

**St James Veterinary Group Ltd**

253 Gower Road, Sketty, Sketty, Swansea, SA2 9JL

**Location: St. James Vet Group - All premises**

<b>Title :</b> Corona Virus Risk Assessment Update	<b>Date of Assessment :</b> 21/07/2020	<b>Risk Assessor :</b> Nicola Gore
<b>Risk Assessment Reference :</b> COV-2	<b>People involved in making this assessment :</b> Nicola Gore	
<b>Task/ Process :</b> Risks from Coronavirus - Premises based working	<b>People at Risk :</b> Employees, Contractors, Members of the Public, Service Users	

**Hazard : Compliance of staff** Staff who are not fully aware and understanding of, or compliant with, the procedures and arrangements we have put in place to work within Government Policy on essential working could compromise our arrangements and jeopardise the health of others.

**Control Measures:**

1. Specific procedures and measures to reduce the risk of spreading Coronavirus have been prepared. These are based on NHS, Public Health and Government guidance and instruction. They are updated regularly to reflect any changes in the official advice and guidance.
2. Every member of staff has been fully briefed to ensure that they are aware of the hazards and risks and understand the rules and procedures we have put in place.
3. NHS and Public Health warning posters are displayed throughout the premises.
4. Our plans and procedures have been shared and co-ordinated across all our premises.
5. Regular communication with staff via email, audio / video meetings.
6. Staff are expected to comply with current Government guidance and behave in a socially responsible manner both in and out of work to reduce the risk of infection.
7. An anonymous reporting system will be used for employees to raise any concerns regarding colleagues. Any staff who are not following the protocols outlined in the Risk Assessment may be risking the health of their co-workers and could be subject to disciplinary action.

**Hazard : Food & Drink Preparation Areas** Potential risk or transfer of virus through cross contamination

**Control Measures:**

1. Staff instructed to ensure that good hygiene standards must be maintained when food or drinks are being prepared.
2. Ensure that when spills of food or liquids occur they are cleaned straight away and work surfaces are left in a clean and sanitised condition.
3. Staff should keep their hands out of and not to touch food and waste bins or receptacles as they may contain contaminated products, food or tissues.
4. Staff should wash their hands thoroughly before and after using these facilities.
5. The microwave oven (where available) should be left in a clean condition and wiped out after use.
6. Put half eaten food products in a clean, sanitised, sealed wrapper, bag or container, if they are to be stored in the communal refrigerator. Please ensure the fridge door is wiped clean after use.
7. Thoroughly wash crockery and cutlery after each use in warm soapy water and put them away.
8. Single use paper tissues are provided in place of tea towels to ensure ongoing hygiene.
9. Where a dishwasher is available this should be used to thoroughly clean crockery and cutlery.

10. Communal tea trays are not to be used. All food and drink should be prepared individually by staff members for their own consumption.
11. Lunch and tea breaks should be staggered as much as possible to prevent congestion in kitchen / staff areas. If the staff area is already occupied try to find an alternative quiet area, e.g. Parkway flat, waiting room, etc.
12. Kettles, tea and coffee caddies, fridge, and other touch points will be cleaned regularly as per cleaning rota. Hands should be washed before and after using these items.
13. Social distancing should be maintained when on lunch / tea breaks. One person per sofa / chair. Only one person to use the kitchen area at a time.

**Hazard : Communal facilities** Risk of cross contamination from equipment, surfaces etc. that may have been touched or otherwise contaminated by coronavirus and create a risk to health.

**Control Measures:**

1. Cleaning measures have been increased. Toilets and communal areas, along with workspaces, are cleaned more frequently than before and the cleaning routine is to a higher specification.
2. Supplies of soap and sanitising agents provided and regularly topped-up at all hand washing stations. NHS and Public Health hand washing advice posters displayed.
3. Staff instructed to clean their hands after using the toilet, by washing their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
4. Staff made aware that where welfare facilities are used, they must have an awareness of surfaces (toilets, sinks, door handles, taps, showers, soap, and soap dispensers, etc) and should clean them after they have been used. Hands should be washed thoroughly and taps turned off using paper towels.
5. Staff are required to ensure that coats, scarfs and other outdoor items are stored separately (within lockers where available) avoiding contact with other people's personal items.
6. Staff instructed to ensure that the toilet seat is in the closed position before flushing to prevent aerosols becoming airborne and contaminating the facilities with potential pathogens.
7. Any items brought to work from home should be kept to a minimum, e.g. mobile phone chargers. Any such items should be kept in lockers / with bags and coats and not left lying around.
8. When using the Practice Ambulance, please ensure all touch points (e.g. door handles, steering wheel, gear lever, etc.) are thoroughly cleaned after use.
9. Movement around different areas of the practice should be kept to a minimum. E.g. only receptionists to use the phones and computers at reception, vets to keep to a single consult room, etc.
10. Where possible, staff should not bring their dogs to work with them unless they are being treated. If they do need to be brought in they should be kennelled in a collapsible cage or kennel in a quiet area and not allowed loose at reception or other parts of the surgery.

