



Office reopening

Guidance for staff and changes to visitor management effective 1 April 2022

When should I come back to the office?

From 31 January 2022 RCP staff have been able to return to main buildings at 11 St Andrews Place and The Spine. Staff previously based in 1–8 St Andrews Place can book a desk in house 11 for now (see guidance linked below), due to current discussions and potential office moves concerning houses 1–8. Staff based in regional offices should continue to follow local process.

This guidance takes into account that while government restrictions have been lifted nationally, and a plan for 'living with COVID' has been set out, the pandemic hasn't ended so the RCP will continue to take a cautious approach for the foreseeable future.

New hybrid working approach

As a general rule, staff on a full-time contract should plan to work in the office for a minimum of 2 days each week. There will inevitably have to be variability in work patterns reflecting the different operational needs in teams across the RCP and the arrangement can be pro-rata for staff working reduced hours.

We anticipate that we will reach 50% time in the office for most staff in this planned approach. The key is to keep talking with your line manager as we adapt to this 'new normal'. Moving forward we want staff to benefit from working from home as they have done successfully over the past 2 years, while also realising the positive opportunities we have missed out on by not being together physically. This is particularly important for the many new staff who joined during the pandemic and are only just recently able to benefit from being welcomed to the RCP in person.

Can I invite visitors to the office?

Yes, you may invite visitors to the office. We may restrict access to the building on days when there is high footfall expected, for example for exams or major conferences and events.

RCP meetings, events and conferences staff will be strongly encouraging external visitors to take a lateral flow test before attending our sites and advising that if positive or feeling unwell, not to visit or attend an event at the RCP.

What do I need to do before I come into the office?

Your responsibility to your colleagues and their families, and our visitors

The legal requirement to isolate after testing positive for COVID-19 has been removed. However, in line with government advice, we advise that staff members who test positive for COVID-19 stay at home until they produce a negative result on two consecutive days.

The advice to stay at home also applies to external visitors to our offices and this information will be communicated via our website.

We support the current government advice that you should work from home if you can, if someone in your family/household tests positive. You should not come into work if you feel unwell, and if you produce a negative result but still feel unwell, please stay at home and retest the following day.

From 1 April, free LFTs are no longer available in England, except for [specific groups](#). Plans are being made for the RCP to provide test kits for staff who develop symptoms, more information on this will be communicated in due course. In the meantime, we would encourage you to continue to take a test before you attend any of our offices if you are able to, but we acknowledge that this may not now be possible. You should still stay at home and not come to site if you feel unwell or have any [symptoms of COVID-19](#).

Finally, if you have had a positive result within the past 90 days and you develop new symptoms, you should take an LFT.

If you are a person considered at high risk from COVID-19, you will know you should be taking additional precautions. To understand how we can help and support you, please speak to your line manager in the first instance. If you have any general worries or concerns, please take time to discuss these with your line manager and/or HR business partner.

Book a workspace

Property Services, the Project Management Office and IT have worked together to design and implement a simple and effective system for staff, college officers and service partners working and visiting The Spine and St Andrews Place. Staff working in House 11 must book a workspace to ensure there is enough space for everyone working on site that day. Only those staff members or visitors planning to use a flexible workspace at The Spine need to book, all other desks are free to use. Booking is carried out using Outlook and is much the same as booking a meeting room. We have developed a [user guide](#) for booking desks in St Andrews Place and The Spine. In addition, Wendy Nagel has helpfully recorded a [video](#) so you can see how the process works.

Please sit at the desk you have booked. If you for any reason need to change desks, please inform Property Services so that deep cleaning and contact tracing can be arranged in the event of a positive COVID-19 test.

Recurring bookings can be made for up to 6 months in advance, but we suggest that spaces are only booked a couple of weeks ahead to allow for greater flexibility for all staff and to prevent staff having to cancel bookings that are no longer needed.

Each desk has now been modified with docking stations specifically for laptop capabilities. Anybody using hardware other than this should notify IT as soon as possible so we can adjust accordingly.

If you no longer need a workspace booking, please cancel this so the workspace can be used by another colleague.

College officers, EDs and staff who already work in single/smaller offices do not need to pre-book a desk.

This process will be reviewed on a monthly basis while employees settle into a routine of regular office working.

Swipe cards

If any staff member has lost their access card or find it no longer works around the building, please contact [Nigel Crowdy](#) (London) or [Cathy Hardman](#) (Liverpool) in Property Services, who will arrange a replacement by appointment.

What happens on the day when I go into the office?

