

In today's update you'll find:

- **Partnership working arrangements during COVID-19 – what this means for staff and managers**
- **Planned office improvements to keep staff safe**

Partnership working arrangements during COVID-19 – what this means for staff and managers

Our organisation is committed to partnership working and recognises the importance and value of our existing partnership arrangements at all levels of the organisation. This is particularly the case during the current COVID-19 pandemic, and partnership working continues to be at the heart of any changes that are necessary to ensure that we are able to respond effectively.

The Scottish Partnership Forum (SPF) has recently issued a [statement](#) concerning partnership working. The statement identifies a number of key employment matters where partnership working may be impacted by current circumstances. It provides guidance to managers, staff and trade union representatives on how these matters can be addressed or delivered.

We have fully considered all aspects of the SPF statement, in partnership, and you can find details of our agreed approach in the [guidance and protocol documents](#) on HR Connect (you can access the documents by using the link above, selecting the NSS board tab and you'll find the documents under 'Policy and process' titled 'Guidance on SPF Statement on Partnership Working final - NSS' and 'Case Management protocol final - NSS').

These include our current position on key areas such as:

- continuing the provision of facility time (time and facilities allowed for trade union and staff representatives to carry out their duties)
- what will be happening with organisational change during COVID-19
- provisions for case management (for example, disciplinary matters and grievances)

[Frequently Asked Questions](#) (FAQs) that explain terminology used in the statement, and specifically on case management, are also available (you can access the FAQs by using the link above, selecting the NSS board tab and you'll find them under FAQs titled 'Case management protocols final – NSS FAQ').

If you are unable to find an answer to your query in the guidance and supporting information provided, please contact HR using the [Contact Us](#) form on HR Connect.

Planned office improvements to keep staff safe

Since the start of lockdown there have been minimal numbers of staff in NSS buildings, delivering critical services which could not be done from home. To support those office working staff a number of safety and infection control measures were introduced.

As a wider range of NHSScotland services start to resume, there will be an increasing need for more staff to return to the office where a service cannot be delivered remotely. Colleagues across NSS have been

working together to determine the level of additional safety measures and procedures required, both internally and within the immediate surrounding areas of our buildings, to allow more staff to return to their workplace safely. As mentioned in our previous email, this will be carried out in a phased approach, and only colleagues who are required to be in the office for a service reason will form part of the first group to return to our buildings.

We've developed an agreed programme of works, aligned with national recommendations and Scottish Government guidance, which provide further precautionary measures – including the installation of hand sanitising stations and introduction of one-way pedestrian walkways, to maximise safety and minimise risk when more colleagues start returning to our shared workspaces in the coming weeks. Where possible all necessary works will be undertaken outside office hours to minimise disruption and restrict the amount of visitors to our buildings.

Helping you adjust to the new ways of working

If you receive written notification that you can return to the office – you will notice some changes to our working practices.

The Marketing and Communications team, supported by colleagues in HR and Facilities, are creating short videos to give you a feel for the redesigned working environment and what you can expect when you return – along with guidance on how to keep yourself, and your colleagues, safe at work. If you're based at our Meridian Court or Gyle Square sites, you may see filming activities taking place over the next week. If you do not wish to be included in any wide or panning shots, please inform the team when you see them.

Important reminders:

- To support staff with the latest information, we continue to update the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on the [HR Connect Coronavirus Hub](#) on a daily basis.
- For information on how to stay safe and well please visit the [HR Connect Coronavirus Hub](#)
- Travel should only be undertaken when essential, including travel to and from work. If you are travelling for work purposes, please make sure you have your staff ID badge with you at all times.
- If you're a line manager, please ensure all NSS systems - such as SSTS, eExpenses and eESS – are up to date.
- PECOS orders - please ensure you receipt orders when goods arrive or services are received to allow suppliers to be paid promptly.

Where to go for help and useful information

- **COVID-19 symptoms and how to manage them:** [NHSInform \(available in BSL and a variety of languages\)](#)
- **HR or staff-related questions and support -** [HR Connect Coronavirus Hub](#)
- **IT-related questions and support** – visit DaS Knowledge base and more <https://nhsnss.service-now.com/das>. If accessing from an external internet connection your login details should be in the format of [networkID@nss.scot.nhs.uk](#) (ie [kyliem01@nss.scot.nhs.uk](#)) and then your network password
- **Travel info and updates:** [Traveline](#)

- **Communications queries** - nss.communications@nhs.net



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