



HM Courts &
Tribunals Service

HMCTS COVID-19 Local Assessment Tool (England)

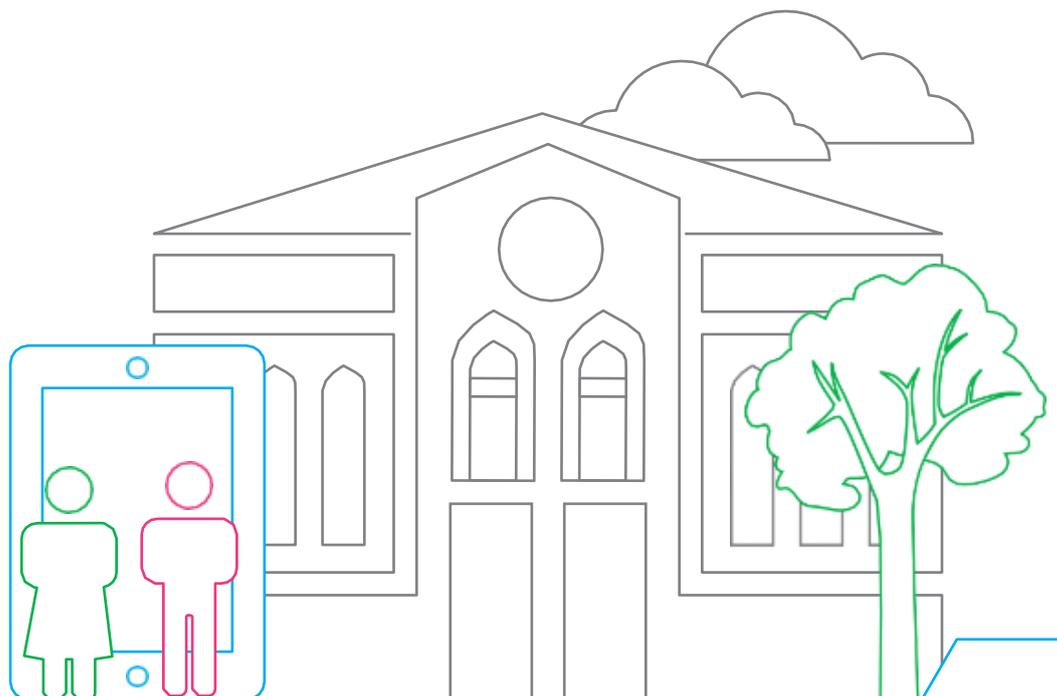
Location:

Date
assessment
undertaken:

Local version: [please enter](#)

To see details of the changes to this template see: [version control](#)

Justice matters



Background

HMCTS is committed to ensuring the health, safety and welfare of all staff, judiciary and visitors to its sites by protecting them from harm, so far as it is reasonably practicable, while they are on the premises. It welcomes the opportunity for collaborative working with DTUS appointed trade union health and safety representatives in this process and recognises their valuable input.

Under Step 4 of its Roadmap, HM Government lifted or eased certain COVID-19 restrictions and requirements in England on 19 July 2021. Reaching the Step 4 point is important but does not mean we no longer face risk. Instead, it means Public Health and wider advice to us has shifted, so that the way we assess and manage risk similarly needs to be reviewed.

This updated guidance reflects the new position in our courts and tribunals and the control measures that we consider necessary to protect people from undue infection risk and incorporates guidance already communicated/applied across the estate from Public Health authorities.

The purpose of this document is to aid each Senior Person on Site (SPoS) to implement those measures, monitor compliance with them and escalate any issues, which fall outside of their control, to the appropriate level, so the required actions can be addressed, and interim controls put in place.

If any changes need to be made to HMCTS buildings and services that will impact users, we need to consider the [Public Sector Equality Duty \(PSED\)](#). PSED is about considering how changes we're planning to make impact people who have protected characteristics and making sure they're not discriminated against. If you are making changes to the way staff work, you'll also need to consider the PSED.

