



COVID19 Policy

This policy explains what covid19 is and provides a framework to staff and clients for working in a safe office environment whilst Covid 19 exists. Employers have several common law and statutory duties in relation to health and safety at work. This document has been prepared to operate in tandem with the UK Government's latest advice and details the protocols we have put in place.

In addition to this policy, if any individual wants to know more of the UK Government's latest advice on making the working COVID-secure, they can familiarize themselves with current HSE Guidance [here](#).

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Background

Information about the virus

A coronavirus is a type of virus. As a group, coronaviruses are common across the world. COVID-19 is a new strain of coronavirus first identified in January 2020.

Signs and symptoms of COVID-19

The following symptoms may suggest a possible COVID-19 infection:

- a high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal.

Generally, the infection can cause more severe symptoms in people with weakened immune systems, older people, and those with long-term conditions like diabetes, cancer and chronic lung disease.

How COVID-19 is spread

COVID-19 is spread by airborne transmission, close contact via droplets, and via surfaces. Airborne transmission is a very significant way that the virus circulates. It is possible to be infected by someone you don't have close contact with, especially if you're in a crowded and/or poorly ventilated space.

Close contact with an infected person is also a significant way COVID-19 is spread. When someone with COVID-19 breathes, speaks, coughs or sneezes, they release particles containing the virus that causes COVID-19. The particles can come into contact with the eyes, nose or mouth or can be breathed in by another person. The particles can also land on surfaces and be passed from person to person via touch.

In general, the risk of catching or passing on COVID-19 is higher in crowded and enclosed spaces, where there are more people who might be infectious and limited fresh air.

How long the virus can survive

How long any respiratory virus survives will depend on a number of factors, for example:

- what surface the virus is on
- whether it is exposed to sunlight
- differences in temperature and humidity
- exposure to cleaning products

Under most circumstances, the amount of infectious virus on any contaminated surfaces is likely to have decreased significantly by 72 hours.

Once similar viruses are transferred to hands, they survive for very short lengths of time. Regular cleaning of frequently touched hard surfaces and hands will, therefore, help to reduce the risk of infection.

What to do if someone develops symptoms of coronavirus

If anyone becomes unwell with any of these 3 coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms they should [Self Isolate](#) and arrange to get a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test as soon as possible:

- a high temperature
- a new, continuous cough
- you've lost your sense of smell or taste, or it's changed

You can order a PCR test kit to be sent to your home or book an appointment at a walk-in or drive-through test site [here](#).

Halo Return Home Protocol

Below is the Halo response plan in the event of a staff member displaying coronavirus symptoms

If they are at work, we will send them home and instruct them to seek medical advice from the NHS and keep their line manager informed of developments.

We will have a designated isolation space in which to place them if suitable transport is not immediately available (this space will be deep cleaned immediately after each use)

If they are at home, they will be told not to report for work, seek medical advice from the NHS and keep their line manager informed of developments.

Other staff members or clients who are known to have been in close contact* with a suspected or known case of Covid-19 while that individual was displaying symptoms will be contacted and instructed to follow UK Government guidelines and stay at home until safe to return. We will also arrange a covid test for any staff member if they or members of their household show symptoms.

*'Close contact' – defined at the time of writing in the UK as below 2m for more than 15 mins or having had unprotected direct contact to respiratory secretions of the ill individual (e.g. cough/sneeze in the face)

Self-Isolation

Self-Isolation is when you do not leave your home because you have or might have coronavirus (COVID-19)

When to self-isolate

You must self-isolate if:

- You've tested positive for coronavirus.
- You're told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace
- If you live in the same household as someone with COVID-19, you must stay at home and self-isolate if you are not fully vaccinated or if they have been identified as a suspected or confirmed case of the Omicron variant of COVID-19
- If you live in the same household as someone with COVID-19 that has not been identified as a suspected or confirmed case of the Omicron variant, and you are fully vaccinated or aged under 18 years and 6 months, you are not required to self-isolate

If you develop COVID-19 symptoms, self-isolate immediately and get a PCR test if you can, even if your symptoms are mild. This is because many people experience mild symptoms from COVID-19 but may still pass on the virus to others.

How to self-isolate

If you are self-isolating, you must not leave your home.

