

Risk Assessment – Covid-19

All staff of Sternberg Reed and clients have legal responsibilities to protect themselves and others. This assessment does not alleviate these responsibilities.

All Sternberg Reed staff and visitors must maintain social distancing where possible.

This risk assessment will be updated as required and is available on the firm's general website.

This document is a specific Covid-19 assessment, the overarching hazard being the transmission of Covid-19 and the harm referred to throughout the document is infection with the virus.

At a secondary level are the risks posed by the various parts of the business, set out in the hazards column, such as poor hygiene, illness etc.

Assessment undertaken by Ben Thomas on 2 February 2021

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed?	Risk Level L, M, H	What is to be done (or planned)? Control Measures	Action by whom?
Exposure from others due to: 1. Living with someone who has Covid-19. 2. Coming into close contact	All	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The firm encourages staff to follow the Government guidance that attendance at any of the firm's offices should only take place when it is necessary. Similarly, the firm's staff should only attend any other venue, for example court or police station, when it is necessary to do so. Full advantage should be made of digital solutions to "attend" venues outside the control of Sternberg Reed. 	Individual

<p>with someone who has Covid-19.</p> <p>3. Being advised by a Public Health Agency that contact with a diagnosed case has occurred.</p>			<p>It is recognised that a large proportion of the firm's staff fall within the definition of "critical workers" because of the general need to maintain the criminal and civil justice systems.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay at home and only attend hospitals in an emergency. Do not attend work. Do not attend GP Surgery, phone the NHS Covid line (119 or 111) if further advice is required. • Follow all Government advice on self-isolation and only leave the house in the following circumstances: for medical reason; to shop for necessary food supplies; and for essential work. • Any existing individual risk assessments (disability, young person's, new/expectant mothers) to be reviewed. • Maintain contact with line management and HR and follow the firm's guidance. • To keep ourselves updated as to changing Government guidance and to follow good NHS hygiene measures at all times. • Avoid all visitors to your home address other than exceptional circumstances, such as to receive medical treatment. • Do not approach couriers and other delivery personnel, receiving packages left on the doorstep. 	
<p>Suspected case at work</p>	<p>Co-workers and visitors</p>	<p>H</p>	<p>If a worker develops a high temperature, persistent coughs or loss of taste sensation whilst at work, he/she should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaise with HoD and return home immediately. • Avoid touching anything. • Cough or sneeze into disposable tissues and place them in a bin (or if tissues are not instantly available cough and sneeze into the crook of his/her elbow). The worker must follow medical advice 	<p>Individuals/HoDs/HR and Premises Manager.</p>

			<p>and the guidance on self-isolation and not return to work until the period of self-isolation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaise with HoD and HR to minimise the risk to colleagues by conducting a deep clean of their office and alert other applicable workers and visitors. • Immediately clean all high frequency touch areas. • Consider immediate closure of office to conduct deep clean. When cleaning after a suspected case of Covid-19 refer to the specific Government guidance. <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings</p>	
Staff who need to shield or those more medically vulnerable to Covid-19 due to pre-existing conditions	Individual	M	<p>Those who are or become vulnerable to Covid-19 are to ensure that the firm is made aware. The firm will ensure that extremely vulnerable persons who are so advised by a medical practitioner are to shield and follow the specific medical advice issued to them.</p> <p>Home working will be facilitated for as long as is necessary.</p>	Individuals/HoDs/HR/IT Manager
Pregnant colleagues	Individual	M	<p>Any woman who becomes pregnant should inform HR as soon as possible and HR and their HoD confidentially.</p> <p>Sternberg Reed will make the necessary arrangements to facilitate working from home, bearing in mind that it will be for a long term basis will be required.</p>	Individuals/HoDs/HR/IT Manager
Staff working on site and access / egress to offices	Staff and visitors	L	<p>Adopt routine working practises and reduce the number people in any office at any time, and grouping, to keep occupancy levels as low as possible.</p> <p>Entry to the building will be strictly controlled. All people entering the</p>	All

