

COVID-19 Risk Assessment for Law Firms

Sterling House

- **Covid-19 is a new illness that can affect your lungs and airways. It is caused by a virus called Coronavirus. Symptoms can be mild, moderate, severe or fatal.**

Who might be harmed

- Staff
- Visitors to your premises
- Cleaners
- Contractors
- Drivers
- Vulnerable groups – Elderly, Pregnant workers, those with existing underlying health conditions
- Anyone else who physically comes in contact with you in relation to B P Collins

Assessment completed by: Adam Cahill – Facilities Managers

Reviewed by: Greg Clark – H&S Representative

Created – 4th September 2020

Date last updated: 30th September 2020

Risk title	Description & consequence	Mitigation	Action by who and by when?
Spread of COVID-19 in the firm	<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 affected¹</p>	<p>Most partners and staff (where possible) to work from home</p> <p>Take steps to review work schedules including start and finish times/shift patterns, to reduce the number of people on site at any one time</p> <p>Set an upper occupancy limit of 20 members for our office and visitors at any time</p> <p>Desks to be used on a rota so no 2 desks are used daily</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grey Monitor arms on desks Mon, Wed & Fri • Black Monitor arms on desks desk Tues & Thursday <p>to encourage physical distancing whilst at a desk</p> <p>Canteen/communal areas can be used as long as social distancing is in place, with a maximum of 10 in 'The Hub' at any one time</p> <p>One-way system on the two staircases, within Sterling House (just BP Collins Staff)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rear Staircase for Up • Front Staircase for Down (unless Lift is needed) <p>Lift can be used, one member of staff at a time or in multiples if they are from the same household.</p>	<p>Facilities Department (Adam Cahill, Kate Fox)</p> <p>18th Sept 2020</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.)

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		<p>No one feeling ill will be allowed to come to work</p> <p>Communication and awareness-raising posters/signs referring to the above measures</p> <p>Enhanced cleaning regime (day cleaner employed), including for toilets, coffee machines, kettles, cupboards and frequent touchpoints such as door handles, light switches, the reception area using appropriate cleaning products and methods</p> <p>Hand washing awareness: see the NHS guidance</p> <p>Sanitation products (hand sanitiser, cleaning wipes, spray cleaner, paper towels) widely available, at Sanitation Stations, throughout the office.</p> <p>Reminding everyone of the public health advice through posters, signs and other materials made widely and prominently available: see the government guidance</p>	
Spread of COVID-19 to clients or visitors	This will result in multiple individuals (partners, staff, visitors/clients and contractors) becoming infected and possibly seriously or fatally ill	<p>No face-to-face events permitted on site</p> <p>Face-to-face meetings are able to take place with the Clients and Staff Members wearing face coverings, in line with governmental guidelines</p> <p>Where possible conference calls to be used instead of face to face</p> <p>Upper limit on meeting numbers determined by available room size (6 people max)</p> <p>All Visitors into the building have to wear Face Coverings, whilst in the building, according to governmental regulations as of 8/8/20</p> <p>Meetings staggered so no congestion possible</p> <p>Alternate seats to be used in meeting rooms to ensure Social Distancing</p>	<p>Facilities Department (Adam Cahill, Kate Fox)</p> <p>4th Sept 2020</p>

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		<p>Enhanced cleaning regime, including before/between/after each individual meeting</p> <p>Sanitation products (hand sanitiser, cleaning wipes, spray, paper towels) available inside each meeting room</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>2 hour upper limit on meetings strongly advised and communicated to staff</p> <p>No cloakroom service – Clients should look after their own personal items</p> <p>Toilets to stay open but cleaned regularly, as well as wipes provided for the individual to wipe down before use</p> <p>No sharing of any on desk IT equipment (Keyboard, Mouse, Laptop etc)</p> <p>Photocopiers that are classed as essential, Wipes are left by them for staff to wipe the touch pad down after use, as well as being included in the cleaning routine</p>	
<p>COVID-19 case (suspected) in our offices</p>	<p>This may result in the individual staff member experiencing medical distress on-site and could increase the risk of onward transmission of the virus among other people with whom the individual has been in proximity</p>	<p>Staff and Clients asked to stay away from B P Collins offices if they are showing symptoms of Covid-19 (new continuous cough, a high temperature or loss of sense of smell or taste)</p> <p>Staff should also work from home if a member of their household are showing any symptoms or have been diagnose, or have been in close contact with a person/persons that has been recently diagnosed or are showing symptoms, of Covid 19.</p> <p>If anyone (Staff or Client) becomes unwell with a new continuous cough, a high temperature or loss of sense of smell or taste whilst in the workplace, they will be</p>	<p>Facilities Department (Adam Cahill, Kate Fox)</p> <p>18th September 2020</p>