Court/tribunal users who have any concerns about local measures should notify the SPoS in the first instance, or alternatively contact the [COVID-19 Response and Recovery Team](#)

In conjunction with risk assessments of our buildings, and notwithstanding the Step 4 point reached in the Government's Roadmap, we must continue to ensure that individual circumstances are considered. Line Managers must use the [COVID-19 Individual Risk Indicator \(CIRI\)](#) and [Returning and Continuing to Work Conversation Guidance](#) on a regular basis to hold conversations with all staff members. Particular attention must be paid to those in groups that are disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 or who are clinically extremely vulnerable to understand their circumstances, for example how they travel to and from the workplace and agree any actions to support them to work. Managers should expect to revisit these conversations in the context of changes to restrictions. For more information, please see [HR Line Manager Guidance](#)

Best practice guidance on completing this assessment tool is available [here](#).

Separate Local Assessment Tool (version 5.3) is available for courts and tribunals in Wales and Scotland where additional COVID-19 measures remain in place.

Section 1. Ventilation

Ventilation, whether mechanical or natural (such as opening windows), is one of the factors to be considered as part of an assessment of our buildings along with other mitigations such as hand washing and sanitising, face coverings and screens as highlighted in this document.

It is the responsibility of our suppliers to check mechanical ventilation systems in our buildings. There is an escalation process, whereby following the identification of an issue with mechanical ventilation systems by the FM supplier, they will notify the regional facilities manager who will notify the SPoS.

The regional facilities manager will engage with the SPoS regarding any ventilation issues which need to be considered as part of this assessment. Any issues should be recorded in the action plan.

Given the transmission risks associated with them, desk fans remain, as a general rule, prohibited within our offices, and court or tribunal rooms until further notice.

This reflects continued PHE and HSE advice and guidance that desk fans increase the risk of the virus spreading through the air. Please refer to [COVID-19 summer ventilation plans](#) for further details.

Exceptions are limited to the use of fans in single occupancy rooms or by staff members requiring a fan as a workplace adjustment following strict criteria set out in HR [Returning and Continuing to Work Conversation Guidance](#).

This section applies to all of our buildings (owned and landlord tenanted)

Actions required	In place Yes/No <small>(If NO complete Action Plan below)</small>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The regional facilities manager has provided me with assurance that the suppliers have managed ventilation within my building in accordance with government and public health standards and guidance. There are no known issues which would prevent ventilation systems from complying with this. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where there is an identified issue with ventilation in your building, an alternative provision has been agreed by the SPoS with advice from facilities managers, and if required, the RSSO. The SPoS must carry out local checks and respond to concerns raised locally by raising them with the facilities management helpdesk /facilities manager. <p>Refer to the Working safely in courts, tribunals and administrative offices</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where remedial action is required, an action plan is in place (see below). 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where there is a reliance on natural ventilation, procedures are in place and maintained. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where CO2 monitors are installed, they are being used in accordance with the guidance documentation to provide assurance of air quality in those rooms. Where smaller rooms, occupied by a number of people, with adequate ventilation are being used, you should consider installing a CO2 monitor to provide assurance of air quality. Regardless of other mitigations unventilated rooms must not be used. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where portable cooling/heating units e.g. desk fans, personal heaters etc. are being used, appropriate workplace adjustments are in place to justify why they are required. Please refer to Returning and Continuing to Work Conversation Guidance and COVID-19 summer ventilation plans for further details. 	

Action Plan and Summary (Section 1) Ventilation	
Actions identified (insert lines as required)	Deadline for completion
<p>Outline details of spaces/rooms in the building with significant ventilation concerns and actions being taken to address concerns:</p>	

<p>Section 2. Reducing contact in our buildings Whilst public health guidance no longer mandates social distancing, there are a number of controls, which should remain in place to reduce contact and therefore the risk of transmission in our buildings.</p> <p>This section applies to moving around buildings and the use of all areas including office areas, deliberation rooms and court and tribunal hearing rooms.</p>	
Actions required	In place Yes/No <small>(If NO complete Action Plan below)</small>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moving around buildings: wherever possible while people travel through the workplace, the following measures should be considered where practical: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Floor markings, including directional arrows should be used to indicate a one-way flow around the office. • Making sure that people with disabilities are able to access lifts. • Review desks in high-use thoroughfares which may need to be put out of use e.g. next to printers, outside toilets and kitchen areas. • Unless exempt, all court users and staff are required to wear a face covering in all public areas of court and tribunal buildings. This should include communal areas such narrow corridors that cannot be made one-way, busy entrance areas, narrow stairwells or robing rooms etc 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workplaces and workstations: to reduce contact between staff members, the following measures should be considered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review office layouts and processes to allow people to work further apart from each other where possible. This can include seating areas or individual desks being taped off. • Allocate desks to staff and avoid hot-desking / sharing workstations (including keyboards, mouse, headsets, telephones, mobile phones). If workstations need to be shared, share amongst a small number of people and clean desks / equipment after each use. • Provide supplies to allow for cleaning and sanitising of workstations and shared equipment between different occupants. 	

Internal / External (delete as appropriate) document

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings: to reduce transmission due to face-to-face meetings and minimise contact in meetings, the following measures should be considered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing the use of tea points and kitchen areas to avoid congestion. • Staggering break times to reduce pressure on break rooms or canteens. • Reconfiguring seating and tables to reduce face-to-face interactions. • As far as is practicable, a one-in one-out, system to be used for toilet entry and exit. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jury deliberation rooms: Following the guidance for Stage 4, smaller Jury Deliberation rooms, previously unable to support minimum social distancing requirements under the 1m+ rule, can now be used. However, measures will need to be taken to ensure contact and proximity is reduced as far as possible. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Screens should be considered and prioritised for the areas/rooms of most acute risk. • Furniture arrangement should be managed so as to reduce risk of contact or unduly close proximity – for example having chairs side to side, rather than face to face. • Use floor markings and signage to indicate safest ways to enter, exit, and move around the room. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Court and Tribunal Hearing rooms: The measures should be considered wherever a room is in operational use: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Furniture arrangement should be managed so as to reduce risk of contact or unduly close proximity – for example having chairs side to side, rather than face to face. • Where reasonably practicable, introduce seating only where it is needed to increase capacity and does not cause congestion. • Use floor markings and signage to indicate safest ways to enter, exit, and move around the room. • Where fixed or mobile screens are already in place, they can remain unless removal is necessary to increase capacity. 	

Action Plan and Summary (Section 2) Reducing contact in our buildings	
Actions identified (insert lines as required)	Deadline for completion
<p>Outline details of significant local factors/risks which prevent the reduction of contact in our buildings. Record how these concerns are being addressed:</p>	

Section 3. Entry to the building/security searches	
Actions Required	In place Yes/No <small>(If NO complete Action Plan below)</small>
Our public guidance informs users of the measures in place when entering our buildings. Refer to ‘Working safely in courts, tribunals and administrative offices’ Entry to the Building and Searches, for further guidance.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entry to the building: to ensure we follow the latest NHS guidelines on checking for symptoms for COVID-19 the following measures should be implemented: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All court users including legal professionals, personnel from stakeholder agencies and those signed up to the Professional User Access Scheme, in areas of high prevalence of Covid will be asked to confirm that they do not have any symptoms of coronavirus in line with Public Health guidelines. • If anyone discloses that they have symptoms consistent with COVID-19, they will be refused entry to the building by the C/TSOs. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If necessary, provide ‘I attended Court with Symptoms’ leaflet. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C/TSOs will wear a FRSM whilst conducting their duties in a public space. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C/TSOs should remind every person entering the court or tribunal building that our buildings are busy settings with individuals coming into contact with people they would not usually encounter and we will require them to wear a face covering whilst in the public areas of the building. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C/TSOs ask court/tribunal users entering the court to temporarily remove their face coverings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For completing a sip test. • For identification purposes (to permit a CCTV image to be recorded). 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing physical contact: to minimise the risk of exposure (the potential risk of individuals sneezing or coughing directly at each other) the following measures should be implemented: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bag searches will be conducted without making any physical contact with the individual. • Court/tribunal users will be asked to open their bag and show the C/TSO its contents. If there are too many items within the bag to view the full contents, they will be asked to empty the items into a tray and then stepping back to a safe distance. • The C/TSO will conduct a visual check for restricted items, avoiding where possible, physically touching bags/items. If a bag/item needs to be touched, the C/TSO will have access to protective gloves and hand sanitiser to maintain hand hygiene. Confiscated items should be placed in sealed plastic bags and securely stored. The storage area must be regularly cleaned. • The trays used will be cleaned after each use and there should be sufficient stocks of cleaning material. • Confirm that C/TSOs have sufficient stock of PPE, and there is a process in place for OCS to inform the SPoS if stock levels are low, and to inform the SPoS if searching cannot be undertaken. • SPoS and security to have an agreed process to inform the list office/legal adviser team if someone is turned away on the day, including information of the reason. • Court/tribunal users will be asked to walk through the archway twice prior to wandng. • Court/tribunal users will be asked to confirm they agree to the search procedure before it begins, with those who decline being advised the ‘wandng’ is necessary to comply with security requirements. 	

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a court user declines, they will be asked to leave the building and make contact by phone or email. • Court/tribunal users will be asked to turn their head away from the C/TSO so that they are not face-to-face at any point during the search. • 'Wanding' will be conducted as promptly and effectively as possible by the C/TSO, starting at the back of the individual, working forward to cover their front. They will not touch the person's body. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a court/tribunal user relies on lip reading, facial expressions or clear sound to communicate then the C/TSO and court staff may at a suitably safe distance, remove their face coverings to communicate effectively. (Note, this arrangement must be in place throughout the court building). 	

Action Plan and Summary (Section 3) Entry to the building/security searches	
Actions identified (insert lines as required)	Deadline for completion
<p style="color: #e91e63;">Outline details of significant local factors/risks affecting entry to our buildings. Record how these concerns are being addressed:</p>	

Section 4. Cleaning and hygiene in our buildings	
<p>Please ensure you are familiar with the 'Cleaning in our buildings' document before completing this section. Our public guidance informs users of the cleaning and hygiene measures in place.</p>	
Actions required	In place Yes/No <small>(If NO complete Action Plan below)</small>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hygiene measures in the courtroom/hearingroom: to help reduce the spread of the virus and follow Public Health advice the following measures should be considered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hand sanitiser to be available for users. • The use of documents, iPads and laptops in court is such that they are used by only one person and no double handling takes place. Trial bundles should be placed within plastic wallets, which are cleaned between usage. There should be regular washing breaks during hearings. • Holy books/scriptures, oath or affirmation cards/laminated sheets are not shared/touched by court users. The oath or affirmation is instead read out and then repeated. • Staff to clean their hands at regular intervals when handling paperwork and afterwards, by either washing their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or by using hand sanitising gel. • Hand washing facilities or sanitiser are available for court/tribunal users including in custody suites. • The location(s) of hand sanitiser for public use is clearly signed on entry to the building. • The locations must be set up so they do not introduce congestion to walk ways 	

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or seating areas.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signage: Posters will be displayed in prominent locations, particularly in and near waiting areas. (The posters can be found within the posters section here). 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleaning the building: to help reduce the spread of the virus and maintain the cleanliness of court and tribunal buildings the following measures should be considered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleaned regularly throughout day, and over night • Cleaners returning at frequent intervals to common touch points such as lift buttons, public waiting areas, staff reception, custody suite including cells etc. • Shared items such as leaflets, magazines, children's toys, books, TV remotes etc. are removed from waiting and general areas, as well as communal staff areas. • Rubbish is promptly disposed of. There are an adequate number of bins and they are emptied at regular intervals. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responding to incidents: to help reduce the spread of the virus and maintain the cleanliness of court and tribunal buildings the following measures should be considered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responding swiftly to complaints received of any areas of poor hygiene. • Should there be any instance of a confirmed case of COVID-19 follow the guidance for suspected and confirmed cases, including consulting with your facilities manager to see whether a section 16 clean is required. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only paper towels and hand dryers to be used in line with guidance. Ensure non-disposal towels are removed/inaccessible. 	