		<p>offices are required to take a non evasive temperature test on arrival at Reception (the fact of which will be recorded together with contact details). Admission to the firm's offices will only be permitted if the temperature test has been passed. If a temperature test is failed the person taking the test is to leave the premises immediately and alternative arrangements made to meet their needs. In borderline cases referral will be made to a Partner to investigate the particular circumstances of the individual (on a confidential basis) to establish whether entry is safe or not. The presumption will be one of caution.</p> <p>Hand washing and/or use of sanitiser on every entry to the building.</p> <p>Frequent cleaning of high frequency touch areas.</p> <p>Where ever possible working from home rather than attendance at the workplace will be facilitated. (See above.)</p> <p>Travel to work – start and finish times can be staggered if this will assist individuals travelling via public transport – to be discussed with the relevant HoD,</p> <p>Work stations should not be shared. Hot desking is not permitted.</p> <p>When using keypads, printers, photocopiers and other equipment that is used by more than one person, gloves should be worn or hand sanitiser applied before and after use.</p> <p>Hand sanitiser and antibacterial wipes are available throughout the firm's offices.</p> <p>Provision of PPE equipment – Masks, disposable gloves and hand sanitiser are available to any staff member who requests them. Particular advice has been given to those attending court and the police station in this regard.</p> <p>Hand sanitiser and disinfectant wipes are available in each office. They are to be used to clean down your own equipment and</p>	
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			<p>telephone. No-one else should be using someone else's equipment.</p> <p>Supervision and training upon minimising contamination – issue of this risk assessment via the firm's general website, intranet and the preceding email memos to all staff upon which this is based.</p> <p>Mentoring is in place to ensure competency and compliance.</p>	
Interaction with clients	Client facing staff	L	<p>Adapt routine working practices.</p> <p>If a face to face in person client meeting is necessary, the client is required to wear a face mask in all areas except meeting rooms where Plexiglass screens are in place. The client is to be offered hand sanitiser and once their temperature has been taken and recorded, directed immediately to the meeting room. Wherever possible the largest rooms available are to be used.</p> <p>No hot refreshments are to be offered to clients. Water may be provided from the coolers on each floor using the disposable cups provided.</p> <p>If clients are meeting a member of staff, windows in the meeting rooms are to be opened, weather permitting, and are to remain open for at least an hour after the visit to ensure that the room is ventilated.</p> <p>Fee-earners should forewarn clients of the adaptations that they should expect when they visit the office.</p> <p>Following meetings, the fee-earner should wipe down the surfaces in the room which was used with the anti-bacterial wipes provided and then wash or sanitise their own hands.</p> <p>Pens and other equipment should not be shared with clients. If a client does need to borrow a pen because they do not have their own, afterwards safely dispose of the one provided</p>	Client facing staff

Hygiene	Staff and clients	M	<p>Sternberg Reed will increase hygiene levels and provide signage.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularly clean the hand washing facilities and check soap and sanitiser levels. • Provide suitable and sufficient rubbish bins for hand towels with regular removal and disposal. • Advise on restrictions to the number of people using facilities at any one time. • Communicate and reinforce regularly to staff • Ensure information is accurate, up to date and accessible e.g. keep website updated <p>Enhance cleaning procedures paying particular attention to communal areas and at high frequency touch points including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toilet flush and seats • Taps and washing facilities • Door handles and push plates • Hand rails on staircases • Equipment controls • Food preparation and eating surfaces • Telephone equipment, keyboards, photocopiers and other office equipment • Card payment keypads • Computer screens and equipment 	All/Building Manager/IT
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Lunch and Refreshment	Staff and visitors	L	<p>Staff are encouraged to remain in the office once they have entered it and not to use local shops.</p> <p>Where possible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lunchtimes should be staggered to reduce congestion and contact at all times. • Hand cleaning facilities and hand sanitiser is available in any room where people eat and should be used by all when entering and leaving the area. • Staff are asked to bring refreshments, food and refillable drinking bottles from home. • Staff should maintain social distancing while eating. • Where staff prefer to eat outside the office they must wash their hands on exit and entry and maintain high levels of hygiene at all times. • All rubbish should be put straight in the bin and not left for somebody else to clear up. • Plates, cups etc must be washed by the person who has used them and not left for others to deal with under any circumstances. 	All staff

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wherever possible, try and make your own tea/coffee to minimise the use of cups being handled by more than one person. • All kitchen areas used for eating must be thoroughly cleaned including microwaves, fridges etc. by the person who used the facilities. • “Communal” food is banned. • No shopping, including food shopping is to be brought in to the office – please take it to your car or purchase it outside working hours. • Tea and coffee – the kitchen should only be used for the making of tea or coffee. People should use their own cup/mug and wash the items used themselves. Please only prepare drinks for yourself. Please consider the items that are touched while making the drink, for example kettle, milk container, fridge door, cutlery drawer handles etc and clean these with an anti-bacterial wipe after doing so. • Only one person should be in the kitchen area making tea/coffee to maintain social distancing. 	
Common Areas	Staff and visitors	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain social distancing on staircases • Be conscious of high frequency touch areas on door handles, key entry systems etc. • Maintain social distancing in all common areas at all times • No personal items are to be left in communal areas. 	Staff and visitors
Employees working within 2 metres of each other	Staff	M	The staffing level and space available at all of the offices of Sternberg Reed are sufficient to enable a minimum of 2 metres distance to be maintained from each other at all times (other than in meetings) if	Staff/HoD/HR/ Premises Manager

