



Our working and operational approach to the Covid-19 pandemic

While things remain very fluid and uncertain, we thought it would be helpful to send out an email to let you know what actions Atkins Bland have taken, or will take, to help protect the health of our staff and clients.

It seems clear to us that a core priority should be for everyone to do all they can to avoid contracting the virus or spreading it. We interpret this as meaning everyone should limit their physical contact with items others have touched and keep at a safe distance from other people, with that safe distance currently described by our government as 2 metres.

Our approach to these challenges is that we have wasted no time in ensuring that staff who wish to work from home, and are able to, can do so. As this is nearly all of our staff, we are confident that our normal services can continue to be provided, even if this is by email and telephone communications rather than physical meetings and use of the post. Please rest assured that we have taken appropriate steps to ensure the security of data is not compromised through having staff work from home instead of our offices.

While the office currently remains open, we are fully prepared for the possibility that it will be forced to close, either due to government edict or the application of common sense. We are also taking the view that clients should not leave home and add to their risks of catching the virus unnecessarily, so we advise all of our clients against visiting our offices, but to use the telephone for any discussions instead.

It is very encouraging that we have seen several items of news about existing drugs which may significantly reduce the symptoms of Coronavirus, and others implying that a vaccine may be available rather earlier than the 12- to 18-month time frame generally predicted a few weeks ago. It is also encouraging, compared with the predictions of some, that the experience in China, so far, is that the daily number of fatalities rose for about 3 weeks, plateaued for the next 2 weeks and fell quite rapidly following that.

In Italy, they have already been through three weeks of rising daily deaths, and suffered far worse than China in the process, but perhaps we will now see the benefit of the stalwart actions they have taken to try to overcome this horrid virus. Spain and France seem to be about a week behind Italy, with Spain suffering particularly badly, while the UK seems to be about 10 days into the period of rising daily fatalities, if you ignore the first few days when we had one or two a day.

There is no current way to assess if the China experience will be replicated elsewhere, but there seems room for hope that the worst of this dreadful experience will last for a few weeks, rather than a few months. However long it does last, we are confident that Atkins Bland has taken the actions needed to ensure we can continue to operate a full service to our clients, and can remain fully open and here to help in any way we can, and that the need for isolation to minimise contagion can be accommodated.

