

**Covid-19 Working Group**

**Roadmap for Returning to Chambers**

**Introduction**

On 22 February 2021 the Prime Minister set out the Government’s roadmap to cautiously easing lockdown restrictions (in England). Last year, many chambers and Bar Standards Board regulated entities will have prepared for the gradual return of their employees and barristers to the workplace and, following the most recent period of lockdown, will now be seeking to review their existing policies so as to ensure that they are properly prepared for the complete easement of restrictions and any associated increase to their existing skeleton staff (on rota) through which they can run a fully operational chambers that is equipped to meet the needs of a recovering justice system. Likewise, many chambers will not have opened their doors since 16 March 2020 and, particularly in the wake of the Lord Chief Justice’s statement that “… *as the number of people who have been vaccinated against COVID increases and restrictions begin to ease… it will be possible and desirable to increase attendance in person [at court]*…”, will now be considering how to manage the entirety of their return to work process.

It’s becoming increasingly apparent that, having adapted to paperless working and a virtual working environment, many chambers are not planning to return to their previous business model and are now considering how changing their historic working practices might better suit the long-term needs of their members and employees. However, most are hoping to re-open their doors at some point and the purpose of this document is to help chambers and other relevant entities to plan for their return, ensure that they are properly prepared from a compliance perspective, and have procured any necessary supplies and/or equipment. Whilst the Government’s ‘Stay at Home’ order ended on 29 March 2021, businesses are expected to discuss working arrangements with their employees and take every possible step to facilitate working from home, including providing suitable IT and equipment to enable remote working. To facilitate this,sets should continue to encourage their members to make only essential visits to chambers, and carefully consider their staffing requirements so as to ensure that they continue to safeguard their employees until all legal limits on social contact are removed; provisionally on 21 June 2021.

**Government Guidance**

In February 2021 the Government announced that, from 8 March 2021, people in England would see restrictions start to lift and issued a [roadmap](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-response-spring-2021/covid-19-response-spring-2021-summary) offering a route back to a more normal life. The Welsh Government has taken a slightly more cautious approach but [recently announced](https://gov.wales/further-coronavirus-restriction-relaxations-brought-forward) that it would be moving the country into Alert Level 3 on 3 May 2021.

To assist businesses with the return to work process the Government has issued guidance on [working safely during COVID](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/offices-and-contact-centres), which chambers’ senior management teams are encouraged to read as part of their preparation. The remainder of this document should be read in conjunction with, rather than instead of, the more comprehensive Government guidance.

**Roadmap for Returning to Chambers – An Overview**

In addition to making sure that chambers’ premises have been properly risk assessed and are COVID secure before reopening, members of the Bar and their employees should be aware of the dates and related actions set out below.

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| **Date** | **Roadmap** | **Considerations** |
| 29 March 2021  | Stay at home order ends | * Working from home policies should reflect the fact that employees must still work from home wherever possible, and employers should take every possible step to facilitate this
* Barristers should be encouraged to make only essential visits to Chambers
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| Minimise travel | * Employees who are in quarantine after returning from travel will not be eligible for Statutory Sick Pay
* Barristers can still break self-isolation to participatein legal proceedings but must consult with the court or tribunal first. See the **Courts Information > Can I go to court if I’ve just returned from a non-exempt country?** tab on the Bar Council’s [website](https://www.barcouncil.org.uk/useful-information/coronavirus-advice-and-updates.html) for further information
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| 1 April 2021 | Clinically extremely vulnerable people no longer required to shield | * Individual risk assessments should be undertaken for clinically vulnerable employees who are unable to work from home
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| 12 April 2021 | Non-essential retail, indoor leisure facilities[[1]](#footnote-1) and outdoor hospitality services[[2]](#footnote-2) are permitted to open |  |
| 17 May 2021  | Indoor hospitality and entertainment venues reopen[[3]](#footnote-3) |  |
| 21 June 2021 | All legal limits on social contact to be removed | * Any employees being removed from furlough should be issued with a return to work letter
* Chambers should ensure that its flexible working policy is updated and be prepared to deal with any relevant requests under it
* Consider whether employee contracts need to be amended to reflect any permanent changes to their working environment
* Ahead of the end of the furlough scheme on 30 September 2021 chambers should consider whether any restructuring of the staff team is required, and act accordingly with the advice of specialist consultants, solicitors or otherwise
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| 30 September 2021 | Furlough scheme ends | * Whilst the furlough scheme ends on 30 September 2021, employers must begin making contributions towards the wages of those on furlough from 1 July 2021. See the **Finance > What financial protection measures apply to me?** tab on the Bar Council’s [website](https://www.barcouncil.org.uk/useful-information/coronavirus-advice-and-updates.html) for further information
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**Managing Risk and Undertaking an Assessment**