**Hazard : Waste** Ill-health as a result of the transfer of coronavirus and other pathogens through cross contamination after contact with waste (accidental or otherwise).

**Control Measures:**

1. Staff are required to have consideration for colleagues and contracted cleaning staff with regards to discarded tissues, food, etc. to others being accidentally contaminated. All staff are expected to clean up after themselves.
2. All waste bins and receptacles should be carefully and safely emptied regularly by staff wearing gloves and appropriate PPE to reduce the risk of contamination.
3. Staff instructed that disposable tissues should be used when coughing and or sneezing and put directly into a waste bin, preferably bagged, or pocketed and taken home.
4. Staff instructed to not put their hands directly into food waste or general waste bins or receptacles as they may contain contaminated products, food or tissues.

5. Waste bins are provided at employee desk areas and within kitchen areas.

**Hazard : Staff Meetings** Potential risk or transfer of virus on account of close contact with other persons.

**Control Measures:**

1. Staff instructed that meetings in enclosed spaces such as offices and staff rooms /meeting rooms should only be undertaken when absolutely essential for business needs. Any face to face meetings should be kept to the minimum number of people necessary and should be kept as short as possible.
2. Staff using offices and meeting rooms are instructed to follow Government advice and maintain a 2m separation distance.
3. Staff instructed that the same 2m distance rule must be applied to any meetings with clients or visitors.
4. Staff told to avoid physical contact with clients and visitors, such as handshakes, hugs, etc; and to give a polite explanation of this policy if required.
5. Remote working tools should be used where possible, e.g. ZOOM, WhatsApp, Skype, etc. to allow meetings to take place remotely rather than face-to-face, even if staff are in the same building.
6. Hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes are provided for use and sharing of equipment e.g. pens, should be avoided.

**Hazard : Workstations, phones and computers** Direct contact with potentially cross contaminated workstations, IT or telephony equipment may cause adverse coronavirus health effects.

**Control Measures:**

1. Staff are instructed not to share phones, head sets and personal mobile phones with others to prevent accidental cross contamination.
2. Telephone equipment and computer equipment is to be deep cleaned at the end of each working day by the user.
3. Staff instructed that they should stick to one workstation and telephone as far as possible, to prevent accidental cross contamination. Each vet will be designated to one consulting room per session and this should be adhered to. Equipment is to be wiped before and after each session by the user.
4. Staff are instructed to ensure that their workstations, IT and telephony equipment, such as keyboards, screens, phones and headsets are cleaned and sanitised on a regular basis throughout the working day. Suitable wipes and cleaners that do not damage equipment are provided.

**Hazard : Close contact / Clinical Areas** Staff may be at risk of exposure to others who are carrying coronavirus unknowingly. In clinical areas social distancing will not be possible when carrying out certain procedures so use of appropriate PPE and other control measures should be implemented to reduce risk as far as possible.

**Control Measures:**

1. Staff instructed to avoid close face-to-face contact or touching other employees, visitors, etc. and follow the 2m rule where practicable.
2. Physical contact, such as handshakes, hugs, pat on the back, etc. is to be avoided. Contact with animals should also be kept to a minimum except where it is necessary for the welfare of the animal or in order to carry out your duties.
3. Staff are required to be environmentally aware and sit out of the immediate air flow from fan heaters, cooling fans, air conditioning and or ventilation systems that could potentially spread the virus.
4. Where social distancing is not possible, e.g. during clinical procedures, animal restraint, in operating theatres, etc. full PPE must be worn (face masks, gloves, gowns/ aprons) if practical.

5. Where face to face working is unavoidable, e.g. when manually restraining animals for procedures or when in the operating theatre, restrict this to 15 minutes wherever possible.
6. Aim to minimise time spent working in close proximity to others. Once a task is complete you should revert back to maintaining a 2m distance as soon as is practical.
7. Any procedures that do not specifically need to be done in the Prep Room or Operating Theatre (i.e. those not requiring anaesthesia) should be done elsewhere, e.g. Consult Room, Dental Room, etc. in order to reduce the number of people working in an area at any one time.
8. Guidance has been given regarding types and numbers of appointments and procedures that can be booked in. These guidelines should be adhered to in order to minimise close contact. These guidelines will be reviewed regularly.
9. All staff are to adhere to the PPE SOP at all times, ensuring they are wearing the relevant PPE for the situation.
10. To encourage social distancing 2m floor markers will be used in high occupancy areas, e.g. prep room, reception, and should be adhered to wherever possible.
11. In operating theatres / examination rooms it is advisable to stand side-by-side rather than opposite / face-to-face with colleagues wherever possible to avoid contamination. Face masks should be worn when in close proximity to others.

