

NOCKOLDS SOLICITORS

# COVID-19 Risk Assessment



The Law  
Society



**Assessment completed by:** Premises Partner/Premises Manager

**Reviewed by:** Premises Partner

**Approved by:** Premises Partner

**Date last updated:** 24 February 2022

**Date of next scheduled review:** 24 March 2022

Risk title	Description and consequence	Mitigation	Action by who and by when?
1. Spread of COVID-19 in the firm	<p><b>22 February 2022</b></p> <p>The legal requirement to isolate if you have tested positive for COVID-19 has been lifted, we encourage staff who test positive for COVID to isolate for a period of five days. This should run from either the date of the test results or the onset of symptoms - whichever is the earliest. If you feel unwell, all staff to consider conducting a lateral flow test and/or to work from home if they feel able to do so. This minimises the risk of spreading illness to colleagues and clients. We continue to source lateral tests where possible and necessary. These will be made available to staff who wish to test ahead of meetings or events.</p>		Management Team/HR: Ongoing

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Supplies of hand sanitiser face coverings and gloves will remain available in meeting rooms and communal areas  
Office fogging was conducted in mid-February and provides a further one-months protection. Fogging will be paused from this point and can be reintroduced if the COVID risk indicates this is unnecessary and sensible precaution.

**From 27 January 2022** you will not be required to wear a face covering, including in communal areas of schools, but the government suggests you continue to wear one in crowded and indoor spaces where you may encounter people you do not normally meet.

You will no longer need to show your NHS COVID Pass at venues and events by law.

**From 19 January 2022** you are no longer asked to work from home if you can. Hybrid Working Policy in place.

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**From 17 January 2022** you can stop self-isolating at the start of day 6 if you get 2 negative rapid lateral flow test results on days 5 and 6 and do not have a temperature. Tests must be at least 24 hours apart. If either test is positive, wait 24 hours before testing again.

**From 11 January 2022** if you get a positive rapid lateral flow test result, most people will not need to take a PCR test to confirm the result. You must self-isolate immediately if you get a positive rapid lateral flow test result.

The work from home guidance has been extended until 26 January 2022 as part of the general extension of the plan B restrictions.

**From 22 December** if you've tested positive or have symptoms, you can stop self-isolating after seven days instead of 10 days if you get two negative lateral flow test results on day six and seven.

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**From Monday 13 December 2021** where possible, people should work at home.

All members of staff who are seeing clients or dealing with members of the public to wear masks. All clients attending the offices shall be asked to wear masks.

Anyone encounters anyone with Omicron, then they must currently self-isolate for 10 days regardless of your vaccination status. You will be contacted by NHS Test and trace.

We encourage all visitors and staff to wear facemasks during face-to-face meetings.

**From 5 November** if you're eligible, [you can book a booster vaccine appointment online](#) if it's been at least five months since your second dose. Or [you can get a booster vaccine at a walk-in site](#) without an appointment if it's been at least 6 months since your second dose.

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People aged 40 to 49 are offered a booster of either Pfizer or Moderna vaccine 6 months after their second dose. [Book your vaccination appointment online](#) or [find a walk-in clinic](#).

If you're travelling to England from abroad you must take a PCR test before the end of day 2 following your arrival and self-isolate until you get a negative test result, even if you're fully vaccinated.

If you're a contact of someone who may have been infected with the Omicron variant, you must self-isolate for 10 days, regardless of your age or vaccination status.

Lateral flow tests available on site.

From 16 August, you will not be required to self-isolate if you are notified you have had close contact with someone with COVID-19 and any of the following apply:

- » You are fully vaccinated

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- » You are below the age of 18 years six months
- » You have taken part in or are currently part of an approved COVID-19 vaccine trial
- » You are not able to get vaccinated for medical reasons

Fully vaccinated means that you have been vaccinated with an MHRA approved COVID-19 vaccine in the UK, and at least 14 days have passed since you received the recommended doses of that vaccine.

NHS Test and Trace will contact you to let you know that you have been identified as a contact and check whether you are legally required to self-isolate. If you are not legally required to self-isolate you will be provided with advice on testing and given guidance on preventing the spread of COVID-19. Even if you do not have symptoms, you will be advised to have a PCR test as soon as possible. Children aged 4 and under will not be advised to take a test unless the

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	<p>positive case was someone in their own household.</p> <p>You should not arrange to have a PCR test if you have previously received a positive PCR test result in the last 90 days, unless you develop any new symptoms of COVID-19, as it is possible for PCR tests to remain positive for some time after COVID-19 infection.</p> <p>Even if you are vaccinated, you can still be infected with COVID-19 and pass it on to others. If you are identified as a contact of someone with COVID-19 but you are not required to self-isolate, you can help protect others by following the <a href="#">guidance on how to stay safe and help prevent the spread</a>. As well as getting a PCR test, you may also consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>» Limiting close contact with people outside your household, especially in enclosed spaces</li><li>» Wearing a face covering in enclosed spaces and where you are unable to maintain social distancing</li></ul>		<p>Premises</p>
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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.

