

COVID-19 Risk Assessment



Assessment completed by: Premises Partner/Premises Manager

Reviewed by: Premises Partner

Approved by: Premises Partner

Date last updated: 19th July 2021

Date of next scheduled review: 19th August 2021

Risk Title	Description and Consequence	Mitigation	Action By Who and By When?
<p>1. Spread of COVID-19 in the firm</p>	<p>This will result in multiple individuals (partners, associates and staff) becoming infected and possibly seriously or fatally ill</p> <p>Vulnerable workers could be worst affected ¹</p> <p>¹ Essential services workers need to be identified and a separate risks analysis considered for them, such as mail, document production/reprographics, reception and cleaning staff. Enhanced safety measures for these groups should be considered (e.g. plexiglass screens, enhanced cleaning, etc.)</p>	<p>In England No limits on how many people you can meet.</p> <p>1m guidance removed except in hospitals and passport control when entering.</p> <p>Face coverings are no longer a legal requirement. The government still expects and recommends them in crowded and enclosed spaces.</p> <p>Some shops and transport operators will still require masks.</p> <p>For further information: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-coronavirus-restrictions-what-you-can-and-cannot-do#history</p>	<p>Management and HR Team: Ongoing</p>



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		<p>From Monday 19 July, move to stage 4 of the Nockolds roadmap and week one of the hybrid working plan for those who would prefer to continue to remote work for 40% of their working week.</p> <p>Continue to closely monitor the regional COVID situation, in particular vaccination levels and hospital admissions as a measure of the effectiveness of the vaccine programme. This information is fed into the COVID risk assessment undertaken regularly.</p> <p>From 19 July, all government restrictions including social distancing will be removed. We will be easing the maximum room occupancy guidance, and teams will plan based on their own office areas and needs.</p> <p>Continuing our COVID-secure approach, the following measures will remain in place until September, when the need will be reviewed once again.</p> <p>Preventative anti-COVID fogging will continue to be applied to all communal and open plan working areas in Bishop's Stortford and London.</p>	



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		<p>Reception screens and sanitiser stations will remain in place.</p> <p>Occupancy numbers on the kitchens/staff rooms will remain restricted and we encourage use of the outdoor spaces for informal and social meet ups such as lunch breaks.</p> <p>Screens will remain available in the meeting rooms for use.</p> <p>Face coverings for visitors to the office will be encouraged.</p> <p>Hands, face, space signage will remain in place.</p> <p>Visitor numbers in reception will continue to be managed.</p> <p>London office will now have a 'soft' opening (meetings with clients and colleagues can be held in the office and inter-office working is now permitted)</p> <p>Covid-secure, phased dual working plans take effect. BS office - clients will no longer be restricted to attending with pre-booked appointments.</p>	<p>Management Team and Premises Team: Ongoing</p> <p>Management Team: Ongoing</p>



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		<p>Clients will continue to need to follow guidance on social distancing and the wearing of face coverings.</p> <p>London office will be open to clients to attend for pre-arranged appointments. This will remain under review and be revised in accordance with the covid data and business need.</p> <p>Remote client meetings continue to be encouraged, with in person meetings taking place where necessary.</p> <p>Staff with underlying health conditions and shielding - staff in this group who have been vaccinated may adopt a combined office/ remote working</p> <p>Coronavirus tests for people with no symptoms (rapid testing) are now available free of charge from Hertfordshire County Council Website: https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/about-the-council/news/coronavirus-tests.aspx#kits</p> <p>1 in 3 people with coronavirus do not show any symptoms.</p>	<p>Management Team and Premises Team: Ongoing</p> <p>Management Team and HR: Ongoing</p>



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		<p>Rapid tests are free tests for people who do not have any <u>symptoms</u>. They are also known as lateral flow tests. You get your test results in 60 minutes.</p> <p>Everyone can now get a free test twice a week. Even if you have been vaccinated, continue to get tested regularly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">» Visit a testing site where you do a self-swab test (with supervision)» Use a home testing kit. <p>Under 16s are not eligible for community rapid testing.</p> <p>Rapid testing is over 70% accurate.</p> <p>The programme, aims to identify people who do not have COVID-19 symptoms but who are infectious and could spread the infection to others unknowingly.</p> <p>Identifying and supporting infectious people to isolate will help reduce spread.</p>	



