



HM Courts &  
Tribunals Service

# HMCTS Organisational Covid-19

## Risk Assessment



# HMCTS Organisational Covid-19 Risk Assessment

Over recent weeks, we have identified the COVID-19 related risks in our workplaces, and put in place measures to mitigate those risks. Our arrangements are kept under constant review to ensure that they continually reflect changing circumstances and current Government advice. We work with our trade unions and other organisations who use our courts, sharing with them our approach on risk assessment and risk management. The table below gives an overview of our assessment of risks across the organisation and details the safety measures in place.

We constantly monitor the arrangements in all our buildings to ensure that they continue to meet the standards required - in doing this, we adopt a structured approach, using a local assessment tool. Across HMCTS we have a range of workplaces with differing requirements and this provides a flexible framework for managers to effectively assess the risks and manage the safety measures for individual buildings, working with trade union colleagues and local teams. The tool helps to ensure that potential risks are constantly monitored, that swift action can be taken where necessary, and that anything significant that can't be resolved quickly at local level is promptly escalated.

We keep this tool updated to reflect any changes in guidance, and any feedback from external stakeholders and trade unions. We are currently updating the tool to reflect the latest Government guidance issued this week.

If you are worried about anything or feel that something is not in place that should be, please ask to speak to the court manager, or contact [HMCTS.COVID-19ResponseTeam@justice.gov.uk](mailto:HMCTS.COVID-19ResponseTeam@justice.gov.uk). Members of HMCTS staff should speak to their line manager, the senior person on site, or their Regional Safety and Security Officer.



What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed?	What have we already done to control the risks?	What further action do we need to take to control the risks?	Who needs to carry out the action?	When is the action needed by?
<p><b>Contraction of Covid-19 through contact with surfaces</b></p>	<p>Staff and all court users</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduced more than 150 additional cleaners into court and tribunal buildings open to the public, carrying out additional touchpoint cleans throughout the day with extra attention on hand-washing basins and facilities. Adherence to the British Institute of Cleaning Science (BICS) cleaning standards form the basis on which the cleaning process is conducted by our new provider.</li> <li>• Introduced deep cleans within all or parts of buildings if we have a confirmed case of coronavirus, following <a href="#">Government guidelines</a>.</li> <li>• Provided extra checks around soap and hand drying facilities, ensuring priority for fixing immediately any reported issues. Addressed all known hot water related issues and undertaken a programme of works in washrooms to improve facilities.</li> <li>• Introduced regular hand washing breaks during hearings.</li> <li>• Ensured every court is cleaned at night, along with regular daytime cleaning in public and court admin areas.</li> <li>• Introduced high visibility ‘cleaning support’ jackets for our daytime cleaners, so they are easy to spot.</li> <li>• Provided hand sanitiser to all sites, with stock available to meet future demand. Arrangements also made for individuals to bring their own into courts and tribunals.</li> <li>• Displayed handwashing posters in prominent places.</li> <li>• Responded quickly to complaints about poor hygiene or problems that would prevent users washing their hands.</li> <li>• Closed our refreshment areas, water fountains and removed water carafes and glasses from court rooms. In public and non-public areas, avoiding preparation or eating of food with others.</li> </ul>	<p>Regular local monitoring and communication. Our staff will carry out checks through the day and will close off areas within a building, or whole buildings, where standards are not as they should be, whilst they put in place measures to improve the situation.</p>	<p>Local managers supported by central Facilities Management team.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encouraging any concerns with building cleanliness or soap supplies to be referred instantly.</li> <li>• Promotion of handwashing and personal hygiene through posters and other means.</li> <li>• Should there be any instance of a confirmed case of COVID-19 a system is in place to isolate/close down the area concerned and ensure a deep clean can be completed imminently before it is re-opened.</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Contraction of Covid-19 through contact with other people</b></p>	<p>Staff and all court users</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If anyone appears to have, or discloses that they have, symptoms consistent with COVID-19, they will be refused entry to the building by Court/Tribunal Security Officers.</li> <li>• We have reviewed <b>all non-public areas</b>, to promote social distancing for staff and judiciary, with measures at different sites including the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Taking desks and other furniture out of use to enable individuals to retain a physical distance of 2m from each other wherever possible.</li> <li>- As far as is practicable, using one-way systems.</li> <li>- Monitoring and regulating use of toilet facilities, restricting access if necessary.</li> <li>- Changing working hours where possible, if it supports individuals in travelling at earlier or later times to reduce contact with other people.</li> <li>- Staggering lunches and breaks.</li> <li>- Introducing shift working where possible, sometimes creating temporary teams, to allow individuals to travel to and from the workplace at different times of the day and/or alternate weeks.</li> <li>- Cancelling all events that involve bringing groups of people together or moving them to become virtual events e.g. team meetings arranged on the phone (even if people are sat apart in the same office);</li> <li>- Postponing all face to face training.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Regular local monitoring and communication.</p> <p>Our staff will carry out checks through the day and will close off areas within a building, or whole buildings, where standards are not as they should be, whilst they put in place measures to improve the situation</p>	<p>Local managers supported by central Facilities Management Team</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have reviewed <b>all public areas</b>, including every open or staffed court, putting in place arrangements to help people maintain a 2m distance. These will vary for the different buildings depending on layout, but may include:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Putting a system in place to manage the flow of people and maintain a 2m distance e.g. using numerical labelling of seats, floor markings and tape.</li> <li>- Advising those entering or leaving courtrooms, to avoid cross-traffic in the doors and restricting the number of people in court in the public galleries at any point in time.</li> <li>- Removing furniture or cordoning off to enable individuals to be at a physical distance of 2m from each other wherever possible.</li> <li>- In courtrooms, marking seats as 'not for use', taping them off and leaving some rows empty.</li> <li>- For areas where queuing will occur, using floor marking tape to enable social distancing to be observed.</li> <li>- As far as is practicable, using a 'one-in, one-out' system for lift entry and exit.</li> <li>- Monitoring and regulating use of toilet facilities, restricting access if necessary.</li> <li>- Marshalling by staff in the court room to ensure people are directed to take the correct seat and maintain their social distance.</li> <li>- Taping off selected seats in seating areas or clearly marking some as not for use, to ensure a 2m distance between those sitting in these areas.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Reviewed <b>custody suites</b>, putting in place arrangements to help people maintain a 2m distance. These will vary for the different buildings depending on layout, but may include:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Prisoner Escort &amp; Custody Services ensure that visits are conducted safely and practically.</li> <li>- Where possible, facilities to allow legal defence professionals to communicate remotely (by phone) with prisoners from within the custody suite for a conference with their client. Prisoners with</li> </ul> </li> </ul>			

