
ASSESSMENT OF THE RISKS POSED BY COVID-19 IN THE WORKPLACE

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1) INTRODUCTION

Preston Redman is committed to ensuring effective risk management within the practice and all staff have a role to play in ensuring we achieve this. The purpose of this risk assessment is to consider the risks specifically relating to the Covid-19 outbreak and how they impact on staff within the workplace. In considering these specific risks we must also be mindful of associated risks which may include, as an example, the impact of remote working, lockdown on staff and clients, and the additional risks which develop from these situations.

This risk assessment is for managing the current Covid-19 risks in the workplace, it is live document and may be adapted to cover developing scenarios to provide a dynamic response.

This risk assessment sets out:

- 1.1 The identified and evaluated risks relating to Covid-19 in the workplace, namely:-
 - (a) Identify what work activity or situations might cause transmission of the virus, or create associated risks;
 - (b) Think about who could be at risk;
 - (c) Consider the risk of exposure and how we control or mitigate those risks;
 - (d) Act to remove the activity or situation if this isn't possible to control the risk.
- 1.2 The steps we will take to monitor and update this risk assessment. Including monitoring and reviewing our risk management arrangements.
- 1.3 Setting out the responsibilities for risk management
- 1.4 Sign-posting to our related our risk management policies and procedures, when they have been developed;
- 1.5 Reporting arrangements to Partners the on risk management.

2) MONITORING AND REVIEW

- 1.6 The COLP (Adrian Falck) has overall responsibility for this risk assessment and associated policies and procedures.
- 1.7 All staff must be aware of this Risk Assessment. You may be liable to disciplinary action if you fail to comply with the provisions of this Risk Assessment or related policies and procedures.

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3) RISK ASSESSMENT

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed	Controls Required	Additional Controls	Action by who?	Action by when?	Done
General & Health & Safety						
Spread of Covid-19 Coronavirus	Staff Visitors to our premises Cleaners Contractors Vulnerable groups – Elderly, Pregnant workers, those with existing underlying health conditions Anyone else who physically comes in contact with you in relation to our business	<p>Reporting Problems Internally</p> <p>If advised that a member of staff or public has developed Covid-19 and were recently on our premises (including where a member of staff has visited other premises such as domestic premises), we will contact the Public Health Authority to discuss the case, identify people who have been in contact with them and will take advice on any actions or precautions that should be taken.</p> <p>We must also consider staff who live with a household member who is “Shielding”. We may wish to encourage these staff to work from home</p>	<p>Staff will be encouraged to report any problems.</p> <p>To help reduce the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) we will remind everyone of the public health advice - Posters, leaflets and other materials will be displayed where appropriate.</p> <p>Rigorous checks will be carried out by Partners and managers to ensure that the necessary procedures are being followed.</p>	Partners and all staff	On-going	✓
		<p>First Aid</p> <p>With more staff working remotely we must consider whether we have 1st aiders available to cover staff working within the offices</p>	<p>The giving of 1st aid in emergency situations generally takes precedence over other considerations. However we should ensure that 1st aiders have access to PPE including gloves, masks (CPR breaths not recommended). Along with suitable cleaning/disinfecting supplies</p>	1 st aiders Adrian Falck Jemma Hodgson Gill Hawker David Albans Kate McLaughlin	Immediate	✓

