



RISK ASSESSMENT

ASSESSMENT SUBJECT: Garden Court North Offices / Covid-19 Office Recovery

LOCATIONS COVERED: All areas within Garden Court North Chambers at 3rd Floor, Blackfriars House Parsonage, Manchester M3 2JA, as well as Blackfriars House itself

Note:

Several risk assessment templates were considered to assist with this process. The Bar Council’s own template however has been used as it lends itself perfectly to our circumstances and will help ensure our compliance.

Guide to risk assessment scores:

Likelihood (“L”)	Severity (“S”)	Risk Rating	Scores Between	
1. Very low (unlikely)	1. Nuisance (discomfort – no lost time)	Scores multiplied Likelihood x Severity = Degree of risk (“DR”)	1-4	LOW RISK
2. Low (may occur)	2. Minor (up to 3 days off)		5-7	LOW TO MEDIUM RISK
3. Medium (could occur)	3. Moderate (off more than 3 days)		8-14	MEDIUM RISK
4. High (likely to occur)	4. Serious (lengthy incapacity to work)		15-19	MEDIUM TO HIGH RISK
5. Very High (near certain to occur)	5. Very serious (immediately notifiable)		20-25	HIGH RISK

ACTIVITY	PERSON(S) AT RISK	SIGNIFICANT HAZARDS	RISK			RISK CONTROL MEASURES	RESIDUAL RISK		
			L	S	DR		L	S	DR
Preparing to reopen Chambers	Employees Members Pupil barristers Visitors Contractors such as cleaners, delivery people etc BAME community members	Exposure to Covid-19 resulting from: (i) inadequate cleaning; (ii) poor ventilation; and/or (iii) inadequate evacuation procedures.	3	4	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arrange for Chambers and all the equipment within it, including computer mice, keyboards, telephones, photocopiers etc., to be deep cleaned ahead of reopening. Where possible, open windows and doors to encourage natural ventilation. Arrange for the staff and members to co-ordinate a clear out of all non-essential paperwork in accordance with the GDPR policy. Modify assembly points and ensure that fire marshals are properly trained to control them by supporting social distancing. To be confirmed with Bruntwood. (See annex below). Understand the increased risk and impact upon BAME communities in accordance with Government guidance and ensure the risk assessment as a whole addresses those risks as far as reasonably practicable. 	2	4	
Deciding who should be on site and protecting those at higher risk	Employees Members Pupil barristers Clinically vulnerable persons, those who are pregnant, and other high-risk persons.	Exposure to Covid-19 resulting from unnecessary attendance. Unnecessary exposure to Covid-19 by those with protected characteristics as a result of poor assessment and a lack of adequate provisions.	3	4	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decide the minimum number of people needed on site to operate safely and effectively. Reduce floor and/or room capacities to reflect social distancing guidelines and implement 2m separation or (1m with PPE), and also diary systems or an employee rota accordingly. The desk locations in Chambers are fixed along with the electrics. The Clerking room can therefore only accommodate 3/4 at any one time, and the member's rooms only 2/3. The hot desk area can accommodate 3 more people, and the meeting rooms 4 and 3 respectively. The divide between the meeting rooms should remain in place whenever possible. So far as is possible, continue to permit all members of chambers, employees and pupil barristers to continue to work from home according to personal circumstances and preferences. These preferences and personal concerns will be recorded in a consultation process (see the next bullet point). Consult with all members of chambers, employees and pupil barristers on an individual basis in line with GDPR guidelines in order to gain a better understanding of their circumstances and to ensure that, so far as is possible, their concerns are appropriately addressed. Take into consideration any individual risk assessments carried out in respect of clinically vulnerable persons or those who are pregnant when planning their return, and consider whether any adjustments need to be made for those with protected characteristics in order to maintain compliance with equalities legislation. 	2	4	8

