relaxations to COVID rules the following approach is still being taken by Portal.

- Staff to continue to work from home if they can.
- Continue to carry out and regularly update a COVID-19 risk assessment,
- Continue to maintain 2 metres social distancing, wherever possible.
- Where people cannot be 2 metres apart, manage the transmission risk.
- Reinforcing cleaning processes.
- Introduce a Vaccination Policy and support the Welsh Government Vaccination campaign.

## Purpose

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to ensure the safety of Portal team members when returning to normal working practices during and post the Covid-19 pandemic. This policy and procedure have been produced along with revised risk assessments in order to minimise risks related to employees contracting the virus both within the office environment, on customer premises and other remote working locations.

## Scope

This Policy applies to all Portal team members, contractor and or visitors.

## Responsibilities

The overall responsibility for this policy inclusive of its creation, reviewing and updating is that of the Director of Operations. However, overall responsibility of Portal’s health and safety practices and staff wellbeing is that of the full board of Directors.

### **Responsibilities of the Director of Operations**

- Ensure that suitable policies and procedures are in place.
- Ensure where possible employees are consulted regarding the practices to be adopted within this policy and procedure.
- Regularly review and update this document to ensure that it is in line with the most current Government guidance.
- Source agreement from all board members regarding the content of this document.

### **Responsibilities of the board**

- Jointly sign off this temporary policy and its related procedures.
- Lead by example and model behaviour expected as part of this policy and procedure.
- Allocate any required funds to ensure that this policy and procedure can be fully adhered too.

### **Responsibilities of Managers**

- Ensure that this policy and procedure is understood by all team members and followed on a day-to-day basis.
- Model behaviour by adhering to all practices noted within this document.
- Answer any questions that staff members may have regarding this policy and its procedures, referring queries to the Director of Operations when and if required.

### **Responsibilities of Team Members**

- Adhere to this policy and procedure at all times.
- Report all concerns to their Line Managers.
- Request any PPE that they may require.

## **Procedures to be followed**

### **Office environment and common areas**

To minimise risks related to Covid-19 the following temporary measures will be adopted by Portal at Ocean Park House and should be adhered to by all staff members.

1. Open windows and doors to encourage ventilation.
2. Work collaboratively with landlords and other tenants to ensure instructions are consistent across commonly used areas, for example, receptions and staircases.
3. Manage office occupancy levels to enable social distancing, **however, staff members must work at home where possible** and individuals working from Portal's office must be a last resort.

4. When staff must attend Portal's office numbers will be limited currently a maximum occupancy of 8 at any given time. This will be reviewed on an ongoing a monthly basis and changes to occupancy numbers or office use will be communicated on an ongoing basis and the instruction will super seed this policy for a suggested period of time.
5. The main front door will be the entrance and exit as guided by our landlords.
6. We will continue to review the office layout and systems to allow people to work further away from each other.
7. We will continue to arrange the office so that it is suitable for side by side working or back-to-back working to avoid face to face working.
8. Limit hot desking where possible.
9. Ensure the 2-meter social distancing rule is adhered to by using floor signs to reinforce and remind staff members, learners and/or visitors.
10. Restricting access to other areas of Ocean Park House by;
  - advising staff members to only use the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor toilet and handwashing facilities.
11. Avoid unnecessary use of the touch-based signing in systems by scanning the code at reception to log into the building.
12. Advising against using the lift unless required to do so due to an injury or disability.
13. Provide hand sanitiser at entrances, exits and cleaning stations.
14. Encourage storage of personnel items such as coats and bags to be kept within the team members allocated work area.
15. Limit use of the breakout area to one staff member at any given time so that social distancing can be adhered to all times.
16. Ensure masks are used by staff members, learners and/visitors while entering and exiting Ocean Park House and whilst moving around communal area's such as toilets, the reception area and corridors.
17. Asking staff to provide information regarding their vaccination status.
18. All staff to wear PPE/Masks in communal areas.
19. Staff members do not need to wear masks whilst sat at their workstation as long as a safe distance can be maintained between them and other staff members and/or visitors. ***This is regardless of individuals vaccination status.***

***NB In the event of an emergency such as a fire the 2-meter social distancing rule does not apply when lives may be in danger.***

## **2. Meetings/Group Sessions in the Office**

Where we strive to limit face to face meetings or group sessions, we recognise that there will be limited occasions where this is not possible. The following points should be adhered to at all times.

