

GEORGE F.WHITE

COVID Secure

Risk Assessment and Operating Plan
for

George F. White

Date of issue – 24th September 2020

The principal objective of this assessment and plan is to take all reasonable steps to prevent the risk of spreading the COVID-19 virus to:

- Our employees and their families
- Our customers and their families
- Visitors and contractors who visit our premises or properties we are selling or managing

The senior person responsible for COVID-19 Management is Sally Hart.

OUR STATEMENT

1. Where possible, we will take all reasonable steps to enable our teams to work from home and those who come into the office will operate from a safe distance.
2. We will complete a risk assessment and agree an operating plan to manage our risks. This document will be shared with all of our team and reviewed on a regular basis.
3. Where we operate in the office or where we visit people in their homes, we will maintain a minimum one-metre social distancing or two metre, where possible.
4. We will use technology where we can to conduct our business operations in order to reduce the need for face-to-face contact.
5. We will have strict processes for cleaning and hygiene and make PPE available for our teams.
6. We will not undertake any face-to-face meeting or allow any employee to attend the office where they or a member of their household is self-isolating or showing symptoms of COVID-19.

1 Our People

- 1.1 We will ensure that all members of our team are fit and healthy by asking two key questions: are they or any member of their household self-isolating or been advised to self-isolate; are they or any member of their household suffering from any COVID-19 symptoms? Where this is confirmed, then the individual will not be permitted to work in a face-to-face situation.
- 1.2 We will establish whether any member of the team is, or has within their household, any person classed as clinically extremely vulnerable or clinically vulnerable. Where this applies, they will be advised to consult medical advice before undertaking any face-to-face work.
- 1.3 There is a clear understanding that where a COVID-19 health situation changes, the employee must notify us at the earliest opportunity, but in no circumstances should they attend work.
- 1.4 Where possible, we will continue to support home working.

2 Our Premises

- 2.1 Our office doors will be locked during usual business hours and clients must knock for a member of staff to meet them.
- 2.2 Where possible, we will promote the use of telephone, email and video calls as the primary sources of communication to minimise the need for individuals to visit our offices.
- 2.3 We recommend that when face-to-face discussions in one of our offices with a specific member of our team is required that appointments are made to ensure availability and so that suitable provision for a private meeting space can be organised, we would also ask that visits are made only by those specifically required for the purpose of the meeting.
- 2.4 We will have all occupied workstations at least two metres apart with side-by-side seating rather than 'face-to-face' where possible.
- 2.5 Our teams will be asked to ensure that only one person at a time will be allowed in the kitchen and other similar communal areas.
- 2.6 We will have a sign on our door advising that no admittance will be provided if: you are or have been advised to self-isolation; you are showing symptoms of COVID-19.
- 2.7 We will arrange for our offices to be fully cleaned on a regular basis.
- 2.8 Each member of the team will be responsible for regular cleaning during the day of all surfaces and equipment used.
- 2.9 We will ensure all toilet facilities have hot water, soap, sanitiser and paper towels. The use of hand dryers and towels will not be permitted.
- 2.10 All members of the team will be encouraged to wash their hands more frequently with hot water and soap.
- 2.11 Hand sanitiser will be available at the entry/exit door, hand and surface wipes will be provided for use at individual workstations and within communal areas.

3 Site Visits

- 3.1 We will encourage use of digital technology, such as Zoom, Skype and other means of communication to minimise the need for face-to-face meetings.
- 3.2 Where a face-to-face meeting is required, then we will establish whether the client/contact or any member of their household is self-isolating or showing any of the COVID-19 symptoms. Where they are, then no face-to-face appointment will take place.
- 3.3 We will confirm in writing the requirement for the client/contact to advise us at any point prior to the appointment if any COVID-19 situation changes.
- 3.4 Where we do conduct a site visit, we will avoid any handshaking or physical contact, keep a two-metre distance, and consider the use of face coverings and protective gloves.

- 3.5 Where possible written content will be provided digitally to minimise the exchange of 'paper' documents.
- 3.6 We will ask the client/contact to open all internal doors, so that we can walk freely around and will not touch any surfaces, where possible.
- 3.7 This goes against the 'grain', but we will keep face-to-face contact time to a minimum, decline any coffees/refreshments etc.
- 3.8 We will explain to the client/contact the actions we are taking to reduce the risk of spreading Coronavirus.
- 3.9 When we return to our cars we will: dispose of gloves, use hand-gel to give our hands a good wash and wipe any equipment we have used during the visit.
- 3.10 When we arrive back at the office, we will be sure to wash our hands with soap and water before we do anything else.
- 3.11 We will never attend a site visit appointment if we are feeling unwell.

4 Property Viewings

- 4.1 We will make full use of video/virtual viewing tools and only arrange a physical viewing where the prospective purchasers or tenants are interested in the property.
- 4.2 We will always establish whether the viewer or any member of their household is self-isolating or displaying any COVID-19 symptoms.
- 4.3 We will find out who will be attending the viewing and limit the number of people to no more than two people from a single household.
- 4.4 If the property is occupied, we will check on the health of the seller before arranging the appointment and advise the seller to open all internal doors and to wipe down all surfaces and door handles after the viewing.
- 4.5 Where a physical viewing does take place, we will avoid any handshaking or physical contact, keep a two-metre distance where possible, wear protective gloves and avoid any 'paper' documents. If anyone from the team goes out on a physical viewing, they may wish to consider using a face covering.
- 4.6 Where we have a supply of hand-gel and disinfectant wipes in the car, when returning to the vehicle, we will sanitise our hands and wipe any equipment used on the visit. We will avoid touching our faces during any appointment.
- 4.7 If the property is vacant and we use a key, we will wipe the key when it is taken from the key cabinet, wipe it after the viewing and again before it is placed back in the key cabinet.
- 4.8 We will never travel in the same car as anyone else and will always meet viewers at the property.
- 4.9 No open house viewings will be arranged.
- 4.10 We will issue clear guidance to viewers so that they understand the processes we are taking to prevent COVID-19 from spreading.
- 4.11 We will confirm all arrangements in writing (digitally), including matters relating to COVID-19 and how the viewing will be conducted in order to comply with COVID Secure guidelines.

