

**OFFICE OF THE INDUSTRIAL TRIBUNALS AND FAIR EMPLOYMENT TRIBUNAL**

**(OITFET)**

**KILLYMEAL HOUSE**

**COVID-19 RISK ASSESSMENT**

**16 JUNE 2020**

## **NOTE FROM THE SECRETARY ON RE-OPENING THE OFFICE OF THE INDUSTRIAL TRIBUNALS AND FAIR EMPLOYMENT TRIBUNAL**

Covid-19 (Coronavirus) has radically changed the way we are able to operate. The services that the OITFET and Tribunals provide have a very important part to play in supporting the economy and ensuring timely access to justice for those who have employment disputes.

It is of paramount importance that we all play our part in the Executive's efforts to contain the spread of the virus and thereby protect the NHS and save lives. The Executive have continued to advise that the primary control to avoid exposure to the virus is to work from home where you can. However, there is a significant amount of work which can only be done in, and from, the office and arrangements now need to be put in place for this which incorporate all possible measures to ensure the safety, health and wellbeing of all users of the building.

In the context of Tribunal proceedings, as far as is reasonably practicable, and in accordance with Presidential Guidance and direction, hearings shall take place either in Killymeal House where necessary and safe to do so, by remote facilities using Webex, or a combination of both (hybrid model). There is a clear need to deliver appropriate services at pace to deal with those hearings that have been postponed during the lockdown period and ensure that the public have access to justice. The general approach will be to ensure that the smallest number of staff and visitors possible attend our offices at any one time.

OITFET staff and the Judiciary were consulted on the content of the initial risk assessment.

In consultation with the Trade Union and the Departmental Health and Safety Advisor the risk assessment process has been completed and agreement reached in regard to the additional measures necessary to reduce and control the risks from Covid-19.

A deep clean of the building has taken place, social distancing and additional hygiene measures put in place, and a stock of PPE has been received.

### **Continual Risk Assessment**

A single point of contact (SPOC) will be responsible for the implementation and monitoring of this actions resulting from this risk assessment. **Noleen Smylie** will undertake this role with Denise McLaughlin deputising in her absence and will monitor all actions necessary to reduce and control the risks, complete a weekly review assessment, report to the head of branch and communicate any issues or concerns to all staff and the judiciary.

Killymeal House will re-open on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> July 2020.

**Joanne Williams**

**Acting Secretary**

**OITFET COVID-19 Risk Assessment and Action Plan – Office of the Industrial Tribunals and Fair Employment Tribunal**

The purpose of this risk assessment is to safely manage the return to Killymeal House for the purposes of conducting Industrial and Fair Employment Tribunals.

**What are the hazards?** – Spread of Covid-19 (Coronavirus)

**Who might be harmed?** – Staff, Judiciary, Visitors, Contractors, Drivers, Vulnerable groups e.g. elderly, pregnant workers, those with underlying health conditions

Controls required	By who?	By when?	Completed	Additional controls
<b>Cleaning</b> Staff and Judiciary to clear work spaces of personal items and papers to facilitate deep clean	Staff and Judges	17 <sup>th</sup> and 18 <sup>th</sup> June	18.06.20	
Initial deep clean before office re-opens	Contractor	Week ending 28 <sup>th</sup> June (TBC)	05.07.20	Further deep cleans required on confirmation of a case of coronavirus
Additional resource required to clean objects and surfaces that are touched regularly particularly in areas of high use such as toilets, door handles, light switches, lift buttons, handrails, photocopiers, trolleys etc using sanitising products provided. This will also include cleaning of each hearing room immediately after use.	Housekeeper	To be facilitated from day 1 of hearings taking place in the building.		Cleaners will clean down workstations, toilets and hearing rooms each morning. Toilets will be cleaned hourly. “Touch it, Clean it” policy to be implemented e.g. before and after cleaning of office equipment such as photocopiers, staff must wipe down the surfaces they have used. Rigorous checks will be carried out by line managers to ensure that the necessary procedures are being followed – guidance will be provided.



