

37 Wimpole Street



37 Wimpole Street: The new working environment

Welcome back to Hearings at Wimpole Street.

We've been working in line with the latest Government guidance outlining safe office practices during COVID-19. This was developed in conjunction with industry, unions, Public Health England and the Health and Safety Executive.

We've developed the set of guidelines below from this guidance to ensure that Wimpole Street remains a safe working environment for all.

In addition to this guide, briefings have also been set up for those attending hearings. After the briefing, we will ask you to complete and sign a checklist confirming you are aware of the protocols and expectations set out below.

Social distancing at Wimpole Street when attending Hearings

Getting around: A one-way route has been introduced around the hearings areas and throughout the building, which are marked by floor arrows. The lifts will be in service but restricted to a maximum of two people per lift.

(There are pictures of signage and sanitiser stations on pages 3 - 6)

Signing in/out for hearings on arrival and departure:

The Hearings reception will be open from 8:30am. Screens have been put in place for protection during the signing-in process and hand sanitiser will be available for those arriving at the venue to use. Upon arrival you should sign in at the Hearings reception, where you will be asked for an up-to-date phone number so that we can contact you if we become aware of a circumstance where you will need to self-isolate. We will hold this

information on the signing-in sheet for 21 days before deleting it.

On your first arrival for a hearing, a Hearings team staff member will provide a short overview and induction. This will include explaining the layout and signage of the hearings area, and any other modifications that have been implemented to ensure your safety. We will also answer any questions you have.

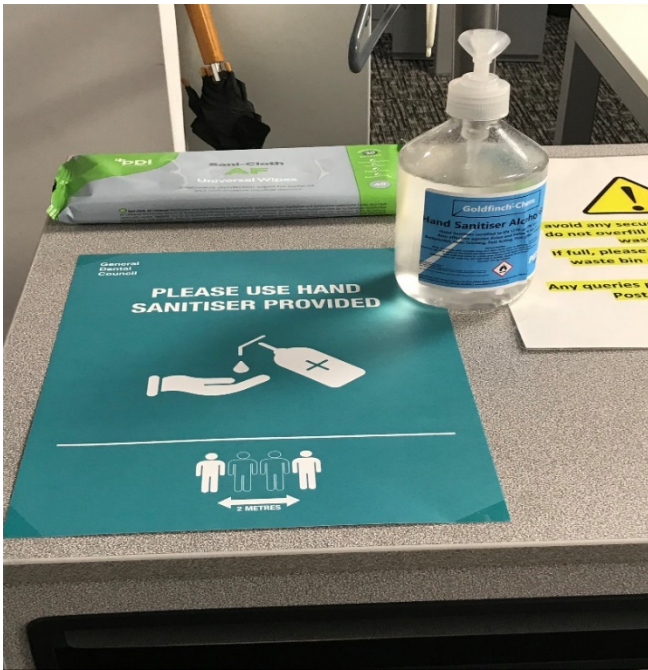




Hearings reception



Hearings witness room and example sanitiser provision





Lift restrictions and Hearings sanitising station



Set-up of hearing rooms: We've introduced protective screens in Hearing Room 1 (HR1) in the GDC basement, which will be the first hearing room in use from September 2020. These screens are designed to divide participants and ensure that the room layout is COVID-19 secure, providing a safe environment for those attending the hearing (picture of this layout is on page 8).

Each desk will have hand sanitiser for use throughout the hearing. These bottles will be wiped down at the end of each day/sitting to ensure their continued safe use by others.

HR1 is ventilated by a large air handling unit (AHU) that brings large volumes of fresh air in and extracts air. The air is not recirculated, and our maintenance engineer advises that the air is exchanged and optimised for best operation. There are a number of circular grills in the floor and panels on the wall, which are bringing fresh air in constantly, tempered if need be, to achieve the temperature of 22C. The panel in the wall extracts air, the filters have recently been cleaned and the coils have been sterilised. Other adjustments have been made to optimise the ventilation and the frequency of filter change/extra sterilisation will be kept under active review.

