

Keeping everyone safe at work

By law, employers have a 'duty of care' for employees, customers and anyone else who visits the workplace.

There are a number of things an employer should consider to make work as safe as possible for everyone.

Employers also have responsibilities for health, safety and wellbeing when staff are working remotely, for example working from home.

Employers must:

- do all they reasonably can to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of everyone at work
- complete a risk assessment, and take reasonable steps to prevent harm
- consider how to protect employees who are at high risk of covid-19 (coronavirus) as part of their general health and safety risk assessment
- consult staff, and any trade union or employee representatives, on any decisions that involve health and safety

Find out more from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) about [employers' responsibilities for health and safety risk assessments](#).

What employers should consider

Employers should consider policies and rules to keep their workplace safe. This is part of their legal obligation for the health, safety and wellbeing of staff.

Cleaning and ventilation

Employers should follow government guidance on hygiene and cleaning the workplace:

- England – [GOV.UK guidance on living safely with respiratory infections, including covid](#)
- Scotland – [Scottish Government guidance on safer workplaces and public settings](#)
- Wales – [Welsh Government guidance for employers, businesses and organisations](#)

Employers must also make sure there is adequate ventilation in their workplace. This means a good flow of fresh air from outdoors and removing stale air from indoors.

[Find out more about ventilation in the workplace from the Health and Safety Executive \(HSE\)](#)

Covid

If someone at work has covid symptoms or has tested positive, they should follow the public health advice in England, Scotland or Wales and any policy their organisation has in place.

Find out more about:

- [covid and work](#)
- [covid health and safety advice for workplaces](#) from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE)

Talking to employees about changes

Employers should encourage employees to talk to them about any concerns they have, and try to resolve them together.

Employers should consult with staff about any changes to how they work.

This means the employer should:

- ask staff for their views
- consider any suggestions
- try to reach agreement

Where they have them, employers should also consult their trade union or other employee representatives. They should check if there's any agreement with representatives that says they must formally consult.

Things to talk about could include:

- how health and safety is being reviewed and managed – employers should share their latest risk assessment
- any changes to safety measures at work
- any other flexible working arrangements, including working from home and hybrid working

Find out more about:

- [talking about health and safety with workers from the Health and Safety Executive \(HSE\)](#)
- [consulting employees and their representatives](#)

Changes that might affect someone's employment contract

If there are any proposed changes that affect the written terms of someone's contract, the employer must consult with them or their representative, for example their trade union representative.

[Find out more about changing an employment contract](#)

Get more advice and support

If you have any questions about health and safety at work, [contact the Health and Safety Executive \(HSE\)](#).