

COVID-19 Risk Assessment

Assessment completed by: Practice & Operations Manager in conjunction with Office Managers and full staff consultation

Reviewed by: Practice & Operations Manager

Approved by: Managing Director

Date last updated: July 2020

Date of next scheduled review: October 2020

Risk title/hazards	Description & consequence	Control Measures	Action by who and by when?
<p>Spread of COVID-19 in the firm</p>	<p>This will result in multiple individuals (directors, associates and staff) becoming infected and possibly seriously or fatally ill</p> <p>Vulnerable workers could be worst affected. Reception and cleaning staff workers need to be identified and a separate risk analysis considered for them. Enhanced safety measures should be considered.</p> <p>Current Government advice is that gloves and masks are not necessary in an office environment but will be kept under constant review.</p>	<p>Most directors and staff (where possible) to work from home.</p> <p>Take steps to review work schedules including start and finish times/shift patterns, to reduce the number of people on site at any one time.</p> <p>Set an upper occupancy limit of X% for our offices at any time* .</p> <p>Desks removed (or desks sealed with tape) to encourage physical distancing.</p> <p>Closure of canteen/communal areas OR putting in place social distancing markers and measures in communal areas including kitchens and canteens**.</p> <p>No one feeling ill will be allowed to come to work.</p> <p>Communication and awareness-raising posters referring to the above measures.</p>	<p>All directors and staff are responsible for ensuring the safeguarding of themselves and their fellow colleagues. Each office location has a Business Leader. The Business Leader is currently a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), and to support them each office has an Office Manager. They are responsible for ensuring strict adherence to monitoring, reviewing and implementing the processes outlined in this document.</p> <p>*each office location is different in demographics and can cater for a different occupancy, for this purpose each office location has carried out their own assessment and set an upper occupancy limit.</p> <p>** kitchen/canteen areas remain open but a rota for access has been applied.</p> <p>Custom made plexi-glass screens are being introduced at reception areas.</p> <p>Enhanced cleaning has been introduced.</p>

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		<p>Enhanced cleaning regime, including for toilets, pantries and frequent touchpoints such as door handles, light switches, reception area using appropriate cleaning products and methods.</p> <p>Cleaning operatives to receive full instructions on initial deep clean routine and then ongoing cleaning regime.</p> <p>Drying hands with disposable paper towels.</p> <p>Hand washing awareness: see the NHS guidance</p> <p>Sanitation products (hand sanitiser, cleaning wipes) widely available. Consider providing a 'cleaning pack' for staff with hand gel, wipes etc.</p> <p>Social distancing to be observed at all times.</p> <p>Reminding everyone of the public health advice through posters, leaflets and other materials made widely and prominently available: see the government guidance</p>	<p>Office Managers are responsible for stock levels. In their absence their appointed deputy holds that responsibility.</p>
<p>Spread of COVID-19 to clients or visitors</p>	<p>This will result in multiple individuals (directors, staff, visitors/clients and contractors) becoming infected and possibly seriously or fatally ill</p>	<p>Face-to-face meetings are discouraged with conference calls to be used instead and only essential face-to-face client meetings permitted on site.</p> <p>Temperature checks at building entrance will keep away any external attendee with an elevated temperature.</p>	<p>The fee earner will determine whether a face-to-face appointment is essential. The fee earner will ensure the reasons for the meeting being essential are duly noted on the file.</p> <p>The fee earner will be responsible for ensuring temperature checks are carried out on client visits.</p> <p>The face-to-face meeting process will be carefully monitored and reviewed, if necessary</p>

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		<p>Register of meeting attendees to be kept, in the event that contact tracing information has to be provided.</p> <p>Upper limit on meeting numbers determined by available room size.</p> <p>Meetings staggered so no congestion possible.</p> <p>Seats removed from meeting rooms to ensure physical distancing .</p> <p>Enhanced cleaning regime, including before/between/after each individual meeting.</p> <p>Sanitation products (hand sanitiser, cleaning wipes) available inside each meeting room .</p> <p>No catering/refreshments offered inside meeting rooms .</p> <p>Pre-meeting notification (if possible) sent to all attendees asking them to stay away if feeling unwell.</p> <p>Physical distancing in place in reception/waiting area.</p> <p>X hour upper limit on meetings strongly advised and communicated .</p> <p>No cloakroom service – visitors should look after their own personal items .</p>	<p>an approval system will be introduced if needed at a later date.</p> <p>Guidance notes have been provided by the Practice & Operations Manager, duly approved by the Managing Director, for onward transmission to clients, visitors and service providers.</p>

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		<p>Temperature checks at building entrance should prevent anyone with an elevated temperature entering the office.</p> <p>Visits to clients' homes/other offices are to be kept to a minimum. In the event a visit is absolutely necessary, government guidance should be followed at all times. If visiting a client in their home, where possible staff should not enter the client's house and every effort made to hold the meeting in an open air environment observing the social distance guidance.</p>	
<p>COVID-19 case (suspected) in our offices</p>	<p>This may result in the individual staff member experiencing medical distress on-site and could increase the risk of onward transmission of the virus among other people with whom the individual has been in proximity</p>	<p>If anyone becomes unwell with a new continuous cough, a high temperature or loss of sense of smell or taste in the workplace, they will be sent home and advised to follow the stay at home guidance.</p> <p>Everyone in the relevant office to be informed.</p> <p>Directors and managers to increase the frequency of communication with those they supervise during this time.</p> <p>Majority of people instructed to work from home</p> <p>Reemphasise that no-one feeling ill is allowed to come to work.</p> <p>Maintaining up-to-date contact information (including emergency contacts) for all directors and staff .</p>	<p>Business Leaders with the support of their Office managers are responsible for ensuring all local staff are well by means of frequent communication.</p>

