

FW Solutions Ltd

Pandemic Recovery Plan

Version History

REVISION	DATE	NAME	DESCRIPTION
Original 1.0	24 th May 2020	Rebecca Warden	COVID 19 Recovery Plan
Version 2.0	8 th June 2020	Rebecca Warden	COVID 19 Recovery Plan V2
Version 3.0	25 th September 2020	Rebecca Warden	COVID 19 Recovery Plan V3

Table of Contents

FW Solutions Ltd	1
Pandemic Recovery Plan.....	1
Pandemic Plan Statement of Intent	4
Policy Statement.....	4
Objectives	4
Key Personnel Contact Info	5
1. Plan Overview	6
1.1 Plan Updating.....	6
1.2 Plan Documentation Storage	6
2. Recovery Plan Phase One – the current situation	7
3. Recovery Plan Phase Two – controlled return.....	8
3.1 Office Based Staff.....	8
3.2 Field Based Staff.....	9
3.3 Learners and Apprentices.....	9
3.4 Redundancy of Staff.....	10
3.5 Redundancy of Apprentices.....	10
4. Recovery Plan Phase Three – a new normal	12
4.1 Apprentice and Learner Training	12
4.2 Local Economic Support	12

Pandemic Plan Statement of Intent

This document delineates our policies and procedures for responding to and recovering from the COVID 19 outbreak that has disabled some company staff and negatively impacted the organisation's ability to provide our training services as usual. It includes process-level plans for addressing people issues and maintaining the company's ability to provide business as usual. This document summarises our procedures for response and recovery in three phases in line with the UK Government's COVID-19 Recovery Strategy 'Our Plan to Rebuild'. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/our-plan-to-rebuild-the-uk-governments-covid-19-recovery-strategy>

Our mission is to protect staff and learners from the impact of a pandemic illness such as COVID-19, ensure business continuity, uphold data integrity and overall business resilience.

Policy Statement

- FW Solutions shall release and implement a comprehensive pandemic recovery plan.
- A formal risk assessment shall be undertaken to determine the requirements for the pandemic plan.
- The pandemic plan should cover all essential and critical human needs and resources, technical infrastructure elements, systems and networks, in accordance with key business activities.
- All staff and key stakeholders, including learners and employers, must be made aware of the pandemic plan and their own respective roles.
- The pandemic plan is to be kept up-to-date, taking into account changing circumstances during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Objectives

The principle objective of the pandemic recovery plan is to develop and document a well-structured and easily understood plan which will help FW Solutions recover as quickly and effectively as possible from an outbreak such as the coronavirus which may reduce available staff needed to support the organisation's business operations. Additional objectives include the following:

- The need to ensure that all employees fully understand their duties in implementing such a plan
- The need to ensure that pandemic policies are adhered to within all planned activities
- The need to ensure that proposed contingency arrangements are cost-effective
- The need to uphold our Duty of Care to all learners
- Pandemic recovery needs applicable to key stakeholders

Key Personnel Contact Info

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1. Plan Overview

1.1 Plan Updating

It is necessary for the pandemic plan updating process to be properly structured and controlled. Whenever changes are made to the plan, the version history must be recorded and the current plan communicated to all stakeholders and published on the FW Solutions website. Key policies must be updated in accordance with update to the recovery plan. This will involve the use of formalised change control procedures under the control of the Director of Business Development (Rebecca Warden).

1.2 Plan Documentation Storage

Copies of this plan will be controlled by the Director of Business Development and stored within MS Teams and published on the FW website www.fwsolutions.net. Each Director and Governor will be issued a copy to store locally.

1.3 Plan Supporting policies and procedures

The following policies and procedures have been updated to support the emergency response and recovery phases:

- Safeguarding
- Homeworking
- Remote Workers Agreement
- Data Protection and Privacy policy
- English and maths Strategy
- Teaching and Learning policy
- Domestic Abuse policy
- Staff Drugs and Alcohol policy
- Learner Drug and Alcohol Policy
- Wellbeing Strategy
- COVID-19 Wellbeing Response Policy
- Return to work procedures/COVID 19 Return to work Risk Assessment
- Head Office COVID 19 Risk Assessment

2. Recovery Plan Phase One – March – May 2020

FW Solutions implemented the business continuity and risk management plan on Tuesday 17th March which included immediate home working for all tutors and administration personnel to ensure the safety of the whole team.