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		<p>Reporting to HSE We must also consider our reporting obligations under RIDDOR.</p>	<p>RIDDOR reporting of COVID-19. We must only make a report under RIDDOR (The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013) when: ... a worker has been diagnosed as having COVID-19 and there is reasonable evidence that it was caused by exposure at work.</p>	ACF/KM	On-going	
Staff						
Spread of Covid-19 Coronavirus	Staff, clients and visitors	<p>Social Distancing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff should work from home where possible and only come in to the office where necessary Where working from home is not possible, the firm will make every reasonable effort to comply with the social distancing guidelines set out by the government (keeping people two metres apart wherever possible) <p>We will also:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce the number of persons in any work area to comply with the 2-metre distancing Ensure that Team or conference calls are used instead of face to face meetings where possible. If the volume of people in the office increases, the firm will look to staggering arrival and departure times at work to reduce congestion at doorways into and out of the offices, taking account of the impact on those with protected characteristics. Ensuring sufficient rest breaks for staff. Social distancing also to be adhered to in kitchens and common areas. 	<p>Staff to be reminded on a regular basis of the importance of social distancing both in the workplace and outside of it, using regular email updates and official posters.</p> <p>Regular checks will be made to ensure the rules are adhered to.</p> <p>Additional controls which may be considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing additional facilities such as bike parking to help people walk, run, or cycle to work where possible. Reducing congestion, for example, by using all entry points to the buildings. Using markings and introducing one-way flow at entry and exit points, if appropriate. 	<p>All staff</p> <p>DCA to draft policies & procedures</p> <p>ACF/KM</p>	<p>Immediate</p> <p>4/6/20</p> <p>To be monitored</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing handwashing facilities, or hand sanitiser where not possible, at entry and exit points • Where staff have to work together, keep the activity time involved as short as possible. • When the office re-opens to clients, using screens or barriers to separate visitors from the receptionist. • Use back-to-back or side-to-side working (rather than face-to-face) whenever possible. • Reducing the number of people each person has contact with by using 'fixed teams or partnering' (so each person works with only a few others). • Reducing movement by discouraging non-essential trips between buildings, encouraging use of phones, where permitted, and cleaning them between use. • If necessary restricting access between different areas of a building or site. • Where needed we will use floor tape to mark areas to help workers keep to a 2m distance 				
		<p>Remote Working</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will monitor the wellbeing of staff who are working from home and helping them stay connected to the rest of the workforce. • We will keep in touch with remote staff on their working arrangements including their welfare, mental and physical health. • We will provide equipment including software for staff to work at home safely and effectively, for example, remote access to work systems. 	<p>Separate guidance will be issued for supervisors to ensure that effective and consistent supervision takes place (supervisors may wish to keep a contact log to evidence that effective supervision and regular contact has taken place)</p>	<p>Supervisors and all staff and KM/NM for IT supplies etc.</p> <p>DCA to prepare guidance</p>	<p>5/6/20</p>	<p>✓</p>

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		<p>Hand Washing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure hand washing facilities with soap and water are maintained. • Ensure that stringent hand washing is taking place. • See hand washing guidance. • Drying of hands with disposable paper towels. • Staff encouraged to protect the skin by applying emollient cream regularly if required • Gel sanitisers in any area where washing facilities not readily available 	<p>Staff will be reminded on a regular basis, using email updates and posters etc. to wash their hands for 20 seconds with water and soap and the importance of proper drying with disposable towels. They will also be reminded to catch coughs and sneezes in tissues – Follow Catch it, Bin it, Kill it and to avoid touching face, eyes, nose or mouth with unclean hands. Tissues will be made available throughout the workplace.</p> <p>Recommended “official” work place posters will be used as appropriate.</p>	<p>All staff</p>	<p>Immediate</p>	<p>✓</p>
		<p>Mental Health</p> <p>Partners will promote mental health & wellbeing awareness to staff during the Coronavirus outbreak and will offer whatever support they can to help.</p>	<p>Regular communication of mental health information and open door policy for those who need additional support.</p> <p>Signpost staff to further advice or support, such as employee assistance programmes and any other well-being resources may be appropriate.</p> <p>Checklist for staying at home – points to be aware of in communicating to staff</p> <p>Work: carry on working from home, unless advised otherwise. Health: focus on maintaining your physical health.</p>	<p>All staff</p> <p>DCA to prepare policies & procedures</p>	<p>Immediate</p> <p>4/6/20</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>

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			<p>Connectivity: keep in contact with people you would normally see regularly.</p> <p>Routine: create a routine or timetable for yourself, especially in relation to work</p> <p>Exercise: maintain a regular regime of physical activity, outdoors where possible. This means regular breaks away from your computer/working area when working remotely.</p>			
		<p>Wearing of Masks Public Health guidance on the use of PPE (personal protective equipment) to protect against COVID-19 relates to health care settings. In all other settings individuals are asked to observe social distancing measures and practice good hand hygiene behaviours. The Government guidance on the wearing of masks in the workplace is that they may be beneficial in places where it is hard to follow maintain social distancing measures. This applies when using public transport, such as trains and buses, or when visiting shops. They do not need to be worn outdoors, while exercising, or in workplaces such as offices.</p> <p>Masks can help prevent the transmission of Covid-19 and staff may choose to wear a mask whilst travelling to or from work or whilst outside.</p>	<p>We should ensure a supply of masks for 1st aiders and for any other situation where staff cannot maintain a 2 metre separation.</p>	1 st Aiders	Immediate	✓
		<p>Symptoms of Covid-19 If any member of staff develops symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) (a new, continuous cough and/or a high temperature) they should be sent home and stay at home for 7 days from onset of symptoms.</p>		All staff	Immediate	✓

