

GILBERTSTEPHENS LLP – COVID-19 FIRMWIDE RISK ASSESSMENT

Assessment completed by: Terry Bastyan (Managing Partner)

Date: 22nd June 2020 - Reviewed (1) 8th August 2020 (2) 3rd December 2020 (3) 4th January 2021 (4) 28th January 2021

Date of next scheduled review: Continuous - to be regularly reviewed and updated in line with Government advice/Regulations and changes in circumstances

Risk	Consequence	Mitigation	Action by who and by when?
<p>Spread of COVID-19 in the firm</p>	<p>This will result in multiple individuals (partners, associates and staff) becoming infected and possibly (but fortunately rarely) seriously or fatally ill</p> <p>Vulnerable workers could be worst affected</p>	<p>Most partners and staff to be encouraged to work from home where circumstances permit</p> <p>Vulnerable staff who have been instructed to shield by the NHS will continue to do so and will be supported by the firm.</p> <p>Take steps to review work schedules including start and finish times to reduce the number of people on site at any one time and rota working</p> <p>Where possible provide parking to reduce the need to use public transport</p> <p>Encourage walking/cycling to work</p> <p>Desks removed or suitably marked to encourage physical distancing or placed so that staff are working back to back or side by side (with appropriate screening) or individuals assigned certain desks or areas to work in.</p> <p>Putting in place social distancing reminders and measures in communal areas including kitchens.</p> <p>One way systems to be introduced where possible</p> <p>Provide perspex screen in reception and other areas as required</p> <p>Masks/face coverings may be worn by staff if they wish to do so</p> <p>Maintain register of who is in the building – time in/out</p> <p>Temperature to be monitored on arrival at work and confirmed as <38 degrees C</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 and frequent touchpoints such as door handles, light switches, copiers, reception area using appropriate cleaning products and methods</p> <p>Hand washing awareness: see the NHS guidance</p>	<p>Immediate and ongoing. The responsible person will be the designated office partner/manager with support and assistance from the Managing Partner and HR Manager. It will be necessary to involve others from time to time such as IT staff</p>

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		<p>Make sanitation products (hand sanitiser, cleaning wipes anti-bac sprays) widely available.</p> <p>All staff to wipe down and leave equipment and spaces as they found them including disposal of rubbish and not to leave used cutlery, cups unwashed and in open spaces</p> <p>Reminding everyone of the public health advice</p> <p>If a member of staff or client requires first aid the nominated first aider must wash their hands before approaching the situation (even in an emergency) and try to maintain social distancing rules. Where this is not possible PPE comprising of gloves and a mask must be worn. The first aider should not place themselves at risk and contact the emergency services if in doubt</p>	
<p>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>Face-to-face meetings discouraged where possible with conference calls/Zoom/MS Teams//Facetime to be used instead</p> <p>If a client must attend the office for a face to face meeting he/she must be reminded that they must not attend the office if they, a member of their household or anyone they have been in contact with are showing symptoms of Covid-19</p> <p>Clients must wear a mask or face covering whilst in the office</p> <p>Members of staff may wear a mask when meeting with a client if they wish to do so</p> <p>Upper limit on meeting numbers determined by available room size and must not be exceeded</p> <p>Diary system with time for room cleaning between appointments. Meetings staggered so no congestion possible and diary system to be strictly adhered to</p> <p>Seats removed from meeting rooms to ensure physical distancing and remaining seating must be arranged to allow safe social distancing</p> <p>Enhanced cleaning regime, including before/between/after each individual meeting. It is the individual staff member's responsibility to clean down after a meeting.</p> <p>Sanitation products (hand sanitiser, cleaning wipes anti bac sprays) available inside each meeting room</p> <p>No refreshments will be offered</p> <p>No client toilet facilities are available Physical distancing in place in reception/waiting area – if possible clients not to be kept waiting</p>	<p>Immediate and ongoing. The responsible person will be the designated office partner/manager with support and assistance from the Managing Partner and HR Manager. It will be necessary to involve others from time to time such as IT staff</p>

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		<p>Visitors to the office with pre booked appointment to be met and shown directly to interview room</p> <p>One hour upper limit on meetings strongly advised and communicated</p> <p>Visitors must look after their own personal items</p>	
COVID-19 case (suspected) in our offices	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>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>Everyone in the relevant office to be informed</p> <p>Partners and managers to increase the frequency of socially distanced/remote contact with those they supervise during this time</p> <p>Majority of people instructed to work from home</p> <p>Re-emphasise that no-one feeling ill is allowed to come to work</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</p>	Immediate and ongoing. The responsible person will be the designated office partner/manager with support and assistance from the Managing Partner and HR Manager.
COVID-19 transmission via communal resources or areas	This may result in increased risk of transmission, including to/from clients and visitors	<p>Marketing material (brochures and literature), newspapers and magazines removed from client reception area</p> <p>No sharing of desks or workstations except in the virtual meeting room and EFT where hand hygiene and cleaning of keyboards, mice, etc between users is essential (sanitisers and wipes available)</p> <p>No sharing of resources such as IT equipment except as above</p> <p>Regular sanitising of photo copiers and any shared equipment</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>	Immediate and ongoing. The responsible person will be the designated office partner/manager with support and assistance from the Managing Partner and HR Manager. It will be necessary to involve others from time to time such as IT staff
COVID-19 transmission via mail/packages	This may result in increased risk of transmission by handling of objects	No additional measures in place but cleaning products available to wipe courier packages. Gloves may be worn but is not a substitute for proper and regular handwashing	Immediate and ongoing. The responsible person will be the designated office partner/manager with support and assistance from the Managing Partner and HR Manager.

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		<p>Staff advised to clean wash hands well after any mail/post items delivered to their desks</p> <p>Use of electronic communication to be encouraged</p>	<p>It will be necessary to involve others from time to time such as IT staff</p>
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 staff may feel more uncomfortable coming back into the office than others especially if shielding or otherwise vulnerable</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</p> <p>Encourage reporting of difficulties with homeworking both on homeworkers themselves and those supporting them in the office (e.g. printing, copying dealing with post)</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>Enabling those with inadequate IT or other obvious sources of stress (such as isolation, living alone or difficulty in working safely and securely from home) to return safely to the office</p> <p>Provide assurance over measures taken to protect employees' health and safety</p>	<p>Immediate and ongoing. The responsible person will be the designated office partner/manager with support and assistance from the Managing Partner and HR Manager.</p>
Ergonomic injuries	<p>Insufficient chairs, screens, desks and IT equipment (in particular) may be available in the office as a proportion of these could have been taken home by staff</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>Workplace risk self-assessment to be made available</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>Immediate and ongoing. The responsible person will be the designated office partner/manager with support and assistance from the Managing Partner and HR Manager. It will be necessary to involve others from time to time such as IT staff</p>
Public transport virus transmission	<p>Crowded and unsanitary conditions on public transport services</p>	<p>Individuals who feel that they cannot travel safely to/from the office for good reason will not be required to do so</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>Offer parking where possible</p>	<p>Immediate and ongoing. The responsible person will be the designated office partner/manager with support and assistance from the Managing Partner and HR Manager.</p>

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		Encourage walking/cycling where possible	
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 or because they have/have not been forking from home.	<p>Reporting channels to permit investigation and where proven appropriate misconduct procedures followed</p> <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>	Immediate and ongoing. The responsible person will be the designated office partner/manager with support and assistance from the Managing Partner and HR Manager.
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>	Immediate and ongoing. The responsible person will be the designated office partner/manager with support and assistance from the Managing Partner and HR Manager.