

Dear all

You will no doubt have seen [the Prime Minister's announcement yesterday evening](#) which confirmed that most current COVID-19 restrictions in England will remain in place for a further four weeks beyond the initially planned date for lifting of Monday 21 June.

For all courts and tribunals in England and Wales, yesterday's announcement means that there will be no change in how our buildings are currently operating, and the safety of our users remains our top priority.

Whilst there is no change to the current mitigations and guidance in our buildings, it is vital – now more than ever - that we all remain committed to rigorously observing the safety measures we currently have in place, and do not allow complacency to creep in.

What we need from you

Today we reminded all court and tribunal staff of how important it is that they continue to follow the 'hands, face, space' guidance to the letter and keep sticking closely to the safety measures currently in place in our buildings.

I would be hugely appreciative if you would please do the same with your own teams, members and colleagues as part of the ongoing vital role that we all play in keeping each other safe. We need your help and vigilance to achieve this.

What we continue to do

We are keeping all current safety measures in place which include:

- social distancing, plexiglass screens, face coverings in court and remote hearings (where a judge or magistrate decides it's appropriate)
- continued observance of hands, face, space guidance
- asking visitors with any symptoms, a positive PCR or lateral flow test to stay away from our buildings and follow NHS guidance
- managing any cases we identify quickly and robustly which includes notifying any close contacts
- maintaining our weekly court risk assessments and rigorous cleaning regimes
- urging frequent court users to take regular tests by [ordering free rapid lateral flow tests](#) to check for symptoms or collect a [home testing kit](#) if visiting one of our buildings
- publishing and promoting our [escalation route](#) for professional court users to report any concerns in our buildings

There has been no relaxation in our approach. We will continue weekly risk assessments, maintain rigorous cleaning regimes, regularly check ventilation systems and review our safety measures.

We continuously monitor and review our guidance and practices to ensure that we are complying with the latest public health advice. Public health experts have endorsed our safety measures and confirmed they are strong enough to deal with the new variants of the virus.

Positive cases amongst HMCTS staff and users have continued to track community cases as the vaccine is rolled out and the restrictions of the last lockdown take effect, and remain at a low level. This is good news but we need you to help us keep it this way.

With your continued support – for which I am immensely grateful – I am confident that we will continue to keep court and tribunal users safe whenever they enter one of our buildings no matter where it is.

We are committed to keeping you updated as Government guidance evolves and thank you, wholeheartedly, for your ongoing help, patience and supportiveness during this pandemic.

Yours Sincerely

Paul Harris
Operations Director