

Covid Risk assessment v6.0 9th November 2020

This note updates the risk assessment published on 30 October¹.

Summary:

Since 19 October, there have been 23 positive cases in the Manchester Magistrates' Court including one inquiry attendee; one in Spinningfields; and none in the media annex. Manchester moved into the very high-risk category (Tier 3) on Friday 24 October, although this was superseded on 5 November by a second national lockdown.

An independent group chaired by Public Health England was convened in the last week of October and met three times to assess whether the cases were the result of transmission within the court complex, as well as the level of risk to the Inquiry and the Magistrates' Court. After three meetings, the group concluded that there was possibly a very limited amount of transmission within the Magistrates' Court but that the level of risk in the setting (and to the Inquiry) was low. It was deemed safe for in-person hearings to continue.

Public health officials visited the three inquiry sites on 26 October. They were satisfied that attendees were observing social distancing and that the sites were Covid-secure.

Following the Government's announcement of a second national lockdown, the Chairman of the Inquiry stated his intention at the hearing on Monday to continue with in-person hearings. He said that he expected that the courts would remain open and that there was sound justification for the Inquiry hearings to continue in person. Given the complexity and nature of the hearings, it would be difficult to achieve the same outcomes using virtual hearings or any other model that was substantially different from in-person hearings. Furthermore, he is very keen to build on the momentum established over the first 9 weeks of the hearings and well into the Chapter 7 on Security.

CPs remain broadly supportive of this view, consistently making clear that a move to virtual hearings would be a last resort. The independent public health group also agreed at a meeting on Wednesday that it was sensible to continue the hearings in person.

Key points:

- There have been 23 reported positive cases across the Magistrates' Court and one in Spinningfields since 19 October. Five of these belong to a team that operates in an area far removed from the Inquiry or any areas frequented by Inquiry attendees. One of the cases in the court involved an individual who had attended the inquiry. The case in

¹ <https://files.manchesterarenainquiry.org.uk/live/uploads/2020/10/02144906/Covid-Risk-assessment-v3.0f.pdf>

Spinningfields involved a security guard, and as a precautionary measure the rest of the team were tested immediately (all were confirmed as negative);

- Full details on every positive or suspected case has been provided to PHE who have carried out an independent assessment of whether they think the cases are linked and whether this presents a risk to the inquiry. Aside from the GeoAmey cases, no evidence has been found of any link between the cases and it is expected they are the result of community transmission given the high incidence rate in the area;
- Attendees are reminded to let the inquiry know as soon as possible if they are symptomatic or have had a positive test.

Advice for attendees of the hearings:

If you attended Manchester Magistrates' Court within the last 14 days, we ask you to closely monitor your own health and report to see if you become symptomatic with a cough or fever or lose your sense of taste/smell. [COVID-19 Public health guidance](#) is available on GOV.UK.

As per Government advice you do not need to get a Covid-19 test if you are not displaying any symptoms.

If an inquiry attendee requires a Covid-19 test they should contact the Secretariat immediately because we can then ensure that as a member of the inquiry the test is given priority.

The contact details are generalenquiries@manchesterarenainquiry.org.uk or 0161 830 4331. Please include the words 'contact tracing' in the subject line of any email.

Attendees are reminded that parking is available near the court, and if they need to use public transport to remember hands, face, space.

9 Sections of our risk assessment:

Area	Observations
Queueing and entry to the building	No issues reported
Bag searches	As above
Use of handheld detectors	As above
Social-distancing in the public areas	Some near misses have been observed at lunchtime in SCC. This has been addressed by reducing the number of seats per table and

	each table now has a sign reminding attendees that it should be one household per table.
Social-distancing in the courtroom	Attendees need to remain at 2m plus at all times or take additional steps (e.g. face coverings where this is not possible)
Hygiene and cleaning (public area)	No reported issues.
Provision of food and water	No issues reported
Face coverings and provision of PPE	No issues reported
Ventilation	The rooms are well ventilated.

Inquiry Secretary

Manchester Arena Inquiry