

# Health and Wellness Alert – Open Plan Office Etiquette

Number 17-07

## 1 BACKGROUND

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Many UON offices and workspaces are now moving to open plan arrangements and it's important to remember that there needs to be certain rules of etiquette, consideration and respect shown towards others in order to make this arrangement function efficiently. Following are some guidelines as to the issues.

## 2 ACTION REQUIRED

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### Show Consideration

- Showing consideration to colleagues in an open plan office will only work if you all adopt a mutual respect for each other.
- Be accessible to others but adopt clearly understood signals for when you're busy and don't wish to be disturbed.
- Keep your desk tidy. This is especially important if you are "hot desking".
- Show courtesy when using any shared spaces.
- Be careful when having conversations. Don't speak too loudly as you may be disturbing others.
- Never shout to a colleague who is at a workstation distant from you to attract their attention, and don't have a conversation across other colleagues.
- Never use anything which might cause disruption to others, e.g. a speaker phone or radio.
- You should always be wary of speaking openly about any issues of confidentiality. Make sure you move to a more private enclosed space such as a quiet room for confidential discussions.
- If a colleague is on the phone themselves, don't interrupt them during the call but wait until they're off the phone.



### Smells

Smells that do not bother you can be unpleasant for other colleagues, e.g.:

- Aftershave or perfume.
- Food.
- Waste - make sure you dispose of food waste thoughtfully.

### Tact and Diplomacy

- Should you accidentally overhear a conversation that you know was intended to remain private between the people having the conversation, keep it to yourself, try and forget about the subject matter.
- Be accessible to people wherever possible but still maintain boundaries whenever you need to focus on work, show consideration to others and be tidy and courteous.
- Remembering that not everybody will share the same values as you but in general adopt a policy of treating people how you'd like to be treated yourself is usually a good benchmark to ensuring a harmonious workspace.

## 3 ASSISTANCE

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If you have any further questions or concerns, please contact the Health and Safety Team on 49218847 (x18847)