**Keeping Killymeal House Safe Secure and Clean**

This document provides details about cleaning and social-distancing arrangements in Killymeal House during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. It has been developed in line with the risk assessment and is there to minimise risk to you, our staff and the Judiciary.

Please also refer to the guide “[Covid](https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/court-venue-safety-during-covid-19) 19 Safety Guidance for users of Killymeal House” which can be accessed on our website.

**Covid-19 secure risk assessment**

Please refer to the risk assessment for Killymeal House which can be accessed on our website. These arrangements are to help us maintain the safety of all visitors to our building and are in line with Public Health Agency guidance.

Look out for our information posters to guide you when you are in the building.

A deep clean of Killymeal House took place before the building re-opened. Additional cleaning is taking place throughout the day with particular attention to touch points and toilets.

**Do not attend if you are unwell or self-isolating**

You should not attend the tribunal if you have symptoms of COVID-19, or are self-isolating because you live with someone that does. Symptoms of COVID-19 may include a new persistent cough, a fever, or a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste.

If you cannot attend you should contact the office at your earliest convenience either by email at mail@employmenttribunalsni.org or by telephoning the office on (028) 90 327666.

**Face Coverings**

Please note that from Monday 12th October you are required to wear a face covering on entry and throughout the duration of your visit to Killymeal House unless you are exempt from wearing one.

You may be asked to temporarily remove your face covering when providing evidence. If you need to communicate with someone who relies on lip reading, facial expressions and clear sound, they may ask you to remove your face covering.

If you forget to bring a face covering with you, please ask a member of staff at reception who can provide you with one. Please note that the disposable face covering should be disposed of in the bin at the reception area when leaving the building.

**Food and water in our buildings**

Make sure you bring sufficient food and bottled water with you for your visit.

Only plastic bottles are permitted into the building, any glass bottles will be retained by reception staff.

We have closed our water dispensers and removed water carafes and glasses from the hearing rooms.

You will be able to take bottled water into the hearing room but food is not allowed.

**Keeping safe when queuing**

* Staff and Judiciary will enter and exit the building by another entrance point to avoid access issues;
* Arrive at the time allotted to minimise the build-up of queues. The arrival and start times of all our hearings will be staggered to reduce foot flow throughout the building;
* Please play your part by observing the social distancing requirements while queuing;
* You should not enter until you are invited to do so by a member of the reception staff;
* If you appear to have symptoms you will not be invited into the building. You will need to contact the tribunal and your legal representative by phone;
* Show respect to the reception staff and recognise that their work keeps us all safe.

**Reception**

* You **must** sanitise your hands at the sanitising station on your right hand side as you enter the building;
* A plexiglass screen has been erected between staff and the public;
* The visitor’s book has been removed. Instead, your information will be recorded by a member of reception staff;
* You will be asked to confirm your name;
* If you are a lead[[1]](#footnote-1) member for the purposes of track and trace you will be asked to confirm your contact telephone number. We must know, at least 72 hours in advance, how many people will be in your party and their names;
* You will be asked to confirm that you do not have any symptoms of COVID-19; and
* You will be directed to your designated waiting area. If that area is on another floor, you may use the stairs or the lift. Only one person may use the lift at one time unless you are from the same household.

**At all times social distancing and the one way system must be observed**

**Waiting Area**

A maximum of 13 people may use the waiting area at any one time and only designated seating may be used while you wait.  Signage will identify which seats may be used. Please remain in the waiting area until such times as the clerk advises you to move to your hearing room.

A maximum of 2 people may use a consultation room at any time.

Please note that there are no consultation room facilities available in Adelaide House.

**PLEASE DO NOT MOVE ANY FURNITURE**

Should the Tribunal rise for a break attendees will be directed by the Clerk to either remain seated or return to the waiting area.

When your case has finished for the day you must leave the building **immediately**. The waiting area and consultation room cannot be re-entered.

**Please ensure that you follow the one way system at all times**

Some windows in the waiting area and consultation rooms will be left open during the day. Please do not close them.

Random checks will be performed by premises staff to ensure that measures are being adhered to.

**Entry to the Hearing room**

You must maintain social distance when entering the hearing room. A sanitising station will be available in the corridor leading to the hearing rooms.

We have carried out a spatial analysis of all our hearing rooms which indicates the maximum capacity of each room. A seating plan will be displayed outside the hearing room. Seating has been numbered and you will be allocated a seat number on entry. Please only sit in the seat allocated to you throughout the day. The furniture and seating in each room has been arranged to ensure social distancing is observed. You must **NOT** move any furniture. Please ensure that the chair remains within the taped area.

**Hearing room protocol**

All parties must comply with social distancing requirements while in the hearing room. Mobile phones must remain on silent throughout proceedings in line with normal court etiquette. It is an offence under the Coronavirus Act 2020 to make any unauthorised recording of the proceedings.