How long to self-isolate

If you test positive, you must self-isolate from the day your symptoms started and the next 10 full days, or from the day your test was taken if you do not have symptoms and the next 10 full days. This is the law, regardless of whether you have been vaccinated. Self-isolating is important because you could pass the infection on to others, even if you do not have symptoms. You must stay at home for the full amount of time you are told to, because this is the period when the virus is most likely to be passed on to others.

New rules enable people to reduce their self-isolation period. Effective from Monday 17th January, people self-isolating with COVID-19 will have the option to reduce their isolation period after 5 full days if they test negative on both day 5 and day 6 and do not have a temperature.

Your self-isolation period starts immediately from when your symptoms started, or, if you do not have any symptoms, from when your positive LFD or PCR test was taken, whichever test was taken first. Your self-isolation period includes the day your symptoms started (or the day your test was taken if you do not have symptoms), and the next 10 full days. It may be possible to end your self-isolation earlier (see below).

If you are self-isolating because of a positive test result but did not have any symptoms, and you develop COVID-19 symptoms within your self-isolation period, you do not need to start a new self-isolation period.

If you develop COVID-19 symptoms at any point after ending your first period of self-isolation you and your household should follow the steps in this guidance again.

If your PCR test result is negative but you still have symptoms, you may have another viral illness such as a cold, flu or a stomach bug. You should stay at home until you feel well and for at least 2 more days if you have had diarrhoea or vomiting. Seek medical attention if you are concerned about your symptoms.

Testing

The expansion of workplace testing will identify more positive cases of COVID-19 and ensure those infected isolates. This will reduce the spread of the virus and protect those who cannot work from home.

Daily declaration

All staff are required to declare their state of health when on halo premises and clients are asked whether they are suffering from any COVID-19 symptoms when entering the building.

Temperature

All staff and clients have their temperature taken on entering the premises. This is an easy and fast method for detection of COVID-19 but it is not especially reliable.

Lateral Flow Tests

Lateral flow testing is a fast and simple way to test people who do not have symptoms of COVID-19, but who may still be spreading the virus.

Halo has a stock of testing kits and regularly invite staff and clients to take a test in a safe environment. Results are recorded and shared with each individual via the government website as part of the wider testing programme.

The tests are easy to use and give results in less than 30 minutes. Lateral flow devices do not require a laboratory to process the test. They are designed to be intuitive and require minimal training to operate.

In some circumstances, tests can be arranged for individual groups, on request.

Those who test positive must immediately self-isolate to avoid passing the virus on to others.

Social Distancing

Social distancing means keeping people apart to help reduce the spread of coronavirus.

Where possible individuals should keep 2m apart. If this is not viable, keeping 1m apart with risk mitigation is acceptable.

Risk mitigating actions includes:

- Using screens or barriers to separate individuals from one another
- Using back-to-back or side-to-side working (rather than face-to-face)
- Reducing the number of individuals each person has contact with.

Safe Office Environment

Regardless of a visitor's personal attitude to risk, Halo's responsibility as an employer and service provider is very clear. We have a duty of care to everyone who works in our buildings. We maintain a systematic approach to safety, social distancing and the highest standards of cleanliness at all times.

Cleanliness

Cleaning is no longer something that will happen in the morning and evening only. It will be a constant, ongoing focus for everyone on site. Our regular daily cleaning which includes an hourly process that maintains a clean and safe environment at all times is also supplemented by a specialist 'deep clean' service that is used when appropriate. We have also implemented a process of regularly cleaning surfaces, door handles and various commonly touched objects throughout the office throughout the day as well as toilets. All the same, it falls to every individual to make sure they behave in such a way as to make halo as safe as possible for all users.

Entering the Building

Upon entering any of Halo's buildings every individual must use the anti-viral hand gel provided and have their temperature taken by the receptionist. If the receptionist is busy, please be patient.

We are asking all staff to declare daily whether they suspect they (1) might be experiencing coronavirus symptoms or (2) have knowingly been exposed to an infected individual. If a staff member answers 'yes' to either question or shows a temperature above 37.8 degrees (being the UK government's threshold for 'risk of fever' associated with coronavirus) they will be asked to leave the building and return home in accordance with [Halo's Return Home Protocol](#).

Common Areas

Common areas are used by many people. The potential for spread of coronavirus is considered to be higher in these areas so special attention is given.

