**OFFICE OF THE INDUSTRIAL TRIBUNALS AND FAIR EMPLOYMENT TRIBUNAL (OITFET)**

**Covid-19 (Coronavirus) Safety Guidance for staff and judicial members**

As part of our continuing response to coronavirus, we are taking precautions to make sure we keep the tribunals office safe, secure and clean. In order to do this we regularly monitor and assess and make changes. The guidance below sets out what we all need to do to ensure the safety of each other and the public. This guidance will be kept up to date as Executive guidelines and Public Health Agency information changes.

The OITFET management team have a responsibility to take all reasonably practicable measures to implement a safe working environment during the current emergency, but equally, all staff and judicial members have a collective responsibility to follow instructions regarding safe working practices.

I have set out the measures that will be implemented in relation to your safety and describe the steps that **you** need to follow to be safe when working in Killymeal House.

Please do not hesitate to contact me, Noleen Smylie or Denise McLaughlin for any clarification or assistance.

**Joanne Williams**

**A/Secretary to the Tribunals**

**Safety Checklist**

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| **To ensure your safety, the management team will:** | **To ensure your safety, you should:** |
| **Minimise the risk of exposure to coronavirus, by:** * Undertaking a Risk Assessment of Killymeal House to include all restricted and public areas, a copy of which will be issued to all staff following consultation with the Trade Union and the Department;
* Facilitating a rota for home working for all staff and judicial members who are not required to work in or from the office;
* A senior manager asking each member of their team to confirm that they do not have symptoms of coronavirus, on a daily basis. Anyone displaying symptoms will be sent home to isolate and close contacts will be identified;
* Providing all staff and judicial members with guidance on how to work safely at home and within the office;
* Displaying clear signage throughout Killymeal House;
* Designating a single point of contact (SPOC), Noleen Smylie, responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the Covid Safety plan;
* Carrying out spot checks to ensure compliance with guidance and assess risk; and
* Carrying out a regular review of the risk assessment and communicating progress to all staff and judicial members.
 | * Read and follow the Risk Assessment for the building and be aware of the measures that have been introduced;
* Not attend Killymeal House if you are displaying any of the symptoms of Coronavirus;
* Inform your line manager/President or Vice President if you feel you have any symptoms such as a persistent cough and/or a fever or a recent loss of smell/taste;
* Inform your manager/President or Vice President if you develop or become aware of any condition that may put you in the vulnerable group as set out in NHS guidance;
* Only attend Killymeal House if scheduled to do so and remain there for no longer than required;
* Follow the directions of the SPOC and the premises team who are responsible for ensuring the implementation of the risk assessment and safety protocols;
* Be alert to and follow signage;
* Report any issues or concerns to the SPOC/President or Vice President (or a senior manager if the SPOC or Deputy SPOC are not available);
* Be understanding of and comply with guidance and the ongoing risk assessment; and
* Keep up to date with progress reports and any new measures introduced.
* Wear a face covering when entering and leaving the building and at all times when away from your desk.
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| **Minimise the risk of surface transmission of coronavirus, by:*** Arranging covid cleans on confirmation of a case of coronavirus;
* Facilitating an enhanced cleaning regime to focus on touch points;
* Introducing a new “housekeeper” cleaning regime for all toilet facilities to include sanitising stations in the toilet corridors, regular cleaning of toilets and appropriate signage;
* Introducing additional cleaning of hearing rooms after each hearing has concluded;
* Implementing a “touch it, clean it” policy before and after use of office equipment;