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.

From 19 July, all government restrictions including social distancing will be removed. Easing the maximum room occupancy guidance, and teams will plan based on their own office areas and needs.

Continuing our COVID-secure approach, the following measures will remain in place until September, when the need will be reviewed once again.

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Preventative anti-COVID fogging will continue to be applied to all communal and open plan working areas in Bishop's Stortford and London.

Reception screens and sanitiser stations will remain in place.

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.

Screens will remain available in the meeting rooms for use.

Face coverings for visitors to the office will be encouraged.

Hands, face, space signage will remain in place.

Visitor numbers in reception will continue to be managed.

London office will now have a 'soft' opening (meetings with clients and

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	<p>colleagues can be held in the office and inter-office working is now permitted).</p> <p>This will result in multiple individuals (partners, associates and staff) becoming infected and possibly seriously or fatally ill.</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><b>Outdoor events:</b> people can meet in a group of six people, or with members of up to two households.</p> <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.</p> <p>(Government to review 19 July 2021)</p> <p>This Risk Assessment will be reviewed again following any changes by the government.</p>	<p>Management Team/Premises: Ongoing</p> <p>Management Team: Ongoing</p> <p>Management Team: Ongoing</p>

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		<p><b>62 staff have had the booster</b></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>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>Premises Team: Completed</p> <p>Premises Team: Completed</p> <p>Premises Team/Reception: Ongoing</p> <p>Premises Team/Reception: Ongoing</p>
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		<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/Reception: Ongoing</p>
<p>3. COVID-19 case (suspected) in our office</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 &amp; Amanda Pearson, Premises Manager.</p> <p>The response plan will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Contact the staff member to ensure that he/she gets a test as soon as possible and self-isolates for 7 days and</li> <li>» 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)</li> </ul>	<p>Premises Partner/Premises Manager: Ongoing</p> <p>Management Team: Ongoing</p>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>» Contact NHS Test and Trace and assist them with the details required</li><li>» Inform management team.</li></ul> <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>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>Management Team: Ongoing</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 and keeping this information for 21 days as per the Government's guidance</p> <p>Deep clean the area.</p>	<p>Premises Team: 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>Good ventilation brings fresh or cleaned air into indoor spaces. The fresher air that is brought inside, the more diluted any airborne virus will become. In poorly ventilated spaces, residual virus can remain in the air after an infected person has left and increase the risk of COVID-19 spreading.</p>	<p>Premises Team: Completed</p> <p>Premises Team/Reception: Completed</p> <p>Management Team: Ongoing</p>

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		<p>You should maximise the supply of fresh air in your premises. You can do this through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>» Fully or partially opening windows, air vents and doors to improve natural ventilation</li><li>» If you use mechanical ventilation, ensuring that your systems are set to maximise fresh air and minimise air recirculation. Maximising the amount of fresh air your system draws in or ensuring additional fresh air will help avoid COVID-19 spreading</li><li>» Identifying any poorly ventilated spaces as part of your risk assessment, and taking steps to improve fresh air flow in these areas (see below for further details)</li></ul> <p>You can also encourage the use of outside space where practical, for higher risk activity such as exercise or when people are singing or raising their voices.</p>	
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<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>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 &amp; masks provided)</p> <p>Drop off and drop on zones should be considered.</p>	<p>Premises/Post Team/Reception: Ongoing</p> <p>Post Team: Ongoing</p> <p>Post Team/Reception: Ongoing</p>
<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>Signpost to <a href="#">LawCare</a> resources and the <a href="#">Law Society's mental health resources</a></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.</p>	<p>Management Team: Ongoing</p> <p>Management Team: Ongoing</p>

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	<p>Staff members of BAME background may feel more uncomfortable coming back into the office</p>	<p>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: Ongoing</p>
<p>7. Ergonomic injuries</p>	<p>Sufficient equipment available for both remote and office working</p> <p>It may be difficult to perform workspace risk assessments whilst</p>	<p>Virtual workplace risk assessment module to be made available (if not already).</p>	<p>Premises/IT Team: Ongoing</p>

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	maintaining physical distancing or if people sit in different locations each time they are in the office	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.	Management Team: Ongoing
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><b>11.</b> 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 &amp; Management Team</p>
<p><b>12.</b> 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>Liaise with staff groups to inform the measures you are taking.</p> <p>Conduct an equality impact assessment on new measures.</p>	<p>Management Team: Ongoing</p> <p>Management Team: Ongoing</p>

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	<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>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/Premises: Ongoing</p> <p>Management Team: Ongoing</p>
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