Whilst chambers should continue to take every possible step to enable home working, if they cannot then they should be aware that they have a duty, as employers, to reduce workplace risk to the lowest reasonably practicable level. Furthermore, all UK businesses are required to carry out a COVID risk assessment before re-opening. To assist with your risk assessment, the Bar Council has produced, and recently updated, a Template Risk Assessment for Chambers (see **Appendix 1** below).

When completing their risk assessment, chambers should also be aware that they have a duty to consult with their employees. For smaller sets it is recommended that this be done on an individual basis, either through an online chat or the use of a specific email address. Larger sets may wish to consider using a survey and/or asking their employees to appoint one or more health and safety representatives with whom chambers’ senior management team can liaise.

Based on the results of your risk assessment, you should take appropriate steps to ensure that your workplace is COVID secure, for example by putting in place social distancing and taking measures to increase the cleaning of the premises. Once you have completed any relevant work, you should share the written record of your assessment with your employees and members and display a [Covid-19 Secure notice](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-covid-19-secure-in-2020-notice) in a public location within your Chambers. The Government recommends that businesses with more than 50 employees also post a copy of their risk assessment on their website and chambers with more than 50 employees *and* members may therefore wish to follow this guidance.

**Employees in the Workplace**

Until 21 June 2021, the Government is still encouraging businesses to take every possible step to facilitate home working wherever possible. When deciding which of your employees you ask to return to chambers, you will need to ensure that you do not discriminate against any individual and ensure that you have made appropriate reasonable adjustments for disabled workers.

At present, and until all legal limits on social contact are removed, chambers should bear in mind that, whilst having their employees work from home may not be their preferred business model, it may not be reasonable for sets to instruct their staff to work from the office. This will of course depend on the nature of each employee’s role and the requirements of the business, and it is recommended that those chambers that are unsure of their position seek legal advice from an employment solicitor or direct access barrister. As restrictions begin to ease, some of your staff may remain reluctant to return to work and, whilst employees are [legally obliged to obey reasonable instructions from their employers](https://littletonchambers.com/articles-webinars/john-bowers-qcs-employment-law-blog-disobeying-reasonable-instructions/), taking disciplinary action against them should be used only as a final resort. At all times, chambers will likely want to take a more empathetic approach and should therefore be open to discussing the ways in which they might be able to address the concerns of their employees, either as individuals or as a collective. To that end, it is advisable to ensure that your flexible working policy has been updated and is easily accessible to your staff. Remember that your health and safety obligations extend to your staff members’ mental health, including work-related stress and anxiety. For further information about how to manage the wellbeing of your members and employees, visit the Bar Council’s [Wellbeing at the Bar site.](https://www.wellbeingatthebar.org.uk/)

**Protecting Vulnerable Employees**

Whilst clinically vulnerable people have not been required to shield since 1 April 2021, employees categorised as such are still advised to work from home wherever possible. If they cannot then chambers should be aware that they may need to take extra steps to protect them and should ensure that their risk assessments accounts for their needs, for example by ensuring adequate social distancing.