<p>Communicating guidance and the site rules</p>	<p>Employees Members Pupil barristers</p>	<p>Spread of Covid-19 resulting from unclear guidance and a lack of awareness of best practice in reducing the risk of contracting the virus.</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>8</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide clear, consistent and regular communication to improve understanding and consistency of ways of working, and to manage expectations and to store relevant documents on a shared drive. • Engage with all members of chambers, employees and pupil barristers through existing communication routes to explain and agree any changes in working arrangements. The Bar Council Working Group conversely recommends setting up a dedicated Covid email address to handle internal consultations. Therefore a dedicated email address will be created with the Office Manager and Office Assistant monitoring, so that points of concern are properly recorded and addressed on an ongoing basis. • Develop communication and training materials for all members of chambers, employees and pupil barristers prior to returning to the building, especially around any new procedures for arrival at work. • Utilise internal communication channels and cascading of messages through management committees and senior management teams, and pupil supervisors, to provide reassurance and support in a fast-changing situation. 	<p>1</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>4</p>
<p>Travelling to and from work</p>	<p>Employees Members Pupil barristers</p>	<p>Exposure to Covid-19 resulting from contact with strangers on public transport or otherwise. Spread of Covid-19 resulting from internal congestion arising through building access limitations.</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>16</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government guidance on safer travel to be read by all members of chambers, employees and pupil barristers before visiting the office (link provided). Confirmation of the guide being read should be recorded. • Provide all persons with access to appropriate PPE and encourage the wearing of a face covering where possible, ensuring that all members of chambers, employees and pupil barristers are aware that it is mandatory to do so on public transport, in shops and in supermarkets. • If necessary, implement staggered arrival and departure times for employees to reduce crowding, taking account of their respective routes and the impact on those with protected characteristics. Unplanned overtime, or overstaying late in the office generally should be prohibited where possible. • Provide information on request for local parking and rates to anyone considering driving as an alternative to public transport. Also consider bike storage externally, in Blackfriars or Chambers itself (see annex below). • Provide all persons with adequate storage for personal belongings. Ensure that any lockers used on a temporary basis are cleaned thoroughly as part of the newly implemented cleaning regime. 	<p>3</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>9</p>

<p>Accessing the building, including touch points</p>	<p>Members Employees Pupil barristers Visitors Contractors such as cleaners, delivery people etc.</p>	<p>Spread of Covid-19 resulting from daily contact with touch points such as door handles, keypads required for building access etc.</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>12</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Assessment and any other relevant documentation to be read by all members of chambers, employees and pupil barristers before visiting the office, and to be provided by hyperlink in emails as well as on the GCN website for visitors and contractors to access ahead of their respective arrivals. • The Bar Council asks Chambers to consider the deactivation of any turnstiles and instead request that, in order to gain access to a building, all members of chambers, employees and pupil barristers show their pass to security personnel. These have only recently been installed by Bruntwood however so a consultation will be had with them and recorded on this document (see annex below). • Implement a new cleaning regime in consultation with existing staff. The job description, reporting lines and performance management of cleaning staff will be reconfirmed. The Bar Council advises to ensure that the office is cleaned at least twice daily and a record kept. All touch points to be cleaned therefore with alcohol-based sanitiser after use throughout the day and every evening. • Provide all persons with access to alcohol-based hand gels, and set-up easily accessible "hygiene stations" in key places such as above the keypad or security intercom. • Members of chambers, employees and pupil barristers to be reminded to wash their hands on a regular basis, with soap and water, for at least 20 seconds. Confirm with Bruntwood the introduction of signage in the toilets and around the building to that effect, and to remind those using the facilities of the importance of properly drying their hands, and securely disposing of any used paper towels, thereafter (see annex below). 	<p>2</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>8</p>
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<p>Movement around the building, including touch points</p>	<p>Members Employees Pupil barristers Contractors such as cleaners, delivery people etc.</p>	<p>Spread of Covid-19 resulting from: (i) unnecessary travel around the building; (ii) the repeated touching of lift buttons; and/or (iii) the maximum capacities for adequate social distancing being breached.</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>12</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Assessment and any other relevant documentation to be read by all members of chambers, employees and pupil barristers before visiting the office, and to be provided by hyperlink in emails as well as on the GCN website for visitors and contractors to access ahead of their respective arrivals. • Implement a new cleaning regime in consultation with existing staff. See above. • Introduce signage and floor markings if necessary to indicate a one-way flow at entry and exit points and to show social distancing guidance, as per government guidelines. • Floor and/or room capacities to be reduced to take into consideration social distancing guidance and decrease the number of persons in the office at any given time (see above). Implement restricted access to specific areas such as the Clerks’ room if necessary. • All members of chambers, employees and pupil barristers to avoid traversing the floors and to be discouraged from making non-essential trips within the building. The continued use of telephones, video conferencing software and/or instant messaging software to conduct business will be encouraged. • The Bar Council recommends the maximum occupancy for lifts to be reduced to one person at any given time and use of the stairwells to be encouraged wherever possible. This will form part of the consultation with Bruntwood (see annex below). • Where possible, doors will either be left open or the latches will be removed from them to ensure that those using them are able to nudge them open with their hips or elbows and, in doing so, reduce contact with touch points. This will not include the main entrance door as Chambers security needs to be maintained. 	<p>2</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>8</p>
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<p>Using the workplace and workstations</p>	<p>Members Employees Pupil barristers</p>	<p>Spread of Covid-19 resulting from: (i) desk/room layouts do not allow for adequate social distancing; (ii) building users not practising social distancing; and/or (iii) the use of shared touchpoints.</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>12</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Assessment and any other relevant documentation to be read by all members of chambers, employees and pupil barristers before visiting the office. • Implement additional cleaning regimes and to limit the risk of spread, ensure that available desks are not used by more than one person on any given day. Keyboards, mice, desks and phones to be cleaned by user with alcohol-based sanitiser after use and every weekday evening. • Where possible, open windows and doors frequently to encourage natural ventilation (excluding the main entrance). • Introduce signage and floor markings if necessary to reflect social distancing guidance, as per government guidelines and ask all members of chambers, employees and pupil barristers to ensure that conversations in common areas are kept to a minimum. The Bar Council specifically advises members not to socialise in Chambers or court building corridors. • Floor and/or room capacities to be reduced to take into consideration social distancing guidance and decrease the number of persons in the office at any given time. Restrict access to specific areas such as the clerks' room if necessary. • Ensure that those with fixed desks participate in a rota that allows them to sit with sufficient space between them or, alternatively, implement hot-desking and an associated booking process. Avoid face-to-face working wherever possible and if necessary install screens or barriers to separate people where it is unavoidable. • If employees are operating on a rota and therefore split in to two or more groups, they will be instructed not to mix their shifts so as to reduce the risk of exposure to themselves and their colleagues, and enable a continued service in the event of contamination. • So far as is possible, if 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. • Provide all persons who require it with access to appropriate PPE and encourage the use and safe disposal of gloves when handling deliveries and moving documents to and from court. • Install alcohol-based hand gels next to high-touch items such as photocopiers and introduce appropriate signage encouraging users to sanitise their hands before carrying out the relevant activity. Encourage all members of chambers, employees and pupil barristers to continue to work from electronic documents wherever possible. • Implement a clear desk policy and ask all members of chambers, employees and pupil barristers to ensure that they clear their respective workspaces of any personal belongings and dispose of any waste before they leave. 	<p>2</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>8</p>
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<p>Ensuring good hygiene, particularly when accessing toilet facilities</p>	<p>Members Employees Pupil barristers Visitors Contractors such as cleaners, delivery people etc.</p>	<p>Spread of Covid-19 resulting from: (i) inadequate cleaning of work areas; (ii) a lack of appropriate facilities; and/or (iii) poor hygiene</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>12</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Assessment and any other relevant documentation to be read by all members of chambers, employees and pupil barristers before visiting the office, stored on a shared drive and to be provided by hyperlink in emails as well as on the GCN website for visitors and contractors to access ahead of their respective arrivals. • Implement additional cleaning regimes, ensuring that high touch points are cleaned by staff throughout the day and every weekday evening. • Obtain the Bruntwood toilet cleaning policy and append to this assessment (see annex below). • Provide all persons with access to alcohol-based hand gels and PPE, including face coverings and latex gloves, and set-up easily accessible "hygiene stations" in key places such as keypads. • Members of chambers, employees and pupil barristers to be reminded to wash their hands on a regular basis, with soap and water, for at least 20 seconds. Introduce signage to that effect, and to remind those using the facilities of the importance of properly drying their hands, and securely disposing of any used paper towels, thereafter. 	<p>2</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>8</p>
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<p>Accessing kitchen facilities</p>	<p>Members Employees Pupil barristers</p>	<p>Spread of Covid-19 resulting from: (i) inadequate cleaning of kitchen areas; (ii) the use of shared touchpoints; and/or (iii) building users not practising social distancing;</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>12</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Assessment and any other relevant documentation to be read by all members of chambers, employees and pupil barristers before visiting the office. • Where possible, reduce kitchen facilities to a minimum and allow access only to essential equipment such as fridges and water boilers or coolers. • Implement additional cleaning regimes. All kitchen facilities, and specifically any essential equipment such as fridges and water boilers or coolers to be cleaned by user with alcohol-based sanitiser after every use and every weekday evening. • All kitchen facilities to be stocked with soap and hand sanitiser and disposable paper towels. • Install alcohol-based hand gels in the kitchen and introduce appropriate signage encouraging users to sanitise their hands before touching any essential equipment or cupboard doors. • Provide all persons who require it with access to appropriate PPE and encourage the use and safe disposal of gloves when handling catering equipment (both used and unused). • Maximum occupancy for the kitchen to be reduced to one person at any given time. Except for those employees responsible for the setting-up of catering, all members of chambers, employees and pupil barristers to ensure that they only prepare food and drink for themselves and any crockery or cutlery should be either handwashed or rinsed and put into the dishwasher. • Remove the water cooler in line with the service agreement (currently out of contract). 	<p>2</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>8</p>
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<p>Handling goods</p>	<p>Employees</p>	<p>Spread of Covid-19 resulting from the handling of potentially contaminated items.</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>8</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Assessment and any other relevant documentation to be read by all employees before visiting the office. • Provide all persons who require it with access to appropriate PPE and encourage the use and safe disposal of gloves when handling deliveries, particularly immediately after receipt. • Request that all delivery drivers leave incoming items in a secure location and, where possible, ensure that they are not moved through the building or opened for a period of at least 48 hours. Bruntwood will need to be consulted to see if permanent mail storage facilities are available on the ground floor (see annex below). • Restrict or temporarily ban non-business deliveries of personal items. This will require a change in the Health and Safety policy, wherein currently personal deliveries are permitted. 	<p>2</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>6</p>
<p>Managing visitors</p>	<p>Employees Visitors</p>	<p>Exposure to Covid-19 resulting from lack of adequate protection. Spread of Covid-19 resulting from (i) building users not practising social distancing; and/or (ii) the maximum capacities for adequate social distancing being breached.</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>12</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wherever possible, site visits should be agreed in advance and visitors should be provided with access to a copy of this Risk Assessment and any other relevant documentation before visiting the office. • Before allowing visitors or contractors to enter the main building, ask Bruntwood reception personnel to confirm with them that they are not exhibiting any common flu symptoms, have not had any person-to-person contact with someone who has exhibited coronavirus symptoms within the last seven days and have not visited an area where there has been a significant outbreak of coronavirus within the last seven days. This will need to be discussed with Bruntwood (see annex below) and GCN staff should also make the same enquires when greeting visitors. • Install alcohol-based hand gels on the reception desk and introduce appropriate signage encouraging visitors to sanitise their hands before entering the main building. • Confirm Bruntwoods' policy of ensuring visitors verbally provide security and reception personnel with their details, including any contact details that might enable effective tracing. Bruntwood will need to maintain an electronic log of anyone that they come in to contact with for 15 minutes or more and of the areas of the building they visit. 	<p>2</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>8</p>