Please wash your hands on arrival and regularly throughout the day.

Offices and desk spaces will be cleaned every evening; a green side up card placed on the desk indicates that the desk is clean (red side up indicates that it has not been cleaned). Please feel free to sanitise the space further if you want further reassurance. Please contact [Property Services](#) if you think the workspace you have booked hasn't been cleaned and our day janitor will attend.

We are asking staff to refrain from using the pedestals; they are limited in numbers to certain business units and are not in general use. Lockers are available for the storage of valuables and personal items while on site.

Staff are asked not to personalise workstations as the RCP is developing a hybrid approach to working practices. This means that all office-based desks in House 11 and The Spine are available for any member of staff to book, especially if a chosen office is overstretched.

Meeting spaces are having new videoconferencing hardware installed to allow them to be entirely self-service using new software called 'Mersive Solstice' which will be installed on all RCP laptops. This software will allow users to connect to the screen, camera, microphone and speakers wirelessly. RCP staff will be expected to conduct all meetings and MS Teams meetings in meeting rooms in this way. Mersive training resources will be made available on Parklife.

Do I need to wear a face mask, and what other precautions against COVID-19 are being taken?

We are continuing to advise people to wear face masks in the public footfall areas of our buildings. All areas of the RCP have enhanced cleaning protocols in place, and we have provided Perspex screens attached to workstations to provide further protection. Once in the office spaces, if possible, open windows for increased ventilation.

Things staff are still encouraged to do

Regularly wash your hands and avoid touching your face. Sneeze or cough facing away from people, into your sleeve or a tissue. Please dispose of tissues in the bins provided. Observe hygiene protocols and regularly use the hand sanitiser provided. If any sanitiser units look like they are running low, please report this to [Property Services](#).

Although wearing face masks/coverings is not mandated by government, we have left it to your discretion if you still want to wear one when sharing an office with colleagues. We and Liverpool City Council are expecting everyone to wear face coverings while in the public areas of the buildings and moving around the office areas. We have a supply of personal protective equipment (PPE), masks, gloves and hand sanitisers to help minimise your exposure to infection in the workplace. These can be requested from Reception or Security on arrival if you do not have your own.

What provisions for food/drink have been made?

The Base Café located on the ground floor of The Spine is open and the Regent's Perk café in London has also reopened with a limited menu (reflecting the reduced number of people using the building). Regent's Perk is self-service – please take the food, register it and pay by card. If you are bringing your own food, bear in mind that fridge space may be limited, and be considerate of other users.

Please eat at your allocated desk, outside, at the allocated breakout areas in The Spine or you are welcome to eat in the Regent's Perk space. Remember to wash your hands before and after eating and ensure the workspace is left clear for the following day.

Where possible, please bring drinks and glasses/mugs/utensils from home. The kitchenettes will be stocked with tea and coffee, and milk can be collected from Regent's Perk in London and will be replenished at The Spine.

What should I do in public/common areas of the RCP?

Wear face coverings in public and common areas of the building. Use good judgement and spatial awareness.

Depending on the layout of washrooms and WCs, please ensure that you observe the need to safely distance from other users. In instances where there are smaller facilities, we would advise that only one person use them at a time.

It is advisable to limit the number of passengers in a lift at any one time, and we would encourage use of the stairs where possible.

In house 11, the museum and exhibition space have reopened to the public. The research service for members, fellows and the public will resume later in the year. The RCP Library has now reopened and is located within the Jerwood Centre in house 5.

What do I need to do before I leave the office each day?

Please remember to remove any debris/papers from the working area and put all rubbish in the bin. Clean down your working area, equipment and surfaces before you leave with the wipes provided. Please leave the cleaning card red side up so we know which desks need any additional cleaning requirements.

If a member of staff has specific IT items issued to them such as an ergonomic mouse or keyboard, we advise that they lock them away in the allocated lockers at the end of the day. If vacating a locker, please ensure that the key is left in the locker door after use.

Where are my belongings that I left in my desk/office before lockdown?

Any member of staff who previously had personal items left on their desk/in their pedestal before we closed the office in 2020 should contact [Property Services](#), who will arrange for their box to be retrieved and collected at a time of your convenience.

We fully appreciate that this 'new normal' is an unusual way of working for many of you, but we are doing this to keep you, your colleagues and their families, and our visitors, safe and well within the work environment. If you have any questions about this guidance, please contact [Property Services](#) in the first instance. For questions relating to The Spine, please contact [Cathy Hardman](#).