

# 50 North Thirteenth Street

# COVID19 Risk Assessment

*Version 3 - August 2020*



*Any queries or issues with regard to the COVID safe measures in operation should be communicated to:*

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DAVID LOCK  
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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Risk Assessment ('assessment') supplements the standing workplace risk assessment for David Lock Associates' Office at North Thirteenth Street, Central Milton Keynes. In circumstances where measures proposed in this assessment conflict with any previously implemented, these more recent measures take precedence.
- 1.2 The assessment specifically addresses health and safety matters arising from the spread of Coronavirus (CV19) in the UK. It addresses the need to limit the risk of the disease spreading through contact in the workplace, to the lowest reasonable and practical level. It also addresses consequential risks arising from actions taken to reduce the risk of spreading the disease, particularly the health and well-being of colleagues who are working from home, or furloughed.
- 1.3 The assessment has been prepared having regard to Government guidance, in particular:  
*'Working Safely During COVID-19 in Offices and Contact Centres – Covid 19 secure guidance for employers, employees and the self-employed'* issued on 11 May 2020 (updated August 2020)
- 1.4 The form and content of this assessment also reflects HSE guidance which advises a structured approach to a hierarchy of risk mitigation through elimination (remove the risk); substitution (work around the risk); physical controls; administrative controls and personal protection.
- 1.5 This assessment is a 'live' document and will be updated at appropriate intervals, as advice is updated, circumstances change and in response to any issues that in arise in practise.

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## 2.0 WORKING FROM THE OFFICE

- 2.1 The office at North Thirteenth Street accommodates David Lock Associates (DLA), DLA Architects (DLA Arch) and staff (rarely more than two) from Integrated Transport Planning (ITP) as 'satellite' workers. All three practices will be required, as a condition of occupation, to adopt the control measures which will apply in the office environment. DLA Arch and ITP are responsible for any specific measures, in addition, deemed necessary for the safe operation of their specific business practices.
- 2.2 Pre CV19 virtually all employees worked exclusively from the office at North Thirteenth Street. The value attached to this collective working practice was deeply in-grained and had persisted since DLA was established. DLA Architects had a similar ethos. Most employees travelled or could easily travel to the office on foot, by car or by cycle. A very small number travelled from a distance and relied on public transport to do so.
- 2.3 The main office spaces are open plan, with five separate studios. Personal interactions in the office arise in desk clusters ('pods'). Seating arrangements vary with adjacent and opposite interaction in relatively close proximity (approximately 2 metres 'head to head', 1 metre side to side and 1-2 metres back to back). There is a degree of screening face to face, provided as a result of computer and modesty screens. Informal interaction also occurred at desks; in moving around and sharing facilities (kitchen, print room, library, car park, garden); during shared journeys (by car and public transport); and in meeting rooms (varying from one to one interaction to whole office gatherings). None of the activities of the business require close, direct physical contact (other than in an emergency scenario) and it can be generally avoided.
- 2.4 Employees ordinarily share facilities available in the office including toilets, showers, communal kitchen areas and associated equipment. A common room, with a kitchen and flexible dining area, has recently been completed with the express purpose to encourage professional and social interaction.

### Reopening of the Office

- 2.5 This assessment has been prepared at a point where the Government advises that employers have discretion to invite employees to continue to work from home or to return to their workplace, adopting Covid secure measures. This position is a change from Government guidance prior to 1<sup>st</sup> August 2020, which required employees to work from home, 'if at all possible'. Clinically extremely vulnerable individuals, who were previously advised to shield at home, can go to the workplace as long as it is COVID-secure, but are advised to carry on working from home wherever possible.
- 2.6 For the most part, DLA has transitioned from office-based working to home working without major impact upon the nature of business activity or service to clients (although the impact of social isolation on some individuals has been notable). Lockdown has however affected business performance (turnover has diminished) and the Partners Board has resolved that restoring consistent and meaningful presence in the office is important to strengthening commercial performance and the support, training and mentoring of employees.
- 2.7 Employees continuing to operate entirely or mostly from home has proved sustainable from a business perspective while high priority has been attached to the need to limit the spread of infection. In the longer term continued reliance upon homeworking to any significant degree will present challenges to the effectiveness and culture of the business for a variety of reasons including: the need to mentor and integrate new employees; social cohesion and team working; professional development which relies on seeing senior colleagues and clients 'in action'; the need for physical outputs (printed materials); and efficiency linked to working practice and technology.

