Working safely during COVID-19

This 'risk assessment and response' document was written in line with government guidance issued 11th May 2020 for 'working safely in offices during COVID-19' and reviewed against government updates.

This document will continue to be reviewed weekly against updates provided at www.gov.uk/workingsafely.

Contents

1. Who should go to work?

Objective: Everyone should work from home, unless they cannot work from home

		Steps required	Our response
1.1		Consider the maximum number of people who can be safely accommodated to site	Firstly, a departmental analysis of staffing requirements will be carried out to determine how many staff are required to work from the office. Secondly, all staff will be consulted as to whether they can work from the office, taking into account care responsibilities, health conditions, whether they are at a higher risk of transmission and other circumstances. Finally, the management team will then consider the maximum number of staff who can be safely accommodated within each office and will use best endeavours to meet departmental requirements for number of staff in the office. If it is not possible for all required staff to be safely accommodated within offices, or if required staff members are unable to physically return to offices then the management team will use best endeavours to ensure that they can work from home effectively. Risk assessments have been completed for every member of staff to include whether they are working from home or the office, any requirements they have for working, any flexible working needs, additional equipment etc.
1.2		Planning for a phased return to work for people safely and effectively	A department by department phased return will be co-ordinated over the space of a week, rather than an office by office approach. This will ensure that the number of staff returning to each office is staggered for social distancing and reintegration/ orientation purposes.
1.3		Monitoring the wellbeing of people who are working from home and helping them stay connected to the rest	All staff members (home workers, office workers and furlough staff) have the opportunity to connect with the wider firm on a weekly basis. This is done via: • Weekly Zoom meetings/telephone catch ups with line managers and team members

		of the workforce, especially if the majority of their colleagues are on-site.	• Weekly staff email update from Managing Partners • Staff are regularly reminded to notify the HR Partner of any welbeing issue relating to themselves or colleagues. • Numerous weekly Zoom training sessions Any wellbeing issues are escalated to the management team and acted upon accordingly.
1.4		Keeping in touch with off-site workers on their working arrangements including their welfare, mental and physical health and personal security.	As above at paragraph 1.3.
1.5		Providing equipment for people to work at home safely and effectively, for example, remote access to work systems.	All staff members have home working equipment which gives full secure access to our Microsoft Azure remote desktop platform. All staff members also have an integrated telephony app installed on their mobile phone which gives the full functionality of their desk phone. Those staff members who have a requirement to print and scan have been provided with desktop multi function printers which are fully networked into our remote desktop platform.

2. Protecting people who are at higher risk

Objective: *To protect clinically vulnerable and clinically extremely vulnerable individuals*

	Steps required	Our response
2.1	Providing support for workers around mental health and wellbeing. This could include advice or telephone support.	As above at paragraph 1.3.
2.2	Following current guidance for clinically vulnerable staff	Clinically vulnerable staff **will not** be permitted to physically work from the office. Staff risk assessments have been carried out to identify clinically vulnerable staff.
2.3	Following current guidance for clinically extremely vulnerable staff	Clinically extremely vulnerable staff **will not** be permitted to physically work from the office. Staff risk assessments have been carried out to identify clinically extremely vulnerable staff.

3. People who need to self-isolate

Objective: *To make sure individuals who are advised to stay at home under existing government guidance do not physically come to work. This includes individuals who have symptoms of COVID-19 as well as those who live in a household or are in a support bubble with someone who has symptoms and those who are advised to self-isolate as part of the government's test and trace program.*

	Steps required	Our response
3.1	Enabling workers to work from home while self-isolating if appropriate.	All self isolating staff members have full access to equipment, remote desktop access, telephony app and printer/scanner where required.

4. Ventilation

Objective: *To use ventilation to mitigate the transmission risk of COVID-19. Ventilation into the building should be optimised to ensure a fresh air supply is provided to all areas of the facility and increased wherever possible. Ventilation systems should provide an adequate supply of fresh air.*

	Steps required	Our response
4.1	Increasing the existing ventilation	As well as air conditioning, all staff will be encouraged to open windows and doors to increase ventilation into the buildings. Those staff working in shared spaces MUST open windows to allow ventilation. Extra heating equipment will be provided where needed.
4.2	Monitoring and managing filters in accordance with manufacturer instructions	All of our air conditioning units are professionally serviced as part of an annual maintenance plan. All units are serviced twice annually.

5. Equality in the workplace

Objective: To treat everyone in our workplace equally.

		Steps required	Our response
5.1		Understanding and taking into account the particular circumstances of those with different protected characteristics.	Protected characteristics will be taken into account when carrying out each individual staff risk assessment. This will include mitigating any potential impact of changes to working locations, working hours and access to equipment.
5.2		Involving and communicating appropriately with workers whose protected characteristics might either expose them to a different degree of risk, or might make any steps we are thinking about inappropriate or challenging for them	The above mentioned staff risk assessments will be carried out in consultation with the individual staff member to ensure that all requirements and associated risks have been considered.
5.3		Considering whether we need to put in place any particular measures or adjustments to take account of our duties under the equalities legislation.	Any needs or risks identified through carrying out staff assessments will be escalated to the HR Partner and appropriate adjustments will be made in consultation with the staff member concerned.
5.4		Assessing the health and safety risks for new or expectant mothers.	New or expectant mothers **will not** be permitted to physically work from the office. Any adjustments required to their home working arrangements will be made in consultation with the staff member concerned.
5.5		Making sure that the steps we take do not have an unjustifiable negative impact on some groups compared to others, for example, those with caring responsibilities or those with religious commitments.	This will be included in the staff risk assessments mentioned above.