* Ensuring adequate supplies of warm water and soap in washroom facilities;
* Providing additional hand sanitizing facilities at key locations throughout the building;
* Providing a sanitising station and ‘no touch’ bin at entry points in the building;
* Removing coat racks; and
* Carrying out regular management checks to ensure necessary procedures are being followed.
 | * Keep your workstation and other work spaces clear of personal items and papers;
* Wash your hands with soap and water regularly and particularly following any hearings or touching of hard surfaces;
* Use the additional hand sanitizing facilities and ‘no touch’ bins that have been provided;
* Bring your own hand sanitiser in to the tribunal room if you feel this is necessary;
* Abide by the “Touch it, Clean it” policy - wipe down surfaces of office equipment you use before and after use;
* Let a member of the premises team know if you notice that sanitising supplies are running low;
* Avoid touching anything you do not need to touch;
* Consider others by keeping communal areas clean and clutter free and wiping down after use;
* Use gloves when handling post/files or using any filing cabinets;
* Use only your own crockery/cutlery, clean and store in your own tambour;
* Do not make refreshments for others;
* Hang coats/jackets/cardigans/handbags etc on the back of your chair; and
* Report any breaches to line management/ SPOC/President or Vice President.
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| **Minimise the risk of airborne transmission of coronavirus, by:*** Implementing social distancing measures throughout the building to ensure 2 metre separation between individuals which will be revised in accordance with Executive guidance;
* Displaying signage to indicate how you can maintain social distancing;
* Displaying signage to indicate the maximum capacity of rooms;
* Providing direction on the use of alternative means of ventilation such as the opening of windows and use of electric fans (limited to those who have medical need); and
* Providing face coverings and gloves to all on request
 | * Maintain a safe 2 metre distance from other people in the building at all times;
* Observe the social distancing measures that have been implemented, and follow the directions on the signage that is displayed;
* Not remove any signage or hazard tape;
* Follow the directions of the SPOC and Premises team who are responsible for ensuring the implementation of the risk assessment and safety protocols;
* Keep windows open for additional ventilation;
* Inform management if you require a fan for medical reasons and if so take responsibility for keeping it clean and dust free; and
* Wear face coverings on entrance and exit to the building and at all times whilst away from your desk.
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| **Ensure social distancing on arrival and exit by:** * Introducing staggered start times for staff/judiciary and hearings when necessary to do so;
* Providing hand sanitizing facilities at entry points;
* Introducing a queuing system (using taped social distancing markings) to manage people accessing Killymeal House at any time. This will be strictly limited to 1 person at a time unless from the same household;
* Limiting access to the building to the side door for judiciary/panel and staff (with the exception of staff working on reception) to reduce the number of people entering the building through the front door and avoid staff interaction with members of the public;
* Having reception staff confirm with visitors that they are not displaying any of the symptoms of COVID-19. Anyone displaying symptoms will be refused entry;
* Installing a protective screen at reception;
* Implementing a one-way system in Killymeal House on the hearing room floors to prevent unnecessary contact with and between visitors to the building; and
* Restricting use of lifts to one person at any time unless from the same household.
 | * Where implemented, adhere to your allocated start time;
* Ensure you enter/exit the building by the side entrance only and one person at a time;
* When exiting the building you must clean the exit push button before leaving the building;
* Use hand sanitiser, masks and gloves provided;