<p>reduce footfall and numbers of staff in the building at any one time to reduce potential for queuing to form;</p> <p>Reception staff will call forward the next person to enter the building by mechanically opening the door/signalling to the person to enter;</p> <p>A plexiglass shield will be put in place at the reception desk;</p> <p>On entry to the building all visitors will be asked to confirm that they do not have symptoms of coronavirus in line with NHS guidance i.e. persistent cough and/or a fever or a recent loss of smell/taste. If anyone appears to have, or discloses that they have, symptoms consistent with Covid-19, they will be refused entry;</p> <p>Visitors must sign in to the building as a health and safety precaution. To avoid potential risks reception staff will record the names of attendees.</p> <p>All staff will be asked by the senior manager of their team to confirm that they do not have symptoms of coronavirus in line with NHS guidance i.e. persistent cough and/or a fever or a recent loss of smell/taste. If anyone appears to have, or discloses that they have, symptoms consistent with Covid-19, they will be sent home and asked to isolate;</p>	<p>Reception staff</p> <p>Premises team</p> <p>Reception staff</p> <p>Reception staff</p> <p>Line managers</p>		<p>12.06.20</p>	<p>To be included in FAQs and placed on the website; incorporated into signage placed at the entrance and included in information leaflet issued with NOH letters.</p> <p>To be included in FAQs and placed on the website; incorporated into signage placed at the entrance and included in information leaflet issued with NOH letters.</p>
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<p>A sanitising station and “no-touch” bin receptacle will be installed at reception and the side door. The bin will be emptied twice a day (mid-day and before the house-keeper leaves) and disposed of in line with PHA guidance.</p> <p>Seating in reception area will be removed.</p>	<p>Premises team</p> <p>Premises team</p>			<p>Reception staff to advise premises team when replenishment of stock is required.</p>
<p><b><u>Public areas</u></b></p> <p>Signage: social distancing posters will be displayed in prominent locations throughout the building; advice on maximum capacity of each room within the building will also be displayed and visitors reminded not to move the furniture which has been designated for use.</p> <p>Social distancing: will be regularly assessed in the common use areas and visitors asked to move should they not be adhering to the rules.</p> <p>A one way system around the hearing floors will be introduced. 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. To facilitate social distancing the floor will be taped to indicate appropriate spacing.</p> <p>Waiting areas: chairs 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 should not be used. A maximum of 13</p>	<p>Premises team</p>	<p>All to be completed by 17<sup>th</sup> July</p>		<p>All public areas are covered by CCTV and compliance with social distancing will be monitored. Where there are breaches of this, reception staff will immediately inform the SPOC.</p> <p>Floor to be taped and information posters erected. Fires Safety Unit to be consulted.</p> <p>Appropriate signage to indicate maximum capacity to be erected.</p>

<p>people will be allowed to use the waiting area at any one time.</p> <p>Consultation rooms: furniture will be re-arranged in these rooms to ensure 2m social distancing measures are in place. Those 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 3 people will be allowed in the consultation rooms at any time.</p> <p>Lifts: Only one person can use the lift at a time.</p> <p>Toilets: all toilet facilities in the building are single use. A sanitising station will be placed in the toilet corridor. Signage will be placed on each door in regard to good hand hygiene and all users advised to ensure that before flushing the toilet lid should be closed to avoid a cloud of spray in a confined space.</p> <p>The cleaners will thoroughly clean the toilets first thing each morning and on an hourly basis throughout the day and sign a checklist on the outside of the toilet door to indicate that this has been completed.</p>				<p>Appropriate signage to be erected in and outside of toilets.</p> <p>Erect checklists on all toilet doors. This will be checked for compliance by the premises officer on a daily basis.</p>
<p><b><u>Judicial entrance to hearing rooms</u></b></p> <p><b>Rooms 1, 4 and 8</b></p>				

<p>Entry to the room will be in the order in which the Tribunal sit i.e.  Panel member 1  Employment Judge  Panel member 2  Hearing clerk  Exit from the room will be in the reverse</p> <p><b>Rooms 3, 5 and 10</b>  Entry to the room will be in the order in which the Tribunal sit i.e.  Hearing clerk  Panel member 1  Employment Judge  Panel member 2  Exit from the room will be in the reverse</p>				
<p><b><u>Hearing rooms</u></b></p> <p>All preliminary hearings will take place by electronic means for the foreseeable future to minimise risk to staff, judiciary and the public.</p> <p>Interim relief hearings, full hearings and those cases which, in the opinion of the President, require a hearing in person will be held in Killymeal on a staggered basis.</p> <p>Plexi-glass will be erected between each person on the bench.</p> <p>Signage: social distancing posters will be displayed in prominent locations throughout the building including the hearing rooms. How the room is set</p>	<p>Properties Division</p> <p>Premises team</p>	<p>Awaiting confirmation of date for erection</p>		<p>Guidance will be issued to attendees in advance of the hearing and will be included in FAQs and will be reviewed in line with Executive guidance on social distancing measures</p>