6. Social distancing for workers

6.1. Coming to work and leaving work

Objective: *To maintain 2m social distancing on arrival and departure and to ensure handwashing upon arrival.*

		Steps required	Our response
6.1.1		Staggering arrival and departure times at work to reduce crowding into and out of the workplace, taking account of the impact on those with protected characteristics.	The number of staff working in each office is limited and start times and departure times are naturally staggered as staff do not tend to work fixed shift patterns. All staff have been issued with a passport which advises them to ensure that entrances and exits are clear of other staff/visitors before they enter or leave, ensuring that social dtancing guidelines are followed at all times.
6.1.2		Reducing congestion, for example, by having more entry points to the workplace.	As above, congestion will be reduced through naturally staggered arrival and departure times and ensuring social distancing guidelines are is followed at all times.
6.1.3		Providing more storage for workers for clothes and bags.	All personal belongings must be stored in the staff member's allocated room for working. Where staff members are working in an open plan setting (High Street, Congleton and Alsager) their personal belongings must be stored at their desk, within the taped boundaries on the floor. Staff members will not be permitted to use communal coat stands/hooks and these will either be removed or decommissioned.
6.1.4		Using markings and introducing one-way flow at entry and exit points.	All common areas will have 2m spaced social distancing tape on the floors.
6.1.5		Providing handwashing facilities, or hand sanitiser where not possible, at entry/exit points and not using touch-based security devices such as keypads.	All staff will be required to wash their hands upon entering an office and again before leaving. There will also be hand sanitiser on all reception desks, meeting room tables and staff workstations. All staff will be provided with hygiene keys which must be used to open doors and enter alarm codes.

	Steps required	Our response
6.1.6	Maintaining use of access devices, such as passes and adjusting processes at entry/exit points to reduce risk of transmission.	All staff will be required to use hygiene keys for opening doors and deactivating/setting the security alarm where they do not have an alarm fob. Staff will be required to clean their hygiene key, alarm fob and card pass (Congleton out of hours) after each use.

6.2. Moving around within offices

Objective: To maintain 2m social distancing while people travel through the workplace

	Steps required	Our response
6.2.1	Reducing movement by discouraging non-essential trips within buildings and sites, for example, restricting access to some areas, encouraging use of radios or telephones, where permitted, and cleaning them between use.	Staff will only be permitted to move around the office building when essential. i.e. to use W/C facilities, to attend a client meeting, to retrieve documents from reception, to use a printer. They must observe 2m social distancing at all times. Staff will be asked to remain in their allocated work areas and to not gather in common areas such as reception to talk to colleagues. Communication with colleagues should be done via email and telephone, with as little face to face communication as possible. There will also be a cleaning schedule in place so that meeting rooms, door handles, W/C facilities, printers and other commonly touched items are cleaned after every use. COSHH sheets will be provided to staff for all cleaning materials.
6.2.2	Restricting access between different areas of a building or site.	All staff will be provided with a 'passport' outlining the areas they are permitted to access within their office. All kitchens are out of bounds with strictly no access by any staff member and will be decommissioned. Meeting room access will be tightly controlled with some members of staff having no access to meeting room facilities at all. Staff will also not be permitted to enter the workspace of any colleague under any circumstances and must work within their designated office room/workspace only. All staff will also have an allocated 'file drop-off' point for file sharing (see

		paragraph 9.1.2 for more information). Post room access, DX and post collection/drop-off and opening of post will also be restricted to designated individuals.
6.2.3	Reducing job and location rotation.	Staff will only be permitted to use their designated workstation which will be allocated for sole use in the majority of cases. The only exception to this will be reception cover where staff will be required to cover during lunch times/absences, and three 'hot rooms' within the business where desks will be shared between just two people. When a receptionist leaves reception they must clean all surfaces, chair and phone. The staff member covering reception must not touch or use anything on the reception desk, including the phone. Phone calls will be picked up by overflow staff. All staff (including those sharing a hot desk) are required to clean their workstations at the end of each day. Those hot desking are required to do the same when they have finished using their desk so that the colleague they are sharing it with has a clean, sanitised desk to work from.
6.2.4	Introducing more one-way flow through buildings.	One way flow systems are acheiveable in some of our offices. Where possible these will be set up and aided by use of arrow signage and staff passport.
6.2.5	Regulating use of high traffic areas including corridors, lifts turnstiles and walkways to maintain social distancing.	Staff must stay vigilant when moving around offices to ensure they do not come within 2m of another person. If the shared space is too small to accommodate more than one person whilst observing a 2m distance, one person must leave the area until it is clear. An example of this would be stairs.

6.3. Workplaces and workstations

Objective: *To maintain social distancing between individuals when at their workstations*

	Steps required	Our response
6.3.1	Review layouts and processes to allow people to work further apart from each other.	All staff will have a designated workspace for their sole use in the majority of cases. The only exception to this will be reception cover where staff will be required to cover during lunch times/absences, and three 'hot rooms' within the business where desks will be shared between just two people.