We will also be extending the operation of the air handling unit so that it comes on at 4am instead of 7am daily, so the room is well ventilated for many hours before it is used each day, and is continually ventilated in an open system, not recirculated air.

Throughout the hearing, panel members, the legal advisor, the GDC case presenter, the registrant and defence representative will have allocated desks and seats.

For the GDC case presenter, there will be two seats designated to their support team on the table behind where they sit.

For the registrant/defence team there will be two seats designated to their support team on the table behind where they sit. No other seating will be provided for additional support persons in the defence section of the hearing room.

The GDC Hearings staff will have their own desk and seats to work from in the hearing room. The witness desk will be cleaned, and the chair swapped, after each witness gives their evidence.

In HR1 for the immediate future there will be one public observer chair should anyone wish to observe the live hearing taking place, including one additional support person for the registrant. This chair is in the room at a safe distance away from parties.

(Picture of room layout and protective screens)



Entering and exiting the hearing room:

All parties will wait, enter, and leave the hearing room in an order that observes social distancing.

For example:

- All parties will wait in the breakout rooms until called by the Hearings Support Officer once the hearing is ready to reconvene.
- The panel members and legal advisor will enter the room first, in order of who sits from left to right of the room.
- The registrant and/or defence representative and their support team will enter the room next, and once seated the Hearings Support Officer will ask the GDC case presenter to enter.
- The Hearings Support Officer will enter the room last once they have confirmed all parties are in the room and seated.
- When exiting the hearing room, the opposite order of process will take place and each individual will leave ensuring they are maintaining social distancing.

Witness entering and exiting the hearing room:

When witnesses attend to give evidence, they will enter the room after the panel and legal advisor and before the registrant and/or defence representative and their support team.

Breakout rooms and shared coffee areas:

The panellist breakout room can safely accommodate five socially distanced people at a time, with each person allocated their own area upon arrival. Panel members and the legal advisor will be asked to sit at this table throughout their sitting.

The registrant breakout room is set up in accordance with social distancing with spaces between each area someone sits at the table. The room can safely accommodate a maximum of five people.

The GDC case presenter breakout room can safely accommodate a maximum of two people.

Please note, if you wish to bring a larger team for any parts of the hearing, it is vital that we know in advance how many people are coming, who they are and what date they will be attending, so that suitable breakout room arrangements can be made.

Refreshments: Coffee and water machines will be available for use.

Sensor operated, i.e. touchless water machines, are available in the Hearings Reception area, panel room, witness room and HR1.

The coffee machines in the Hearings Reception area, panel room and witness room will be available for use but are not sensor operated. We ask that you use the cleaning wipes before and after each use to wipe the surface and buttons.

Cleaning wipes will be available in all rooms, please consider future users of any space you use.

Printing/scanning: We want to reduce use of paper as much as possible. Parties and registrants should send in any documents by email prior to the hearing for electronic distribution. In exceptional circumstances, should you require the use of a scanner, please speak with the Hearings Support Officer who will be able to help.

Cleaning the workplace

Our cleaners will be using products containing over 70% alcohol content, ensuring we are meeting the Government's workplace cleaning guidance. Our cleaners will perform the usual daily clean, with more frequent cleans of touch surfaces in the communal areas.

Cleaning wipes will be available in all rooms, please consider future users of any space you use.

Hand cleaning and hygiene

Hand sanitiser: We have a substantial supply of 500 ml bottles located throughout the office and in all meeting rooms.

There are also auto-dispensers at the office entrance and exit areas along with clear signs.

In summary:

- Please follow headcount restrictions in GDC meeting rooms and speak with Hearings staff if you require an additional room.
- Cleaning wipes are available in meeting rooms and communal areas; please use freely and think of other users of this space.
- Make sure you continue to follow our clear desk policy when leaving the office as this will allow the cleaning of surfaces to be carried out more efficiently.
- Lastly, we strongly advise that you continue to follow the Government's guidance on social distancing and best hygiene practice.

Remember we're here to help. If you have any questions about the office and the measures in place, please get in touch with the Hearings Team.