

Background

The government has now moved into the next phase of encouraging estate and letting agents to return to work provided that the environment is as safe as it reasonably can be. Linley and Simpson Group will be following the workplace safety guidelines closely and will be assessing the risk in each of our locations accordingly as we gradually return to normal staffing levels.

Our Employees

Prior to returning from a period of Furlough we will check on the health of staff members the day before their intended return date.

Returning to work does not necessarily mean returning to work physically on a full-time basis and may mean limiting numbers in buildings/offices. It may be necessary to rotate who works in the office and who works from home.

New routines once back at work

As part of our morning meeting, we will have a daily check in to ensure no health issues have changed. If anyone is displaying symptoms, and they live on their own they must self-isolate for 7 days, if a member of their household is displaying symptoms they must self-isolate for 14 days.

Premises

We will be accommodating the 2-metre social distancing rule wherever practical both between staff and between staff and customers. All face to face contact should be kept to a minimum. Screens will be assembled in front of the desks used for visitor/customer interactions within a branch.

Each branch will only allow a certain number of visitors/customers including contractors into the branch at any one time, this will be dependent on the physical space available in each location. These rules will be displayed on the entrance door and within the office space.

Each office will have a deep clean prior to staff returning including kitchens, staff rooms, toilets, kettles, fridges, microwaves etc.

Each office will be supplied with an ample supply of hand-gel, anti-bacterial wipes and sprays and soap. These will be readily available throughout the office for staff, visitors and customers to use.

Changes to working practices

Each location will have a regular cleaning routine throughout the day. This will be mid-morning, after lunch and at close of business and will include: Desks, chair arms, safety screens, keyboards, mouse, screens, staplers, pens, photocopier controls, drawer handles, phones, mobile phones, key cabinets, filing cabinets, door handles and any items or surfaces that the visiting public may touch.

All staff will be encouraged to wash hands with hot water and soap more frequently than before, and must be done every time a staff member returns from an external appointment.

Carrying out Market Appraisals

Where possible we will carry out the valuation in accordance with the seller's or landlord's instructions. If possible and if the client is agreeable, we will visit the property with no-one else present and report back to the client afterwards. Using video conferencing to do this is our preferred method.

Where a face to face meeting is to take place we will assess any risk attached to the visit, in terms of health of the seller/landlord and ourselves, and ask if anyone is self-isolating at the property in line with Government guidelines.

Where a valuation is conducted face to face, we will avoid any handshaking or physical contact, keep a two-metre distance, always wear protective gloves, and consider the use of face coverings.

When we get back to our cars we will: dispose of our gloves; use hand-gel to give our hands a good wash and wipe any equipment we have used during the visit with antibacterial wipes.

Viewings

WE will need to ensure we find out who will be attending the viewing and limit the number of people to no more than two at any one time. They should also be from the same household. If the property is occupied, we will be checking on the health of the tenant/seller before arranging the appointment. If the existing occupants refuse access, we must respect this both morally and legally.

Where a physical viewing does takes place we will:

- avoid any handshaking or physical contact
- keep a two-metre distance
- wear protective gloves
- avoid any 'paper' documents
- consider using face masks
- Take antiseptic wipes and wipe all handles and surfaces which we or the viewer may touch
- Provide the viewer with a wipe or hand sanitizer upon entry if they don't have their own.

When returning to the car, we will wash our hands, wipe any equipment we have used on the visit and avoid touching our face during any appointment.