

UPDATED 15.05.2020:

This is the risk assessment for:

1. **Abingdon Estate Agents, 5 Ock Street Abingdon, Oxon, OX12 0AL, (Hodsons)**
2. **Didcot Estate Agents, 220 Broadway, Didcot, Oxon, (Hodsons),**
3. **The Old Bank, 137 Broadway, Didcot, Oxon, OX11 8RQ (Slade Legal)**
4. **The Greenhouse, Stratton Way, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 3QP (Slade Legal)**
5. **7 ST. Martins, Wallingford, Oxon, OX10 0AN (Slade Legal)**

Date of risk assessment Thursday 13 May 2020:

Reason for Risk Assessment (COVID 19 / Return to work):

Tracey Waite / Amanda Hodson / Lisa Hedges

Company Name: Law & Property Lawyers Ltd t/as Slade Legal or Hodsons

Branch Managers

Branch Manager, 5 Ock Street: Warrick Baldwin,

Branch Manager: 220 Broadway: Louise Batten

Head of branch:

The Greenhouse: Tim Healy & Lisa McQueen

Wallingford: Helen Duthie

Didcot: Tom Eeles

Director: Tim Healy has overall and final responsibility for health and safety.

Branch Managers and individual employees have day to day responsibility for ensuring a safe working environment

A full staff member list for each branch can be found with HR dept.

Products

Legal Services & Residential Property Sales

Usual trading hours Estate Agents

- Monday - Friday 9:00 am – 6:00 pm
- Saturday - 9:00 am– 5:00 pm
- Sunday – 10:00 am – 4:00 pm

Trading Hours Legal Offices

- Monday - Friday 9:00 am – 5:00 pm

Risk Assessment

As an employer, we have a legal responsibility to protect workers and others from risk to their health and safety.

Supporting Documents

Employees can find a copy of this Risk Assessment and full range for supporting documents dealing with our processes and COVID-19 at G Drive / HR / Coronavirus / Risk Assessment. The Risk Assessment will also be found on our Slade Legal & Hodsons websites.

These are organic documents and we expect both the supporting documents and this Risk Assessment to feature regular and timely updates as and when required.

Background

On Sunday 10 May 2020, the Prime Minister announced the Government's COVID-19 recovery strategy. This laid out an indicative roadmap and a very loose timetable of adjustments to current measures in relation to social distancing. Without warning, on Tuesday night 12 May 2020, the Government suddenly announced that Estate Agents could start trading from Wednesday 16 May 2020.

The effect of these new measures requires preparations to make sure that the physical space at our offices is adapted so as more of our people return to the workplace, we can function safely and that both our people and our clients can operate in a "COVID-19 Secure" environment."

Our People

One of the key starting points for the business was to consult with our employees and accurately establish the risks and risk level currently affecting our individual employees, to build up an accurate picture of our overall position and help with our workforce planning. A voluntary COVID-19 questionnaire was sent to all 73 staff members on 12 May 2020 for return to tracey.waite@slade-legal.co.uk , by Monday 18 May 2020.

Our Offices - General

Our offices are a mixture of modern offices, mid-century offices and historic buildings.

Ordinarily our offices present a low risk environment is so far as there is no heavy machinery, heights or lifting, or use of industrial chemicals. There is a safe way in and out of the buildings and low risk of being locked in. Risk of random violence and or aggression from the public is a possibility. Based on each branch's history this is not considered high risk.

Our buildings tend to be well lit from the outside of the premises. Window lights remain illuminated all day and at night in the Estate Agents and main entrances to all buildings are situated at the front of the buildings. All buildings are alarmed. In good weather front doors may be propped open. In bad weather, front doors remain closed. All offices are based on main thoroughfares.

What are the COVID-19 hazards for our employees and the public at our premises?

- Risk from the public (i.e. clients, contractors, visitors,) by transmission of infection to other people either by airborne methods, inadvertent direct touch, close proximity, sharing of surfaces and items, and by visiting our work premises.

Who might be harmed and how?

- Any employee, consultant, worker, client, contractor, delivery person or any other type of visitor to our premises could be at risk of infection of COVID-19.

What are we already doing?

- Allowing those staff who can work from home to do so;
- Providing equipment needed for employees to work safely and effectively at home (for example pcs & laptops);
- Allowing staff who are considered High Risk, Moderate Risk and who are shielding, to be at home
- Keeping in contact with people who are furloughed and who are working from home, including their wellbeing.
- For staff present at the office, ensuring the guidance on social distancing and hygiene (handwashing with soap and water often, for at least 20 seconds) should be followed.
- Offices closed to the public (and making separate arrangements made for the drop off and pick up of items)
- Signage on front doors of all buildings – advising we are not open to the public and how to safely contact our employees
- Additional signage in toilets reminding people to wash their hands (with examples) – Check Wallingford, Didcot, Didcot EA.
- Email signature signage – advising where possible, visitors contact the firm by telephone or email rather than attending personally at the offices to not visit our offices if displaying known symptoms of Coronavirus.
- Provision of handwashing facilities (running water, soap and paper towels) at all buildings
- Hand sanitizer present on all floors in all buildings
- Anti-bacterial hand wipes on each floor
- Professional Cleaning of offices

Do we need to do anything else to control this risk? What further action may be required?

Ongoing Planning (Management Team / No end date)

- Identify the minimum number of people needed to carry out work tasks safely and review regularly
- Plan for clinically extremely vulnerable (shielding) workers who must not work outside the home.
- Plan for people working at home who have someone shielding in their household.
- Help employees at increased risk to work from home, either in their current role or an alternative role; where people at increased risk cannot work from home, offering them the safest available roles.
- Plan for people who need to self-isolate as and when this arises.

