



## RBLI COVID-19 Safety Protocols September 2021

### Introduction

#### **Who do these Protocols apply to?**

These Protocols apply to and must be followed by all employees, workers, agency workers and volunteers carrying out any activities on RBLI premises. Throughout this document, reference to employee will cover all these categories, unless stated otherwise. The Protocols will be covered in a Health and Safety induction presentation to be completed by all new employees and those returning to the workplace following furlough, or a prolonged period of working from home. They may be supplemented by local COVID-19 (CV-19) arrangements (such as in Care) which will be communicated to relevant employees.

#### **Background and context**

CV-19 is a highly contagious virus which is spread through close contact with an infected person (even where they do not have symptoms) by breathing in infected droplets or by touching surfaces covered with the infected droplets. Some individuals are particularly vulnerable to severe disease or death due to a number of factors including health and age. The UK (like other countries Worldwide) introduced restrictions on social gatherings and other measures in order to reduce the risk of transmission of the virus with the potential to overwhelm the NHS. With the development and roll out of an effective CV-19 vaccination programme, CV-19 restrictions have largely been relaxed across the UK and in particular social distancing, restrictions on social contact and gatherings have been removed or reduced.

#### **Government Guidance**

New guidance has been issued for workplaces reflecting the reduction in restrictions focusing on:

- Ventilation
- Stopping people potentially infected coming into workplaces
- Cleaning and hygiene
- Reducing contact with people you don't usually work with

#### **RBLI CV-19 actions to date**

CV-19 assessments have been carried out across RBLI premises and specific safety control measures and other changes have been implemented including:

- Moving desks and workstations to enable distancing or installing screens where this is not possible
- Placing occupancy limits in common areas and shared working places
- Increasing cleaning and introducing a sanitise as you go policy
- Introducing a requirement to wear face coverings in certain areas in RBLI premises
- Enabling relevant employees to work from home, where necessary
- Setting up virtual platforms such as Microsoft teams and Zoom for remote meetings
- Setting up a reporting and tracking process of instances of CV-19 symptoms and positive tests in employees and residents and identifying close contacts of positive cases for Test and Trace purposes
- Installing CV-19 safety signage
- Improving ventilation in some areas and reminding staff to keep windows and doors open
- Introducing CV-19 awareness training
- Ensuring visitors complete a health declaration and agree to follow RBLI safety measures

Whilst most Government CV-19 restrictions have been removed, CV-19 still remains a risk within our workplaces; RBLI remains committed to protecting its people and therefore is taking a cautionary approach to relaxing the CV-19 measures in our workplaces and for our staff working elsewhere. These safety Protocols have been produced with full consideration of Government guidance and the continuing risks associated with CV-19. They will be kept under regular review, having regard to government guidance, CV-19 cases both in the community and amongst our people.

## COVID-19 Safety Protocols

### 1. References to RBLI CV-19 documents

All RBLI CV-19 documents referred to in these Protocols can be found in <I:\Policies\Covid>.

### 2. Attending RBLI premises

With the removal of Government guidance (for England) to work from home, employees are no longer limited to attending the workplace for essential purposes only. Employees who have been working from home during this period should ensure that they liaise with their Line Managers regarding their working pattern in the workplace to ensure numbers attending the office are monitored and staggered working arrangements are in place where required. Anyone working in or attending head office must sign in to Digigreet on arrival (<https://rbli.digigreet.com/v7/>).

### 3. Self-isolation and attending the workplace

1. Employees must not attend the workplace for any reason if
  - i. They have any CV-19 symptoms (a high temperature, a new, continuous cough or a loss or change to sense of smell or taste)
  - ii. They have tested positive for CV-19
  - iii. Someone they live with has CV-19 symptoms or has tested positive
  - iv. They have been told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace (or equivalent) or the NHS CV-19 app or they are aware that a recent close contact has tested positive for CV-19
  - v. They are self-isolating under the travel to UK quarantine requirements.
2. Employees (excluding volunteers) should comply with the **RBLI COVID-19 Self Isolation and Absence Procedures**. Volunteers should contact their Line Manager or the Volunteer Manager.
3. Where an employee notifies their Line Manager that they have tested positive for CV-19, their Line Manager will discuss with them whether they had been in close contact with colleagues in the workplace so that the necessary precautionary steps can be taken to reduce risks of transmission.
4. If an employee believes they are exempt from the requirement to self-isolate (as a close contact of someone who has tested positive), they should not attend the workplace and notify their Line Manager accordingly. They will not be able to return unless they have a negative PCR test and have had approval by their Line Manager to return.