The arrangements were set out in the emergency response relating to the Covid-19 pandemic and were temporary. During this period FW Solutions has successfully:

- changed its teaching and assessment methodology to operate virtually through platforms including Zoom, Google Hangouts and Microsoft Teams. Teaching continues monthly, on a 1:1 basis covering the theory and knowledge elements of each apprenticeship, linking to practice to develop skills and behaviours.
- introduced virtual classrooms to enable learners to engage with each other and further develop the behaviours required for their apprenticeship.
- carried out recorded assessment through written work and professional discussion.
- followed the assessment guidance of Ofqual and our EPAOs/AOs for mandatory diplomas and functional skills. All learning and assessment continue to be evidenced via eportfolio and VLE.
- ensured that platforms are accessible to all learners and assess individual needs and methods tailored individually e.g. where a learner does not have laptop or Internet connection at home, learning is taking place through phone tutorials and apps such as WhatsApp.

In March we responded quickly to business interruption, supporting apprentice employers with an initial telephone IAG meeting to establish which apprentices would be affected and to plan for remote learning. All employers engaged with FW Solutions have agreed for their apprentices continuing learning whilst furloughed and understand the rules around salary during training time. We regularly update our dedicated COVID-19 webpage so that employers have access to up to date information regarding apprentices and Government guidelines. As well as engaging apprentices using online platforms e.g. Zoom, we have ensured employers have access to these platforms and are involved in the review process and agreeing changes to curriculum for apprentices learning at home rather than in the workplace during this period of business interruption. Employers continue to have 'view and agree' access to apprentice's eportfolio and all evidence of learning is signed electronically by the employer.

The UK Government published their Plan to Rebuild the UK on 11th May, setting out a plan to rebuild the UK for a world *with* COVID-19. The following phases of the FW Solutions Recovery Plan aim to adapt to a world where business continues with a 'new normal' and will be adapted as we learn more about the local and national Government's plan to recover.

3. Recovery Plan Phase Two – controlled return May 2020

In line with the UK Government's three phase plan, throughout this phase

“ people will need to minimise the spread of the disease through continuing good hygiene practices: hand washing, social distancing and regular disinfecting of surfaces touched by others. These will be in place for some time. The number of social contacts people make each day must continue to be limited, the exposure of vulnerable groups must continue to be reduced from normal levels, and symptomatic and diagnosed individuals will still need to isolate”

Over time, social contact will be made less infectious by:

- making such contact safer (including by redesigning public and work spaces, and those with symptoms self-isolating) to reduce the chance of infection per contact;
- reducing infected people's social contact by using testing, tracing and monitoring of the infection to better focus restrictions according to risk; and
- stopping hotspots developing by detecting infection outbreaks at a more localised level and rapidly intervening with targeted measures.

Therefore, FW Solutions will implement the following plans from 11th May 2020 until such a time that we are safely able to enter Phase Three:

3.1 Office based staff

Office based staff will return to work from furlough where the business demands require increased staffing levels. All Head Office staff can work from home, and in line with lockdown measures, will remain at home to work until those guidelines change.

However, from 1st June, FW Solutions recognise that for the well being of some office staff, they may wish to return to Head Office on some of their working days.

The following measures will be implemented to ensure the health and safety of any member of staff attending head office:

- a full risk assessment will be carried out and published on the Atlas website and must be acknowledged by all office staff
- a deep clean of the office area will be undertaken before anyone enters the office in May and every week thereafter
- hygiene and cleaning materials will be provided for the office as a whole and on every desk including disinfectant wipes, disinfectant spray and antibacterial hand gel. Gloves and disinfectant spray will be made available for the general office
- communal machinery such as shredder, photo copier and all filing cabinets will be cleaned nightly

- if more than two members of staff attend to the office at one time there will be a staggered entry and exit and machinery such as the photocopier and shredder and access to the filing cabinets will be limited to one person to avoid transference risk
- kitchen equipment will be disinfected nightly
- the kettle may be filled from the water cooler and where possible staff should bring disposable kitchenware to avoid using the communal kitchen
- all staff using the Windsor House office facilities will adhere to hygiene requirements including regular hand washing
- all other health and safety requirements including use of the communal bathrooms will be in accordance with The Windsor house multi tenant risk assessment
- The Staying COVID-19 Secure poster will be displayed in the office
- information regarding Boulton Brook's (the Landlord) response to health and safety in the Windsor house building released on 11th May 2020 can be found in Annex 1

3.2 Field-Based Staff

Field-based staff (TLCs and Employer Engagement Team) can work from home but in certain circumstances, will be required to visit learners and apprentices in their workplace. Field Based staff should only make an onsite visit for the following reasons:

- To carry out functional skills or on screen BTEC tests that cannot be carried out remotely
- to observe a learner or apprentice in practice for the purpose of achieving competence evidence for their programme of study
- where a learner or apprentice has not engaged with online learning platforms and is at risk from disengaging with the programme without a face to face visit from their tutor
- where an employer has requested a progress meeting and this cannot be done remotely
- where the DSL is required to attend following a safeguarding incident

Field based staff must ensure that they have acknowledged the relevant risk assessments in Atlas and completed the return to work risk assessment form with the learner and manager of the setting before making the on site visit. All Government guidelines must be adhered to and where the FW Solutions member of staff does not deem it safe to make the on site visit they should postpone until Phase Three of the recovery plan. Visits must only be made for 1:1 meetings, not for group 'classroom style' meetings. The return to work risk assessment that will be carried out with each individual setting can be found in Annex 2.