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		<p>suspected coronavirus are managed by HMPPS in compliance with PHE and PHW guidelines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introducing a ‘hands off’ bag check and requesting that court users do not bring in prohibited items (<a href="https://www.gov.uk/entering-court-or-tribunal-building">https://www.gov.uk/entering-court-or-tribunal-building</a> ) to limit the need for a close contact security search of court users at the public entrances. Walk-through detectors are used wherever possible to detect such items, and therefore reduce as far as possible, the use of hand held ‘search detectors’ at the public entrance of buildings. If an item needs to be touched, the Security Officer will use protective gloves and sanitiser to maintain hygiene. This is delivered in line with published guidance and endorsed by Public Health England/Wales: <a href="https://www.gov.uk/guidance/keeping-court-and-tribunal-buildings-safe-secure-and-clean#use-of-hand-held-detectors">https://www.gov.uk/guidance/keeping-court-and-tribunal-buildings-safe-secure-and-clean#use-of-hand-held-detectors</a></li> <li>• Allowing HMCTS staff and court users to bring in their own face covering as a reassurance measure. Paper face coverings being made available to all court staff working in public areas if they are not able to maintain social distancing and wish to wear one, and to court users on request. All face coverings being placed in a ‘no-touch bin’ at the end of use.</li> <li>• Promoting personal responsibilities for social distancing through posters and other means.</li> </ul>			
Wellbeing	Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotion of positive wellbeing of staff during these challenging times is critical and has included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Providing support through resources such as the Employee Assistance Programme, the mental health allies network, various other tools and guidance including free access to a meditation app.</li> <li>- Encouraging team members to keep regular contact, with keeping in touch guidance being put in place.</li> <li>- Introduction of new newsletter for all staff to combat feelings of isolation and loneliness, and help people adapt to new ways of working.</li> <li>- Creation of additional online learning.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>More detailed guidance to be provided for staff following the recent BEIS guidance, with Trade Union input.</p> <p>Continual monitoring including and using results from a survey in May to update any activities.</p>	HR, Property, Health & Safety and Operations.	Ongoing

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	Other court users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Communication campaigns to promote the wellbeing resources available, and the means of accessing them.</li> <li>- Positive promotion of the safety measures in place to reassure and reduce anxiety.</li> <li>• Measures to reduce the anxiety of other court users include:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Clear signage to reassure that safety measures are in place.</li> <li>- Publication of our processes and arrangements, along with channels through which to raise any concerns</li> <li>- Reassurance provided by staff members.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Regular monitoring and communications	Local managers supported by central Facilities	Ongoing