**Employees should remain vigilant and be aware that in a third of people testing positive do not have any of the three recognised CV-19 symptoms. If employees are feeling unwell and has any doubt they should contact 111 or consult NHS direct and speak to their Line Manager before attending the workplace.**

### 4. Temperature taking

1. Currently, RBLI are taking temperatures before entry to the following locations:
  - i. Leatherhead
  - ii. Gavin Astor House and Appleton Lodge.
2. Temperature taking at other RBLI premises may be introduced for limited purposes such as at events or for face to face training.

### 5. Workplace Testing

Outside of Care, RBLI are not currently conducting workplace or visitor testing, however employees should be aware of the following:

1. Lateral Flow Tests (LFT)

Employees are encouraged to book regular LFT. If you test positive on a LFT, you must self-isolate and book a PCR test. There are a number of ways to obtain a LFT:

- i. Everyone can obtain home testing kits either at specific testing sites and pharmacies or online.
- ii. Attending an onsite testing centre.

## 2. PCR Tests

- i. Employees testing positive from a LFT or who are potentially exempt from the requirement to self-isolate, will need to book a PCR test and provide evidence of a negative test before returning to the workplace.
- ii. Employees are encouraged to follow Government advice and book a PCR test when:
  - a. They or someone they live with has developed CV-19 symptoms, or
  - b. They have been in contact with someone (including someone they live with) who has tested positive for CV-19.

## 6. Vaccinations

1. Outside of employees in our Care Homes and employees whose role may require them to attend our Care Homes, we are encouraging staff to have the full recommended dose of CV-19 vaccination (and any recommended booster, where applicable). For more information please see the **Vaccination Policy**
2. For those working in our Care Homes or whose role may require them to attend our Care Homes, there is a legal requirement to be fully vaccinated by 11<sup>th</sup> November (or be exempt) in order to enter our Care Homes. For more information please see our **Vaccination Policy**.

## 7. Personal Hygiene whilst in RBLI premises

1. Employees should ensure that they wash their hands in accordance with Government guidance for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser, (as a minimum):
  - i. On entering and leaving buildings
  - ii. On entering and leaving communal areas such as kitchen areas, toilets and meeting rooms.
  - iii. Before and after using or touching any multi-person use item such as photocopiers, kettles, microwaves, fridges etc.
  - iv. Before and after wearing a face covering.
2. Employees should cover their face when sneezing or coughing and safely dispose of used tissues.

## 8. Face coverings whilst on RBLI premises

It is a requirement to wear a face covering whilst in RBLI premises, unless exempt – see the **Face Covering Policy**. In all RBLI factories, the higher grade 11/R face masks must be worn by anyone entering the factory. Employees must ensure that they follow good hygiene practices when putting on and taking off face coverings and that they dispose of used single use face coverings promptly and to wash reusable face coverings after each use.

## 9. Social Distancing in RBLI premises

1. All workstations or desks within RBLI premises will be arranged, so far as is reasonably practicable 2 metres apart. Where this is not possible, screens will be installed between desks/workstations. If screens are not possible other measures will be introduced including staggered working patterns. Anyone concerned about the configuration of their work space should notify their Line Manager or the Health and Safety Manager.
2. Employees must ensure that they take all reasonable steps to keep 2 metres from other people, including in common areas such as kitchens, toilets and meeting rooms. In particular employees should comply with the following:
  - i. Any stipulated occupancy limits in shared areas

- ii. In the event of a fire evacuation, employees must follow fire evacuation procedures relevant for their building. Employees should try to maintain social distancing from others whilst exiting the building, but the overall imperative is to evacuate the building safely quickly. Once out of the building and whilst waiting at the assembly point and returning to the building, social distancing must be maintained.
3. Any interaction less than two metres should be kept to a minimum and:
- i. Take place outside or in a shared area indicated by signage as being a **1 metre zone**
  - ii. If inside, all doors and/windows in the room must be kept open for a fresh supply of outside air;
  - iii. All parties should be positioned at least 1 metre apart;
  - iv. Extra attention should be paid to maintaining strict hygiene and cleaning before, during and after the meeting;
  - v. Staff should not be sharing a computer screen at the same time with others (ie to participate in a remote meeting, or to carry out training)

## **10. Ventilation**

An essential part of managing the risks of CV-19 contamination is effective ventilation – allowing ventilation (through adequate air flow systems, open windows etc) helps to dilute contaminated particles. Employees should ensure that where possible they keep windows and doors open, particularly in multi occupied offices or when meeting with others. Employees should also ensure any doors fitted with a doorguard are kept open to aid ventilation, which will close automatically in the event of a fire.