			<p>engaged in face to face working. There is sufficient space for colleagues to work side by side and maintain the relevant distance.</p> <p>Any work that has to be done within 2 metres should be kept to a minimum, for example to view somebody else's screen, to provide authorities or advice. This proximity should be restricted to a few seconds at most as, for example, screen shots can be provided digitally in most cases.</p> <p>Staff members are responsible for cleaning their own equipment prior to and after using it in addition to the general cleaning that is undertaken by the firm's cleaning staff.</p> <p>When possible, ventilation should be increased within enclosed spaces.</p> <p>PPE is available in easily accessible areas and items that are single use should only be used once and disposed of responsibly to control potential contamination.</p> <p>If clients do come within 2 metres of staff, staff should feel comfortable moving backwards or asking the client to respect their personal space.</p>	
Deliveries / File Retrieval	Visitors	M	<p>No person will be admitted to the office at all other than under the supervision of a member of the firm's staff. Notices are posted at the firm's entrances to require callers to contact nominated individuals to monitor their presence in the office.</p> <p>Nobody is to pass Reception without having taken the required temperature test.</p> <p>Walkways and access routes will be kept clear at all times and staff are required to ensure that use of these parts of the office is with 2 metres social distancing in mind.</p>	Visitors / Reception / Support Staff / Fee Earners.
Office Layout	Staff	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The office layout and staffing levels are such that it is possible to maintain social distancing at all times. 	Staff / Visitors .

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ventilation should be maximised. • People should not pass each other in small spaces, for example, in corridors or on staircases. • People should not share the lift at Barking or Romford. 	
Telephones	Staff and clients	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit the use of office telephones • Use your designated phone or office mobile telephone, do not share telephones, do not pass the handset from one person to another. • Staff are to clean their own telephones with antibacterial wipes on a regular basis. • Do not hot desk • Do not use meeting room telephones. • Clients are not permitted to use office telephones. 	Staff
Clients	Staff and clients	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wherever possible technological ways to verify identity, to make payments and conduct meetings should be used. • Staff are to be clear with clients about the adaptations to service which we are using. An open and collaborative approach to combating Covid-19 is encouraged. Any issues that arise should be openly discussed and addressed in an appropriate manner. • Staff have been informed and are to be informed of any amendments to these procedures by email memo. • Clients with disabilities or other vulnerabilities are to be identified at the earliest opportunity and, when appropriate, made aware of the risk assessment so that they are informed as to the options 	Staff/Clients

			<p>available to them to utilise the services we will provide. Reasonable adaptations are to be made.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reception maintains a log of all visitors to the office and contact details. 	
Client documents	Staff and clients	L	<p>Hardcopies of documents are to be avoided wherever possible.</p> <p>Whenever a hardcopy is required and the client must attend the office to receive it, the procedures applying to client meetings are to be followed.</p> <p>The document concerned should not be jointly handled or sequentially handled if at all possible.</p>	Staff / Clients
Deliveries and post	Staff	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Person to person contact is to be minimised. • Reception is to be used as a drop off point at each office. The DX boxes are additional. (The DX room is accessed by visitors. Those visitors are to go to and from the DX room only). Post and DX is diverted to the Barking office. There post will be opened, scanned, checked by a supervisor and distributed digitally. If the original paper copy can be disposed of this can be done. Documentation that cannot be shredded, discs, tapes etc are to be placed in sealed envelopes and the firm's internal post system used. • The delivery of personal parcels to the office is to be kept to a minimum. 	Staff
Caring Responsibilities	Individual	L	<p>Those with caring responsibility for children or others should consult with HoD/HR. Working from home will be facilitated if possible.</p>	Individuals/HoD/HR/IT
Specific for Barking and Romford offices	Staff, clients and Visitors	M	<p>Use of the lift is to be avoided but if it is used it should only be occupied by one person at a time.</p>	Staff/Clients/Visitors

Meetings	Staff and Clients	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remote working tools are to be utilised to facilitate digital meetings rather than in person attendances. • The number of attendees at in person meetings should be limited to those who are absolutely necessary. • When meeting clients at court or the police station all social distancing measures that can be taken must be taken. • Meetings in our meeting rooms – ensure ventilation, use of flexi-glass screen, hand sanitiser and anti-bacterial wipes for cleaning of the surfaces by the meeting holder before and after the meeting. • Meetings should be held in large, specially designated meeting rooms so that 2 metre distancing can be maintained. 	Staff/Clients/Auditors
Wellbeing	Staff	M	<p>All colleagues are encouraged to speak to their HoD, HR or anybody else with whom they feel comfortable if they are struggling with any aspect of the restrictions and adaptations required to minimise the risk to themselves and others in their working and personal lives.</p> <p>Staff should inform HR if family members are unwell, symptoms appear or if there are concerns that colleagues are not observing social distancing in the way that is expected.</p>	Staff
Consultation	Staff		<p>If you feel that this document does not adequately cover safety in area of your work please raise this with HR immediately and/or your HoD and the firm will consider points raised immediately.</p>	Staff