**COVID Testing**

Chambers may want to consider whether they request that their employees, barristers, and visitors take a rapid lateral flow test before travelling to, or entering, their premises. To facilitate this process, the Government has published a [search engine](https://maps.test-and-trace.nhs.uk/?dm_i=4CGD,1205V,4S4FJR,4SLIK,1) that individuals who are not exhibiting Covid-19 symptoms can use to locate the pharmacies closest to their homes that are offering free tests.

Some chambers have been fortunate enough to obtain a bulk supply of lateral flow tests through the Department of Health and Social Care and, where this is the case, it is recommended that they first distribute a set of seven tests to each of their employees by post, and then ask them to collect a fresh set when they are in the office and are due to run out. You may also wish to consider allocating a small conference room, separate from the staff offices and communal areas, that employees and barristers can use to take a test when they first arrive. This will ensure that, if the results are positive, you are able to effectively protect the remainder of your workforce and minimise the extent to which cleaning must take place following their departure from the building.

If chambers want to carry out workplace tests, then they must ensure that their testing is lawful, and it is therefore recommended that they carry out a Data Protection Impact Assessment to ensure that their procedures are necessary, fair, and proportionate. Further information relating to workplace testing is available on the Information Commissioner’s Office’s [website.](https://ico.org.uk/global/data-protection-and-coronavirus-information-hub/coronavirus-recovery-data-protection-advice-for-organisations/testing/)

**Other Considerations**

Chambers will need to consider any public transport or other travel issues for staff. Whilst employers do not have any statutory legal responsibility for an employee’s journey to and from the workplace, chambers should be conscious of the fact that any work-related travel (e.g. to and from meetings) is encompassed by health and safety legislation and that, in that context, they have a duty to protect their employees from relevant risks. In relation to journeys to and from the workplace, sets should consider government guidance, which suggests staggered arrival and departure times to reduce crowding, and the provision for alternative ways of travelling, such as by cycling. Chambers should also ensure that they are considering the risks associated with their employees’ respective commutes and are aware of the serious concerns that their staff might have about using public transportation. If you have taken every possible step to enable home working but have not been able to entirely accommodate it, then you must do everything possible to ensure that employees can get to chambers in the safest way possible.

As stated above, sets should continue to encourage their members to make only essential visits to chambers. This will be particularly important as employees begin to return to work, as you will need to ensure that you can deal as effectively as possible with their concerns by, for example, taking reasonable measures to implement social distancing. In most, if not all, cases this will not be possible whilst your building is fully, or even mostly, occupied. To that end, you may wish to document and circulate what justifications you consider to be reasonable in respect of members working from chambers and, when they do, for visiting staff offices and communal areas.

The extent of work that will have to be carried out in chambers will be affected by the degree to which remote participation in hearings remains available, and the appetite of both professional and lay clients for the use of remote meetings. The ability and willingness of barristers, solicitors, and the courts to operate on electronic rather than printed documents will also have an impact, and if you have not done so already, you should consider providing training for your members and staff on paper-free working and the preparation of electronic bundles. To assist with the latter, the Bar Council’s IT Panel has produced [guidance relating to good practice when e-bundling](https://www.barcouncilethics.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Ebundles-guidance-updated-jan21.pdf).

**Conclusion**

Having considered which functions may or may not be carried out remotely and the relevant advantages and disadvantages, chambers should also consider the ability of staff and members to work reasonably from home, or from the office. The assessment of the new working environment will enable chambers to better identify the requirements for their IT infrastructure, and their equipment and space needs to provide the optimal solution for remote communications, both in chambers and for staff and members working from home.

Taking the time now to consider each of the functional areas set out in this document, alongside the relevant government guidance and any further present or future requirements that are specific to your set, will enable you to conduct a comprehensive risk assessment and facilitate the safe return of your members and employees to chambers.

