

Carers of East Lothian: Safely Returning to Business

At CoEL, we know a lot has changed over the past few months and there is more change to come. We want to help everyone stay up to date with how we are operating our services, to ensure carers, staff, volunteers and all our other stakeholders have a shared understanding of our approach to safely returning to business following lockdown.

We have aligned our approach to returning to business with the phases outlined in Scotland's route map which sets out how Scotland will transition out of lockdown: <https://www.gov.scot/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-scotlands-route-map/> and in particular:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-small-and-micro-businesses-guidance/pages/overview/>

In developing our approach, we are working to consult with staff, through our newly appointed Health and Safety Representative, as well as with carers, through our Coronavirus Response Survey.

Phases 1 and 2

In Phases 1 and 2 the majority of CoEL staff are working from home with the office at the East Lothian Community Hospital only being used as and when needed (for example to collect mail). Home visits and groups have been cancelled and support is being provided via phone and video link, where appropriate, allowing us to continue to offer support and advice to unpaid carers without interruption. All carer records can be accessed via CoEL's cloud based systems and key contacts remain the same:

call: 0131 665 0135 (call routed to staff mobiles)

email: centre@coel.org.uk

web referral: www.coel.org.uk

One full time staff member is focused on identifying and disseminating information to staff and carers about local resilience networks and resources to allow CoEL to provide carers with as much information as possible. This information is shared with ELHSCP and circulated by the Communications Officer to all ELHSCP staff, some partners and local resilience groups weekly.

The team are carrying out regular calls to carers who we haven't had recent contact with to check what support they need and we are running a range of small grants programmes to support carers with the additional costs and caring responsibilities they are taking on during this time.

Phase 3

During Phase 3, remote working remains the default position for those who can do so. However, following a full and thorough risk assessment of the office space, we have put in place a number of measures to allow us to offer some office time to staff members who would benefit from attending the office and choose to do so. The safety of staff and carers remains paramount and safety measures include:

- Allocated days and desks for all staff to ensure physical distancing can be maintained within the office environment and minimize mixing between team members
- Additional signage in the office to support social distancing and hygiene measures
- Staff cleaning surfaces after being in the office based on cleaning schedule
- A supply of hand sanitizer, wipes and other cleaning products available to all staff members
- Training provided to all staff on all risk measures adopted to ensure they are fully aware of their responsibilities and implement these accordingly
- All staff members completed an individual risk assessment to identify anyone at additional risk and any further support or adjustments required
- Intercom system installed to ensure security and social distancing is maintained in the office space

In addition, in Phase 3 we will be able to offer 'garden visits' if assessed as necessary, where both a carer and staff member are in agreement, and following completion of a satisfactory individualised risk assessment and in accordance with CoEL Lone Working Policy. The safety of carers and their loved ones will remain our priority so to support decision making on the type of contact that should be offered for the type of support required, both in Phase 3 and beyond, staff will be using our new Contact Tool, which will help identify the best method of contact for the situation. The Contact Tool will be used when considering contact methods beyond phone or video link for this first time, or if there is a planned change in method of contact.

Finally, in Phase 3, we will begin to offer small group work, subject to physical distancing and following appropriate risk assessments and any identified required measures being put in place. During Phase 3, outdoor group work can take place with participants from no more than 5 households (one CSW and four carers), and an individual Risk Assessment for each carer will be required in addition to the outdoor group Risk Assessment.

Phase 4 and beyond

During Phase 4, remote working will remain in place, combined with office attendance, for staff members who want to make use of this approach, in line with our new Home Working Policy [still in development]. Office working will take place in line with public health advice.

In addition, in Phase 4, we will be able to offer 'home visits' and office appointments, where both a carer and staff member are in agreement, and following completion of a satisfactory individualised risk assessment. To support decision making on the type of contact that should be offered for the type of support required, staff will continue to use our Contact Tool.

All indoor group work will resume and larger events could take place, in line with public health advice and following appropriate risk assessments and any identified required measures being put in place.