- 2.8 Some of the challenges of home working have been mitigated by use of Zoom and Microsoft Teams. In some respects, contact levels and inclusion have been improved by use of these platforms and the business would benefit from continued use and development of on-line communications, even when office based working resumes. This will be particularly important to ensure that divisions do not emerge if working from home continues to any significant degree; and to ensure larger 'gatherings' can still take place regardless of spatial location.
- 2.9 **At the Strategic Board Meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> July 2020 the Board resolved to reopen the office on 7<sup>th</sup> September. While not requiring staff to work from the office from that date, working from the office will be welcomed.** Through monitoring and managing attendance during September and if necessary, beyond that point, the total number of staff in the office at any time will be limited and the CV19 safe measures proposed can be tested. Acknowledging that contact risk is not a defined threshold, with any basis in science, a limit of around 30 people in the office is set for the time being (a little flexibility will be adopted to respond to the pattern of activity/occupation/meetings). As a rough guide, it is helpful to think in terms of the opportunity for around a third of staff being in at any one time.
- 2.10 For DLA, the intention is to progress (assuming no change in the risk profile/guidance) to require everyone to be present in the office at some time during the working week at some time later in the Autumn (date to be confirmed). The framework for operating on this basis will be shaped over September/October 2020 and this assessment will be updated accordingly, referencing, where appropriate the latest Government Guidance. Beyond that, it will be reviewed and updated, as necessary, as circumstances and risks change.
- 2.11 This assessment addresses a risk control regime to become effective at the point any significant reoccupation of the office begins, planned from 7<sup>th</sup> September 2020. This denotes a change from the arrangements prior to 7<sup>th</sup> September when occasional, necessary attendance by a very small number of people was permitted.
- 2.12 If, in due course it is decided that homeworking will become a permanent provision for DLA staff, an additional risk assessment will be required to establish that home workstations are satisfactory and staff are suitably equipped and supported to work remotely.

## 2.0 SPECIFIC RISKS AND ACTIONS

2.1 This risk control regime has been prepared out by Julia Foster (Managing Partner). The Partner's Board have been consulted and inputted to the draft.

### Control Measures - Operation

- The effectiveness of measures is dependent upon universal observance and compliance. It is important to underline that this is a collective endeavour, regardless of personal sentiment about risk and behaviour. All users of the building need to behave with others in mind, especially those who are more vulnerable to infection and serious illness. The control measures are not optional: behaviour that deliberately puts others at increased risk will be a disciplinary matter.
- This assessment does not repeat guidance and rules laid down by Government (which may from time to time be supplemented by local provisions in Milton Keynes or other locations where employees live or visit). Employees are responsible for ensuring they are familiar with and adhere to all relevant guidance, as appropriate.
- There will be a staff briefing on the control measures set out herein, on the morning of 7<sup>th</sup> September, on Zoom (it will be recorded).
- Signage and information to guide, inform and underline the rules will be displayed/provided, as necessary.
- Individuals will be assigned responsibility to help manage and co-ordinate activity in the office, with priority afforded to keeping people safe while bringing people together to avoid isolation and support cohesion, sociability, training, mentoring and team working. Some individuals (reception staff in particular) will have 'host responsibilities' to steer and guide employees and visitors to ensure risks are minimised. A CV 'Risk Management Team' (CV RMT) has been established (you will be advised on the team members on 7<sup>th</sup> September). When communicating important information to the CV RMT (for example, if you have fallen ill or been advised of contact with the infection through Track and Trace, please email the group (DLA CV RM Team) as a first priority. Telephone one of the team if you cannot email.
- Continued and effective communication between home and office-based employees through virtual platforms is essential. It is anticipated that for the foreseeable future large group gatherings will still have to happen through Teams/Zoom. Zoom/Teams meetings in the office will be supported at an early opportunity through the provision of earphones.
- At this time, it is especially important to take time and care to ensure that all staff are treated fairly, acknowledging that personal circumstances vary considerably and many factors impacting upon work are beyond an individual's or DLA control. Colleagues should listen to each other, respect different perspectives and be accommodating, wherever possible.
- If there is an incidence of CV19 associated with 50 North Thirteenth Street Julia Foster (JF) is the identified SPOC (Single Point of Contact) with responsibility for liaison and providing information to the local Public Health Team. The emergency contact register which was prepared by JF prior to lockdown is a critical document for this purpose, please ensure any changes to the information previously provided (contact number, health issues which might give rise to vulnerability) are provided to JF to ensure this document remains up to date.