**Hazard : Vulnerable employees** Vulnerable employees with existing health conditions are at a higher risk of contracting Covid-19, which may have a significant increased adverse affect on their health and wellbeing.

**Control Measures:**

1. In accordance with Govt. policy Clinically extremely vulnerable individuals have been furloughed. Clinically vulnerable individuals, who are at higher risk of severe illness (for example, people with some pre-existing conditions), have been asked to take extra care in observing social distancing.
2. Staff with family members in at risk categories have been instructed to inform their management team. Decisions on home working or furlough in accordance with Govt. policy are taken on a case by case basis.

**Hazard : Cleaning and hygiene** Inadequate cleaning & hygiene standards pose a risk of spreading infection by way of cross contamination from surfaces contaminated with the coronavirus.

**Control Measures:**

1. Cleaning regimes have been significantly increased, particularly the frequency of cleaning of hard surfaces and touch points (floors, handrails, door handles, equipment, switches, etc).
2. Suitable disinfectant cleaning products are provided and used by staff and cleaners.
3. Sufficient hot water, liquid soap, disposable towels and hand sanitiser dispensers are provided throughout the building.
4. Staff are required to report anything contaminated or spilt that requires cleaning or to clean it themselves whilst observing necessary precautions and using suitable PPE provided.

**Hazard : Personal hygiene** Poor personal hygiene standards pose a risk of passing or contracting the infection.

**Control Measures:**

1. The importance of good personal hygiene has been explained to all staff. Particularly the need for regular thorough hand washing and the avoidance of touching eyes, nose or mouth, if their hands are not clean.

2. Staff instructed to clean their hands frequently, using alcohol-based hand sanitisers or preferably to wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Soap and gels are provided.
3. Uniforms or scrubs are provided to wear during working hours. These should be changed into on arrival at work. Before leaving, work clothing should be removed, placed in a suitable bag and taken home for washing. We suggest the use of a washable laundry bag to minimise the risk of contamination.
4. Staff instructed that disposable tissues, should be used when coughing and or sneezing. Used tissues to be bagged and put into a bin or pocketed and taken home for safe disposal.

**Hazard : Contact With Clients** Potential risk or transfer of virus on account of contact with other persons.

**Control Measures:**

1. Clients are only allowed into reception to announce their arrival at the surgery and to pay their bill or collect items / medication after treatment. Clients must then wait in their cars until they are called.
2. Clients are asked health screening questions before being offered an appointment. Anyone confirmed as having COVID-19 or showing symptoms of the disease will be asked if someone asymptomatic can bring their pet in where possible.
3. Clients should be offered telephone or video consultations in place of a face to face consultation wherever possible.
4. Medications, flea treatments and wormers can be posted to clients to reduce the need to visit the surgery.
5. If pets do need to be seen then they should be collected from owners in the car park and brought in to the surgery for examination and treatment. They should then be returned to their owners in the car park and social distancing maintained as far as possible.
6. Payments should be taken by card (rather than cash) wherever possible to reduce contact. This can be done over the phone or in the designated reception / foyer area.
7. Routine work has previously been suspended and is now being re-introduced gradually. Vaccinations, neuterings and dentals are currently being undertaken on animal welfare grounds.
8. Any animals from confirmed or suspected COVID-19 positive households should be treated as potential fomites. Full PPE (full cover gowns, masks, visors/goggles, gloves) should be worn whilst in contact and disposed of safely after use. All in-contact areas should be disinfected immediately.
9. Where site visits are required by contractors or other members of the public, site guidance on social distancing and hygiene should be explained to visitors on or before arrival.
10. Visits to clients homes should be kept to a minimum and when visits are necessary social distancing measures and PPE Policy should be adhered to at all times. For farm and equine visits, please also observe any local rules at the site.
11. Items belonging to animals being admitted should be kept to a minimum, e.g. blankets, food, toys, etc. and only left at the surgery if absolutely necessary. Owners should be asked to take any non-essential items. e.g. leads, home with them.
12. Clients are only permitted to enter the designated area in reception as described above. They are not permitted into consultation rooms or other areas of the practice. Consult nurses have been designated to hold animals for vets during examinations.
13. In exceptional circumstances only, e.g. euthanasias, clients may be allowed into the consultation with their pet. This is limited to 1 member of the household only and is at the absolute discretion of the vet.
14. To protect reception staff dealing with clients face-to face, protective screens have been installed at reception to provide a sneeze barrier. Reception staff will be issued with visors rather than face masks to enable clearer communication when speaking to clients.
15. Hand sanitizing stations will be placed at the entrance to each surgery and should be used by clients and staff on entering and leaving the premises.

<b>Documents Associated with this Risk Assessment:</b>	Coronavirus PPE SOP.docx(PPE Protocol )
<b>Review Date :</b>	<b>Reviewer :</b>