

Coronavirus - Sales and Marketing Operating Procedures

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INTRODUCTION

As house builders return to work, it is clear that rigorous protocols need to be adopted to ensure the protection of employees and customers.

In addition, sales & marketing suites operating during the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic also need to minimise the risk of spread of infection. This includes considering how personnel travel to and from site.

This template guidance is intended to help developers introduce consistent measures across marketing suites in line with the Government's recommendations on social distancing. Companies need to put training and monitoring processes in place to ensure individuals are aware of the requirements and make every effort to comply.

Organisations must have in place effective arrangements for monitoring and reviewing their compliance with Government and industry guidance. Marketing suites should review the Sales and Marketing Operating Procedures at the start of everyday, which are aimed at protecting them, their colleagues, families and the UK population.

Particular types of housing, such as retirement properties, will require more specific guidance to be developed. Therefore, consideration should be given to developing protocols that include an additional focus on the use of PPE, demarcation zones, access to areas other than the sales suite, provision of documentation and cleaning procedures.

This guidance needs to be read and operated alongside the guidance developed to ensure safe working procedures are adhered to with regards to the construction works going on site such that they dovetail with each other.

Both documents are based on the latest Government advice on coronavirus (Covid-19) and on Public Health England (PHE) guidance.

Initially, marketing suites should be operated with minimal staff to maintain social distancing.

A risk assessment will then need to be completed on each development to assess if additional sales negotiators and visitors can be accommodated in the marketing suites whilst maintaining social distancing.

The guidance covers marketing suites, show homes and access between the two (if appropriate).



WHEN TO TRAVEL TO WORK

It is important to understand the following guidelines by which the sales team should or should not travel to work as outlined below.

Social distancing

Workers in the new homes industry should follow the guidance on staying at home and away from others (social distancing). Where they cannot work from home, they must follow the same principles of social distancing while travelling to and from work and while at work.

Self-isolation

Anyone who either has a high temperature or a new persistent cough or is within 14 days of the day when the first member of their household showed symptoms of coronavirus (Covid-19) should not come to site, but must follow the [guidance on self-isolation](#).

Person at increased risk

Anyone who is at increased risk of severe illness from coronavirus (Covid-19) is strongly advised to work at home and should be particularly stringent about following social distancing measures.

Persons defined on medical grounds as extremely vulnerable

Anyone identified as extremely vulnerable will be advised by their health authority and must follow the guidance on shielding and protecting extremely vulnerable people.

Living with a person in one of the above groups

Anyone living with a person who is at increased risk of severe illness, or an extremely vulnerable person who is shielding from Coronavirus (Covid-19), should stringently follow the guidance on social distancing and minimise contact outside the home.

If someone falls ill

If a worker develops a high temperature or a persistent cough while at work, they should:

- Ensure their manager or supervisor is informed
- Return home immediately
- Avoid touching anything



- Cough or sneeze into a tissue and put it in a bin, or if they do not have tissues, cough and sneeze into the crook of their elbow.
- They must then follow the guidance on self-isolation and not return to work until their period of self-isolation has been completed.
- All areas the person has been working in must then be thoroughly cleaned

TRAVEL TO WORK

The large majority of house builders' work force drive to work. Therefore, travelling to work in isolation is a plausible safe means of travel, with appropriate parking available on all developments.

If personnel do not or cannot travel via their own means of transport, then public transport can be used with strict guidelines to protect workers and their family/colleagues, which are:

- Avoid using public transport during peak times (05:45 - 7:30 and 16:00 - 17:30)
- Wear gloves
- Wear a mouth mask
- Store 'touch points' (Gloves, Mask, outer coat etc) in bag away from general circulation in marketing suite
- Wash hands in line with recommendations once at your development

DRIVING AT WORK

If required to travel to a different development, it is important that staff travel alone and do not share a car with anyone they do not live with. During this return to work period, sales management staff are to visit only one development a day to reduce the potential spread of infection.

Sales Managers will be encouraged to reduce visits to sites to a minimum and utilise conference call facilities. Where they do visit sites, all protocols must be followed.



MARKETING SUITE ACCESS AND RULES

- Companies must ensure sales staff have been fully trained and briefed on all safety requirements in advance of them returning to work.
- Only booked customer appointments are allowed. If a visitor arrives without an appointment and there is no other customer in the sales office at the time and no appointments booked, then and only then, will the visitor be allowed in, i.e. to take that vacant appointment.
- Only one appointment at a time to ensure social distancing is maintained within the sales complex.
- Customers should be informed in advance of arrival on site of the measures in place that they need to abide by.
- Builders need to ensure parking is available that enables safe distancing rules to be adhered to. Customers to be told to only arrive a few minutes before their appointment and to wait in their car until the time of their appointment.
- Clear signage must be provided outside the marketing suite entrance to advise customers that they will not have to touch any surfaces and doors will be opened for them, whilst maintaining social distancing at all times.
- Once in the sales office, the sales advisor should advise the customer of the safety protocols and ensure the two metre social distancing requirements are agreed and maintained. Whilst the customer can walk around the sales office they should not enter the sales advisor's two metre space. Consideration could be given to using perspex screens on the sales advisor's desk for extra protection.
- Upon welcoming customers to their appointment, a clear but brief explanation of how the appointment will flow is to be followed to ensure both parties are at ease with the situation and understand what is expected of them. **FAILURE TO FOLLOW PROCEDURES WILL MEAN THE VISITOR WILL BE ASKED TO LEAVE.**
- No documentation - e.g. brochures, plans, hand-outs, reservation paperwork and identification - to be directly exchanged between employees and customers. Builders should endeavour to send to customers digitally. Builders should also develop processes for customers that do not have the facility to accept and view documents digitally. Consideration could be given to producing pre made up packs that can be left in a certain place for customers; or, for example, laminated A3 plans could be made available a safe distance away from the sales advisor for the customer to view without touching. Any such documents should be cleaned wearing gloves once the customer has left.
- Reservation payments will be taken over the telephone (with the builder ensuring adequate ID authentication measures are in place).
- Customers to be sent documents digitally or by email for signature and returned by email; or customers to confirm by email that they have read and are in agreement with the documents.



