

# COVID-19 RETURN TO WORK COMMS PLAN

As coronavirus (COVID-19) lockdown measures ease across the globe, many businesses and organisations are now creating return to work strategies.

There are many challenges to consider when creating a return to work strategy – including how to implement safety and social distancing measures, increasing hygiene controls and updating ways of working to prevent the spread of the virus.

Here at Cardinus, we have chosen to follow the [PIPR \(Prepare, Inform, Prevent and Recover\) strategy](#). This return to work approach is fully flexible and is designed to split everything which needs to be considered into four easy to manage stages.

## Inform

The 'inform' stage of the PIPR strategy is designed to help businesses and organisations establish a program of communication for employees returning to work.

This stage of the strategy is critical - as for safety and social distancing measures to be effective, everyone within a business must first understand how and why measures are expected to be enforced.

Preparing a workforce to return in the current environment is challenging, especially as the guidance and facts relating to coronavirus (COVID-19) are ever-evolving as science learns more about the virus and how to control it.

Topics employers may need to address in communications include (to name just a few):

- New workplace safety and social distancing protocols

- How employees can travel to work safely
- Workstation hygiene requirements
- Changes to workplace eating and drinking facilities
- Changes to government advice and guidance
- If new training is required, as a result of new measures

## Timing of employee communications

As well as considering what needs to be communicated, employers also need to think carefully about the timing of messages.

Many businesses and organisations were unable to operate when strict coronavirus (COVID-19) lockdown measures were in place and chose to furlough employees. In these cases, employers should consider that these employees are likely to require 're-engagement' and may need to be contacted via other channels (i.e. personal email addresses).

When creating a communication plan, we propose businesses and organisations consider splitting messages into 3 groups:

## Preparation messages

Messages that employees need to receive before they return to work. This includes the initial 'we are reopening/returning' communication, alongside re-engagement messages.

## During messages

Messages that employees require as they return to work. This may include messages relating to how to plan their first day or information regarding new training that is required.

## On-going messages

Messages that employees need to receive on an on-going basis – i.e. reminders about safety measures. In addition to reminders, this group of messages may include how an employer will inform employees of changes to safety protocols in place.

## Return to work comms plan template

To help make the planning of return to work employee messaging easier we have created a free comms template. This template is a simple table, which features columns employers can use to develop employee messaging and considers the following:

- Target audiences
- Key messages
- Objectives
- Delivery methods
- Timings and status

A comms plan is not just a content calendar – it is a planning sheet, which identifies the key objectives of each message created. This helps to ensure that employee audiences and groups within a business receive the messages they require to implement coronavirus (COVID-19) safety and social distancing measures effectively.



Department							
Communication lead:				Communication stage: Preparation / During / On-going			
Date	Target Audience	Objective	Message	Format	Channel(s)	Timings	Status
6 <sup>th</sup> July, 2020	Returning employees	To help staff travel safely	Guidance on using public transport when travelling to work.	Video, text	Email and Intranet	8 <sup>th</sup> July, 2020, 13 <sup>th</sup> July 2020, 20 <sup>th</sup> July 2020	In-progress