Cleaning

- Deep Clean Estate Agents office - scheduled (Abingdon EA 13.05.2020) Didcot (14.05.2020)
- Regular professional cleaning schedules for all branches up and running with Branch Managers in EAs utilizing Cleaning Logs to monitor issues and encouraged to provide regular feedback to Office Manager.

Ventilation (Before reopening)

Checked whether a need to service or adjust ventilation systems, for example, so that they do not automatically reduce ventilation levels due to lower than normal occupancy levels. [\(Confirmed N/A our air conditioning systems do not need adjustment to our offices 14.05.2020 AH/ TW\)](#)

Open windows and doors frequently to encourage ventilation, where possible.

PPE

- Maintain good supplies of hand sanitizer, anti-bacterial wipes, hand drying cloth, plastic foot coverings, gloves
- Installation of portable cube / screens at front desks, receptions and other destinations where appropriate.

Face Coverings

Wearing a face covering is optional and is not required by law, including in the workplace.

If an employee chooses to wear one, it is important to use face coverings properly and wash your hands before putting them on and taking them off.

We support the use of face coverings safely if employees choose to wear one. This means:

- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer before putting a face covering on, and after removing it.
- When wearing a face covering, avoid touching your face or face covering, as you could contaminate them with germs from your hands.
- Change your face covering if it becomes damp or if you have touched it.
- Continue to wash your hands regularly.
- Change and wash your face covering daily.
- If the material is washable, wash in line with manufacturer's instructions. If it's not washable, dispose of it carefully in your usual waste.
- Practice social distancing wherever possible.
- You can make face-coverings at home and can find guidance on how to do this and use them safely on GOV.UK.

Travel

- Discourage car sharing & non-essential travel between offices
- Encourage staggered arrival and leave times to maintain 2 m social distancing.
- Consider separate entry/exit points where possible
- Encourage handwashing on arrival and departure and provide hand sanitizer.

Work areas

We will assess and physically arrange our work areas so that we can assign one person to one work area, to keep people 2 m apart, where possible.

We may use screens in public facing areas such as Receptions and front desks in Estate Agents and we may mark areas using tape or similar to help people keep a 2 m distance;

We will provide signage to remind people to keep a 2 m distance;

We will avoid people working face-to-face, for example working side-by-side.

We may assign shift teams and keep people to shift teams to limit social interaction.

Regular and frequent cleaning of work areas and equipment (for example cleaning at the end of each use of shared equipment such as copiers, printers, scanners, hole punchers, staplers, post room

equipment). Identify objects and surfaces that are touched regularly and decide how frequently you clean them.

Handling goods, merchandise and other materials, and onsite vehicles

Cleaning procedures for goods and merchandise entering the site.

Introducing greater handwashing and handwashing facilities for workers handling goods and merchandise and providing hand sanitiser where this is not practical.

Restricting non-business deliveries, for example, personal deliveries to workers.

Moving around the offices

We permit only essential trips within buildings, sites and properties, to maintain social distancing as much as possible.

We may restrict the amount that people rotate between jobs and equipment.

We will limit the number of people who use lifts to a single person at any time.

We will reduce the number of people in high traffic areas including lifts, reception areas and walkways.

We may mark areas using tape or similar to help remind people to keep a 2 m distance.

Meetings

We will continue to use remote working tools to avoid as many in-person meetings as possible.

Only absolutely necessary participants should attend meetings and should maintain 2m separation throughout.

Avoid avoiding sharing pens and other objects.

We will provide hand sanitiser in meeting rooms.

We encourage holding meetings outdoors and in well-ventilated rooms whenever possible.

For areas where regular meetings take place, we will use floor signage to help people maintain social distancing (**Action Point**)

Common Areas

We will review the common areas used in the business including toilets and kitchens.

We may remove tables and chairs, and stagger lunchtimes, creating additional space for people to take their lunch breaks in; marking areas using tape or similar to help people keep a 2 m distance; encourage workers to stay on-site during working hours.

Where a 2 m physical distance cannot be maintained, we will assess how to keep common areas clean and prevent transmission by touching contaminated surfaces.

Staff are encouraged to bring in their own food and immediately wash up any utensils afterwards.

1. Identify and list objects and surfaces that are touched regularly and decide how frequently you clean them.
2. Setting clear guidance for the use of toilets and kitchens to make sure they are kept clean

Good hygiene

1. Use of signs and posters to increase awareness of good handwashing technique.

2. Provide regular reminders on avoiding touching your face and to cough/sneeze into your arm.
3. Setting clear guidance for the cleaning of toilets and kitchens to make sure they are kept clean.
4. Set clear guidance on how to handle goods, merchandise and materials and when cleaning procedures need to be followed.
5. Set clear guidance on how clients will be dealt with when they visit our premises

Emergencies

In an emergency, for example, an accident or fire, people do not have to stay 2m apart if it would be unsafe.

People involved in the provision of assistance to others should pay particular attention to sanitation measures immediately afterwards including washing hands.

Managing visitors & contacts

Encouraging visits via remote connection/working where this is an option.

Where site visits are required, site guidance on social distancing and hygiene should be explained to visitors on or before arrival.

Limiting the number of visitors at any one time.

Limiting visitor times to a specific time window and restricting access to required visitors only.

Determining if schedules for essential services and contractor visits can be revised to reduce interaction and overlap between people.

Maintaining a record of all visitors.

Revising visitor arrangements to ensure social distancing and hygiene, for example, where someone physically signs in with the same pen in receptions.

Communications

Provide clear, consistent and regular communication to improve understanding and consistency of ways of working and promotion of good mental health.