**Covid-19 Working Group**

Monday 24 May 2021



APPENDIX 1 - SAMPLE/TEMPLATE RISK ASSESSMENT

ASSESSMENT SUBJECT: [Name of Chambers or Regulated Entity] Offices / Covid-19 Office Recovery

LOCATIONS COVERED: All areas within [Name of Chambers or Regulated Entity] at [Address] [Include, in brackets, the words “*Not Common Parts*” if the offices are leased and the building is therefore shared with other tenants]

Guidance notes (to be removed prior to internal publication):

1. All of the information detailed under the headings set out below is provided as an example only. Chambers and regulated entities should remove or amend any activities, persons or risk control measures that are not relevant to them. Except for those that have been provided as an example only, the Risk Ratings have not been completed as they will be unique to each organisation and to the mitigations that it has made. It should be noted that “Residual Risk” is the level of risk that remains after suitable and sufficient control measures are introduced.
2. This document has been prepared by the Bar Council to assist barristers on matters of compliance. It does not comprise – and cannot be relied on as giving – legal advice. It has been prepared in good faith, but neither the Bar Council nor any of the individuals responsible for or involved in its preparation accept any responsibility or liability for anything done in reliance on it. For fuller information as to the status and effect of this document, please see here.

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| Likelihood (“L”) | Severity (“S”) | Risk Rating | Scores Between |
| 1. Very low (unlikely)
2. Low (may occur)
3. Medium (could occur)
4. High (likely to occur)
5. Very High (near certain to occur)
 | 1. Nuisance (discomfort – no lost time)
2. Minor (up to 3 days off)
3. Moderate (off more than 3 days)
4. Serious (lengthy incapacity to work)
5. Very serious (immediately notifiable)
 | Scores multipliedLikelihood x Severity = Degree of risk (“DR”) | 1-4 | LOW RISK |
| 5-7 | LOW TO MEDIUM RISK |
| 8-14 | MEDIUM RISK |
| 15-19 | MEDIUM TO HIGH RISK |
| 20-25 | HIGH RISK |