### Risk Mitigation Strategy

Hazard	Risk	Control Measures (existing and proposed)	Responsibility for Delivery	Timeframe
<b>Temporary Home working</b>				
Poor working environment and or inadequate equipment	Physical impact & constraint upon effective working  Risk to all employees	Provision of appropriate home office, chair and screen.  Workstation guidance to be made available.  All staff to be provided with a lap-top with good camera and speaker function.	R Purton Personal Managers Charlie Sweeney	From lockdown  On-going (and under separate review)
Isolation and disconnection; pressure of competing responsibilities at home	Impact on well-being  Risk to all employees but especially:  a) those living alone, with caring responsibilities and without space for a self-contained workstation b) those furloughed	Pastoral care regime through Personal Managers – regular contact especially with those at greater risk. Encouragement/advice on good practice working from home: <a href="https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/7-simple-tips-to-tackle-working-from-home">https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/7-simple-tips-to-tackle-working-from-home</a>  Remind staff that there is advice and support – from colleagues and if appropriate through on-line counselling.  All requests for reasonable adjustments to accommodate personal circumstances to be considered, with compassion.  Priority for more regular office-based working for those feeling isolated, where possible.	J Foster Personal Managers	From lockdown  On-going
Isolation - limited support training, guidance	Mainly risk to junior staff and those most recently recruited or likely to be recruited in the future	Project management/monitoring regime – regular contact especially with those at greater risk.  Review and update line management and internal training provisions.  Increased and inclusive programme of multi-media training.  Pastoral care regime through Personal Managers – regular contact especially with those at greater risk. Encouragement/advice about training opportunities.	J Foster Personal Managers	On-going
Inequality – greater sense of isolation		Embed good practice/recent innovation in use of virtual meetings and large group activities.	J Foster Personal Managers	