1. Continue to use remote/digital methods to hold meetings to avoid face to face meetings where possible.
2. If face to face meetings are necessary, participants should attend meetings and should maintain 2m separation throughout.
3. Avoid transmission during meetings by providing hand sanitiser and avoid sharing pens or any other objects and equipment.
4. Individuals attending the office area should be informed to bring their own electronic devices. If any electronic device is borrowed this will need to be sanitised before and after use.
5. Hold meetings outside or in well ventilated rooms when required.
6. Where meetings must take place floor signage will be used to help attendees adhere to the 2-meter social distancing rule.
7. The room will be set up to support social distancing with no face-to-face seating arrangements.
8. Vaccination status should be checked as noted in point 3, customers and visitors to Ocean Park House

## **3. Customers and Visitors to Ocean Park House**

Where we have been effectively able to limit the number of customers and visitors to Ocean Park House, it is envisaged that as businesses return to normal practices and increase their activity, then the number of customers and visitors to Ocean Park House will steadily increase. As a result, the following guidance will need to be adhered to:

- Continue to encourage customer engagement via remote connection and digital means where possible.
- Where on site visits are required, all visitors should be briefed on Portal's Social Distance policy and sent a copy in advance.
- The number of visitors will be limited at any one time and visitors should not be arranged without Director authorisation.
- Maintain visitor records.
- Ensure the visitor signing in processes are non -touch based.
- Visitors should not use Portal equipment such as pens, laptops etc. In the event that visitors do not have access to their own equipment and an electronic device is borrowed this will need to be sanitised before and after use.
- Asking visitors to provide information regarding their vaccination status.
- All visitors to wear PPE/Masks in communal areas.

- Visitors do not need to wear masks whilst sat at a table ready for the meeting as long as a safe distance can be maintained between them and Portal staff members and/or other visitors. **This is regardless of individuals vaccination status.**

#### **4. Visiting customers on their premises**

We will still be encouraging staff to use remote communication methods where possible on an ongoing basis. We are, however, fully aware that face to face sessions with our customers, in particular for our assessment team and sales teams will be required over the coming months. When face to face sessions commence, the following practices should be adhered to until further notice.

1. Only carry out face to face meetings when all other options have been considered.
2. Request a copy of the customers Social Distancing policy and procedures prior to your visit and complete a Pre-Site check list.
3. Ensure learners/customer attendance is logged on the allocated 365 form before starting any face-to-face sessions.
4. Ensure that your learners/customers do not use staff equipment inclusive but not exclusive of laptops, phones, pens, iPads.
5. Position yourself side to side, 2 meters apart from your learner/customer and do not sit in a face-to-face position.
6. Do not accept drinks provided by the customer, make plans to take your own if you feel you may require a drink during the visit time.
7. Do not use paper resources, ensure digital copies are sent in advance or sent at the end of the visit in cases of learner review documentation.
8. Wash your hands upon entering and exiting the customer premises. Alternatively, hand sanitiser should be used.
9. Avoid visiting customers at times where staff movement and congestion could be heightened such as start, finish and/or break times.
10. Wear masks on entrance and exit to the customers premises or when moving area in communal areas. You do not need to wear a mask if social distancing can be adhered too.

#### **5. Cleaning at Ocean Park House**

We are aware that staff traffic and presence at Portal's head office will gradually increase over the coming months and as such all need to ensure the work areas are clean and well kept. As a minimum the following points will be adopted.

1. We will set up cleaning stations so desks and equipment used can be adequately cleaned before and after use. The cleaning of the work area will be the responsibility of the staff member using the area.

2. We will ensure frequent cleaning of objects and surfaces that are touched regularly, such as door handles, handrails, and keyboards, along with making sure there are adequate disposal arrangements.
3. Any team members using the office are expected to clear workspaces and remove waste and belongings from the work area at the end of a shift.
4. We will be limiting or restricting use of high-touch items and equipment such as printers and cupboard keys.

#### **6. Handling goods, merchandise and other materials and onsite vehicles.**

Where we note that deliveries, inclusive of post, is essential to the running of the business, we are also conscious that deliveries also bring an element of heightened risk, therefore it is Portal's expectations that the following points are adhered to.