5 AML (Anti-Money Laundering)

- 5.1 We are still required to complete legal requirements to confirm the identity of clients and prospective purchasers and tenants in some cases. This should be completed before a business relationship commences. Our team will be able to provide appropriate guidance.
- 5.2 If physical documents are required, the requirement is that this is completed where we can see the individual and the document at the same time – where this method is required our team may consider wearing protective gloves when handling paper documents.
- 5.3 As a first step, we will see if the customer has ‘certified copies’ which they could supply digitally as evidence of identity.
- 5.4 Any face-to-face visits in the office will be undertaken observing the two-metre social distancing guideline.

6 Right to Rent (England only)

- 6.1 The Home Office has issued guidance that the right to rent checks should continue as normal prior to any tenancy commencement.
- 6.2 Where we do see tenants on a face-to-face basis, we will ensure the COVID-19 questions are asked prior to them being permitted into the office. An appointment should always be made and confirmed to ensure the appropriate member of our team is available and that a suitable meeting area can be organised.
- 6.3 They (the Home Office) have permitted FaceTime inspection of documents with the individual followed by submission by email, providing full inspection with the individual takes place within eight weeks of the restrictions being lifted. We will keep a record of all such cases.

7 Property Management

- 7.1 Interim inspections. We will consider achieving these using technology such as FaceTime, Zoom or similar. We will take clear notes on what we have seen, just as we would with a manual recording of an inspection.
- 7.2 It is important to ensure health and safety of tenants; annual gas safety checks will continue (these can be arranged at any time from month 10 of the existing certificate without impacting the expiry date). Gas Safe engineers are permitted to visit.
- 7.3 Contractors may continue to visit properties to undertake maintenance and repair, but we will ask them to complete the COVID-19 health assessment.
- 7.4 End of tenancy check-out. Where possible, we will try completing a virtual check out, with a copy of inventory and check-in report, using this to cross-reference any points. We will obtain landlord and tenants’ consent to using this method.
- 7.5 Where any face-to-face visit has to take place in the property, we will ensure a health assessment is completed prior to the visit taking place; wear protective gloves and avoid any physical contact; on returning to our vehicles, we will sanitise our hands with gel and disinfect any equipment used with wipes.
- 7.6 Where a tenant is required to visit our office, we will ensure full two-metre social distancing is observed.
- 7.7 Where any keys are issued, we will wash our hands once this has happened and where keys are received back, disinfect the keys and wash our hands.
- 7.8 We already operate a cashless system within our offices but where cheques are provided by tenants our team will consider wearing protective gloves.
- 7.9 For new tenancies, where possible, we will consider a ‘three-day void period’ between previous tenants vacating and new tenants taking up residence. This is based on results from research that has found the Coronavirus can still be detectable on surfaces for up to 72 hours.

7.10 Where possible, we will try arranging for any works and health and safety checks to be completed in the period between tenancies

Risk Assessment Summary

Based on the content of our COVID Secure operating plan, we believe that we have appropriate measures in place to control any increased risk of spreading the COVID-19 virus to our people, our customers or visitors/contractors.

Each of our offices have reviewed this document and identified specific concerns relating to that office, local copies are available upon request and have been circulated to our teams.

A generic version of this risk assessment and operating plan has been uploaded to our website and is available at www.georgefwhite.co.uk/covid19

Confirmation Statement: I confirm that on behalf of George F. White I have fully reviewed the content of our COVID Secure operating plan and that this represents an accurate position in our aim to prevent COVID-19 being transmitted.

Signed



Name

Sally Hart

Position

Partner & Operations Director

Date

24th September 2020

Appendix 1

Clinically extremely vulnerable: Doctors in England have identified specific medical conditions that place someone at greatest risk of severe illness from COVID-19

This includes the following people: Solid organ transplant recipients; people with cancer undergoing active chemotherapy; people with lung cancer undergoing radical radiotherapy; people with cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma who are at any stage of treatment; people having immunotherapy or other continuing antibody treatments for cancer; people having targeted cancer treatments which can affect the immune system; people who have had bone marrow or stem cell transplants in the last six months; people with severe respiratory conditions including cystic fibrosis, severe asthma and severe chronic obstructive pulmonary; people with rare diseases that significantly increase the risk of infections; people on immunosuppression therapies sufficient to significantly increase risk of infection; women who are pregnant with significant heart disease, congenital or acquired.

Clinically Vulnerable People are at high higher risk of severe illness from Coronavirus – these include: People aged 70 or older (regardless of medical condition); under 70 with an underlying health condition including; chronic mild to moderate respiratory diseases, chronic heart disease, chronic kidney failure, chronic liver disease, chronic neurological conditions such as Parkinson's, motor neurone, multiple sclerosis or cerebral palsy, diabetes; a weak immune system resulting from conditions such as HIV or AIDS, or medicines such as steroid tables; being seriously overweight (BMI of 40 or above); pregnant women.