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| **ACTIVITY** | **PERSON(S) AT RISK** | **SIGNIFICANT HAZARDS** | **RISK** | **RISK CONTROL MEASURES** | **RESIDUAL RISK** |
| **L** | **S** | **DR** | **L** | **S** | **DR** |
| Preparing to open | Employees MembersPupil barristersVisitorsContractors such as cleaners, delivery people etc. | Exposure to Covid-19 resulting from: (i) inadequate cleaning; (ii) poor ventilation; and/or (iii) inadequate evacuation procedures. |  |  |  | * Arrange for the entire building and all the equipment within it, including computer mice, keyboards, telephones, photocopiers etc., to be deep cleaned ahead of reopening.
* Where possible, open windows and doors to encourage natural ventilation.
* If necessary, adjust ventilation systems so that they do not automatically reduce ventilation levels due to lower than normal occupancy levels and so that they start two hours prior to building occupation.
* Implement additional filter changes and advance planned preventative maintenance schedules.
* Review emergency procedures to consider how Covid-19 control measures such as PPE and social distancing can still be applied so far as reasonably practicable.
* Modify assembly points and ensure that fire marshals are properly trained to control them by supporting social distancing.
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| Deciding who should be on site and protecting those at higher risk | Employees MembersPupil barristersClinically vulnerable persons, pregnant mothers, and other high-risk persons. | Exposure to Covid-19 resulting from unnecessary attendance.Unnecessary exposure to Covid-19 by those with protected characteristics as a result of poor assessment and a lack of adequate provisions. |  |  |  | * Decide the minimum number of people needed on site to operate safely and effectively. Reduce floor and/or room capacities to reflect [social distancing guidelines](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19) and implement booking systems or an employee rota accordingly.
* So far as is possible, continue to encourage all members of chambers, employees and pupil barristers to continue to work from home and to avoid any unnecessary travel to and from the office.
* Consult with all members of chambers, employees and pupil barristers on an individual basis in order to gain a better understanding of their circumstances and to ensure that, so far as is possible, their concerns are appropriately addressed. Take into consideration any individual risk assessments carried out in respect of clinically vulnerable persons or pregnant mothers when planning their return and consider whether any adjustments need to be made for those with protected characteristics in order to maintain compliance with equalities legislation.
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| Communicating guidance and the site rules | Employees MembersPupil barristers | Spread of Covid-19 resulting from unclear guidance and a lack of awareness of best practice in reducing the risk of contracting the virus. |  |  |  | * Provide clear, consistent and regular communication to improve understanding and consistency of ways of working, and to manage expectations.
* Engage with all members of chambers, employees and pupil barristers through existing communication routes to explain and agree any changes in working arrangements.
* Develop communication and training materials for all members of chambers, employees and pupil barristers prior to returning to the building, especially around any new procedures for arrival at work.
* Utilise internal communication channels and cascading of messages through management committees and senior management teams, and pupil supervisors, to provide reassurance and support in a fast-changing situation.
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| Travelling to and from work | Employees MembersPupil barristers | Exposure to Covid-19 resulting from contact with strangers on public transport or otherwise.Spread of Covid-19 resulting from internal congestion arising through building access limitations. |  |  |  | * Government guidance on [safer travel](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers) to be read by all members of chambers, employees and pupil barristers before visiting the office.
* Provide all persons with access to appropriate PPE and encourage the wearing of a face covering where possible, ensuring that all members of chambers, employees and pupil barristers are aware that it is mandatory to do so on public transport, in shops and in supermarkets.
* Implement staggered arrival and departure times for employees to reduce crowding, taking account of their respective routes and the impact on those with protected characteristics.
* Increase access to parking facilities and secure bike-racks to help people drive or cycle to work where possible and/or prioritise the use of any existing facilities in line with business needs.
* Provide all persons with adequate storage for personal belongings. Ensure that any lockers used on a temporary basis are cleaned thoroughly as part of the newly implemented cleaning regime.
* **Added 26 April 2021** – Provide barristers and employees with the link to the Government’s pharmacy [search engine](https://maps.test-and-trace.nhs.uk/?dm_i=4CGD,1205V,4S4FJR,4SLIK,1) so that they can obtain free lateral flow tests to use before travelling in to Chambers.
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| Accessing the building, including touch points | MembersEmployeesPupil barristersVisitors Contractors such as cleaners, delivery people etc. | Spread of Covid-19 resulting from daily contact with touch points such as door handles, keypads required for building access etc. |  |  |  | * Risk Assessment and any other relevant documentation to be read by all members of chambers, employees and pupil barristers before visiting the office, and to be provided by email to visitors and contractors ahead of their respective arrivals.