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		<p>If the member of staff lives in a household where someone else is unwell with symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) then they must stay at home in line with the Government stay at home guidance.</p> <p>Partners/managers will maintain regular contact with staff members during this time.</p>				
		<p><u>Occupancy Levels</u></p> <p>Government advice is to work from home where possible and therefore staff should continue to work from home - When considering a return to the office for staff we should consider occupancy levels to ensure that social distancing remains effective</p> <p>When it comes to planning a return to work for employees special consideration must be given to vulnerable groups and others who may have to remain working remotely.</p>	<p>Clinically extremely vulnerable workers who are shielding and those with caring responsibilities should be prioritised to remain at home,</p> <p>Working parents - Schools are now closed due to COVID-19 childcare may not be available making it difficult for parents to leave home to attend work at the office.</p> <p>Despite the unprecedented nature of this situation, employers still have to remain aware of potential direct and indirect discrimination.</p> <p>Staff will be required to sign in and out whilst temporarily working within the offices so that we can monitor occupancy levels.</p>	Partners & all staff	Immediate	✓

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CLIENTS AND VISITORS						
Spread of Covid-19 Coronavirus	Clients and possibly staff	<p>Meetings</p> <p>Clients will be advised that meetings will not be allowed unless absolutely necessary. Where possible we will use remote working tools to avoid in-person meetings. If a meeting is required the following controls will be put in place:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will avoid transmission during meetings, for example, by avoiding sharing pens and other objects. Only absolutely necessary participants should attend meetings and should maintain 2m separation throughout Providing hand sanitiser in meeting rooms Holding meetings outdoors or in well-ventilated rooms whenever possible Cleaning of meeting room after each use No physical contact (handshakes, etc.) during meetings On premises meetings scheduled such that rooms are not used back to back to allow time for cleaning and avoid two groups of visitors unnecessarily coming in to contact 	<p>For areas where regular meetings take place, using floor signage to help people maintain social distance</p> <p>Separate meeting guidance note for visitors setting out our Covid-19 precautions</p>	<p>All staff</p> <p>DCA to prepare policies & procedures</p>	<p>Immediate</p> <p>4/6/20</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>
		<p>Signing and Witnessing of Documents</p> <p>With clients in lockdown it will be more difficult to have documents signed and witnessed. A client guide has been produced for Will clients on how to sign and have a will witnessed.</p>	<p>Ensure that we have a firm-wide guide to effective signing and witnessing of documents whilst clients are in isolation – circulate to all staff</p>	<p>All staff DCA to produce guide to signing docs</p>	<p>Immediate</p> <p>8/6/20</p>	<p>✓</p>

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COMMUNICATIONS						
Ensuring that staff are appropriately updated as to the risks an current best guidance	All staff	<p>Internal communication</p> <p>Communication channels and cascading of messages through Partners and managers will be carried out regularly to reassure and support employees in a fast changing situation.</p>	Partners and managers will offer support to staff who are affected by Coronavirus or has a family member affected.	Partners	On-going	✓
		<p>Advice to staff</p> <p>We should advise staff to take appropriate precautions and ensure that they are regularly updated with the latest advice and guidance in relation to staying safe within the workplace or working remotely.</p>		Partners	On-going	
		<p>Consult with workers on Covid-19 risk assessments</p> <p>It is a requirement that all employers need to carry out Covid-19 risk assessments in consultation with their workers (and trade unions), to establish what guidelines to put in place.</p> <p>We will establish a representative staff group to consult with regarding this risk assessment and the risk controls or risk mitigation strategies that we put in place to deal with Covid-19</p>	If possible, employers should publish the results of their risk assessments on their website and the government “expects” all businesses with over 50 employees to do so.	Partners	5/6/20	

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FACILITIES						
Spread of Covid-19 Coronavirus	Staff, Clients, visitors, maintenance staff	<p>Review Facilities Arrangements</p> <p>As we occupy our own offices we are better able to implement effective housekeeping and hygiene procedures, such as hand sanitation, hard surface wiping etc.</p> <p>We will:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage staggering of break times to reduce pressure on kitchen areas • If necessary, create additional space by using other parts of the workplace or building that have been freed up by remote working • Install screens to protect staff in receptions or similar areas • Encourage workers to bring their own food rather than have to go out to buy food at lunchtime • Reconfigure seating and tables to maintain spacing and reduce face-to-face interactions • Regulate use of kitchens and common areas such as Outer Office areas to reduce concurrent usage 	<p>Staff must continue to work from home. If they visit the office they must ensure that they stay within their offices as much as possible and reduce time in common areas of the building.</p> <p>Staff should only use their own equipment including pens.</p> <p>Pens used by clients and third parties must be disposed of without touching them directly (use gloves etc.)</p>	All staff	Immediate	✓
		<p>Cleaning</p> <p>While staff are predominantly working from home and cleaning staff are not currently working, staff will be asked to clean and disinfect objects and surfaces that they touch regularly particularly in areas of high use such as door handles, light switches, desks, computers, telephones, etc. using appropriate cleaning products and methods.</p>	<p>Shared facilities such as copiers should be cleaned before and after each use by the user.</p> <p>Common areas such as kitchens must be cleaned before and after each use by the user.</p>	Staff	Immediate	✓