<p>for those not able to engage in office-based activity regularly or at all</p>		<p>Encouraging/supporting social activities/interaction in a CV safe way.</p> <p>Pastoral care regime – regular contact especially with those at greater risk.</p> <p>Encouragement/advice about social engagement opportunities.</p>		
<p><b>Contact Transmission of CV19 in the office</b></p>				
<p>Virus transmission from surfaces or through personal, close contact (virus transfer person to person)</p>	<p>Risk to all staff and visitors and, in turn, their contacts.</p> <p>Broadly level of risk is determined by circulation of the disease in the wider locality.</p> <p>If an infected individual enters the office risk:</p> <p>Increases with more staff present.</p> <p>Increases with level of surface contact.</p> <p>Increases with length of exposure.</p> <p>Increases with face to face contact and proximity.</p> <p>Increases with sharing of equipment.</p> <p>Increases with viral load.</p> <p>Increases indoors and in poorly ventilated spaces.</p> <p>Greater risk of adverse outcomes to those who are CV19 vulnerable.</p>	<p><b>Coming to the office</b></p> <p><b>Staff should only enter the office if completely symptom free and if members of their household/bubble are symptom free.</b></p> <p>Any employee showing any symptoms or having been in contact with a known carrier or someone showing symptoms (including anyone who has tested positive or has been advised of contact by the Test and Trace Service) should not visit the office. Self-isolate and work from home, if well enough, following Government guidance. Symptoms are identified as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fever or chills</li> <li>• new cough</li> <li>• shortness of breath or difficulty in breathing</li> <li>• muscle or body aches</li> <li>• headaches</li> <li>• sore throat</li> <li>• congestion or runny nose</li> <li>• nausea or vomiting</li> <li>• diarrhoea; and / or</li> <li>• however mild, new loss of taste or smell (anosmia)</li> </ul> <p><a href="https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/get-a-test-to-check-if-you-have-coronavirus/">https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/get-a-test-to-check-if-you-have-coronavirus/</a></p> <p>Employees are asked to advise the CV RMT asap of any symptoms or infection contact, ideally by email, but if not by telephone. A test should be taken if showing symptoms and the CV RMT should be advised of the results as soon as possible.</p> <p>An employee or visitor who begins to feel unwell in the office, or is made aware of contact with an infected individual, should make the CV RMT aware asap and leave the building immediately.</p> <p>All staff and visitors are at liberty to use a face covering at any time within the office. A face covering should be used in any circumstance where the minimum 1 metre distance cannot be achieved.</p> <p>The reception area/common room are now spacious enough to accommodate socially distanced signing in/out (especially given the usual pattern of staggered start/finishing times) hand washing and access to the coffee machines. Queue at a safe distance, if necessary, and do not loiter/cluster together in these spaces. Avoid reception at busy times such as when meetings are starting/finishing. If congestion in the reception area/common room becomes an issue (this will be monitored) a staggered start time will be enforced and other control measures may be introduced.</p> <p>When approaching the receptionist, stand at least one metre back from the reception desk.</p> <p><b>All staff intending to work in the office for any amount of time are required to indicate that intention by posting an entry in the office diary at least 24 hours before attendance.</b> Any change of plan should be notified to Debbie, Gillian and Alex by email (or to any nominated stand-ins, managing the diary). Debbie, or a nominated stand-in, will monitor and manage attendance and operational spacing at workstations. Staff will be contacted if occupancy/distancing conflicts arise. Attendance may have to be rescheduled or may only be possible by occupying a flexi-desk. Separate more detailed guidance on the 'booking-in' regime will follow.</p> <p>Individuals with workstations in the front studios (spiral/bridge) should access/egress via the front staircase, from reception. Those with workstations in the rear upper studios should use the back stairs. It is not proposed to operate one-way systems. Please be conscious of proximity and respectful of distance when moving around. No passing on the stairs or where space is tight (such as outside the print room), wait and stand back if someone is approaching.</p> <p>Adherence to 2 metre face to face social distance rules is required, wherever possible. There should be <u>strict adherence</u> to 1 metre separation otherwise (except in the case of an emergency).</p> <p>If it is absolutely necessary for staff to be in closer proximity (for example, to administer first aid) a face covering and gloves must be worn (masks and gloves are provided in the first aid box, masks and gloves are also available at reception).</p> <p>The revised desk layout now ensures 2m distance (face to face) and reduces close passing. Staff should position monitors to provide additional screening face to face. Voices should not be raised to sing or shout!!</p>	<p>All</p> <p>Policed and guided by the CV RMT</p>	