* Deactivate turnstiles and instead request that, in order to gain access to the building, all members of chambers, employees and pupil barristers show their pass to security personnel.
* Implement additional cleaning regimes, ensuring that the office is cleaned at least twice daily. All touch points to be cleaned with alcohol-based sanitiser at least twice daily.
* Provide all persons with access to alcohol-based hand gels and latex gloves, and set-up easily accessible “hygiene stations” on each floor and in key places such as above any lift buttons or keypads.
* Members of chambers, employees and pupil barristers to be reminded to wash their hands on a regular basis, with soap and water, for at least 20 seconds. Introduce signage in the toilets and around the building to that effect, and to remind those using the facilities of the importance of properly drying their hands, and securely disposing of any used paper towels, thereafter.
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| Movement around the building, including touch points | MembersEmployeesPupil barristersContractors such as cleaners, delivery people etc. | Spread of Covid-19 resulting from: (i) unnecessary travel around the building; (ii) the repeated touching of lift buttons; and/or (iii) the maximum capacities for adequate social distancing being breached. |  |  |  | * Risk Assessment and any other relevant documentation to be read by all members of chambers, employees and pupil barristers before visiting the office, and to be provided by email to visitors and contractors ahead of their respective arrivals.
* Implement additional cleaning regimes, ensuring that the office is cleaned at least twice daily. All touch points to be cleaned with alcohol-based sanitiser at least twice daily.
* Introduce signage and floor markings to indicate a one-way flow at entry and exit points and to show social distancing guidance, as per [government guidelines](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19).
* Floor and/or room capacities to be reduced to take into consideration social distancing guidance and decrease the number of persons in the office at any given time. Implement restricted access to specific areas such as the clerks’ room, post room etc.
* All members of chambers, employees and pupil barristers to avoid traversing the floors and to be discouraged from making non-essential trips within the building. The continued use of telephones, video conferencing software and/or instant messaging software to conduct business will be encouraged.
* Maximum occupancy for lifts to be reduced to one person at any given time and use of the stairwells to be encouraged wherever possible.
* Where possible, doors will either be left open or the latches will be removed from them to ensure that those using them are able to nudge them open with their hips or elbows and, in doing so, reduce contact with touch points.
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| Using the workplace and workstations | MembersEmployeesPupil barristers | Spread of Covid-19 resulting from: (i) desk/room layouts do not allow for adequate social distancing; (ii) building users not practising social distancing; and/or (iii) the use of shared touchpoints. |  |  |  | * Risk Assessment and any other relevant documentation to be read by all members of chambers, employees and pupil barristers before visiting the office.
* Implement additional cleaning regimes, ensuring that the office is cleaned at least twice daily and, to limit the risk of spread, that available desks are not used by more than one person on any given day. Keyboards, mice, desks and phones to be cleaned with alcohol-based sanitiser at least twice daily.
* Where possible, open windows and doors frequently to encourage natural ventilation.
* Introduce signage and floor markings to reflect social distancing guidance, as per [government guidelines](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19) and ask all members of chambers, employees and pupil barristers to ensure that conversations in common areas are kept to a minimum.
* Floor and/or room capacities to be reduced to take into consideration social distancing guidance and decrease the number of persons in the office at any given time. Implement a booking system for all building users and restrict access to specific areas such as the clerks’ room, post room etc.
* Ensure that those with fixed desks participate in a rota that allows them to sit with sufficient space between them or, alternatively, implement hot-desking and an associated booking process. Avoid face-to-face working wherever possible and install screens or barriers to separate people where it is unavoidable.
* Where employees are operating on a rota and therefore split in to two or more groups, they will be instructed not to mix their shifts so as to reduce the risk of exposure to themselves and their colleagues, and enable a continued service in the event of contamination.
* So far as is possible, where staff are split into teams or shift groups, fixing these teams or shift groups so that where contact is unavoidable, this happens between the same people.
* Provide all persons who require it with access to appropriate PPE and encourage the use and safe disposal of gloves when handling deliveries and moving documents to and from court.
* Install alcohol-based hand gels next to high-touch items such as photocopiers and introduce appropriate signage encouraging users to sanitise their hands before carrying out the relevant activity. Encourage all members of chambers, employees and pupil barristers to continue to work from electronic documents wherever possible.
* Implement a clear desk policy and ask all members of chambers, employees and pupil barristers to ensure that they clear their respective workspaces of any personal belongings and dispose of any waste before they leave.