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		<p>We will draft a building cleaning policy.</p> <p>Staff will be responsible for cleaning their own work areas including emptying their bins</p>	<p>Cleaning materials and hand sanitiser will be placed at key locations around the office – these locations will be clearly signposted</p> <p>Disposal of rubbish, especially food waste must be undertaken regularly</p>			
		<p>Deliveries</p> <p>Procedures must be put in place for deliveries to ensure adequate social distancing:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliveries will be let outside the building where possible. • Delivery quantities and frequency of deliveries will be kept to a minimum 	<p>All staff</p>	<p>Outer Office staff</p>	<p>Immediate</p>	<p>✓</p>

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OPERATIONAL - CLIENT MATTER RISK						
Failure to manage matters effectively - clients may not receive the level of service they are entitled to expect, which may result in complaints or negligence claims	Staff and clients	<p>Supervision</p> <p>Remote working can lead to a sense of isolation and potentially to reduced supervision. Where fee earners rely on others such as secretaries to issue reminders such systems may not work well with remote working leading to the possibility that critical compliance issues or deadlines may be missed.</p>	<p>All supervisors must have a formal system in place to ensure that supervision meetings take place regularly with all staff.</p> <p>Supervisors must record supervision meetings in their diaries.</p> <p>Supervisors should keep checking in on people's workloads and stress levels and offer support where possible. If necessary consider adjusting targets for staff who remain working and be flexible with deadlines.</p>	All supervisors	Immediate and on-going	✓
		<p>Critical dates</p> <p>Critical dates present a higher operational risk. All critical dates must be recorded in the centrally, these should be monitored closely by fee earners to ensure that they are not missed.</p>	<p>Partner/Supervisors should include the discussion of key dates in remote supervision meetings.</p> <p>Use of Teams Planner with key dates in for each team, reviewed daily by each supervising partner.</p>	All fee earners, supervisors/ Partners and NEF	On-going	✓
		<p>Higher risk matters</p> <p>Higher risk matters should be discuss with Partner/supervisors.</p>	<p>Partner/Supervisors should include the discussion of key dates in remote supervision meetings.</p>	Fee earner & supervisors	On-going	✓
		<p>Dormant and 'mental block' files</p>	<p>Fee earners must take responsibility for discussing any 'mental block' files</p>		On-going	✓

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		<p>Dormant or 'mental block' files present a higher operational risk. Fee earners should ensure progress is maintained on all matters.</p> <p>A 'mental block' file might include a matter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that is technically difficult; • where the fee earner is uncertain how best to proceed; or • Where the client is difficult to deal with. 	<p>with their supervising Partner to agree a way forward, which may include reallocating the matter to another fee earner.</p> <p>Monthly matters reports (Monthly Trawl) should be used as a method of identifying dormant files</p>	Partners and supervisors		
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REGULATORY RISK						
Failure to comply with regulatory requirements or properly manage our regulatory risks can	Clients , Fee earners, Partners	<p>Regulatory Risk and Remote Working</p> <p>Remote working, lack of supervision and the difficulty of dealing with clients in lockdown could lead to a failure to comply with regulatory requirements or properly manage our regulatory risks which could lead to:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> clients may not receive the level of service they are entitled to expect, which may result in complaints or negligence claims; The firm or individuals within the firm could be disciplined by the SRA or another regulator, which could lead to fines, disqualification or other sanctions; The firm or individuals within the firm could be exposed to criminal prosecution 	<p>We must ensure that supervision remains effective.</p> <p>Issue regular email or newsletter updates to ensure that risk & compliance remain in people’s minds.</p> <p>Introduce remote file review</p>	Partners & supervisors	Immediate and on-going	✓
		<p>Anti-Money laundering</p> <p>With clients in isolation we must ensure that AML CDD checks are carried out fully.</p>	<p>Additional support provide by the Risk & Compliance Manager to advise on requirements on a risk based approach and to assist with completing CDD as required.</p> <p>Additional methods of completing CDD to be investigated.</p>	All staff	Immediate & on-going	✓

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NEXT STEPS

This risk assessment has highlighted number of action points which need to be addressed. Suitable policies and procedures will be drawn up to ensure that the identified risk are controlled or mitigated.

The firms risk management arrangements will be monitored and kept under constant review and this risk assessment will reviewed and updated as appropriate.

Regular reports will be prepared for the Partners as to the controls put in place and their continuing effectiveness as well as more general considerations regarding our response to Covid-19 risks.

DCA 1st June 2020