		All rooms haave been reconfigured for single occupancy staff will have their own room to work from or will have a specifically designated area to work from, if the office space is large/open plan. Smaller offices that usually accommodate multiple staff have been repurposed for single staff member use. In the larger/open plan rooms, workspaces have been sectioned off to ensure social distancing guidelines are met . i.e. a pod of four desks will now have just one staff member working at it. Staff members are not permitted to use a desk within the same pod as a colleague under any circumstances.
6.3.2	Using floor tape or paint to mark areas to help workers keep to a 2m distance.	In open plan offices, pod areas will be taped off to restrict access to anybody other than the staff member permitted to work in that specific area. Tape will also be used to mark areas surrounding reception desks to ensure a 2m distance at all times.
6.3.4	Managing occupancy levels to enable social distancing.	Office occupancy levels have been scaled back to essential staff only, as per paragraph 1.2 above. Where essential staff numbers are too high for effective social distancing, some staff have been reallocated to other locations. One of the Alsager conveyancing teams have been relocated to Nantwich High Street.
6.3.5	Avoiding use of hot desks and spaces and, where not possible, cleaning workstations between different occupants including shared equipment.	Staff will only be permitted to use their designated workstation which will be allocated for sole use in the majority of cases. The only exception to this will be reception cover where staff will be required to cover during lunch times/absences, and three 'hot rooms' within the business where desks will be shared between just two people. When a receptionist leaves reception they must clean all surfaces, chair and phone. The staff member covering reception must not touch or use anything on the reception desk, including the phone. Phone calls will be picked up by overflow staff. All staff (including those sharing a hot desk) are required to clean their workstations at the end of each day. Those hot desking are required to do the same when they have finished using their desk so that the colleague they are sharing it with has a clean, sanitised workstation to work from. The three hot rooms in the business will have a calendar so that staff can book the desk in order to ensure the use of the desk is controlled and logged and that staff don't both turn up on the same day to use the desk.

6.4. Meetings

Objective: To restrict number of face to face meetings and maintain social distancing during unavoidable face to face meetings.

	Steps required	Our response
6.4.1	Using remote working tools to avoid face to face meetings.	All internal meetings take place via Zoom. No internal face to face meetings are permitted. All clients are offered appointments via telephone or Zoom to limit face to face contact. Face to face meetings will only be permitted where the meeting is essential/unavoidable or where the client insists on a face to face meeting.
6.4.2	Only absolutely necessary participants should attend meetings and should maintain 2m separation throughout.	Smaller meeting rooms where a 2m separation is not possible are **not** to be used. These will be taped off to prevent access. For larger meeting rooms, screens will be placed down the centre of meeting room tables to separate clients and staff members. Meetings will also be restricted to two external participants at any one time.
6.4.3	Avoiding transmission during meetings, for example, avoiding sharing pens and other objects.	Clients who do not bring their own pen to a meeting will be given a pen to use and take away with them. No pens are to be shared.
6.4.4	Providing hand sanitiser in meeting rooms.	There will be sanitiser in all meeting rooms at all times.
6.4.5	Holding meetings outdoors or in well-ventilated rooms whenever possible.	Due to confidentiality and the nature of our offices it would not be practical to hold meetings outdoors. Where possible, rooms will be ventilated through the use of air conditioning and opening windows. Meeting room doors will be propped open when the rooms are not in use.
6.4.6	For areas where regular meetings take place, using floor signage to help people maintain social distancing.	Social distancing tape will be used in all meeting room areas and reception areas.

6.5. Common areas

Objective: *To maintain social distancing while using common areas.*

		Steps required	Our response
6.5.1		Working collaboratively with landlords and other tenants in multi-tenant sites/buildings to ensure consistency across common areas, for example, receptions and staircases.	Our building at High Street shares access with Natwest via a staircase. We will ask NatWest if they will have staff working at High Street. If so, to agree that nobody is to cross on the stairs. The only other office which is shared is Congleton. Please see appendix for response from our serviced office management. They will be putting social distancing and hygiene measures in place, including signage.
6.5.2		Staggering break times to reduce pressure on break rooms or places to eat and ensuring social distancing is maintained in staff break rooms.	Breaks are staggered and kitchens access is not permitted. Therefore, this isn't an issue. The only consideration needs to be for staff to ensure they maintain a 2m distance when leaving the office for breaks. The use of floor tape in common areas will assist with this.
6.5.3		Installing screens to protect staff in receptions or similar areas.	All reception desks will have separation screens in place.
6.5.4		Providing packaged meals or similar to avoid fully opening staff canteens.	All staff workstations/rooms will have individual refreshment tray facilities. This will include a kettle, tea and coffee, hot chocolate, disposable cups, sugar, UHT milk cartons (no access to refridgerator required) and biscuits. The same refreshment trays will be available in all meeting rooms. This will prevent the need to use kitchen facilities. Clients and staff will put their own items in the bin at the end of the meeting so that staff do not have to handle potentially contaminated cups etc. This will be the same across all office locations.
6.5.5		Encouraging workers to bring their own food.	All staff will be asked to bring lunch items which do not require the use of a microwave or fridge for storage.
6.5.6		Reconfiguring seating and tables to maintain spacing and reduce face to face interactions.	Reception seating will be reduced to just two chairs per reception area. These chairs will be spaced at least 2m apart.
6.5.7		Encouraging staff to remain on-site and, when not possible, maintaining social distancing while off-site.	All staff will be asked to remain on site where possible and guidance will be given on social distancing via the staff passport mentioned in paragraph 5.2.2, should staff leave the premises during the working day. Offsite meetings will be avoided wherever possible but in circumstances

		where it is unavoidable a risk assessment must be conducted. Staff will however be permitted to go to a court which has been designated as an open court by HMCTS as these will have already been risk assessed.
6.5.8	Regulating use of locker rooms, changing areas and other facility areas to reduce concurrent usage.	Two of our offices have showers; Wilmslow and The Dowery. Showers are out of bounds and must not be used under any circumstances.
6.5.9	Encouraging storage of personal items and clothing in personal storage spaces, for example, lockers and during shifts.	Where offices have communal coat hooks and personal storage areas, these must not be used. Personal items should be stored within the staff members' allocated work room, or at their allocated desk where they are working in an open plan environment.