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| Ensuring good hygiene, particularly when accessing toilet facilities | MembersEmployeesPupil barristersVisitors Contractors such as cleaners, delivery people etc. | Spread of Covid-19 resulting from: (i) inadequate cleaning of work areas; (ii) a lack of appropriate facilities; and/or (iii) poor hygiene |  |  |  | * Risk Assessment and any other relevant documentation to be read by all members of chambers, employees and pupil barristers before visiting the office, and to be provided by email to visitors and contractors ahead of their respective arrivals.
* Implement additional cleaning regimes, ensuring that the office is cleaned at least twice daily. All toilet facilities to be cleaned with alcohol-based sanitiser at least twice daily.
* Provide all persons with access to alcohol-based hand gels and PPE, including face coverings and latex gloves, and set-up easily accessible “hygiene stations” on each floor and in key places such as above any lift buttons or keypads.
* All toilet facilities to be stocked with soap and hand sanitiser, disposable paper towels and push-pedal bins for both general waste and sanitary waste.
* Members of chambers, employees and pupil barristers to be reminded to wash their hands on a regular basis, with soap and water, for at least 20 seconds. Introduce signage in the toilets and around the building to that effect, and to remind those using the facilities of the importance of properly drying their hands, and securely disposing of any used paper towels, thereafter.
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| Accessing kitchen facilities | MembersEmployeesPupil barristers | Spread of Covid-19 resulting from: (i) inadequate cleaning of kitchen areas; (ii) the use of shared touchpoints; and/or (iii) building users not practising social distancing; |  |  |  | * Risk Assessment and any other relevant documentation to be read by all members of chambers, employees and pupil barristers before visiting the office.
* Where possible, reduce kitchen facilities to a minimum and allow access only to essential equipment such as fridges and water boilers or coolers.
* Implement additional cleaning regimes, ensuring that the office is cleaned at least twice daily. All kitchen facilities, and specifically any essential equipment such as fridges and water boilers or coolers to be cleaned with alcohol-based sanitiser at least twice daily.
* All kitchen facilities to be stocked with soap and hand sanitiser, disposable paper towels and push-pedal bins for general waste.
* Install alcohol-based hand gels in the kitchen(s) and introduce appropriate signage encouraging users to sanitise their hands before touching any essential equipment or cupboard doors.
* Provide all persons who require it with access to appropriate PPE and encourage the use and safe disposal of gloves when handling catering equipment (both used and unused).
* Maximum occupancy for the kitchen(s) to be reduced to one person at any given time. Except for those employees responsible for the setting-up of catering, all members of chambers, employees and pupil barristers to ensure that they only prepare food and drink for themselves.
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| Handling goods  | Employees | Spread of Covid-19 resulting from the handling of potentially contaminated items. |  |  |  | * Risk Assessment and any other relevant documentation to be read by all employees before visiting the office.
* Provide all persons who require it with access to appropriate PPE and encourage the use and safe disposal of gloves when handling deliveries, particularly immediately after receipt.
* Request that all delivery drivers leave incoming items in a secure location and, where possible, ensure that they are not moved through the building or opened for a period of at least 48 hours
* Restrict or temporarily ban non-business deliveries of personal items.
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| Managing visitors | EmployeesVisitors  | Exposure to Covid-19 resulting from lack of adequate protection.Spread of Covid-19 resulting from (i) building users not practising social distancing; and/or (ii) the maximum capacities for adequate social distancing being breached. |  |  |  | * Wherever possible, site visits should be agreed in advance and visitors should be provided with a copy of this Risk Assessment and any other relevant documentation before visiting the office. Where it has not been possible to provide individuals with a copy in advance of their visit, they will be given an individual handout explaining the site rules.
* Install screens or barriers to separate security and reception personnel from visitors and provide them with access to appropriate PPE, including face coverings.
* Before allowing visitors or contractors to enter the main building, ask security or reception personnel to confirm with them that they are not exhibiting any common flu symptoms, have not had any person-to-person contact with someone who has exhibited coronavirus symptoms within the last seven days and have not visited an area where there has been a significant outbreak of coronavirus within the last seven days.
* Install alcohol-based hand gels on all security and reception desks and introduce appropriate signage encouraging visitors to sanitise their hands before entering the main building.
* Ask visitors to verbally provide security and reception personnel with their details, including any contact details that might enable effective tracing. Maintain an electronic log of anyone that they come in to contact with for 15 minutes or more and of the areas of the building they visit.
* **Added 26 April 2021** – Encourage visitors to obtain and take a free lateral flow test before travelling in to Chambers by providing them with the link to the Government’s pharmacy [search engine](https://maps.test-and-trace.nhs.uk/?dm_i=4CGD,1205V,4S4FJR,4SLIK,1).