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		<p>Record keeping on who is in and where in the office on a given day to aid potential contact-tracing efforts and processes.</p>	
<p>COVID-19 transmission via communal resources or areas</p>	<p>This may result in increased risk of transmission, including to/from clients and visitors</p>	<p>Marketing material (brochures and literature), newspapers and magazines removed from client reception area .</p> <p>Libraries (if applicable) to develop a special protocol for cleaning all books, journals and other publications held in the open. A move to online subscriptions where possible.</p> <p>If advised that a member of staff or visitor has developed COVID-19 and was recently on the premises the management team will ask the local public health authority for advice, identify people who have been in contact with them and take on any actions or precautions .</p>	<p>Office Managers will be responsible for ensuring all loose and non-essential paperwork is removed from reception areas.</p> <p>Hard copy books will be wiped and cleaned before and after use. A review to move to online subscriptions to replace hard copy books is underway with the Practice & Operations Manager.</p>
<p>COVID-19 transmission via mail/packages</p>	<p>This may result in increased risk of transmission by handling of objects</p>	<p>Cleaning protocol is in place for all incoming mail and courier packages.</p> <p>No personal deliveries to offices to be permitted during the pandemic to minimise the risk of transmission.</p> <p>Staff advised to clean any mail/post items delivered to their desks (wet wipes to be provided) .</p> <p>Hand washing awareness: see the NHS guidance</p>	<p>Each office location to review their Post Room procedure and update accordingly.</p>

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Mental health problems and poor wellbeing	<p>This may result from increased stress caused by home-working and the lockdown, potential bereavements, increased caring responsibilities, elevated incidence of anxiety and depression associated with isolation, concerns about personal and family circumstances and job security</p> <p>Staff members of BAME background may feel more uncomfortable coming back into the office</p>	<p>Signpost to LawCare resources and the Law Society's mental health resources</p> <p>Increase volume of guidance materials and resources available.</p> <p>Raise awareness on any Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) offering access to additional resources and support.</p> <p>Adjust policies around home working and leave-taking to support working parents.</p> <p>Regular internal communications from senior leadership emphasising self-care and regular and inclusive communication. The emphasis should also be on honesty and transparency about the difficulties the firm is facing and how to best manage these together.</p> <p>Regular communication of mental health information and an open-door policy for those who need additional support.</p> <p>Provide assurance over measures taken to protect employees' health and safety.</p>	<p>All staff are aware of and have been provided with opportunities and encouragement to undertake webinar training in the area of mental health problems and wellbeing. Directors and staff are encouraged to speak out on behalf of themselves and/or others and seek counsel with a member of staff to share their concerns so support can be offered.</p> <p>Adjustments have been made to a number of policies and procedures, which have been relaxed to a degree where further flexibility has been allowed to enable staff to work around current home working situations.</p> <p>Support is available at all times, their first port of call being their local Office Manager and/or Business Leader, Department Manager or the Practice & Operations Manager and/or the Managing Director.</p> <p>The Managing Director provides a daily morning welcome note of encouragement to all Directors and employees – ensuring open communication at all times.</p>
Ergonomic injuries	<p>Insufficient chairs, screens, footstools, desks etc. may be available in the office</p> <p>It may be difficult to perform workspace risk assessments whilst maintaining physical distancing, or if people sit in different locations each time they are in the office.</p>	<p>Virtual self-administered workplace risk assessment module to be made available (if not already)</p> <p>Where possible, people to be asked to bring their more portable ergonomic equipment (such as keyboards, wrist supports or mice) with them when working in the office.</p>	<p>Virtual self-administered workplace risk assessments are under review, to be drafted by the Practice & Operations Manager and approved by the Managing Director by August 2020</p>

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Safety and security at building entrance	There is a risk that individuals waiting for extended periods of time at building entrances due to physical distancing and temperature checks experience adverse weather-related health impacts.	Staggered arrival times for those attending the office should limit congestion.	Office Managers to create a rota and monitor efficiency.
COVID-19-related stigma and harassment	Risk that there is an increase in targeted harassment or stigma directed at individuals who have been ill or are from a specific ethnic background.	<p>Reporting channels to permit investigation and where proven appropriate misconduct procedures followed.</p> <p>Directors and managers to offer support to staff who are affected by COVID-19 or have a family member affected.</p> <p>Review the organisation's bullying and harassment policy and remind managers of it.</p> <p>Publish or signpost colleagues to facts about COVID-19 to dispel myths.</p> <p>Ensure senior figures in the organisation issue and support messages about company values, and diversity and inclusion.</p> <p>Reminder training on unconscious bias.</p>	Business Leaders and Department Managers with the support of the Office Managers, and the Practice & Operations Manager will constantly monitor for any signs of stigma or targeted harassment and report immediately to the Directors.
Non-compliance with government regulations	Risk that a member of the firm ignores firm's guidance	<p>Communicate the importance of the adherence to the rules.</p> <p>Stricter enforcement of rules against people continuing to attend the office while feeling unwell .</p>	<p>Frequent communications are sent out reminding directors and staff of the importance of adhering to the government regulations and in-house office policies and procedures.</p> <p>Should we identify frequent offenders, then this may develop into a disciplinary matter.</p>