

VPH Staff Meeting
Thursday 28th January 2021 at 4pm
by Teleconference

[illegible]

- Currently, COVID infection rates within parts of NI are in excess of 1200 per 100,000 – this is a very high rate
- Rates are high in all sectors
- We are seeing a degree of COVID control fatigue / complacency and this is causing outbreaks
- There is concern over the new variant strains. The 2020 strain has a higher transmissibility and has been detected in NI.
- There is a link between smaller offices and multi-linked offices to outbreaks
- We are currently looking to reduce potential for droplet infection
- Good ventilation and use of face coverings is essential
- Common touch surfaces need cleaned regularly (before & after use)
- The importance of hand hygiene is emphasized – hand washing is best (i.e. thorough hand washing with soap and water - if this cannot be done, use hand sanitiser)
- The use of face coverings is very important – sanitise hands when putting on and off, do not touch mask when wearing
- Ventilation is extremely important – look at options to increase airflow (opening of windows, doors, etc.)
- Try to avoid car sharing if at all possible
- If you have symptoms, do not leave anything to chance – go and get a test as soon as possible
- You need to self-isolate for a full 10 days if you are a close contact
- We must all be vigilant at all times

Name Redacted stated that some businesses have introduced maximum occupancy rates in some offices, areas, etc. in order to reduce the risk of transmission.

Question from: NR in Cranswick, we wear a mask at all times except at our computer desks or when eating. Should we wear masks even at our computer desks?

Name Redacted replied: Wear a mask as much as possible, even at your desk if you can. On the issue of disposable masks - if the mask starts to become damp or uncomfortable, change it. Try and avoid wearing the same mask for days on end.

Regarding the use of CO2 meters in some offices: These are good and are worth using, particularly in more “crowded” offices.

Name Redacted raised the issue of lateral flow testing, a couple of people have tested positive recently within the plant and we are concerned that this situation may escalate.

Name Redacted replied: PHA mainly deal with lateral flow testing. There has not been a lot of feedback on this from PHA. It is uncertain if lateral flow testing will be rolled out to every premises but if we receive any information on this, we will let everyone know.

NR asked: NR What is the recommendation for offices with no windows?

NR replied: In this case, people should adequately space within the office and sufficient ventilation should be got from another source if possible. If this cannot be done, the occupancy of the office should be reduced.

NR asked if we can get CO2 meters for all premises?

Name Redacted replied that this will be looked into.

Name Redacted **gave a brief update on the issue of cattle coming into NI from GB**

Name Redacted **gave an overview on IRM changes**

Name Redacted **gave a brief update on Trade**

Name Redacted stated that the movement of staff between premises (i.e. for assessments, training, etc.) will be paused.

NR thanked everyone for their attendance and participation and brought the meeting to a close.

Date of next meeting: To Be Confirmed