- Any staff member receiving the goods and/or merchandise entering the site should ensure that they are cleaned at building entrance.
- We will provide hand sanitiser that staff can use after taking a delivery.
- We will be restricting non-business deliveries such as personal deliveries for staff. This will not be permitted until further notice.

#### **7. Personal protective equipment**

Portal will provide all staff members with any PPE deemed required free of charge. We will also look to provide any additional PPE requested by staff, if deemed necessary, during this period. Portal will provide the following PPE as standard.

1. All staff will have access to disposal gloves, hand sanitiser and cleaning wipes for their equipment.
  2. Face Masks should be used as standard when visiting Ocean Park House and when visiting customers premises. These will be made available for staff members and can be posted to remote workers when requested.
- Hands should be washed thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser before putting a face covering on, and after removing it.
  - When wearing a face covering, you should avoid touching your face or face covering, as you could contaminate them with germs from your hands.
  - You should change your face covering if it becomes damp or if you have touched it.
  - You should continue to wash your hands regularly or use hand sanitiser.
  - You should change and wash your face covering daily.
  - If the material of your face covering is washable, wash in line with manufacturer's instructions. If it is not washable, dispose of it carefully in your usual waste.

- You must dispose of used face coverings without delay in bins provided.
- You should continue to practise social distancing wherever possible even if a face covering is used.

### **Work related travel**

When attendance to Portal's office increases, we also note the heightened risk relating to team members whilst traveling to and from work. In order to reduce risks, we ask that the following guidance is adhered to:

1. You must not access public transport unless necessary.
2. Upon arrival to the office, you must respect the 2m distance between you and your colleagues. This may require you to wait in your car, or to form a queue with a 2m distance from others entering the workspace.
3. For travel to/from work in a car with others, you must:
  - minimise the number of people travelling together in any one vehicle.
  - use fixed travel partners.
  - increase ventilation.
  - avoid sitting face-to-face.

### **Business and essential travel**

Whilst we are keen to avoid unnecessary work travel, we recognise that business travel will be required on occasions. If you and your manager agree that work travel is essential, the location which you are visiting must meet social distancing guidelines and must satisfy us that they are COVID-compliant by providing its written risk assessment, signed compliance poster or other form of evidence or undertaking from a director or manager of the business. Assurances that these are in place must be sourced prior to manager authorisation being granted. If it is deemed that staff do need to travel for work, it is Portal's expectations that the following points are adhered to.

For essential travel, it is expected that all staff members should do the following:

1. Minimise the number of people travelling together in any one vehicle.
2. Use fixed travel partners to minimise the number of staff that are in contact with each other.
3. Increase ventilation by opening windows.
4. Avoid sitting face-to-face.



## **First Aid and Emergency Service Response**

During this uncertain period, we understand that there may be concerns regarding how to react in a first aid and/or emergency. The primary responsibility is to preserve life and first aid should be administered if required until the emergency services attend. As always, when planning activities, the provision of adequate first aid resources must be agreed between the relevant parties on site. In addition to this, the following points should be considered.

1. Emergency plans including contact details should be kept up to date and reflect any changes to normal practices.
2. Consideration must also be given to potential delays in emergency service response due to location, resources, and existing pressure on the emergency service
3. We will liaise with landlords and other tenants to ensure there is a trained or appointed first aider on site at all times.

## **Personal Travel Abroad**

Whilst we endeavour to put practices and procedures into place to minimise risks related to Covid-19 within the workplace, we also note that actions by staff members in their personal time could also create an increased risk, therefore it is an expectation of Portal that all staff members adhere to the following.

1. All staff members must inform their direct line manager if they intend to leave the country.
2. All staff members must comply with all current and relevant guidelines in relation to travel abroad including self-isolating for any prescribed period upon your return. If you cannot work from home you may have to include any period of self-isolation in your annual leave request, or the time will be unpaid.
3. As is the case for any annual leave request, we reserve the right to refuse your request for annual holiday provided we give you the requisite notice if we feel it may put company staff members at a higher risk.

## **Risk Assessments**

To continue to strive to ensure the safety of our team at Portal, company risk assessments have been reviewed and updated in conjunction with this policy. All team members are expected to comply to the control measures noted within these risk assessments and any further guidance should be sourced from line managers in the first instance.

Policy/Procedure issue date: 24/08/2021

Signed by the Managing Director:



Signed by Director of Operations:



Signed by the Director of Quality:

