

Coronavirus weekly roundup

Welcome to our Coronavirus weekly round up, highlighting the HMCTS weekly update.

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REACT study lays bare the scale of the UK's Long COVID problem

In a large scale random community sample of over half a million people, undertaken by several bodies, to include the School of Public Health, Imperial College London and the National Institute for Health Research, the scale of the pandemic's longer term impact on the nation's health is set out. Fifteen percent of those who had COVID-19 had three or more symptoms of COVID longer than 12 weeks.

[Read more](#)

“Freedom Day” throws organisations into COVID-19 quandary

The much heralded (Step 4) changes effective from 19 July 2021, bringing to an end social distancing and the compulsory wearing of face masks has received at best a mixed reaction from the general public. Polling for The Times by YouGov revealed 55% felt that lifting the restrictions was “wrong”. Leaving aside public reservations, we examine the implications of the changes for employers and organisations in both an employers’ and public liability context.

[Read more](#)

Workplace fatalities remain uninfluenced by the pandemic

On 7 July the HSE published the annual statistics for workplace fatalities from April 2020 up to and including March 2021. They reveal a fatal accident rate of 0.43 per 100,000 workers (142 deaths) – a figure comparable with the average over the previous five years. These statistics do not include fatal diseases, including deaths due to COVID-19, which are linked to employment (408). Whilst the underlying trend of fatalities has been downward since 1988 (which had a rate of 2.4 deaths per 100,000 workers), the curve has flattened over the last decade. Despite the millions working from home in part or in full during the pandemic and organisations’ heavy use of furlough and the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS), which has supported 11.5 million jobs, this has had little or no impact on workplace fatalities.

[Read more](#)

HMCTS weekly update

Here we highlight the operational guidance from HMCTS each week to assist in preparation for court attendances and hearings.

General COVID guidance

- From 19 July 2021 the UK moved to step four of the Government’s roadmap in England. Different rules apply to Wales and Scotland.
- HMCTS have confirmed the following:
 - A requirement for face coverings to be worn in staff, public and communal parts of court buildings.
 - In custody suites there is a requirement to continue with all social distancing measures introduced during the pandemic such as

touchpoint cleaning, locked down phones, reduced numbers and fluid-resistant surgical masks.

- Screens or barriers will remain in place to separate people from each other who will come into close proximity with others.
- HMCTS are actively encouraging all visitors to the courts and all staff to take part in surge testing in areas affected by COVID variants of concern. Individuals who show a positive test should self-isolate and follow the latest NHS advice. Surge testing guidance can be found [here](#).
- Home test kits are available from all courts and tribunals for all professional court users, legal professionals, judiciary, contractors, jurors, witness services and staff who attend scheduled hearings.
- Nightingale courts are continuing to change weekly but HMCTS are committed to providing the temporary courts where the demand is required. Further information can be found [here](#).

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