<p>Meeting with clients internally</p>	<p>Members Employees Pupil barristers Clients</p>	<p>Exposure to Covid-19 resulting from lack of adequate protection.</p> <p>Spread of Covid-19 resulting from: (i) building users not practising social distancing; (ii) the maximum capacities for adequate social distancing being breached; and/or (iii) the use of shared touchpoints.</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>12</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The default position for all client meetings is that they should take place remotely. Risk Assessment to be read by all members of chambers, employees and pupil barristers before visiting the office, and to be provided by hyperlink in emails as well as on the GCN website for visitors and contractors to access ahead of their respective arrivals. Implement additional cleaning regimes (see above). Where the maximum capacity of any meeting rooms within the building has been reduced to reflect social distancing guidelines, adjust any booking systems accordingly and introduce appropriate signage and floor markings if necessary, and remove all unnecessary pieces of furniture to ensure that they are not accidentally utilised. This will require a clear out of the server room to better utilise the space for furniture storage. Install alcohol-based hand gels in all meeting rooms and introduce appropriate signage encouraging users to sanitise their hands before carrying out the relevant activity. Remove all high-touch items such as pen pots, notepads, biscuit bowls and promotional merchandise from meeting rooms and the reception area. Encourage only those whose attendance is necessary to participate in meetings on site and keeps any requests for catering, which should be handled by an individual member of staff with access to appropriate PPE, to a minimum. Do not allow clients to wait in reception area and instead ask staff to show them directly to the room that they will be using, ensuring that they maintain an appropriate distance from one another. 	<p>2</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>8</p>
<p>Meeting with clients externally and other forms of travel</p>	<p>Members Employees Pupil barristers</p>	<p>Exposure to Covid-19 resulting from unnecessary travel.</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>12</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk Assessment to be read by all members of chambers, employees and pupil barristers before visiting the office. Bar employees from any non-essential travel during working hours, including to meet with clients. Encourage them to continue to conduct client care meetings remotely, by video conference or otherwise. Request that, so far as is possible, all members of chambers, employees and pupil barristers bring in their own food. Encourage the visiting of shops and supermarkets only where necessary and outside of peak hours. Ensure those visiting external sites familiarise and comply with external venue risk assessments and site rules, including published Government guidelines covering public buildings, courts and prisons. 	<p>2</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>8</p>