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		<p>sent home and advised to follow the governmental guidance</p> <p>Everyone in the relevant office to be informed, and where necessary and will have to isolate for a minimum of 10 working days, (if no symptoms are showing)</p> <p>Partners and managers to increase the frequency of contact (via phone/Teams) with those they supervise during this time that are working for home.</p> <p>Staff to work from home at least where possible still using the office for meeting clients (PGL's to manage staff office time)</p> <p>OPTIONAL: Temperature checks at building entrance should prevent anyone with an elevated temperature entering 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 the office and where in the office on a given day to aid potential contact-tracing efforts and processes.</p> <p>The Rotas will be held by the PGL's and sent weekly to the HR team</p>	
<p>COVID-19 transmission via communal resources or areas</p>	<p>This may result in increased risk of transmission, including to/from clients and visitors</p>	<p>Marketing material (brochures and literature), newspapers and magazines removed from client reception area</p> <p>Reception is open, however all Clients are asked to attend at the designated time of the appointment, so to not wait in the reception area for any length of time (short or long)</p> <p>Refreshments (tea/coffee) are not being offered at this time, however bottled water is available upon request</p> <p>If advised that a member of staff or visitor has developed COVID-19 and was recently on the premises</p>	<p>Facilities Department (Adam Cahill, Kate Fox)</p> <p>4th September 2020</p>

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		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	
COVID-19 transmission via mail/packages	This may result in increased risk of transmission by handling of objects	Cleaning protocol is in place for all incoming mail and courier packages When within a B P Collins office, Staff advised to clean any mail/post items delivered to their desks (wet wipes to be provided)	Facilities Department (Adam Cahill, Kate Fox) 4 th September 2020
Mental health problems and poor wellbeing	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 Staff members of BAME background may feel more uncomfortable coming back into the office	Signpost to LawCare resources and the Law Society's mental health resources Increase volume of guidance materials and resources available Raise awareness on any Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) offering access to additional resources and support Adjust policies around home working and leave-taking to support working parents 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 Regular communication of mental health information and an open-door policy for those who need additional support Provide assurance over measures taken to protect employees' health and safety	HR (Jacqui Symons) as well as the mental health awareness team June 2020
Ergonomic injuries	Insufficient chairs, screens, footstools, desks etc. may be available in the office as a large proportion of these could have been taken home by staff. It may be difficult to perform workspace risk assessments whilst maintaining physical	Desk are available to use within Sterling House, working on a rota of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk with Grey poles used Monday/Wednesday/Friday 	Facilities Department (Adam Cahill, Kate Fox) 4 th September 2020

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	distancing or if people sit in different locations each time they are in the office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk with Black Poles used, Tuesday and Thursday <p>B P Collins Staff had the option to take one screen, their old office chair as well as Mouse/Keyboard to use from home for the other days they work from home</p> <p>Virtual self-administered workplace risk assessment module has 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, if they have taken them home.</p> <p>None will be available within the office to share</p>	
Public transport virus transmission	Crowded and unsanitary conditions on public transport services	<p>OPTIONAL: Individuals who feel that they cannot travel safely to/from the office 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, with face coverings worn</p>	Facilities Department (Adam Cahill, Kate Fox) 4 th September 2020
Car/bike park virus transmission	Narrow spaces in the firm's carpark or bicycle storage area may elevate the risk of person-to-person transmission	<p>A 20 person staff occupancy limit has been set, meaning there is plenty of room to accommodate all of the limited staff attending the office</p> <p>All meeting rooms are now having a further reduction capacity and need all clients in Face coverings according to Governmental recommendation.</p>	Facilities Department (Adam Cahill, Kate Fox) 18 th September 2020
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, experience adverse weather-related health impacts or could be subject to opportunistic crime/harassment	Staggered arrival times for those attending the office should limit congestion	Facilities Department (Adam Cahill, Kate Fox) 4 th September 2020

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COVID-19-related stigma and harassment	Risk that there is an increase in targeted harassment or stigma directed at individuals who have been ill or are from a specific ethnic background	<p>Reporting channels to permit investigation and where proven appropriate misconduct procedures followed</p> <p>Partners and managers of B P Collins, 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>Employment (Jo Davis)</p> <p>June 2020</p>
Non-compliance with government regulations	Risk that a member of the firm ignores firm's guidance	<p>Communicate the importance of the adherence to the rules</p> <p>Stricter enforcement of rules against people continuing to attend the office while feeling unwell</p> <p>Office Guidelines also created and shared to help staff get used to the new ways of working</p>	<p>Facilities Department (Adam Cahill, Kate Fox)</p> <p>11th September 2020</p>