Action Plan and Summary (Section 4) Cleaning and hygiene in our buildings

Actions identified (insert lines as required)	Deadline for completion
<p>Outline details of significant local factors/risks affecting ability to manage cleaning and hygiene requirements and actions being taken to address concerns:</p>	

Section 5. Access to drinking water and refreshment facilities (public areas)

Our public guidance informs users of the measures in place relating to food and water in our buildings

Actions required	In place Yes/No <small>(If NO complete Action Plan below)</small>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of food and water: to comply with the Public Health advice and guidance the following measures should be considered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glass bottles are not permitted and should be confiscated or disposed of by security before entering the building. • Carafes and glasses are not in use in courtrooms/hearing rooms. • Bottled water is provided, by exception, in the courtroom/hearing room. • Refreshment facilities and canteens may open. This is subject to change, should the situation demand it, and should not be taken as guaranteed. Please refer to https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus and see latest guidance on here. • Each request to open as a sit-down service will need to be reviewed by the senior person on site and the checklist attached must be completed. 	

Action Plan and Summary (Section 5) Access to drinking water and refreshment facilities (public areas)

Actions identified (insert lines as required)	Deadline for completion

Outline details of significant local factors/risks affecting ability to manage access to drinking water and refreshment facilities (public side) and actions being taken to address concerns:

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Section 6. Custody suites (including Dock areas)

Our public guidance informs users of the measures in place relating to custody suites (including dock areas) in our buildings.

Prisoner Escort and Custody Services (PECS) have primary responsibility for conducting custody suite assessments. Hygiene and cleaning assessment (section 8) also applies to custody suites.

Discussions must be held, and agreements sought from HMPPS PECS Contract Delivery Managers (CDMs) to confirm

(i) the current status of the custody suite, (ii) identify any mitigating actions needed, and (iii) ensure these are carried over into the Local Assessment Tool action plan.

Actions required	In place Yes/No <small>(If NO complete Action Plan below)</small>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I have discussed the available PECS RAG Status and risk assessment with the relevant PECS CDM and understand the current status of the custody suite. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I regularly meet and discuss the plan to progress any outstanding identified actions, with the relevant PECS CCM, to understand the current status of the custody suite. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where a PECS RAG status or risk assessment is not rated green I am satisfied, by a viewing of the area, that the Custody Suite is being occupied and managed by the PECS provider in line with <u>'Working safely in courts, tribunals and administrative offices'</u> 	

Action Plan and Summary (Section 6) Custody suites

Actions identified (insert lines as required)	Deadline for completion
<p>Outline details of significant local factors/risks affecting ability to manage COVID-19 safety requirements in the custody suite identified by PECS and actions being taken to address concerns:</p>	

Section 7. Use of PPE (Fluid Resistant Surgical Masks) and/or gloves and face coverings

Actions Required

FRSMs will be provided to professional visitors on entry to the court custody suite in recognition of the need to provide privileged legal counsel to defendants given the possibility there may be defendants with symptoms or who have tested positive for COVID-19, the small space within consultation rooms and potential for close contact with defendants. Furthermore, all individuals in smaller jury deliberation rooms must wear FRSMs. Rooms where FRSMs have been assessed to be required, will be identified to court users and staff through the use of posters and through the Jury Manager.

HMCTS has also taken the decision to require face coverings to be worn by all court and tribunal users and HMCTS employees, in all staff and public areas of court and tribunal buildings in England, in line with Public Health guidance.

When reviewing the public areas and courtrooms, consider how the following standards/measures are being applied

In place

Yes/No

(If **NO** complete Action Plan below)

Use of PPE

- PPE (masks and gloves) are available for C/TSOs and for first aiders as defined in the [PPE matrix](#). Gloves are available to staff to protect the skin on their hands from the effect of hand sanitiser, where their roles require this gel to be applied at intervals (e.g. when regularly handling papers).

Disposal of PPE

- Masks and gloves are disposed of carefully in a 'no touch' bin, and people advised to immediately wash their hands with soap and water or use a hand sanitiser.
- FRSMs to be issued to professional visitors in court custody suites as an additional mitigation measure against new variants, in limited space with a potential for close contact.

- **Wearing of Fluid Resistant Surgical Masks (FRSMs) in Juror deliberation rooms:** All individuals in smaller Jury deliberation rooms must wear Fluid Resistant Surgical Masks. FRSMs should last for approximately 4 hours - Jury Managers must provide 2 FRSMs to each juror per day and additional FRSMs upon request. Visors do not mitigate the risk of transmission in these areas and so should not be worn.