6.6. Accidents, security and other incidents

Objective: *To prioritise safety during incidents*

	Steps required	Our response
6.6.1	Safety to be prioritised during incidents	There will be a first aider and fire marshal on site at all times. In the event of an incident, it may not be possible to administer first aid or to evacuate a building without breaking social distancing guidelines. It is important that safety during incidents is prioritised and so a break in 2m distancing is permitted during incidents that require first aider or fire marshal intervention. This will enable first aid to be administered and for safe evacuation of a building if required. The firm's health and safety policy must be followed at all times.
6.6.3	If first aid administered to another person, particular attention must be paid to sanitation afterwards, including washing hands.	Sanitiser will be available in all meeting rooms, reception areas and workstations and will therefore be readily available to anybody who has administered or received first aid. All W/C facilities will have antibacterial handwash.
6.6.4	Reviewing incident and emergency procedures to ensure they reflect the social distancing principles as far as possible	Our incident and emergency procedures have been reviewed and as a result our health and safety policy has been revised to encorporate Covid-19 measures and a separate emergency procedures document produced specifically in relation to first aid.
6.6.5	Considering the security implications of any changes you intend to make to your operations and practices in	Staff welfair and security has been a key consideration when carrying our all risk assessments welfare is a priority

		Steps required	Our response

response to COVID-19, as any revisions may present new or altered security risks which may need mitigation.

7. Managing clients, visitors and suppliers

7.1. Managing contact

Objective: *To minimise the number of visitors to offices.*

	Steps required	Our response
7.1.1	Encouraging visits via remote connection/working where this is an option.	All clients are offered appointments via telephone or Zoom to limit face to face contact. Face to face meetings will only be permitted where the meeting is essential/unavoidable or where the client insists on a face to face meeting.
7.1.2	Where site visits are required, site guidance on social distancing and hygiene should be explained to visitors on or before arrival.	All external visitors will receive guidance via email as well as verbal guidance over the phone to explain our social distancing measures and meeting procedures in advance of their visit. All visitors will be offered a mask and gloves and will also be offered the option to wait in their car and to be called on their mobile phone when we are ready to see them (to avoid them waiting in reception).
7.1.3	Limiting the number of visitors at any one time.	Visitor numbers will be limited to two visitors per appointment with a maximum of four visitors in the office at any one time. Appointments must however be staggered so that there is only ever one appointment (two people maximum) waiting in reception. All staff will discourage drop-in visitors where at all possible and clients will be encouraged to book an appointment where an office visit is essential, for example to have documents certified.
7.1.4	Limiting visitor times to a specific time window and restricting access to required visitors only.	Access will be limited to essential appointments only or where a client insists on a face to face meeting. Visitor numbers will be controlled through the use of appointment calendars and a doorbell system on office doors to prevent drop-in customers from gaining access.

		There will be signage on each door explaining that visitors must ring the doorbell for access and that they may be required to wait if they have not booked an appointment, in order for us to observe social distancing guidelines. The sign will also ask them to step back 2 meters after ringing the bell.
7.1.5	Determining if schedules for essential services and contractor visits can be revised to reduce interaction and overlap between people, for example, carrying out services at night.	Access to suppliers and contractors will be by appointment only so that number of visitors can be controlled. Suppliers will not be permitted to access an office if visitor numbers are at the maximum (four).
7.1.6	Maintaining a record of all visitors, if this is practical.	Receptionists will continue to complete a sign in sheet. All visitors will be asked to provide their telephone number on the underdstanding that we may need to provide it to the authorities for track and trace purposes.
7.1.7	Revising visitor arrangements to ensure social distancing and hygiene, for example, where someone physically signs in with the same pen in receptions.	Visitors will be asked to sanitise their hands on entering an office and will be provided with PPE should they wish to wear it. All visitors will be signed in and out by the receptionist to avoid the sharing of pens. No shaking of hands or other physical contact will be permitted under any circumstances. All meeting rooms will have a refreshment tray to enable us to provide professional meeting facilities whist also observing social distancing and hygiene guidelines. The refreshment tray will include disposable items to avoid the use of kitchens and reusable cups. The refreshment tray will include: Kettle, coffee sachets, tea bags, hot chocolate sachets, UHT milk cartons (no access to refridgerator required), sugar sachets, stirrers, disposable cups, water, juice and individually packaged biscuits. Used items will be disposed of in the meeting room waste bin by the client/staff member who has used them. Nobody will touch another person's cup etc.
7.1.8	Encouraging visitors to use hand sanitiser or handwashing facilities as they enter the premises	All reception areas and meeting rooms have sanitiser available for client use.

7.2. Providing and explaining guidance

Objective: *To make sure people understand what they need to do to maintain safety*

		Steps required	Our response
7.2.1		Providing clear guidance on social distancing and hygiene to people on arrival, for example, signage or visual aids and before arrival, for example, by phone, on the website or by email. Consider the particular needs of those with protected characteristics, such as those who are hearing or visually impaired.	All visitors to an office will be provided with social distancing and hygiene guidance via email and telephone prior to their visit. There will also be 'guidance for visitors' on our website which will explain our procedures. This ensures that any visitors who may be visually or hearing impaired have access to the relevant information. All offices will have social distancing and hygiene guidance signs on the front doors as well as social distancing tape on the floors in common areas. W/C facilities will also have hand washing guidance signs. All offices will have 'COVID-19 safe' signage explaining to all staff and visitors that we have complied with the government's guidance on managing the risk of COVID-19.
7.2.2		Establishing host responsibilities relating to COVID-19 and providing any necessary training for people who act as hosts for visitors.	All staff will receive full training on our COVID-19 safety procedures as well as receiving written guidance, a copy of this document and an individual staff 'passport' (see paragraph 5.2.2).
7.2.3		Reviewing entry and exit routes for visitors and contractors to minimise contact with other people.	We are controlling visitor numbers through the use of appointment calendars and maximum numbers of visitors at any one time. This combined with social distancing guidance and floor tape should ensure that any visitors and contractors coming into contact with other people is minimised as much as possible.
7.2.4		Coordinating and working collaboratively with landlords and other tenants in multi-tenant sites, for example, shared working spaces.	The serviced office management at Riverside, Congleton have confirmed that they will be displaying social distancing signage and hand washing guidance in common areas and shared W/C facilities. They will also be operating a 'one in one out' system for W/C use and will be decommissioning hand dryers and providing paper towels.

