



MANAGING A MOVABLE FEAST

SCENARIO

Covid 19 causes a pandemic: The country went into lockdown, the economy started to stall, everyone worked (or not) from home. Totally alien to life as we knew it and not sustainable without significant changes in the way we do things.

WHAT SHOULD HAVE HAPPENED – THE BIT WE ALL HOPED FOR:

The virus would subside, we would naturally become immune and all return to work having survived another of nature's attacks on humans.

WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENED NEXT – THE BIT THE WORLD STRUGGLED WITH:

The virus grew, killing people globally, no respite or prejudice, if you weren't strong enough to fight it, you lost. Incredibly sad for many people and life changing for others. Then the controls the governments around the world put in place started to take effect. Isolation; almost at the top of the hierarchy of controls, as its only second to elimination, did as many safety professionals will testify, prevent cross contamination and hence the spread.

The need then grew to get back to normal – if we could:

We were contacted by a representative of Runnymede Borough Council (RBC) regarding assessment of their Civic Offices and later, community halls, depot, day care centres and museum for the management of the Covid 19 risk at work. Later to be known as Covid-secure. As local government, some areas remained



open but to resume their responsibilities to the full, they needed their offices and other assets reopened.

RBC tabled their ideas for the office and when we met, we looked at what could be done and what were aspirational or long term actions. It was great to be working with people who really wanted to make the working environment viable again. We visited the Civic Offices three times; once to conduct the risk assessment, once to check on the agreed additional controls and a final visit to assess the effectiveness of



those controls. We provided bespoke signage and an FAQ for staff returning. RBC created a return to work video detailing the new rules in the office. In between those visits, there was a day spent looking at the remaining assets and how best to make them covid-secure. The same strategy for all, assessing, implementing and re-assessing, setting a control standard that was better than compliant. The Civic Office, Chertsey Museum and RBC Community Halls are open and the staff armed with a management process that allows them to make informed decisions about controlling their premises. The introduction of the rule of 6 prevented the day care centres from opening. However, they are ready when the Government is ready.

The initial piece of guidance produced by the government in May (Working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19)) was amended over 20 times between its release and September 2020. As the knowledge of this hazard grows, it is highly likely that the requirements associated with controlling it at work will change again and again.

RESULT

A local authority that became the first in its area to be ready to re-open to the public albeit with some significant changes to the way things are done. A3C continue to monitor the guidance and support RBC in their efforts to provide local government services to the people in their borough.

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