- If a signature is required and cannot be obtained digitally documents could be printed and, using safe distancing, left somewhere for the customers to sign without touching them. Customers would need to be provided with a new pen or asked to bring their own. Documents can then be scanned and sent to the customer via email.

SHOW HOMES, STOCK PLOTS AND CONSTRUCTION INTERACTION

- Show homes accessed through marketing suites will manage visits in line with the marketing suite guidance.
- Show homes accessed through communal areas, where people are already residing, will be made clear to the visitors prior to their appointment. Access to these units will be managed in line with the marketing suite guidance.
- Stock plot access where positioned within a finished block, will be managed as per the point above. Builders need to ensure processes are in place to monitor who has access/ is accessing the building.
- Stock plots access through construction working environments. Sometimes there will be light construction works taking place in communal areas which lead to stock plots. Any plot which has such access will be highlighted by the site manager to the sales team each day. As an appointment system is being operated, all appointments should be provided to the site manager to ensure social distancing can be maintained for all parties during the visit.
- Inspections / key handover between construction and sales are still expected to happen. Social distancing and the processes outlined in this document and in those developed to cover construction activity are expected to be maintained.

Builders should ensure there is signage provided reminding individuals at all key points around the development of the requirements. This could include:

- Floor markings, to ensure two metre distance is maintained between people when going around the marketing suite sales tools, such as any interactive TV screens, development models and the show home. Consideration could be given to using floor markings to show the two-metre safe distance around the Sales Advisor's seating position.
- To remind the sales team not to attend site if they have any symptoms of coronavirus and to follow guidelines.
- To require all members of the sales team and visitors to wash their hands for 20 seconds using soap and water when entering and leaving the development (hand sanitizer is available as an alternative).



HAND WASHING / TOILET FACILITIES

Builders need to ensure that customers are able to wash their hands or sanitise them when attending site.

If hand washing /toilet facilities are used, then they must be cleaned after use.

Customers should be asked to wash hands/ use sanitiser upon entering the sales office.

Gloves to be made available for sales advisor/customers to wear during visit and disposed of after the visit ends.

If washrooms are reserved for sales staff only, hand sanitiser / gloves must be provided to customers on entry. If this approach is followed customers need to be notified in advance that there will be no toilet facilities available.

In the event that facilities remain open to customers:

- Wash or sanitise hands before and after using the facilities
- Following each appointment the cleaner or handyman will clean the toilet facilities, particularly door handles, locks and the toilet flush
- Provide suitable and sufficient rubbish bins for hand towels with regular removal and disposal.
- Ensure adequate supplies of soap and fresh water are readily available and kept topped up at all times
- Provide hand sanitizer (minimum 60% alcohol based) as an alternative for customers who do not want to use the hand washing facilities or where no customer handwashing facilities are available.

KITCHENETTE AND REFRESHMENT AREAS

- Sales advisers and cleaners/handyman should bring their own food for lunch to avoid travelling to local shops once at work.
- Builders could consider informing customers in advance that refreshments are not going to be made available. Or that only cold drinks will be provided (by the sales negotiator so the customer does not need to use the facilities)

In terms of staff use of the facilities;

- Only one member of staff to use facilities at any given time and lunch times should be staggered to reduce contact
- Drinking water should be provided with enhanced cleaning measures of the tap mechanism introduced



- Frequently clean surfaces that are touched regularly, using standard cleaning products e.g. kettles, refrigerators, microwaves
- Hand cleaning facilities or hand sanitizer should be available at the entrance to any room where people eat and should be used by workers when entering and leaving the area
- A distance of two metres should be maintained between users, wherever possible
- All rubbish should be put straight in the bin and not left for someone else to clear up
- Tables/kitchen surfaces should be cleaned between each use
- Crockery, eating utensils, cups etc. should not be used unless they are disposable or are washed and dried between use
- Consider arrangements for monitoring compliance.

FIRST AID AND EMERGENCY SERVICE RESPONSE

Sales staff should follow their own company's first aid protocol.

The primary responsibility is to preserve life and first aid should be administered if required and until the emergency services attend.

- Emergency plans including contact details should be kept up to date
- Consideration must also be given to potential delays in emergency services response, due to the current pressure on resources

CLEANING

Enhanced cleaning procedures must be put in place.

This must include the cleaning of touch points between appointments and of common contact surfaces in show home and marketing suites with antibacterial wipes and products.

Close attention should be paid to cleaning:

- Taps and washing facilities
- Toilet flush and seats
- Door handles and push plates
- Hand rails on staircases and corridors



- Lift controls
- Interactive TV screens in marketing suites
- All areas used for eating must be thoroughly cleaned at the end of each break, including chairs and door handles.
- Telephone equipment
- Key boards, photocopiers and other office equipment
- Rubbish collection and storage points should be increased and emptied regularly throughout and at the end of each day.