<p>Ensuring good practice for those who are self-isolating or present as symptomatic</p>	<p>Members Employees Pupil barristers</p>	<p>Spread of Covid-19 resulting from individuals feeling that they must attend work regardless of self-isolation requirements.</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>6</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure self-isolation protocols are clearly conveyed to all members of chambers, employees and pupil barristers, including in the event that members of the same household present as symptomatic or are self-isolating. • Whilst they are presenting as symptomatic or self-isolating and only where they are fit enough to do so, enable employees to work from home, and support members of chambers and pupil barristers in doing the same. • If any person becomes unwell whilst at work, and particularly where they begin to present as symptomatic, they must notify their line manager or member of the SC before immediately removing themselves from the building. 	<p>1</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>3</p>
<p>Ensuring wellbeing</p>	<p>Members Employees Pupil barristers</p>	<p>Isolation and decreased wellbeing for those not in the building</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>6</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor the wellbeing of people who are working from home and help them stay connected to the rest of the workforce, holding regular virtual team meetings with employees regardless of location. • Ask line managers to keep in touch with employees who are working from home to ensure that their working arrangements, including their welfare, mental and physical health, and personal security, are all adequate. • Ensure wellbeing resources such as the Wellbeing at the Bar website, the Bar Council's Assistance Programme and LawCare are regularly publicised. 	<p>1</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>3</p>

Having reviewed the hazards and risks, I believe that if the control measures identified are applied, Garden Court North will, so far as is reasonably practicable, meet the requirements of this assessment including those risks faced by members of the BAME communities.

Assessment date: August-September 2020
Review date: Review on a as needed basis

Assessor: Paul Edwards
Office Manager

APPENDIX 1 – Bruntwood Consultation

The following concerns have been put to Bruntwood and the responses are as follows;

- **Have the fire evacuation points been reviewed so as to avoid crowding in the event of an evacuation?**
Yes, we're asking that instead of congregating at the usual meeting point (Parsonage Gardens), the fire marshal from each business reports to us and the rest of the team disperses away from the building, staying 2m apart from others.
- **Do the new turnstiles require physical touch? Some guidance publications suggest allowing the presentation of ID as an alternative to entry points that require touching.**
No, the speedgates only require the customer to hover their access card over the top of the card reader on the gates. They will then open automatically. The gates also default to open in the event of a fire alarm to assist the evacuation process.
- **Has the cleaning policy been reviewed? A copy that I can append to our risk assessment will be helpful.**
We don't have a cleaning policy document as such, but our cleaning team has received toolbox talks in relation to Covid-19 and PPE is available for them as required such as gloves and face masks. In common parts, we're using a new chemical specifically targeted at viruses. Selgeine Ultra CO66 has been proved to be effective against 99.99% of known viruses and is known to be effective against Swine Flu, HIV, Hepatitis C and influenza. We've increased cleaning of touchpoints in the building, including lift buttons, door handles, etc and our front of house team play an active role in this for our common areas.
- **Are the toilets displaying appropriate signage?**
Yes, we've introduced social distancing signage and we've also closed off a number of urinals, sinks and hand dryers to make sure people keep a safe distance.
- **We're looking at mail delivery options. Are their facilities downstairs to have mail delivered to a locker so we can retrieve it as we require?**
At the moment Royal Mail delivers all post to reception, and our front of house team then take this round to each customer's office. They will either post it under the door if nobody is in or knock onto the door, placing the post on the ground and taking a step back if someone is in to accept it.
- **Are there bike storage facilities in the building?**
Unfortunately not - we just don't have the space for them I'm afraid. It is something we're looking to implement in the longer term when customers in the basement move out. We have a limited number of outdoor bike racks available in the car park at Alberton House, just a 2 minute walk down St Mary's Parsonage. They're first come, first served.
Update: Hopefully a welcome surprise - we've had four bike racks installed in the basement lift lobby in an impromptu turn of events! Although it's not a huge amount, hopefully some of the GCN team will be able to make use of these. They're first come, first serve.
- **What is the maximum occupancy of the lifts? We have guidance saying it ought to be 1.**
We're encouraging people to use the stairs wherever possible and we've implemented a 'keep right' system on the stairs. Of course, we understand there will always be instances where people want or need to use the lifts, and we have a new capacity of 2 people per lift. This is based on a recommended 'back to back' position which we've marked using floor signage in the lifts.