Users and visitors may bring in their own face covering and/or gloves as a reassurance measure.

Waste paper bins will be available in the building for the disposal of face coverings or hygiene items at the end of use.

Bundles and papers must be submitted 5 days in advance of the hearing to enable the papers to be quarantined for 72 hours before they can be provided to the Employment Judge.

Parties and witnesses cannot seek to introduce additional documents at hearing for public health reasons without leave of the tribunal. Where such an application is made, the hearing may have to be adjourned for special measures to be undertaken to limit risk and this may involve an award of costs against a party.

Please note that OITFET staff will be unable to provide copies of any documents.

Some hearings will take place over 3 rooms with the panel in the main hearing room, the claimant’s side in a second room and the respondent’s side in a third room. Video conferencing screens have been installed in each room. You will be given the access code to the hearing on the morning. These are touch screens so you **must** sanitise your hands before entering the code or otherwise touching the screen.

Free Wi-Fi is now active in Killymeal House. Should you wish to avail of Wi-Fi an account will need to be set up for you and you will need to contact us **no later than 24 hours in advance** of the hearing to have this set up . The use of electronic devices such as laptops or ipads is permissible during the hearing but must not be shared with any other participants.

**Taking the Oath and Affirmation**

For the duration of the pandemic, where possible you should bring your own holy book with you to take the oath. If this is not possible, you should inform the office at least 72 hours in advance of your hearing so that the holy book you wish to use can be quarantined for a period of at least 48 hours. Following use of the holy book, it will be quarantined for a further 48 hours.

**Affirming**

The hearing clerk will read out the affirmation and ask you to repeat it.

**Leaving the Hearing room**

At the conclusion of proceedings, or following an adjournment, all parties must maintain social distancing as they leave the hearing room.  Where an attendee needs to exit the hearing room at an undesignated time (e.g. comfort break) they must observe social distancing requirements and follow the one way system.

When the proceedings conclude for the day, all parties must leave the building immediately. The room will be cleaned at the end of each day.

You must take all documentation with you when you leave.

**Feeling unwell**

If you become unwell when you are in the building you should alert the employment judge or hearing clerk immediately. If the symptoms you are experiencing could be an indication that you are suffering from COVID19, you should leave the building immediately.

**Media/Public attendance**

As capacity within the hearing rooms is limited, media representatives or any member of the public who wishes to attend a hearing must contact the office at least 24 hours in advance either by email on mail@employmenttribunalsni.org or by phoning (028) 9032 7666 to make necessary arrangements.

Please do not attend unless you have been given permission to do so.

**Ventilation**

The air conditioning units in Killymeal House bring in fresh air and expel stale air and therefore there is a constant stream of fresh air circulating. In addition, in the rooms that have windows, these will remain open to provide additional flow of fresh air.

Please be advised that the rooms are considerably cooler than you may expect. The heating temperature cannot be increased. You are therefore advised to dress appropriately.

**Toilets**

All toilet facilities are being cleaned on an hourly basis. Please ensure that the toilet lid is down before flushing to avoid spray. In the unlikely event that there is insufficient hand soap, please advise a member of staff as soon as possible.

**FIRE ALARM**

In the event of an emergency evacuation, the hearing clerk will direct you to leave the building and where to go to. Please note that in these circumstances the social distancing measures to do not apply.

**What you can expect**

To help reduce the spread of the virus:

* We will make soap and hand drying facilities available to you
* Cleaning staff will regularly check the supply of soap and hand drying facilities throughout the day and will replenish if supplies are running low
* We will regularly check the supply of hand sanitiser
* We will carry out regular cleaning of frequently touched surfaces throughout the day
* Our premises staff are carrying out additional checks through the day. They will close off areas within the building where standards are not as they should be
* We will provide additional hand sanitizing facilities at key locations throughout the building

And here is what you should do:

* Do not attend if you are displaying any symptoms of COVID-19
* Follow NHS advice on handwashing
* Regularly use handwashing facilities whilst on the premises
* Avoid touching your face as much as possible
* Tell a member of staff if supplies of soap or hand towels are running low so that we can quickly put things right
* Avoid touching anything you do not need to
* Follow the directions of staff and adhere to the signage erected
* Follow the one way system
* Keep your face covering on until asked to remove it by the employment judge
1. In support of the track and trace system, we need to provide the PHA with contact details of users of the building in the event of a COVID-19 incident. The claimant(s) and the respondent(s) in each case will be designated as the “lead member” for each party. That person will be responsible for providing the PHA with contact details of their witnesses and/or supporters if they are asked to do so by the PHA. The lead member of each party will be asked to confirm the contact details we have on record on arrival at Killymeal House. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)