<p>up for social distancing will also be displayed outside the hearing rooms.</p> <p>Social distancing: entry in to the hearing room will be one at a time, maintaining the appropriate social distance by following the floor markers, and in the following order on the basis of where that person will be sitting (that being the person(s) sitting closest to the bench first etc):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Barristers</li> <li>2. Solicitors</li> <li>3. Claimant</li> <li>4. Respondent</li> <li>5. Witnesses</li> <li>6. Interpreters (where required)</li> <li>7. Public (including press)</li> </ol> <p>In rooms 1, 4 and 8 the maximum capacity is 11 In rooms 3, 5 and 10 the maximum capacity is 7</p> <p>Where there are greater numbers involved in each hearing, it will be the responsibility of the judge, in consultation with the parties, to decide whether the hearing should be postponed, whether numbers can be reduced or staggered or whether it is appropriate for the hearing to be viewed in another room using remote technology. Rooms 3, 6 and 9 will be used for overspill/holding areas/remote viewing rooms where there is insufficient capacity in the designated hearing room. These rooms will be subject to the same high level of social distancing and hygiene</p>	<p>Hearing clerk</p>			
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<p>measures as any other hearing room. The maximum capacity in these rooms will be 7.</p> <p>Seating: chairs 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 numbered/labelled for attendees.</p> <p>Where there are greater numbers involved in each hearing, it will be the responsibility of the judge, in consultation with the parties, to decide whether the hearing should be postponed, whether numbers can be reduced or staggered or whether it is appropriate for the hearing to be viewed in another room using remote technology.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Holy books and laminated oaths/affirmations will not be handled by anyone other than the hearing clerk.</p> <p>Sanitising agents and no touch disposal units will be strategically placed on hearing room floors.</p> <p>Water and glasses will be removed from the hearing rooms. Attendees may bring plastic bottles only into the hearing room.</p>				
<p><b><u>Staff areas</u></b></p>				

<p>A staff and judicial rota will be introduced to reduce the number of staff and judiciary in the building at any one time. Only essential staff and judiciary will be in the office on a daily basis and will adhere to the following measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Relevant signage will be displayed throughout the office floors to serve as reminders to actions that need to be taken regularly e.g. handwashing, cleaning equipment etc;</li> <li>▪ A maximum of 3 desks will be used in each bank at any given time;</li> <li>▪ Staff may not use a desk, tambour unit, tray, stationery or telephone that is not their own;</li> <li>▪ Cleaning staff will be responsible for cleaning down desks each morning and staff will be advised to clean their own workstation on return from a hearing or have been away from their desk and touched a hard surface;</li> <li>▪ Sanitising agents will be made available across the offices as well as gloves and face masks;</li> <li>▪ The office will adhere to a strict “Touch it, Clean it” policy. Any hardware that is touched by a member of staff must be cleaned by that person immediately after use e.g. photocopier, hot water geiser, microwave, fridge door (this is not an exhaustive list).</li> </ul>			<p>To be reviewed in light of any Executive easement of the 2m social distancing rule</p> <p>Staff guidance/FAQ document detailing all of the measures to be provided</p> <p>Water to be tested for compliance with health and safety in relation to safe consumption.</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The kitchen will be opened to one user at a time. A flexible approach to break times will be implemented.</li> <li>▪ The glass room will no longer be used as a rest room.</li> <li>▪ The water dispensers will be removed as this is a heavy use contact point.</li> <li>▪ Staff must use their own cutlery and crockery and must clean it immediately after use and store in their own tambour unit and not in the kitchen. All shared crockery will be removed from all kitchen areas.</li> <li>▪ Refreshment facilities for panel members will be removed.</li> <li>▪ Coat racks will be removed – staff should hang coats on the back of their own chairs.</li> <li>▪ There will be no face to face meetings with external people.</li> <li>▪ The only face to face meetings that can take place are those that are of a sensitive nature within the office and are restricted to 15 minutes maximum. The organiser of any such meeting will be responsible for ensuring the cleaning of any surfaces before and after the meeting.</li> <li>▪ Only one person can access the file stores at one time and should ensure that any hard surfaces are cleaned before leaving.</li> <li>▪ Staff involved in postal duties will be required to use gloves.</li> <li>▪ Appropriate social distance to be adhered to in the smoking area.</li> </ul>				
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Desk fans should not be used unless there is a medical need which should be addressed with the direct line manager for the period of the current pandemic.</li> </ul>				
<p><b><u>Emergency evacuation and first aid</u></b></p> <p>In the event of an emergency evacuation all stairwells are to be used to leave the building as quickly as possible. Please note that whilst exiting the building in an emergency evacuation the two metre social distancing does not apply.</p> <p>Until further notice, in the event of an emergency evacuation Killymeal House will operate a roll call system due to the reduced staff numbers and absence of most Fire Wardens. Each day reception staff will record the names of all staff in the building. There will NOT be a dispersal system. Staff should assemble outside the Radisson Hotel, whilst still observing the two meter social distancing protocol where their name will be checked off against the list of staff and visitors present in the building.</p> <p>Any accidents or incidents requiring First Aid should be reported immediately to the Premises team to deal with in the first instance.</p> <p>A fire warden, first aider and trained user of the Evac chair will be onsite each day.</p>				
<p><b><u>PPE</u></b></p>				

Provision of face coverings and gloves can be provided to all on request	Premises team			Advice on use of PPE will be provided in FAQs and on signage throughout the building
<b><u>Mental Health</u></b> Management will promote mental health & wellbeing awareness to staff during the Coronavirus outbreak and will offer whatever support they can to help	All line managers and staff	Ongoing and continuous		