3.3 Learners and Apprentices

On 24 May the Prime Minister announced that further education (FE) settings should plan on the basis that, subject to the government's 5 tests being met, from the week commencing 15 June, they can broaden the number of 16 to 19 learners attending on-site delivery, in line with the [guidance on wider opening from 15 June 2020](#) and [guidance for further education providers](#). This includes apprenticeship training taking place in any educational setting.

FW Solutions' Head Office at Windsor House is not a training facility but does have shared facilities that can be used for Functional Skills testing where required when an apprentice's workplace has not yet reopened or there is not a safe place in the workplace for a face to face meeting. This will be risk assessed on a case by case basis and only one learner and one invigilator/tutor will be present.

From the week commencing 15 June, FW Solutions will offer some face-to-face contact for 16 to 19 year old apprentices where it is practical and as part of a combined approach in which remote training remain the predominant form of training. Where face to face training is offered it will be at the apprentice or learner's place of work and a risk assessment (see Annex 2) will be carried out with the learner and their employer before the training takes place. This training will only be offered at this stage where the learner has struggled to engage with online learning and needs the support or where a competence based observation is required for them to complete their programme of learning.

From 20 June, FW Solutions will carry out Functional Skills tests for those learners that were not eligible for centre assessment grades and where the Functional Skill achievement is necessary for completion of the learning programme.

End Point Assessment flexible arrangements are in place for the Teaching Assistant and Early Years Educator Apprenticeship Standards and FW Solutions and NCFE EPA Plus will ensure that there is as little disruption as possible to those apprentices entering Gateway during this phase of the recovery plan.

3.4 Redundancy of staff

We are making every effort to avoid staff redundancies. However, we have had to make the unfortunate decision to make one part time administration post redundant due to COVID-19 and we are following legal guidelines and advice from our HR and Employment Law advisors Citation. To avoid further redundancies we have utilised the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme for the administration team (who all returned to working full time on 1st September 2020) and we will use temporary reductions in working hours for both teaching and admin staff if absolutely necessary.

3.5 Redundancy of apprentices

Since the start of phase three we have had a small cohort of apprentices made redundant. We are following the Government guidelines and the up to date Funding Rules to support apprentices enrolled with FW Solutions. We are making reasonable efforts to find the apprentice a new employer.

The existing funding support relating to redundancy is outlined in the table below:

Apprentice circumstances Funding support

Apprentice is within 6 months of the final day of training

The Government will fund 100% of the remaining costs of the apprenticeship. Within this 6 month period:

- If the apprentice finds a new employer where they can complete their apprenticeship, the new employer assumes outstanding liabilities and benefits from that point.
 - If the apprentice takes a job with an employer which is not related to their apprenticeship, The Government will continue to fund the remaining costs.
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Apprentice is between 6 months and 12 months of the final day of training

The Government will fund the remaining costs of apprenticeship for a maximum of 12 weeks.

Within this 12 week period:

- If the apprentice finds a new employer where they can complete their apprenticeship, the new employer assumes outstanding liabilities and benefits from that point.
 - If the apprentice takes a job with an employer which is not related to their apprenticeship, The Government will continue to fund the remaining costs for up to 12 weeks.
 - If a new employer is not found within 12 weeks, the apprentice is withdrawn from the programme but can return to the same apprenticeship at a later date, without the need to satisfy the 12 month minimum duration rule.
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Apprentice is more than 12 months away from the final day of training The Government will fund the remaining costs of the price negotiated between the provider and the previous employer for a maximum of 12 weeks.

Within this 12 week period:

- If the apprentice finds a new employer where they can complete their apprenticeship, the new employer assumes outstanding liabilities and benefits from that point.

- If the apprentice takes a job with an employer which is not related to their apprenticeship, The Government will continue to fund the remaining costs for up to 12 weeks.

- If a new employer is not found within 12 weeks, the apprentice is withdrawn from the programme. If they return at a later date to the same apprenticeship, they would need to satisfy the 12 month minimum duration rule.

We are supporting the Government’s vacancy sharing service and encouraging our apprentices that have been made redundant to use the service and the Redundancy Support Service for Apprentices (0800 015 0400) where they can get free advice, find new opportunities, and access local and national support services offering financial, health and wellbeing, legal and careers advice.

If the economic effects of COVID-19 continue though to 2021 we are expecting a very small percentage of our apprenticeship employers to cease trading. In this case, we will follow the same procedure for funding apprentices as above.

