



## Are you planning for a return to the office after lockdown?

**Contact:**

**Mick Heald**

**David Mason**

**T:** 01534 752758

**Email:**

[mickheald@ipm.je](mailto:mickheald@ipm.je)

[davidmason@ipm.je](mailto:davidmason@ipm.je)

The current Covid-19 situation has forced many organisations to adopt new working practices, in particular homeworking, to ensure business can continue during the current restrictions.

These enforced arrangements will no doubt lead to the adoption of the new more flexible working practices in the future, but is there a more pressing need to consider the implications of a phased exit of the lockdown restrictions?

### **A phased return to normality?**

How we will leave the current lockdown period is still unclear, but it is almost certain that physical distancing and other hygiene measures will continue for some time after lockdown begins to be lifted.

With many organisations having created open, collaborative office environments with high density occupation of desks, your office environment may require significant redesign to support the working practices required to make sure those who need to return to work stay safe. Your workplace may need to adapt to support requirements such as keeping employees two metres apart at their desks, providing routes through floors which maintain social distance, enhanced cleaning regimes and clear arrangements for the use of shared space. As well as the physical environment, behaviours will have to be adapted to support social distancing.

### **What could be the implications of returning the office after lockdown?**

Whilst there are not yet any detailed guidelines from government, there are a number of things that may need to be considered to enable a return to the office, including:

- **Reducing Numbers:** A system in place to reduce numbers attending the office, perhaps by 25-50%; this would include identifying those who should stay at home due to vulnerability and the development of rotas or shift patterns appropriate to your business.
- **Redesigning the Office:** The redesign of the office environment to ensure social distances can be maintained, including desk locations, specified routes through the office (e.g. designated one-way systems), protocols for shared spaces and meeting rooms and reducing bottlenecks in waiting areas.
- **Reducing the Spread:** Changes which help reduce the spread of the virus, such as considering improved air conditioning filters, providing surfaces which can be easily cleaned, the use of touchless technology, hands free switches and controls and an enhanced cleaning regime focused on areas of risk.
- **Looking After Staff:** Welfare measures including screening staff for symptoms on a regular basis, reducing the number of hours spent in the office and having a procedure for when someone falls ill within the office environment.
- **Ongoing Awareness and Monitoring:** Clear staff guidance and instruction on the new ways of working as well as specific staff trained to monitor the arrangements and make changes where necessary.