 |  |  |  |
| Meeting with clients internally | MembersEmployeesPupil barristersClients | Exposure to Covid-19 resulting from lack of adequate protection.Spread of Covid-19 resulting from: (i) building users not practising social distancing; (ii) the maximum capacities for adequate social distancing being breached; and/or (iii) the use of shared touchpoints. |  |  |  | * The default position for all client meetings is that they should take place remotely.
* Risk Assessment to be read by all members of chambers, employees and pupil barristers before visiting the office, and to be provided by email to visitors and contractors ahead of their respective arrivals. Where it has not been possible to provide individuals with a copy in advance of their visit, they will be given an individual handout explaining the site rules.
* Implement additional cleaning regimes, ensuring that the office is cleaned at least twice daily. All touch points to be cleaned with alcohol-based sanitiser at least twice daily.
* Where the maximum capacity of any meeting rooms within the building has been reduced to reflect [social distancing guidelines](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19), adjust any booking systems accordingly and introduce appropriate signage and floor markings, and remove all unnecessary pieces of furniture to ensure that they are not accidentally utilised.
* Install alcohol-based hand gels in all meeting rooms and introduce appropriate signage encouraging users to sanitise their hands before carrying out the relevant activity.
* Remove all high-touch items such as pen pots, notepads, biscuit bowls and promotional merchandise from meeting rooms and common areas.
* Install screens or barriers to separate security and reception personnel from visitors and provide them with access to appropriate PPE, including face coverings.
* Encourage only those whose attendance is necessary to participate in meetings on site and keeps any requests for catering, which should be handled by a member of the reception team with access to appropriate PPE, to a minimum.
* Do not allow clients to wait in common areas and instead ask reception personnel to show them directly to the room that they will be using, ensuring that they maintain an appropriate distance from one another.
 |  |  |  |
| Meeting with clients externally and other forms of travel | MembersEmployeesPupil barristers | Exposure to Covid-19 resulting from unnecessary travel. |  |  |  | * Risk Assessment to be read by all members of chambers, employees and pupil barristers before visiting the office.
* Bar employees from any non-essential travel during working hours, including to meet with clients. Encourage them to continue to conduct client care meetings remotely, by video conference or otherwise.
* Request that, so far as is possible, all members of chambers, employees and pupil barristers bring in their own food. Encourage the visiting of shops and supermarkets only where necessary and outside of peak hours.
 |  |  |  |
| Ensuring good practice for those who are self-isolating or present as symptomatic | MembersEmployeesPupil barristers | Spread of Covid-19 resulting from individuals feeling that they must attend work regardless of self-isolation requirements. |  |  |  | * Ensure [self-isolation protocols](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-and-treatment/when-to-self-isolate-and-what-to-do/) are clearly conveyed to all members of chambers, employees and pupil barristers, including in the event that members of the same household present as symptomatic or are self-isolating.
* **Added 26 April 2021 -** If any person is contacted by NHS Test and Trace or the NHS Covid-19 app, ask them to self-isolate for 14 days from the day they were last in contact with the person who tested positive for coronavirus
* Whilst they are presenting as symptomatic or self-isolating and only where they are fit enough to do so, enable employees to work from home, and support members of chambers and pupil barristers in doing the same.
* If any person becomes unwell whilst at work, and particularly where they begin to present as symptomatic, they must notify a member of the Senior Management Team or security personnel before immediately removing themselves from building.
* **Added 26 April 2021** – If the Senior Management Team are advised that a member or employee who has recently been in Chambers has developed Covid-19, they will contact the [Public Health Authority](https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/) to discuss the case, identify the people who have in contact with them and will take advice on any actions or precautions that should be taken.
 |  |  |  |

Having reviewed the hazards and risks, I believe that if the control measures identified are applied, [name of chambers or regulated entity] will, so far as is reasonably practicable, meet the requirements of this assessment.

Assessment date: [Date of Assessment]

Review date: Review on a as needed basis

Assessor: [Name of Assessor]

[Role of Assessor]

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Version** | **Date** | **Action** |
| Version 1.0 |  | Approved by [Committee required for approval] |
| Version 1.0 |  | Added to [name of chambers or regulated entity] intranet and circulated to all members, employees and pupil barristers by email |
| Version 1.1 |  | [Updated to take account of new government guidelines relating to XXX and found at XXX] |
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|  |  |  |
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1. Gyms, leisure, and fitness facilities will be open in Wales from 3 May 2021 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Outdoor hospitality will be open in Wales from 26 April 2021 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. This date is the same in both England and Wales [↑](#footnote-ref-3)