7.2.5	Informing visitors that they should be prepared to remove face coverings if asked to do so by police officers and staff for the purposes of identification	All staff are aware of the need to ask visitors to momentarily remove their face coverings so that they can certify photographic ID as being atrue likeness of the individual. All clients that have made an appointment will be advised of this on the morning of their appointment. Any clients who call into the office to have photo ID certified without making an appointment will be advised by the staff member certifying their photo ID.

8.   Cleaning the workplace

8.1. Before reopening

Objective: *To make sure that any office that has been closed or partially operated is clean and ready to reopen.*

	Steps required	Our response
8.1.1	An assessment of cleanliness for all sites, or parts of sites, that have been closed, before restarting work.	All offices will receive a deep clean.
8.1.2	Carrying out cleaning procedures and providing hand sanitiser before restarting work.	The deep clean will include the cleaning of all surfaces as well as antibacterial mist treatment before the offices reopen. Advice will be sought from the cleaning company as to the regularity of cleaning required to maintain the level of cleanliness.
8.1.3	Opening windows and doors frequently to encourage ventilation, where possible.	Windows will be opened where possible and meeting room doors will be propped open between use.

8.2. Keeping the workplace clean

Objective: To keep the workplace clean and prevent transmission through touching contaminated surfaces.

	Steps required	Our response
8.2.1	Frequent cleaning of work areas and equipment between uses, using your usual cleaning products.	All meeting rooms, reception areas and staff work stations will be supplied with bottle of antibacterial spray and a pack of antibacterial wipes. - Reception surfaces and commonly touched items will be cleaned after every visitor, and where no visitors have been into the building, cleaned every hour. Cleaning wipes will be placed into a waste bin on reception which will be emptied daily (or sooner if the bin becomes full). - Meeting room surfaces, and screens and chairs will be cleaned after every visitor, and where no visitors have been into the building, cleaned every hour. Cleaning wipes will be placed into a waste bin in the meeting room which will be emptied daily (or sooner if the bin becomes full). - All staff workstations will be cleaned at the end of every day using cleaning products supplied to staff workstations. - All staff will take antibacterial wipes and spray with them when using W/C facilities. They will clean the toilet seat, flush, taps and door handles after every use, placing the wipes in a waste bin in the W/C when finished. These waste bins will then be emptied by our external cleaning company twice per week, or by receptionists if the bins become full in between cleans. Cleaning rotas will be in place for the cleaning of all the above areas and these will be managed centrally to ensure that cleaning is being done to hygiene guidelines. Cleaning rotas will detail the items/surfaces that must be cleaned. Gloves will be available to use when cleaning and removing waste. COSHH sheets will be provided to staff for all cleaning materials.
8.2.2	Frequent cleaning of objects and surfaces that are touched regularly, such as door handles and keyboards,	See above for frequent cleaning.

	and making sure there are adequate disposal arrangements.	Receptionists are responsible for cleaning reception areas, meeting rooms after use and removing meeting room waste at the end of each day (or sooner if the bins become full). They are also responsible for removing waste from the W/C bins. All bins will have bin liners in them for ease of disposal and to prevent the need to touch any of the waste within the bin. All meeting rooms, reception areas and workstations will have a roll of bin liners. Gloves will also be available to use when cleaning and removing waste.
8.2.3	Clearing workspaces and removing waste and belongings from the work area at the end of a shift.	All staff are responsible for removing their own waste bin at the end of each day and placing it into the office bins outside.
8.2.4	Limiting or restricting use of high-touch items and equipment, for example, printers or whiteboards.	All staff will be provided with hygiene keys which will be used to open doors and a stylus to use on printer touch screens/buttons. If staff lift the scanner lid on a printer then they must wipe down the area with an antibacterial wipe/spray after use.
8.2.5	Having a plan in place for cleaning following a suspected case of COVID-19 in the workplace.	In the event of a suspected case of COVID-19 (either a staff member or a visitor to the office) the office will be closed and will not reopen until a deep clean has been completed.
8.2.6	Providing extra non recycling bins for workers and visitors to dispose of single use face coverings and PPE.	All staff have non-recycling bins at their workstations which are emptied at the end of every day.

8.3. Hygiene – handwashing, sanitation facilities and toilets

Objective: To help everyone keep good hygiene through the working day

	Steps required	Our response
8.3.1	Using signs and posters to build awareness of good handwashing technique, the need to increase handwashing frequency, avoid touching your face and to cough or sneeze into a tissue which is binned safely, or into your arm if a tissue is not available.	Handwashing signs will be placed in each W/C in all offices. Staff will also be given guidance within their passport documentation which explains the need to frequently wash their hands, cough into a tissue and to not touch their face.

