



The COVID safety group believe that the following are reasonable enquiries for any barrister to make. The courts are our workplace and there ought to be transparency about the COVID prevention measures in place. We are attempting to build a database of reports for each court which any CBA member can access. We encourage members to make these enquiries and forward any disclosed reports and assessment on to the group so that they can be added to the database. We can assist with FOI requests.

Should a barrister come to the reasonable view that the court building is not a safe workplace, that barrister should not be expected to return a brief. This belief might be created by an intransigent approach to disclosure of reports by the Court Manager. This creates a culture of lack of transparency between HMCTS and the Bar. All of the below should be readily accessible and it is only by demanding it that it will become routinely available. When a barrister is refused the information necessary to form an assessment of the safety of the court building, there should be a no return policy. Likewise, if the court is unsafe, there should be a no return policy until the deficiencies are rectified.

### COURTROOMS

1. Is the court seating arranged so that there is a distance of at least 2 metres in each direction between you and anyone else in court? [In practice this is often not the case]
2. Alternatively, if closer seating and Perspex screens have been installed, has there been an assessment of their efficacy by a qualified person ?

Can this report be viewed?

3. Where seating is at different heights, has the 2 metre distance been extended in order to take account of the greater length that droplets can travel from a person who is sat above others?
4. Is the area cleaned after each barrister leaves their seat and before another sits there?
5. Has there been an inspection of the airflow in a court room by a qualified person?

Can this report be viewed?

Does it include an assessment of aerosol flow?

Does it include a percentage of outside air that is pumped into the room by the air conditioning system?

What are the air change rates in each room and have these been professionally assessed?

Does the air conditioning unit include filters for the air that is recirculated?

Are windows (where installed) and doors regularly opened to clear the air of aerosols.

#### CUSTODY VISITS

6. Has there been a health and safety assessment of the cell visiting area that is specific to those cells, as opposed to generic?
7. Are prison staff carrying out rub down searches? Are they changing their gloves after each search.
8. On Cat A visits, counsel are routinely rubbed down. This constitutes close contact. What is the professional assessment of how this can be safely carried out?
9. Do the cell staff have a copy of it so that they can implement it and comply with it?

Is the cell assessment available for inspection?

Does the cell assessment take account of airflow?

Is the airflow controlled by HMCTS or by GeoAmey, Serco or HMPPS?

Are closed visits possible which are inherently safer?

### CONFERENCE ROOMS

10. Are conference rooms available in order to see defendants on bail and if so are these regularly cleaned? What is the safe number of people who can enter?
11. If no conference rooms are available, where is it suggested that a safe conference can occur?
12. Are the conference rooms ventilated?
13. Have video link booths been assessed in the same way as conference rooms and are they cleaned?
14. Are the above rooms regularly cleared of air by leaving the doors open?

### SECURITY

15. Are security staff at the entrance to the courts changing their gloves after each rub-down search?