

London Workplace Recovery Board Case Study

Business Name:	New London Architecture Ltd
Industry Sector:	Property/ Built Environment
Employees Full-Time:	36
Employees Part-Time:	12
Employees on Furlough:	N/A
Main London Office Postcode:	N1 6BH
What problems have you overcome in encouraging a return to the workplace?	<p>Firstly, we acknowledged that everyone's personal circumstances were unique and recognised that people's 'fear' and/or 'appetite for risk' differed also. Therefore, we have very much taken a consultative approach with our staff throughout the pandemic, as well as closely adhering to government guidelines.</p> <p>There is a mix of preference for returning to the office.</p> <p>Some are very keen to get back to an office environment and were pushing to return. Some were more comfortable working from home.</p> <p>Safety is a priority for us as an employer and our employees feeling safe with new COVID concerns and social distancing requirements.</p> <p>Additional work has taken place around new COVID health and safety policies, office set up and COVID safety requirements, cleaning, booking systems for office occupation and desk booking.</p> <p>A small number raised concerns about not being vaccinated and others had concerns regarding travelling on public transport.</p>
How have you overcome barriers to returning to the workplace?	<p>Regular communication with our teams has been critical, keeping people in touch with changing guidance and outlining a clear pathway with timelines leading to a more 'normal way' of working and return to the workplace.</p> <p>To date we haven't experienced that many problems in encouraging people back as we have taken a staggered approach and fully communicated the benefits of returning to the office.</p> <p>We have encouraged team and project days for collaboration resulting in employees coming back into the office 1 or two days a week where the benefits are for them to work together, rather than through remote technology.</p> <p>Employees can occupy the office for as long as required and if there are concerns regarding peak time travel they have the option to stagger their working day in the office.</p>

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	<p>It has been challenging to accommodate hybrid working for meetings e.g. when some of the team are in the office and others working remotely – we have invested in better ‘kit’ in the workplace to enable this to work better.</p> <p>We have (and will continue) to closely manage access to our working spaces – staff booking their desk-space in advance has been a pre-requisite and numbers have been limited each day. We also stopped any external visitors to site and encouraged client meetings to take place outdoors or in public spaces; we are looking forward to lifting this restriction as we come fully out of lockdown. This has helped us build trust and confidence of our teams.</p> <p>Pre-pandemic we had already had a flexible approach to work arrangements and maintaining this alongside a compelling return to the workplace strategy means that we will continue to operate efficiently and keep our people happy and motivated.</p>
What best practice would you recommend to other companies that are returning to the workplace?	<p>Clear and consistent communication is so important – regularly updating people about the measures that are being taken to keep them safe and ensure the business can run smoothly; sign-posting to ‘health and wellbeing’ practices / initiatives; surveys to assess needs etc. keeping employees engaged with what’s going on in the business generally so that they do not feel disconnected.</p> <p>We have a high level of trust with our employees which has been qualified during the lock down period and all our employees working from home and performance levels not being effected.</p> <p>We have encouraged a return to the workplace environment on the benefits of collaborative working. This has focused on team and project days and where employees have a need or a want to return to the office. This way the benefits of working together can be realised and encouraged.</p>