	Steps required	Our response
8.3.2	Providing regular reminders and signage to maintain personal hygiene standards.	All office workspaces will have a sign to remind staff to sanitise/wash their hands regularly throughout the day.
8.3.3	Providing hand sanitiser in multiple locations in addition to washrooms.	All reception areas, meeting rooms and staff workstations will have a bottle of sanitiser. W/C facilities will all have antibacterial handwash.
8.3.4	Setting clear use and cleaning guidance for toilets to ensure they are kept clean and social distancing is achieved as much as possible.	Staff will be allocated to use a specific W/C within their office to ensure that use of W/C facilities is spread out as much as possible. Where a W/C is in use, staff must not wait outside the W/C and should return to their workstation until the W/C is free. In offices where there are multiple cubicles within the same room, only one cublicle should be used at anyone time in order to observe social distancing guidelines. All staff will take antibacterial wipes and spray with them when using W/C facilities. They will clean the toilet seat, flush, taps and door handles after every use.
8.3.5	Enhancing cleaning for busy areas.	Reception surfaces and commonly touched items will be cleaned after every visitor. Meeting room surfaces, and screens and chairs will be cleaned after every visitor. Where there have been no visitors to the office, receptions and meeting rooms will be cleaned hourly.
8.3.6	Providing more waste facilities and more frequent rubbish collection.	All rooms will have a waste bin which is emptied at the end of every day (more regularly if the bin gets full within the working day) and a roll of bin liners. All bins must have a bin liner to prevent contamination of the bin surface.
8.3.7	Where possible, providing paper towels as an alternative to hand dryers in handwashing facilities.	Hand dryers will be disabled and cloth towels will not be permitted. All W/C facilities will have paper towels which must be disposed of using the bins provided.
8.3.8	Keeping the facilities well ventilated, for example by fixing doors open where appropriate	Windows will be opened where possible and meeting room doors will be propped open between use.

8.4. Handling files, supplies, stationery and other materials.

Objective: To reduce transmission through contact with objects that come into the workplace.

	Steps required	Our response

8.4.1	Cleaning procedures for files, supplies, stationery and other materials entering offices.	Staff must sanitise their hands before and after handling any materials. Gloves will also be made available for staff to use when handling anything which has been touched by another person.
8.4.2	Introducing greater handwashing and handwashing facilities for workers handling objects that come into the workplace and providing hand sanitiser where this is not practical.	All staff will be encouraged to wash their hands as frequently as possible and will all have their own bottle of sanitiser provided for their sole use.
8.4.3	Restricting non-business deliveries, for example, personal deliveries to workers.	Personal deliveries to offices will not be permitted. Only essential office deliveries will be permitted (e.g. stationery, water, cleaning supplies etc).

9.   Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and face coverings

	Steps required	Our response
9.1	Provision of PPE and face coverings	Government guidance currently states tat there is growing evidence that wearing a face covering in an enclosed space helps protect individuals and those around them from COVID-19 transmission. All clients and visitors to the office are to wear a face covering for the duration of their visit to our offices, in accordance with government requirements from 8th August 2020. If a visitor to the office arrives and is not wearing a face covering, the receptionist will provide the visitor with a face covering at the door for the visitor to put on before entering reception. All visitors are also asked if they would like to be provided with gloves, and if they would like our staff to wear gloves. Whilst it is not a government requirement for law firm staff to wear face coverings, the firm feels it is courteous to wear face coverings in client facing areas. As of 8th August all staff are requirement to do this. This will help protect from the potential spread of COVID-19 as well as to enhance the client experience and make clients and staff feel as safe as possible.

			If staff feel safer wearing a face covering in non-client facing areas and if they would like to wear gloves, then we would enncourage their use along with frequent hand washing, sanitising and observing good hygiene and social distancing practices.
			The firm will provide face coverings and gloves for all staff and clients.
9.2	Employers should give guidance on how to use face masks		All staff have been issued with guidance on disposable face coverings.

10. Workforce management

10.1. Shift patterns and working groups

Objective: To change the way work is organised to create distinct groups and reduce the number of contacts each staff member has.

	Steps required	Our response
10.1.1	As far as 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.	Staff numbers within offices will be fixed as much as possible
10.1.2	Identifying areas where people directly pass things to each other, for example files, and finding ways to remove direct contact, such as using drop-off points or transfer zones.	The sharing of items is to be limited to essential circumstances only. The only items that should be shared are client files, and this should be limited wherever practicable. If files are being shared between staff, the file should not be handed over in person. Instead the file should be left in a neutral location by staff member A so that staff member B can then retrieve the file without coming into contact with staff member A.

		Both staff members should sanitise or wash their hands before and after touching the file. Alternatively they should wear gloves, but be aware that this will not prevent contamination if touching other objects when wearing the gloves.
		The neutral locations for 'file drop-off' will be demarcated and all staff will be advised of their file drop-off point. Different teams will have different drop-off points to reduce traffic and potential contamination. This information will be included in staff passports (see paragraph 5.2.2).
10.1.3	Assisting Test & Trace by keeping a temporary record of staff shift patterns for 21 days and assist NHS Test & Trace with requests for that data if needed.	Staff sign in sheets are kept on reception and all staff are required to sign in and out every time they enter and leave the office throughout the working day. Receptionists then scan and email these sheets to Di Powell, HR Manager on a weekly basis. This will therefore act as a record for Test & Trace.

10.2. Work-related travel – Cars and public transport

Objective: To avoid unnecessary work travel and keep people safe when they do need to travel between locations.