4. Recovery Plan Phase Three – a new normal September 2020

4.1 Apprentice and Learner Training

The virus is unlikely to die out spontaneously; nor is it likely to be eradicated. Only one human infectious disease - smallpox - has ever been eradicated. The Government must therefore develop either a treatment that enables us to manage it like other serious diseases or have people acquire immunity by vaccination.

The success of remote, or virtual learning, has triggered an understanding that this way of learning will remain a key part of work based learning. We understand that apprenticeship programmes require both on and off the job training to be successful but a strategic element of FW Solutions’ recovery plan and risk mitigation for future epidemics is the development of the online element of our training. We plan to use learner and employer feedback projects carried out in Phase Two to inform us of the successes and limitations of online learning in Phase One.

In this phase, training will be a combination of face to face and online learning, which also has the benefit of reducing travel costs and increasing sustainability. We intend to research and invest in new Ed-Tech to support future e-learning.

We are currently reviewing all curriculums and activity sequencing that will be affected by the medium and long term effects of COVID-19. Notwithstanding, apprenticeships are a competence and work based learning programme, and remote off the job training must be combined with visits to the workplace by teaching staff. We plan to find a balanced approach to training that unites the successes of remote learning forced by lockdown with a return to traditional apprenticeship training pre-COVID.

September 2020 – we have carried out thorough analysis of feedback from both learners and employers to determine ‘lessons learnt from lockdown learning’. As we enter a cyclical phase of local lockdown measures and national restrictions returning and then easing, we are assessing the needs of each apprentice and employer on a case by case basis. We have found that those apprentices in the Residential Childcare sector, for example, are less engaged in online learning but have very COVID secure premises where TLCs can conduct distanced face to face meetings to ensure continued progress.

As apprentices return to work in the childcare and education sector, we have considered how best to minimise the risks of coronavirus (COVID-19) transmission when determining how and when training and assessment takes place. We are being guided by the Government and the procedures that each workplace where apprentices are employed have enforced. Functional Skills Testing has resumed both at employer’s workplaces and at FWS Head Office. Practical observations of apprentices and learners has resumed during ‘outdoor play’ and apprentices are now completing their programmes in a timely manner.

We believe the measures we have in place to keep face to face contact to only essential times and using online learning and assessment where possible are minimising contact with people and reducing transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19).

The Department for Education (DfE) have provided all schools and FE provider with access to home testing kits. From 26 August, all schools and FE providers were sent an initial supply of 10 test kits and since 16 September have been able to order more. These tests are being stored at FW Solutions’ Head Office and will be used in the exceptional circumstance that an individual becomes symptomatic and they may have barriers to accessing testing elsewhere. Access to these tests will help symptomatic staff who test negative and are not close contacts of confirmed cases, to get back to work as soon as they feel well enough.

The plan for the winter months is to continue in this way, with teaching staff and half of the marketing/administration team working from home for the majority of the time. Those apprentices that have started their programmes during the lockdown period March – September will follow the resequenced curriculums agreed with employers where observations and contact requiring face to face time indoors will take place towards the end of their off the job training plan.

FW Solutions’ health and safety advisors, Citation, carried out a Health and Safety review of our practices on 23rd September 2020 and assessed the business as COVID secure. We have the NHS Track

and Trace QR Code displayed at Head Office for learners to check in when attending assessments on our premises and all FWS staff have been encouraged to use the NHS Track and Trace app as effectively as possible.

4.2 Local Economic Support

FW Solutions understands the predicted trends in economic downturn in North Yorkshire, West Yorkshire and the North East, particular in the Early Years sector where the Government u-turn in Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme funds for Early Years providers in April has caused further detrimental impact on cash flow (<https://www.nurseryworld.co.uk/news/article/government-makes-u-turn-on-nurseries-access-to-furlough-cash>).

FW Solutions is supporting Early Years and Education settings with economic recovery by promoting the benefit of apprenticeships and the financial advantage of an apprenticeship work force to support qualified staff on higher wages.

We are promoting the incentives for employers to hire an apprentice between August 2020 and January 2021 and have, at the time of updating V3 of the plan, seen a good uptake of employers taking on new apprentices. As the Government balance their Return to Work campaign, the end of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and the current second spike, our Education and Childcare settings are welcoming children back to their care. We continue to work with our provider network WYLP to support the local Early Years economy during this all important economic recovery period.

The Government has indicated that schools, colleges and early years provision will not close in the second spike and that restrictions will be imposed on retail and hospitality. This gives a degree of security to FW Solutions training operations and to the employers with whom we work as we do not operate outside of the Childcare and Education sectors. Together with the measures stated in this recovery plan, we are prepared for the new normal phase of recovery throughout the coming 'spikes' of the coronavirus.