* Allow enough time to observe social distancing and hygiene guidance;
* Abide by social distancing protocols for movement within Killymeal House as outlined in guidance and signage such as entering the building one person at a time;
* Move directly to your office/hearing room to keep communal areas clear;
* Communicate clearly with and show respect to the reception and premises staff and recognise that their work keeps us all safe;
* Raise any concerns in relation to anyone you feel may be displaying symptoms with the SPOC/President or Vice President;
* Inform SPOC of breaches of social distancing immediately; and
* Use other ways of working/communicating to avoid unnecessary contact whilst in the office environment such as email/phone.
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| **Ensure social distancing in public areas by:*** Limiting the number of cases that will take place in the building and on each floor each day including staggered arrival times and ensuring that participants do not re-enter waiting/consultation areas after a case has been completed;
* Displaying social distancing signage and posters in prominent locations throughout the building;
* Providing signage to advise on maximum capacity of each room and reminding visitors not to move the furniture which has been designated for use;
* Regularly assessing social distancing in common areas; Asking visitors to move should they not be adhering to the rules;
* Introducing a one way system around the hearing floors. Entry will be via the waiting rooms. Entry to the hearing rooms will be via the side corridor and only when directed to do so by the hearing clerk;
* Spacing seating in waiting areas in 2 metre gaps;
* Removing those chairs that cannot be used from these areas or taping furniture off to indicate that they should not be used.
* A maximum of 13 people will be allowed to use each waiting area at any one time. Signage will be displayed indicating maximum occupancy;
* Rearranging furniture in consultation rooms to ensure 2 metre social distancing measures are in place. Chairs that cannot be used will be removed from the area or taped off to indicate that they cannot be used. Furniture should not be moved in the rooms. A maximum of 2 people will be allowed in the consultation rooms at any time and will not be permitted to use the rooms once a hearing has been completed. Signage will be displayed indicating maximum occupancy;
* Restricting the use of the lift to one person at a time unless from the same household;
* Providing signage and guidance in relation to toilet facilities to include directions for safe use and good hand hygiene as outlined above; and
* Cleaning staff will complete a visible checklist to indicate the date and time the toilet facility was cleaned.
 | * Keep time spent in public areas to a minimum;
* Ensure maximum room capacity is not exceeded and ensure strict social distancing is adhered to;
* Ensure when interacting with parties that you adhere strictly to social distancing;
* Direct visitors to signage if they are appear unsure;
* Report any breaches of social distancing protocols immediately to the SPOC/President or Vice President;
* Report any concerns or issues in a timely manner;
* Do not confront visitors - contact the SPOC who will deal with any policing of the social distancing protocols; and
* Do not move misplaced furniture – call on a member of the premises team who will reposition it appropriately;
* Use the lift one person at a time unless from the same household.
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| **Ensure social distancing within hearing rooms by:** * Providing signage to indicate which seats are in use and by whom;
* Positioning the clerk at the back of the hearing room;
* Limiting movement within the hearing rooms;
* Restricting access to hearing rooms to one person at a time with social distance queuing outside the hearing room;
* Placing tape at an appropriate social distance for queuing;
* Employment Judges conducting some preliminary hearings remotely to reduce the need for parties to attend Killymeal House;
* Erecting signage to remind visitors that social distancing rules must be observed at all times;
* Outlining clear directions in relation to the capacity of hearing rooms:

1, 4 and 8 – 15 (including the panel and hearing clerk); 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9 and 10 – 10 (including the panel and hearing clerk)* Room 7 will be closed to the public;
* Seating will be spaced out in 2 metre gaps. Those chairs that cannot be used will be removed from the area or taped off to indicate that they cannot be used. Where possible, all seating will be labelled for attendees;
* The use of ipads, laptops and other devices are the responsibility of the user. The user must ensure that the device is not shared by other attendees;
* Attendees will be asked to bring their own holy book to the hearing with them. Where necessary, Holy books and laminated oaths/affirmations will not be handled by anyone other than the hearing clerk;
* Sanitising agents and disposal units will be strategically placed on hearing room floors;
* Water and glasses will be removed from the hearing rooms - attendees may bring plastic bottles only into the hearing room. No food is allowed in the hearing room.
 | * Understand that the typical familiar tribunal hearing room seating layouts will have changed;
* Ensure that capacity is not exceeded when scheduling hearings;
* Ensure the start time of hearings is strictly adhered to as this will assist the safe movements of attendees, staff and judicial members around the building;
* Make sure you are clear about what should happen in the hearing room in respect of seating arrangements and oath/affirmations;
* Seek clarification from your manager in advance of the hearing if unsure of any aspect of the hearing;
* Speak to the employment judge in advance of entering the hearing room to ensure you know what their expectation is for the proceedings;
* Draw the employment judge’s attention to any potential difficulties in advance of the hearing;
* Follow the direction of the premises team in relation to social distancing in hearing rooms;
* Report any breach of social distancing to the SPOC/President or Vice President immediately;
* Observe any hearing specific protocols;
* Do not allow parties to share papers or electronic equipment without using gloves;
* Not remove any signage or hazard tape;
* Bring your own water into the hearing room if required and remove/dispose of the plastic bottle afterwards. Glass is not permitted in the hearing room.
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| **Ensure social distancing within all other rooms by:*** Indicating the maximum occupancy of rooms;
* Reconfiguring seating to allow for social distancing removing/taping off seats where necessary;
* Displaying clear floor markings and directional signage around the building;
* Restricting access to the following rooms:
* 3rd floor Kitchen – only 3 people can be in the kitchen at one time and should maintain 2 metre distancing;
* Kitchen areas on all other floors – only 1 person at a time;
* A maximum of 3 people in the 4th floor conference room at any time;
* A maximum of 3 people in the 4th floor Library at any one time;
* Store rooms – only 1 person should use any of the store rooms at one time.
* Bundle store – a maximum of 2 people;
* Staff will no longer be providing refreshments;
* All previously shared crockery/cutlery will be removed from the kitchen areas/tea points;
* Providing signage and guidance in relation to toilet facilities for use by visitors to include directions for safe use and good hand hygiene as outlined above;
* Cleaning staff will complete a visible checklist to indicate the date and time the toilet facility was cleaned; and
* Encouraging staff and judicial members to bring packed lunches to avoid use of high touch point equipment such as microwaves etc and eating at their desks/retiring rooms where possible
 | * Understand that familiar practice and procedures may have to change to comply with social distancing;
* Not remove any signage or hazard tape;
* Follow the direction of SPOC and/or premises staff;
* Observe any one way walking systems or queues. Follow the one way system on the hearing floors to minimise the amount of people you will pass by. This might mean it takes longer to move around the building, but please be patient – it is there to keep you, your colleagues and the public safe;
* Observe social distancing measures introduced in respect of communal areas;
* Do not make drinks/prepare food for anyone else;
* Where possible, bring a packed lunch and eat at your desk;
* Clean kitchen appliances properly immediately after use;
* Wipe down any hard surfaces such as door handles, light switches, desks/tables, chair arms etc after use; and
* Use hand sanitiser before using photocopiers/scanner buttons and CISCO touch screens before use.
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| **Consider the possible wider implications of the Coronavirus Pandemic on Staff by:*** Promoting mental health & wellbeing awareness to staff both in Killymeal and at home;
* Promoting physical wellbeing while in Killymeal and when remote working;
* Encouraging staff to take regular breaks;
* Providing flexibility around break times;
* Providing support generally and specifically, when guided by individual needs;
* Encouraging managers to ensure regular contact with teams;
* Encouraging managers to undertake online training in respect of health and safety aspects of remote working as well as training designed to assist in supporting staff;
* Signposting staff to welfare information and online support;
* Providing revised Emergency Evacuation and First Aid Guidance
* Requiring Staff and judiciary to sign in and out of the building throughout the day for the purposes of ensuring a record is accessible in the event of evacuation. A roll call system will be utilised.
 | * Be aware of your own mental and physical health and wellbeing
* When remote working make sure you are working in a safe and comfortable environment;
* Take proper breaks;
* Be aware of and follow Departmental guidance on safe remote working;
* Keep in regular contact with your managers and colleagues who can offer support;
* Recognise when you are feeling anxious or under too much pressure and speak to your manager; and
* Make yourself aware of revised Emergency Evacuation procedures and First Aid advice;
* Sign in and out of the building throughout the day using the sheet placed at the back door for this purpose.
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**All of the above guidance is subject to continuing review and will be updated as issues arising are addressed and circumstances change.**

**KEY CONTACTS**

In addition to your direct line manager, if you need to raise an issue or concern you can contact any of the following members of staff:

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| **Single Point of Contact (SPOC)** | **Deputy SPOC** |
| Noleen Smylie, Head of Premises TeamTel: 028 902 50055Ext: 50055Noleen.smylie@economyni.gov.uk | Denise McLaughlin, Premises Team ManagerTel: 028 902 50040Ext: 50040Denise.mclaughlin@economyni.gov.uk |
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