## **11. Use of shared equipment/workplaces**

1. Employees must wipe down multi person use items such as photocopiers, kettles, fridges, filing cabinets and microwaves with the cleaning equipment provided after use. Employees should make sure they wash or sanitise their hands afterwards
2. Employees should not share items such as cups, utensils, tools, pens and other stationary with others at this time unless sanitised before and after use
3. Employees are responsible for sanitising shared workspaces/desks before and after use.

## **12. Use of Kitchens**

Employees must adhere to the kitchen rules which include:

1. Keeping within the maximum occupancy levels
2. Wearing a face covering whilst in the kitchen
3. Sanitising any items touched (such as kettles, microwaves etc) after use
4. Particular care should be taken when sharing food or utensils or when making food/drinks for others
5. Any utensils etc provided for general use should be washed thoroughly before and after use
6. Not leaving open food lying around including in the fridge
7. Not leaving dirty crockery or other items in the kitchen area – all items must be washed thoroughly and put away in the cupboards or removed from the kitchen

## **13. Face to Face Meetings**

Whilst employees are encouraged to continue to hold meetings remotely wherever possible, face to face meetings can take place. When meeting with others, the following protocols will apply:

1. Social distancing should be maintained at all times and any occupancy limit for the venue complied with (see section 8 above)
2. Windows and doors should be kept open

3. Desks/tables should be sanitised before and after the meeting as should any equipment used such as projectors and IT equipment
4. Particular care needs to be taken when serving food and refreshments and when distributing paperwork

#### **14. Visitors to RBLI premises**

All visits must follow the **COVID-19 Visitor Procedures**. All visitors must be given a copy of the **RBLI Visitor Guidelines** and complete the **Health Declaration Form** prior to the visit.

#### **15. Attending Non RBLI Premises**

When attending or working at non RBLI premises, employees should follow the **Offsite working procedures**.

#### **16. Corporate events**

The **CV-19 Event Safety Checklist** must be completed prior to any RBLI run events taking place.

#### **17. Feeling Ill at Work**

1. Employees who experience any CV-19 symptoms (referred to above) whilst at their workplace:
  - i. Avoid touching anything and move away from others
  - ii. Leave work and return home immediately – ensuring they wear a face covering.
  - iii. Notify their Line Manager as soon as they reasonably can.
  - iv. They must then follow the Government advice on self-isolation. The Government also advises that you should arrange to have a test to check if you have CV-19 and consider alerting people you have had close contact with within the last 48 hours to let them know you have symptoms.
  - v. Employees should not return to the workplace until their isolation period has been ended (or, in relevant cases, they receive a negative test) and they have been authorised to return by their Line Manager to return.
2. Employees should remain vigilant to other symptoms and take action as necessary and if any doubt employees should consult 111 and contact their Line Manager.

#### **18. Failure to comply**

##### Employees only (excluding Volunteers)

Any failure to comply with these Protocols may be regarded as a breach of RBLI's Health and Safety Procedures which will be addressed accordingly in line with RBLI's disciplinary policy. Any wilful failure to comply with any RBLI CV-19 safety requirements may amount to misconduct and, in serious cases, gross misconduct which will be dealt with under **RBLI disciplinary procedures**.

##### Volunteers

Any failure to comply with these protocols or any other RBLI CV-19 safety requirements, may result in termination of their volunteering with RBLI.

#### **19. Collective responsibility**

We all have a collective responsibility to ensure we follow government guidelines and RBLI CV-19 safety measures to enable us to keep employees, visitors, our residents and beneficiaries safe. Employees need to ensure that they do not become complacent as the new CV-19 working practices become familiar. If they see others not complying with the rules, they should not shy away from politely reminding them.

## **20. Support and Advice**

RBLI fully understands that this is an extremely worrying and stressful time for everyone. If employees have any concerns, or require additional support they should discuss these with their Line Manager, or the Health and Safety Manager Ron Board [Ron.board@rbli.co.uk](mailto:Ron.board@rbli.co.uk) or 01622 795936. Employees only (excluding Volunteers): for details of the Employee Assistance Programme, employees should ask their Line Manager or contact a member of the HR department: [HR.office@rbli.co.uk](mailto:HR.office@rbli.co.uk)

## **21. Raising a concern**

Concerns about any of the CV-19 safety measures, premises or work activities should be raised with the employee's Line Manager in the first instance, or the Health and Safety Manager