	Steps required	Our response
10.2.1	Walking or cycling where possible. When not possible people can use public transport or drive. Face masks must be worn when using public transport.	Most of our staff travel via car. Those who are within walking distance of the office do walk. At the time of our last staff risk assessment, out of 126 staff only one stated that they rely on public transport.
10.2.2	Minimising the number of people outside the household and support bubble travelling together in any one vehicle, using fixed travel partners, increasing ventilation when possible and avoiding sitting face to face.	Car sharing is strictly prohibited, unless sharing a car journey with people within the same household.

10.3. Work-related travel – Visits to other sites

Objective: To help staff visiting/delivering documents to other sites such as other offices, suppliers' or clients' premises to maintain social distancing and hygiene practices.

		Steps required	Our response
10.3.1		Putting in place procedures to minimise person-to-person contact during visits to other sites.	Where visits to other sites are unavoidable a 'third party visit risk assessment' document must be completed and submitted to Di Powell for management approval. It is our understanding that open courts and police stations will have already had a risk assessment carried out and so staff are permitted to attend these settings for hearings and police station representation without a risk assessment. Risk assessments will include the social distancing measures in place at the site to be visited and any extra precautions needed to be taken by staff. Face coverings and gloves are available for staff members to use when visiting external sites, if required. Staff are not permitted to visit the below settings, unless the meeting is to take place outdoors: • Home visits • Care homes • Hospitals • Face to face networking • Face to face business development meetings Whilst the firm has a duty to make adjustments in circumstances where accessibility is an issue (usually meaning we would do a home visit), this must be balanced with health and safety considerations and so clients with accessibility

			needs should be offered telephone or video meetings as an alternative to us visiting their home.
10.3.2	Maintaining consistent pairing where two-person visits are required.		If more than one staff member is required to visit a site, they must travel separately, and where there is a frequent need for two members of staff to attend meetings (for example, Will signing), the two members should 'buddy up' and attend meetings together consistently rather than rotating pairings.
10.3.3	Minimising contact during exchange of documentation, files and other items		The same process should be followed as is in place in the offices. I.e. any exchange of items should be done by the items being placed in a neutral 'drop-off' location by person A to then be picked up by person B. This will minimise contact.
10.3.4	Ensuring hygiene practices followed upon exchange of documentation, files and other items.		Hands must be washed or sanitised before and after handling items that have been touched by other people.

10.4. Communication and Training – Returning to work

Objective: *To make sure all staff understand COVID-19 related safety procedures.*

	Steps required		Our response
10.4.1	Providing clear, consistent and regular communication to improve understanding and consistency of ways of working.		All staff will receive full communication and training prior to returning to work. This will include: • Training to explain return to work procedures • Documentation including a staff passport explaining areas of the office building they can and cannot access. • Signage and guidance within offices and at their workstation • HR policies to set out our expectations for staff
10.4.2	Developing communication and training materials for workers prior to returning to site, especially around new procedures for arrival at work.		All staff will receive a staff passport and a copy of this document to fully explain new working procedures. Guidance will include which areas within an office

		they can and cannot access, hygiene guidelines, social distancing guidelines, file drop-off and visitor and meeting procotols.

10.5. Communication and Training – Ongoing communication and signage

Objective: *To make sure all staff are kept up to date with how safety measures are being implemented or updated.*

	Steps required	Our response
10.5.1	Ongoing engagement with staff workers to monitor and understand any unforeseen impacts of changes to working environments.	All changes will be communicated through staff meetings, training, revision of documentation and written updates. In addition to this, staff working within offices will be regularly contacted by the HR Manager to ensure that they have everything they need, to address any concerns and to ensure adequate stock levels of masks, gloves, signage, hygeine supplies and refreshments.
10.5.2	Awareness and focus on the importance of mental health at times of uncertainty.	We will maintain our current systems of staff welfare and escalation of HR issues. The HR Manager will be in frequent contact with all those working within offices as well as home workers and so any mental health and welfare issues will be identified and dealt with promptly.
10.5.3	Using simple, clear messaging to explain guidelines using images and clear language, with consideration of groups for which English may not be their first language and those with protected characteristics such as visual impairments.	All guidance will be clear and effective in terms of layout and messaging. Signage has been sourced from a combination of specialist suppliers, government websites and health and safety consultants. Whilst we do not currently have any staff with English as a second language, this could change. We are also aware that some clients may not have English as their first language and so signage in reception areas and meeting areas will include pictures to aid understanding and clarity of message. All clients who book an appointment with us are advised of our procedures via telephone. This will ensure effective communication to those with visual impairments.
10.5.4	Communicating approaches and operational procedures to suppliers and clients to help their adoption and to share experience.	All external visitors will receive guidance via email as well as verbal guidance over the phone to explain our social distancing measures and meeting procedures in advance of their visit. All visitors will be offered PPE and will also

		be offered the option to wait in their car and to be called on their mobile phone when we are ready to see them (to avoid them waiting in reception). They will also be asked if they would like the staff member they are meeting with to wear a mask. All offices will have 'COVID-19 safe' signage explaining to all staff and visitors that we have complied with the government's guidance on managing the risk of COVID-19. This 'COVID-19 safe' document will also be emailed to all visitors in advance of their appointment.