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		<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, coming into the office on quieter days i.e. Fridays</p> <p>Review need for 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>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>	



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		<p>Consider whether visits between the two Bishop's Stortford offices are necessary. Accounts runs and cheque signing will be managed securely and limited between Accounts and Reception. Should it be necessary to move between the two offices, use face masks/coverings.</p> <p>Fogging in place for both offices. Fogging is effective against enveloped viruses. The Fogging in both offices will commence for the months of August and September, this will then be reviewed.</p> <p>Look at COVID-testing in workplace. High quality testing can provide confidence and clarity for Employers and Colleagues.</p> <p>Look at Eligibility for the National Workplace testing. Continue to review this and keep updated on local authority testing arrangements.</p> <p>Consider wearing Face mask in the office</p> <p>Hand washing awareness: see the NHS guidance: https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/best-way-to-wash-your-hands/</p>	



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		<p>Sanitation products (hand sanitiser, cleaning wipes) widely available. Consider providing a 'cleaning pack' for staff with hand gel, wipes, etc.</p> <p>Review HR sickness policies</p> <p>Reminding everyone of the public health advice through posters, leaflets and other materials made widely and prominently available: see the government guidance https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-covid-19</p> <p>Vaccination roll out is continuing at a pace and is key to the government's plans to ease restrictions over the coming months.</p> <p>To monitor vaccine protection and coverage across the firm, staff will update HR when they receive first and second doses of the vaccine.</p> <p>Government vaccination programme is on track</p>	
<p>2. Spread of COVID-19 to clients or visitors</p>	<p>This will result in multiple individuals (partners, staff, visitors/clients and contractors) becoming infected and possibly seriously or fatally ill</p>	<p>Outdoor events People can meet in a group of six people, or with members of up to two households.</p>	<p>Management Team and Premises Team: Ongoing</p>



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		<p>Up to 30 people will be able to attend weddings, receptions and wakes, as well as funerals. This limit will also apply to other types of significant life events including bar mitzvahs and christenings.</p> <p>Most legal restrictions on meeting others outdoors will be lifted - although gatherings of over 30 people will remain illegal. Indoors, the Rule of 6 or 2 households will apply. (Government to review 19 July 2021) This Risk Assessment will be reviewed again following any changes by the government.</p> <p>49% have had their first job and 20% have had both</p> <p>Face-to-face meetings discouraged with conference calls to be used instead</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>Management Team: Ongoing</p> <p>Management Team: Ongoing</p> <p>Premises Team: Completed</p>



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		<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>Premises Team and Reception: Ongoing</p> <p>Premises Team and Reception: Ongoing</p> <p>Premises Team and Reception: Ongoing</p> <p>Management Team: Completed and now available</p> <p>Premises Team and Reception: Ongoing</p>
<p>3. 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>The single point of contact who will lead the response, including contacting local public health teams will be: [Jennie Jones, Partner & Amanda Pearson, Premises Manager.</p>	<p>Premises Partner and Premises Manager: Ongoing</p>



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		<p>The response plan will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Contact the staff member to ensure that he/she gets a test as soon as possible and self-isolates for 7 days and » Get in touch with the individuals that are part of that staff member's team or shift group and ask them to work from home (reassess next steps once the results of the test are available. If the test is positive, then self- isolate for 14 days) » Contact NHS Test and Trace and assist them with the details required. » Inform management team <p>If there's more than one case of COVID-19 reported in the office we will contact the local PHE health protection team to report the suspected outbreak</p> <p>If anyone becomes unwell with a new continuous cough, a high temperature or loss of sense of smell in the workplace, they will be sent home and advised to follow the stay at home guidance</p> <p>Partners and managers to increase the frequency of contact with those they supervise during this time</p>	<p>Management Team: Ongoing</p> <p>Management Team: Ongoing</p> <p>Premises Team: Ongoing</p> <p>Premises Team: Ongoing</p> <p>Management Team: Ongoing</p> <p>Partners and Management Team: Ongoing</p>



