

# **Covid-19 Return to the Office Plan**

## **For the period 1 September to 31 December 2020**

### **August 2020**

#### **Executive Team**

Directory of Social Change  
356 Holloway Road  
London  
N7 6PA

## Context

DSC's offices have been closed for the emergency since the end of March 2020 when the government advised everyone to work from home due to the rising cases of Covid-19. From that period to 1 September 2020 staff have worked at home.

Working at home has been a necessity during the crisis, but it is not DSC's preferred way of working. Whilst staff have adapted and managed reasonably well, DSC does not aspire in the long term to be a remote working organisation and indeed, is not designed to be one. There are a number of reasons for this:

- 1 We believe that our work and productivity benefits from staff interacting with each other in the same physical space as often as is reasonably practicable
- 2 We are a beneficiary facing organisation and need to be available to interact personally with our beneficiaries
- 3 Most of our staff have limited facilities and environment to work from home occasionally or as part of a working week but their space is not generally adequate for full time home working
- 4 There is a cost to DSC associated with staff working at home on a permanent basis which relates to equipment, environment and travel. This also comes with a potential tax-implication for the staff members concerned. These are not costs that DSC either needs or can afford to bear
- 5 DSC has offices in both London and Liverpool, both of which are in lease or that we require because we need somewhere affordable and permanent for delegates and visitors. It does make economic sense to use this space appropriately
- 6 Part of DSC's brand is being welcoming and having a strong sense of warmth for staff and beneficiaries which is best achieved within our own premises.

DSC aims to ensure that all staff are supported appropriately, within our means, where possible, with the purpose of serving our beneficiaries to the high standards that we are used to.

The pandemic is a moving picture. DSC will at all times be guided by government guidelines and will make adjustments to the plan and working environments as and when necessary.

## 2021

From 1 January 2021 we expect to return to more usual ways of working but with some increased flexibility around start and finish times and the ability for staff to continue to be able to work from home on some days: as part of normal working routine; where it fits in with DSC's priority to serve its beneficiaries; if it works within their team; if it feels fair; and if they so wish. No-one will be forced to work from home if they do not wish to unless government guidelines state they must.

## The Plan

### Office working days and times

Until 31 December 2020 DSC's full-time working staff will continue to do their full time hours in a four day working week. Therefore, the existing Monday crews and Friday crews will remain as they are. Part time staff hours arrangements will be as they are currently agreed.

Every member of staff (unless there are exceptional circumstances) will be required to work a minimum of one day a week in the office between now and 31 December. The timings within each day will be agreed with the rest of the team bubble into which staff are allocated and the appropriate line managers. We hope this will help to mitigate the concerns of those worried about rush hours.

### Team bubbles

All DSC staff will form part of a Team Bubble spread across all departments for the office working days. This is to minimise the likelihood of an entire team being taken out of action if one member contracts COVID-19. This is also to facilitate cross-team working and support.

The offices will be closed on Mondays and Fridays (unless the need to be opened for training or beneficiary visits) and open on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays which is when they will be expected to attend for their office based shift. Staff will continue to work at home for their Friday or Monday crew shift as they do currently.

The bubbles are:

Day	Name	Department	Location
Monday	Monday Crew	As now – cross departmental	At home
Tuesday	Staff member* Staff member Staff member Staff member Staff member	Department Department Department Department Department	
Wednesday	Staff member* Staff member Staff member Staff member Staff member	Department Department Department Department Department	
Thursday	Staff member* Staff member Staff member Staff member Staff member	Department Department Department Department Department	
Friday	Friday Crew	As now cross departmental	At home

\*These members of staff will not be in a position to attend their offices for part or all of the period September to December because either travel is banned or personal circumstances make it impossible for the time being. This will change as and when circumstances change.

\*\*We may on occasion make exceptions to the travel ban between offices for those members of staff who may be required to move between offices or to travel to other locations for the purposes of delivering DSC's work.

Members of staff who are based overseas or whose contracts determine home working will not be required to attend the offices.

### **Transport/travel to and between offices**

DSC will discuss staggering start and end times with individuals in order to facilitate not travelling during rush hour for those who feel they need it. Where staff are anxious about public transport DSC will work with the staff member to help facilitate alternative ways for them to get to the office for their one day a week office shift up to the end of 2020.

There will be no travel between London and Liverpool offices until January 2021 unless for the purposes of delivering for a beneficiary or under exceptional circumstances as agreed by the CEO.

## **DSC Covid-19 Protocols**

### **Cleanliness**

DSC will provide every staff member with a sanitation pack which will clearly state the staff member's name and will include products such as hand sanitizer, tissues, wipes, disposable gloves and masks, a visor, cleaner and cloths for their computer and desks and so on. These will be for staff to use appropriately and within the guidelines during their day in the office each week. When the contents of anyone's pack gets low they need to inform Facilities who will replenish them. Staff may not use or access the contents of any other members of staff's pack.

Staff will not be required to wear a mask during office hours. However, there are separate protocols for the communal areas from our landlords where the wearing of masks may be required and these will be briefed to you prior to return to the office.

Managers will regularly brief staff on cleaning protocols and ensure these are understood and followed. This includes protocols for shared spaces (for example using hand sanitizer or washing hands when returning from other parts of the building such as communal areas or toilets).

## Guidance and signage

Signage will be placed around both offices to remind staff of best practice and government guidelines in relation to handwashing, how to handle a cough or a sneeze and what the social distancing rules are. Signs will also be provided to remind staff and visitors of the symptoms of Covid-19 and what to do in the event they believe they have them.

## Food and drink

To minimise risk DSC will no longer provide facilities to heat or chill food or make hot drinks in the office. Staff will need to bring food and drink in themselves which will not spoil nor will require heating or purchase such items locally. There will be no communal areas made available for breaks or lunches. Staff will be asked to consume perishables at their desks to minimise risk to others.

However, staff are encouraged to take regular breaks and, if they feel safe to do so, to go outside and get some fresh air at points during the working day in order to maintain wellbeing.

## Social distancing

DSC will ensure there is at least one desk space between each worker in the office on each day and that no-one is working directly across from anyone else on any given day.

DSC will provide face masks for visitors' and delegates' use and have clear social distancing signs and markers.

## The DSC bookshop

This will not be open to the public until January 2021. For those who come into DSC to access *Funds On Line* or who wish to browse books we will find another way of enabling them to access what they need.

## Other visitors

It is possible that we will be asked to meet pre-arranged visitors to our offices, for example if someone wants to meet Debra or one of the training team. Whilst we will seek to minimise this obviously the needs of those we serve are a priority.

We will issue guidelines in advance of the visit. We will ask visitors to wear a mask or a visor whilst they are walking through any common areas and provide hand sanitizer for them. It will be for the visitor and visatee to agree whether or not to wear masks during the meeting. We will honour the wishes of our visitors provided we feel it is safe to do so and within government guidelines.

Off the street visitors who do not have an appointment will not, under normal circumstances, be permitted entry to the office. We will have appropriate signage which asks them to contact us to make an appointment if their visit is necessary.

## **Personal Responsibilities**

It will be the responsibility of individuals to comply with DSC's rules, wash their hands, maintain social distancing and take the appropriate action if they display symptoms or fall ill.

If a member of staff feels that a colleague is failing to adhere to the standards we encourage them to speak to each other first. Our team are open, co-operative and understanding and will not be offended by a gentle reminder to follow the rules. If this fails then the usual DSC policies and procedures will apply.