10.6. Outbreaks in the workplace

Objective: To provide guidance in an event of a COVID-19 outbreak in the workplace

	Steps required	Our response
10.6.1	Ensure there is an up to date plan in case there is a COVID-19 outbreak. The plan should nominate a single point of contact where possible who should lead on contacting Public Health teams.	There is a detailed plan within the firm's Business Continuity Plan. The main point of contact is Operations Partner, Stacey Bennett.
10.6.2	If there is more than one case of COVID-19 associated with the workplace, the local PHE health protection team should be contacted to report the suspected outbreak.	PHE Cheshire and Merseyside Health Protection Team, Suite 3B 3rd Floor Cunard Building, Water Street, Liverpool, L3 1DS Phone: 0344 225 0562 option 1
10.6.3	If the local PHE health protection team declares an outbreak, details of symptomatic staff should be recorded and assistance should be given with identifying contacts. All employment records must be kept up to date for	Up to date employee records are maintained by the firm's HR Manager, Di Powell who will provide any required information to help with outbreak management.

	this reason, Information about outbreak management will be given by the local PHE team if needed.	
10.6.4	Communication with staff where there has been a reported case of COVID-19 within an office	If the firm becomes aware that a staff member or visitor to an office has tested positive for COVID-19 and has been into our offices anytime from 2 days before they were symptomatic up to 10 days from the onset of symptoms, the firm will issue a notice to staff to make them aware. The covid safety measures in place within our offices are in line with government guidance to prevent contact with COVID-19. This means that even if a visitor or staff member has tested positive and been into our offices within the period outlined above, it would not constitute 'contact' under government guidelines unless our covid safety measures had been breached (i.e. any face to face contact within one metre, or within two meters for 15 minutes or more without the use of a Perspex screen). Staff would there for not be required to self-isolate and no closure or deep cleaning of offices would be required.

11. Inbound deliveries

Objective: *To maintain social distancing and avoid surface transmission when deliveries enter the offices.*

	Steps required	Our response
11.1	Revising delivery points, procedures, signage and markings.	All offices will have a dedicated delivery point to avoid contact between staff and delivery personnel.
11.2	Minimising unnecessary contact at reception. For example, non-contact deliveries where the nature of the product allows.	All deliveries must be made on a non-contact basis. This has already been put in place with key suppliers, for example stationery providers and print providers.
11.3	Considering methods to reduce frequency of deliveries, for example by ordering larger quantities less often.	Our initial order for PPE, stationery and welfare facility items was done so in bulk with a two month supply in mind. All further orders will follow the same

		logic in that bulk orders will reduce frequency of deliveries and will reduce risk of contamination.
11.4	Where possible and safe, having single workers organise and store away deliveries.	Receptionists will be responsible for storing away deliveries and will be required to sanitise their hands before and after touching delivered items.

12. Appendix

12.1. Congleton office communal areas response

The below response is from our serviced office building management at Riverside, Congleton.

Dear All,

Following the Prime Minister's announcement last weekend, and with a return to work desired by most, we have noticed more offices reopening. Covid-19 is at the forefront of all our minds and we have taken advice on the best steps to protect all employees, visitors and tenants. We have completed a risk assessment and put in place a number of measures, the main points of which are as follows:

Signage

You will shortly notice signs on entry points to the buildings, near lifts, stairs, corridors, kitchens, bathrooms and other communal areas. These are all simple measures designed to keep users of the building safe, encourage social distancing and ensure good hygiene.

Social Distancing

We're all familiar with this concept by now but it is important that social distancing is maintained, however much you might want to hug Ken… Signage and floor markings around the building will help to facilitate distancing.

Reception

The reception area is obviously a crunch point so we would encourage people to pass through quickly. There will be no waiting in this area so please ensure that you are available when your visitors are due to arrive. Additionally, we have removed the sign in / out book, however visitors should report to the Building Manager who will note their arrival.

Post

To reduce exposure and unnecessary contact, the Building Manager will no longer deliver post to your office. Post will be sorted and available for collection from the reception desk in Riverside. A system is in place to hand over post from a safe distance.

Lifts, Stairs & Corridors

We would encourage people to use the stairs wherever possible. Where use of the lift is unavoidable, we would ask that one person is in the lift car at a time. A line showing a 2 metre distance has been marked out around the lift doors – please wait outside of this area.

It is not practical to implement a one-way system in corridors. In the event that someone is coming the opposite direction in the corridor, please aim to minimise contact by waiting in your office or lobby areas until the corridor is clear.

We are increasing cleaning of the touch points (e.g. lift buttons, stair handrails) and doors will be left open where practical and safe, in order to minimise contact with anything beyond your own office door.

Air-conditioning

AC has been disabled in communal spaces to reduce re-circulating germs. Windows in communal areas and corridors will be opened to maintain fresh air flow. To those of you with AC in your offices, we advise that you leave it switched off to reduce re-circulating germs within your office.

Bathrooms & Kitchens

We ask you to respect a one in / one out system in common parts of the bathrooms (e.g. sink area) and kitchens where possible. We understand that this may not always work and so some facilities have been taped off to prevent crowding. Hand dryers have been disabled within bathrooms and replaced with disposable paper towels. Paper towels and hand soap are available in all kitchens.

In addition to the usual rota, high touch points (e.g. surfaces, taps, levers) will receive more frequent cleaning.

Meeting Rooms

The second floor meeting room has been removed from use until further notice. The ground floor boardroom remains available although it is important to book in advance to ensure it is fully cleaned between uses. Please ensure that the meeting room is left clean and tidy.

Cases

It goes without saying that you should not visit Riverside & Meadowside (or, indeed, anywhere) if you have symptoms of Covid-19. If you have visited Riverside & Meadowside, and have a confirmed case, please notify us, your staff and visitors, so that we can take advice on any further necessary action.

All the above measures will be put in place over the coming week, with additional information displayed on the signage displayed within the buildings. We will keep the measures under review as the situation evolves, and will continue to adjust them depending on how practical / effective they prove to be as the buildings get busier. We advise you to undertake your own risk assessments and put in place any necessary precautionary measures within your offices.

Please get in touch if any comments. In the meanwhile, stay safe and looking forward to seeing you around the building (from a sensible distance, of course) as things gradually return to normal.

Greg