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		<p>Reemphasise that no-one feeling ill is allowed to come to the office</p> <p>Maintaining up-to-date contact information (including emergency contacts) for all partners and staff</p> <p>Record keeping on who is in and where in the office on a given day to aid potential contact-tracing efforts and processes and keeping this information for 21 days as per the government's guidance.</p>	<p>Management Team: Ongoing</p> <p>Management Team and HR: Ongoing</p> <p>Management Team, Premises Team and Reception: Ongoing</p>
<p>4. 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>Pens, pads and other stationary removed from meeting rooms.</p> <p>If a member of staff or visitor has tested positive for COVID-19 and was recently on the premises the firm will follow the action plan set in section 3.</p>	<p>Premises Team: Completed</p> <p>Premises Team and Reception: Completed</p> <p>Management Team: Ongoing</p>
<p>5. 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>Premises Team, Post Team and Reception: Ongoing</p>



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		<p>Incoming documentation scanned centrally and placed in post zone. Post Team to follow required guidance on use of PPE and infection control.</p> <p>Where documents are handed to staff in person. Staff advised to use gloves and other PPE such as masks to scan and place document in an envelope for quarantine (wet wipes & masks provided)</p> <p>Drop off and drop on zones should be considered</p>	<p>Post Team: Ongoing</p> <p>Post Team and Reception: Ongoing</p>



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<p>6. Mental health problems and poor wellbeing</p>	<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. Internal guidance provided. Reiterate support available from Mental Health First Aiders.</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>Management Team: Ongoing</p> <p>Management Team, HR and Nockolds HR: Ongoing</p> <p>Management Team: Ongoing</p> <p>Management Team: Ongoing</p> <p>Management Team: Ongoing</p>



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7. Ergonomic injuries	<p>Sufficient equipment available for both remote and office working</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 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>Premises Team and IT Department: Ongoing</p> <p>Management Team: Ongoing</p>
8. Public transport virus transmission	Crowded and unsanitary conditions on public transport services	<p>Introduce an interest-free loan/subsidy scheme that makes buying a bicycle very cost-effective and provide ample space for cycle storage on-site</p> <p>If staff members need to travel (for example to courts or to do site visits) they should not share vehicles or taxis, unless suitable distancing can be achieved</p>	<p>Management Team: Cycle to Work scheme in place.</p> <p>Management Team: include in guidance</p>
9. 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 or could be subject to opportunistic crime/harassment	<p>Staggered arrival times for those attending the office should limit congestion</p> <p>Staff encouraged to arrive early before temperatures rise</p>	Management Team: Ongoing
10. 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	Reporting channels to permit investigation and where proven appropriate misconduct procedures followed	Partners /Management Team: Ongoing



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		<p>Partners 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 values and diversity and inclusion</p> <p>Reminder training on unconscious bias</p>	<p>Partners /Management Team Ongoing</p> <p>Partners /Management Team Ongoing</p> <p>Management Team Ongoing</p> <p>Management Team Ongoing</p> <p>Management Team Ongoing</p>
<p>11. Non-compliance with government regulations</p>	<p>Risk that a member of the firm ignores firm's guidance</p>	<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>Management Team Ongoing</p> <p>HR and Management Team</p>



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<p>12. Impact on protected characteristics</p>	<p>Be aware of the impact measures you are taking might have on protected characteristics and take appropriate action to mitigate that impact.</p> <p>Some examples: New traffic flows through the building may affect accessibility.</p> <p>Reduced room capacity due to social distancing might limit how many people can access a quiet room.</p> <p>What might the impact be on those who are pregnant or new mothers.</p>	<p>Liaise with staff groups to inform the measures you are taking.</p> <p>Conduct an equality impact assessment on new measures.</p> <p>Refer to best practice guidance available through various sources including the Law Society, Law Works, EHRC and other bodies.</p> <p>Consider setting out increased measures to protect BAME staff who might be at higher risk of infection. This should include the ability to work from home for a longer period and prioritising flexible working requests.</p>	<p>Management Team: Ongoing</p> <p>Management Team: Ongoing</p> <p>Management Team and Premises Team: Ongoing</p> <p>Management Team: Ongoing</p>