

Results of Risk Assessment for return to site following COVID-19 lockdown to apply from 23 August 2021

Background

On 19 July 2021, the UK Government moved to Step 4 of its roadmap to recovery. It is noted that although many legal restrictions have been lifted, caution and restraint must continue owing to ongoing prevalence of the virus in the community. The Government's statement on the move to Step 4 can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-response-summer-2021-roadmap/moving-to-step-4-of-the-roadmap>. Because of the ongoing risk of COVID-19 infection, LMS is not yet in a position to return to normal operations.

LMS' Pandemic Recovery (PANDR) group was established in March 2021 to direct the organisation's continued operation under pandemic conditions. PANDR membership can be found listed at Appendix 1

PANDR agreed a suite of control measures prepared on 16 August 2021 and the Organisation's risk assessment for return to site was reviewed and revised on 23 August 2021. From 26 August 2021, a higher occupancy has been permitted on site, with staff no longer required to work from home except where remaining restrictions on occupancy continue to require hybrid working.

PANDR has assessed the risks associated with returning to site and implemented a series of measures to reduce these risks. Its objective is to ensure a safe return to site for LMS that reduces the risk of COVID-19 infection to staff, students, visitors and contractors, complies with government guidance, and allows as many research activities as possible to safely resume. We will take all staff into consideration including, during lockdown periods, those who cannot attend site due to vulnerabilities or caring responsibilities.

PANDR will continue to monitor guidance from Government, UKRI and Imperial College as site occupancy increases and as new ways of working (e.g. hybrid working in some teams) are trialled.

Summary of risks and measures from 23 August 2021

Key risk areas considered and a summary of the results of the assessment to apply from 26 August 2021 are as follows.

1. Managing the risk of spread of COVID-19 Coronavirus in the institute
 - Actions to follow if someone shows COVID symptoms reviewed and communicated via [Key Principles and Rules](#)¹
 - Self-isolation requirements in line with current Government requirements
 - Face coverings will remain mandatory throughout LMS areas except where otherwise stated. Reusable face coverings are supplied by LMS to staff and students, and disposable face coverings are available from a centrally located dispenser for visitors, contractors or when needed by staff. Information on the correct donning/doffing of face coverings. Use of face

coverings will be kept under review. The trigger point for the next review will be the point at which all adults in the UK have had the opportunity to have 2 vaccinations.

- 1m+ social distancing measures will be in place post 23 August. Social distancing of at least 1 metre plus compulsory mask wearing must be observed in all circumstances, except in designated eating spaces during allocated eating times.
- Maximum occupancy limits defined and displayed for areas where ventilation is or suspected to be inadequate, or room dimensions constrain social distancing.
- Intra-office seating arrangements assessed, back to back seating arrangements where applicable, Perspex barriers provided where requested and applicable.
- Posters reinforcing key messages such as good hand hygiene, social distancing and unsafe behaviour reporting displayed.
- Encourage frequent handwashing and promote public health measures, provide hand sanitizer in common access points throughout including common equipment labs, offices and corridors.
- Continue to encourage disinfection of workspaces at the start and end of the work session and for protection and disinfection of common user equipment before and after use, provide paper towels, disinfectant sprays, disinfectant wipes and cling film as required.
- Recommended close contact recording.
- Symptom reporting and contact tracking processes are established. Staff with symptoms should continue to apply for antigen testing through the NHS testing website
- All staff are encouraged to make the most of regular on-site PCR testing and take-home LFD testing
- All staff are encouraged to be vaccinated, and participate in informal, optional anonymous surveys to assess staff vaccination status.
- LMS COVID-19 Key Principles and Rules documented, circulated to all staff and available on Intranet (<http://intranet.lms.mrc.ac.uk/index.php/covid-19-guidelines/>).
- New starters on site provided with latest version of LMS COVID-19 Key Principles and Rules in hard copy.
- Providing local COVID safety induction to service engineers and visitors
- PANDR meeting notes circulated to all staff to keep them informed of current discussions as well as future directions
- We aim to allow all staff to have had the opportunity of 2 vaccinations before reviewing the situation again to see whether all social distancing measures can be removed.

2. Managing the risk of contracting COVID-19 while travelling to work
 - Recommended staff use personal transport (e.g. walking, cycling, private vehicle) where possible
 - Avoid peak times, wear face covering, routinely sanitise hands and observe service provider requirements if public transport use is unavoidable.
3. Managing the risk due to increased lone working as a result of reduced site occupancy or off-setting of hours to avoid peak travel
 - The normal LMS rules for risk assessment and lone working apply.
 - Recommend staff to install Imperial College's SafeZone app on phones and recirculate emergency/security contact numbers.
4. Managing the risk of disproportionately affecting staff who are not on site (e.g. because of remaining social distancing measures limiting attendance)
 - Team leads to consider how best to support productivity across the full team and to arrange on site rotas (while occupancy limits are still in place) to ensure no disadvantage.
 - At this stage, most teams should be able to be on site for some part of the week, much reducing the risk of any disadvantage due to off-site working.
5. Managing anxiety among staff returning to site or concerned about removal of previous safety measures
 - Staff who have concerns about the working environment as social distancing rules are lifted should speak to their manager in the first instance. Where possible we will try to consider the local needs of those who are anxious (e.g. through 1m+, back to back working or other measures).
 - Team leads asked to be sympathetic where the job role allows to requests for working hours that reduce on peak travel on public transport.
 - Hybrid working requests will be considered (see below).
 - Reminder of Imperial and UKRI assistance programmes, occupational health arrangements and in-house mental health first aiders.
 - Team leads should meet or speak to all team members regularly (in person or virtually).
 - The Director of Postgraduate Studies and the Imperial College Graduate School continue to provide support for students
6. Transitioning to new ways of working
 - Guidance from UKRI and Imperial College has been used to develop the LMS approach to requests for continued hybrid working. This was circulated to all staff.
 - All new arrangements to be trialled and no long-term agreements for at least 6-12 months.

Risk assessments from earlier phases of the pandemic can be obtained on request from the LMS Health and Safety team.

Appendix 1

LMS Pandemic Recovery (PANDR) Group

Institute Director

Head of Operations

Head of Health and Safety

Head of HR

Head of Estates

Head of IT

Head of Communications and Engagement

Director of Postgraduate Studies

Head of Animal Research Governance

Section Chairs

Postdocs

PhD students

Facilities Managers