		<p>All internal doors will be kept open, where practical.</p> <p>Use of the lift should be avoided, if necessary, no more than one person in the lift at a time.</p> <p>Dedicated lockers will be assigned to regular cyclists (no sharing).</p> <p>The air handling system is set to only draw in fresh air. Windows should be opened to increase ventilation. Staff should come appropriately dressed for a cooler environment and variation in temperature (visitors should be advised accordingly).</p> <p>Common Room doors will be open when weather permits.</p> <p>Staff can take breaks/eat lunch only at their desk (lowest risk), in the garden (seating and rugs are available) or the common room (occupancy will be limited to the chairs available).</p> <p><b>General hygiene</b></p> <p><b>A rigorous hand washing/personal hygiene regime is essential.</b></p> <p><u>Hand washing is required</u> on entering the building (including after being in the garden) and regularly throughout the day (use common sense – so hand wash after eating, sneezing, using the toilet etc). On entering the building all employees and visitors are required to wash hands with soap and water in the <u>downstairs kitchen (common room)</u> and wash the tap down; dry hands with a paper towel and dispose of the towel in the bin.</p> <p>Hands must be washed regularly and always after using shared equipment or spaces (for example, having been in the meeting rooms, bathrooms, kitchens, garden).</p> <p>All touch screens (sign-in iPad, photocopiers, coffee machine) are to be operated <u>ONLY with a touch pen</u>. They are not to be shared, are always to be carried and to be kept clean.</p> <p>Anti-viral wipes are available for use as appropriate e.g. for shared keyboards/remotes or if someone has had to touch your personal items (e.g. Charlie accessing your computer).</p> <p>Hand sanitiser in pump dispensers is available at the front desk and in meeting rooms (BUT hand washing is to be prioritised over-use of hand-sanitiser).</p> <p>No use of tea-towels/towelling hand towels – paper towels available in all hand washing locations.</p> <p>Used paper towels should be placed in the bin (paper towels can be used to unlock/open toilet door after handwashing).</p> <p>Bin lids to be left open.</p> <p>The office will be cleaned thoroughly every evening with anti-viral cleaner – leave all surfaces clear for cleaning.</p> <p>Frequently used door handles, taps and communal surfaces (reception/common room) will be cleaned mid-morning, lunchtime and mid-afternoon with Dettol (anti bac/virus) cleaner. The CV RMT will nominate responsibility for this each day.</p> <p>No food preparation at work.</p> <p>Things placed in the fridge by others should not be moved/touched – any items left in the fridge on a Friday evening will be disposed of.</p> <p>No communal coffee/tea making (coffee machines to be used instead).</p> <p>If needed, take cups/plates etc only for yourself from the dishwasher/cupboards, without touching other items. The dishwashers will be emptied by staff/cleaners wearing gloves.</p> <p><u>Under no circumstances</u> must used cutlery/plates/cups etc be placed on surfaces/in the sink in communal areas. Once used they must be placed in the dishwasher.</p> <p>Employees can, if they wish, use the shower but must clean handles/levers after use with the cleaner provided.</p> <p><b>Deliveries to the office</b></p> <p>For the time being employees are asked not to direct parcel deliveries to the office unless necessary.</p> <p>Disposable gloves will be provided (Optional) for employees receiving/opening DLA post/parcels.</p> <p>Individuals should store/pick up parcels from the holding area only (not expect reception staff to handle/deliver them).</p> <p><b>Workstations</b></p>		
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<p>Optional, inconsiderate or high-risk behaviour outside the workplace</p>	<p>The level of personal contact outside work is a factor in the likelihood that infection is brought into the workplace.</p>	<p>Employees are asked to adhere to all Government guidance on reducing the risk of infection generally and in the workplace.</p> <p>In managing risk, individuals have some choice about exposure to people outside their household/bubble (some forms of contact, such as with health/education establishments is unavoidable). Government guidance is that we should all try to limit the number of different people we see, especially over short periods of time. The more people with whom we interact, the more chances we give the virus to spread. In making choices to limit exposure, priority should be attached to fulfilling work obligations.</p> <p>If it becomes apparent that an individual has flagrantly breached Government guidance in a way that may increase the likelihood of bringing CV19 into the office environment, they may be asked to quarantine without pay.</p> <p>Employees should take particular care travelling to and from work – car travel, cycling and walking is safer than using public transport</p>		
<p><b>Fear/High risk of illness or adverse outcome</b></p>				
<p>Some members of the team are more fearful or have specific reason to be more wary of infection (those who are more vulnerable/live with vulnerable people)</p>	<p>Risk to a small number of staff, but consequence of infection significant for some.</p> <p>Potential impact on mental well-being.</p> <p>Infection may have more serious health implications for vulnerable individual or those in their household/bubble.</p>	<p>Individual circumstances need to be carefully and sensitively addressed. Some people are or maybe at greater risk of being infected or an adverse outcome, if affected. Higher risk groups are identified (by Public health England) as older males, those with a high BMI, those with certain health conditions such as diabetes and those from BAME backgrounds.</p> <p>Any employee with specific fear or concern including those whose circumstances present a greater risk should discuss the matter with their Personal Manager and or Julia Foster. Where appropriate a more personalised approach to risk mitigation will be implemented.</p> <p>Anyone who is identified as clinically ‘extremely vulnerable’ (there are none at present) will be supported to continue to work from home.</p>		

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		Tolerance and understanding of personal decisions to adopt extra precautionary measures (such as face coverings).		
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