Whilst 2m social distancing may not be possible throughout all common areas within Halo we insist that a face covering must be worn to mitigate the risk of spreading coronavirus when in common areas.

We have installed a protective screen at reception and will manage the number of people in the reception area at any given time.

We only occupy one building with a lift. Where possible, please avoid using it. Halo's Dean Street reception is on the 3rd floor, so taking the stairs is a feasible option. We would like to make sure lifts are prioritised for people who may have restricted mobility.

Halo will make sure the lift buttons are cleaned regularly.

Individual rooms and suites

Each individual room requires its own particular consideration to social distancing depending on the size and shape of the room. Halo has done a thorough risk assessment of every room to establish what is deemed an acceptable number of people in each room and bookings will be arranged in accordance with that assessment.

Halo will also provide floor-standing and desk shielding on request.

Offline suites will be given a deep clean between one client to the next.

We respectfully ask that clients observe sensible social distancing measures in their offline suites.

Sessions with Creatives

Each colourist, online editor, mixer and sound editor has a specific suite to work in. Clients can attend sessions within the parameters that maintain acceptable levels of risk to all parties. Clients are required to wear a face-covering when attending a session.

If a client fails to follow Halo's guidelines and a member of staff feels they are being put at unreasonable risk, they are encouraged to stop the session and contact their line manager.

Finishing suites will be given an extra clean between one client to the next.

Safe Halo Services

Runner Service

Although the runner service is available Halo is requesting all clients and staff to limit their runner requests to minimise runner movement around the facility.

- The usual refreshments (tea, coffee etc) are available by calling through to the runner kitchen. Please let us know if you'd prefer the runners to leave refreshments outside the suite and knock on the door to indicate arrival

Please also bear in mind the runners will be very busy with the additional responsibilities that prioritise safety over comfort which may cause delay.

Edit Support Service

- Support will always be provided remotely whenever possible.
- Attendance to a suite will be provided when essential and under the following arrangements.
 - Please maintain a 2m distance from our technical assistants at all times when carrying out any support tasks in client attended suites. Clients and technical

assistants should both wear a face covering that covers the nose and mouth whilst the assistant is in the suite.

- Where this is not possible clients may be required to temporarily vacate the suite whilst any support or maintenance is carried out
- Clients can wait in an area which will be defined by the technical assistant at the point of attending the suite.
- Clients may return to the suite when they are given the 'all clear'.
- The technical support operative will give all surfaces a wipe down prior to leaving the suite.

Training

Covid-19 safety training must be undertaken by all staff before returning to the workplace. This will cover best practice in general principles, (including safe use of PPE such as masks and gloves, hand washing, cleaning of surfaces, handling of equipment and disposal of waste) and department-specific needs - including particular instances of close-proximity working.

Business continuity and Remote Working

First and foremost, management at halo are taking every precaution to ensure the business continues to operate. This is primarily achieved through preventing infection. As well as the above-mentioned advice and policy we keep a constant view of advice provided by the government, NHS and WHO. Regular advice, understanding and guidance is communicated to staff and clients to ensure an ongoing state of best practice is implemented.

We are also asking all our clients for an up-to-date version of their respective policies so that we may apply appropriate measures at halo.

Access to our Soho offices remains in place but in the event of another lockdown or restricted access Halo can switch to a remote working facility.

Almost all Halo services are now available remotely on request and whilst the guidance is to work from home we are encouraging that to all staff and clients in as far as it is possible.

We are happy to discuss solutions available to enable remote working and are exploring options to develop our remote access solutions further. This offering very much depends on the services required as well as wider circumstances surrounding each project and their respective security restrictions. As a result, these solutions can only be considered on a case-by-case basis as opposed to a one size fits all approach but please rest assured it is rare that a service is unavailable. If you are interested in looking into the possibility of remote working, please get in touch with your halo contact for further information.

Other Considerations

If in doubt

If you have any doubts about the policy or are unsure what to do in a specific circumstance, please ask your producer for assistance.

Halo management will keep on top of the latest news as it emerges and amend the advice accordingly and ensure it's shared with all halo staff. Due to the changing nature of the global infection this policy may be updated to reflect the latest situation. You will be advised of any changes to the policy as they are implemented.