- **Wearing of face coverings in courtrooms:** Following guidance from the senior judiciary, judges and magistrates strongly encourage the wearing of face coverings by everyone in the courtroom except for the judge/ presiding magistrate, the advocate who is speaking and the witness giving evidence. HMCTS supports this position and guidance, and information should be given to staff locally to that effect

- **Unless exempt, all court users are required to wear a face covering in all public areas of court and tribunal buildings.** This should include communal areas such narrow corridors that cannot be made one-way, busy entrance areas, narrow stairwells or robing rooms etc.

- **HMCTS employees across the estate are required to wear a face covering in all non-public areas of our buildings, including back office/office buildings, unless seated at a workstation or exempt.** Posters should be used to ensure this is clear throughout buildings.

- Instructions on donning and doffing of face coverings should be made available to all staff locally. A clean plastic bag or pocket should be used by staff to put the face covering in, when they are sat at their workstation. Used face coverings should not be placed on desks.

Action Plan and Summary (Section 7) Use of PPE (Fluid Resistant Surgical Masks and/or gloves) and face coverings

Actions identified (insert lines as required)

Deadline for completion

Outline details of significant local factors/risks affecting ability to implement face covering requirements and actions being taken to address concerns:

Section 8. Further Guidance

[GOV.UK – COVID-19 Guidance](#)

[COVID-19 H&S Hub](#)

[COVID-19 Line Manager's HR Guidance](#)

[COVID-19 Security and Safety Guidance](#)

[Face covering exemptions | HM Courts & Tribunals Service \(justice.gov.uk\)](#)

Section 9. Statement of completion / assurance

Names to be removed prior to sharing externally

Statement of assurance

I confirm that the assessment has been completed and I am assured that appropriate measures are in place. Where an action plan is in place there is a target date for the resolution of all the issues and a date for review.

Signed (SPoS) (Name/Role)

Statement of completion

I confirm that the assessment has been completed and I can confirm measures are in place. I have reviewed the action plan to ensure it reflects the assessment.

Signed (SPoS) (Name/Role)

Signed (DTUS H&S Rep) (Name/Role)

Only to be signed by the rep and not on their behalf. The TUS rep is signing to confirm they have been fully engaged in checking the effectiveness of COVID-19 safety measures.

Note: *If the rep has not signed, the TUS rep should explain why, providing details in this signature box.*

Note: *If your site does not have a TU rep, please indicate this in the signature box*

Signed (Security Supervisor) (Name/Role)

If not signed the Security Supervisor should explain why, providing details in this signature box.

Version Control

Version	Publication Date	Author	Summary of Changes
V1		Safety and Security	First Release
V4 V5	10 November 2020 18 February 2021	 <p>For more information on the H&S Hub click here</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Background updated - completed actions to remain listed and not removed. - requirement to wear a face covering in non-public communal areas and staff areas added - No names or details of any person except those completing the AT should be included. - All significant completed actions to be retained. - Managers/SPOs should regularly share the completed local assessment tool proactively with all staff and relevant stakeholders - FRSMs in jury deliberation rooms added. - Summary of rationale for RAG rating added at the beginning of the document - Yes/No Boxes added against each action. - Action plan added to each section with a summary of the mitigating activity (specific to site) introduced (added at request of PHE).
V5.1 V5.2 V5.3	24 February 2021 9 April 2021 May 2021	 <p>For more information on the H&S Hub click here</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ventilation section updated. Reference to CO2monitors included. - Addition of information relating to the COVID-19 Individual Risk Indicator tool and other HR guidance to be used to aid discussions with staff. - Names, including SPOs, TU Rep and Security Supervisor are to be redacted before external publication. - FRSM to be issued to all professional visitors to custody suites - Courtroom capacity updated – capacity should be displayed on hearing room doors and monitored. - Custody suite section updated – action required statements amended - Information relating to use of fans updated. - Updated information on catering provisions added. - Use of sunflower lanyards added.
V6	July 2021		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Changes made to reflect the government's roadmap out of COVID-19 restrictions in England. - All references to social distancing have been removed. - All references to limiting capacity in various areas of our building have been removed.