



The Covid diaries: Day 198 – Quarantine, the Inside Joke

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29th September 2020

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By Dónall Breen - 30 September

A daily fly-on-the-wall blog about running a legal business during the Covid-19 crisis.

The next person who says the phrase ‘the Next Normal’ will have to talk to the hand. But it will be a sanitized hand, at least.

Despite using that phrase myself countless times over the last few months, just like a high five at a testing centre it’s a little counterintuitive right now. How can we know what the next normal will be if we can’t even agree what the temporary fix looks like?

A little over six months ago we started this fly-on-the-wall blog about working in a law firm through a pandemic (our very first post

[here](#)). Now, half a year later we return after a hiatus to say that we are still figuring it out. Since March, GQ|Littler have had one person in the office, then a complete office shut down, then cohorts back in and now we are allowing only necessary users to enter. And that is just one smallish law firm in the City.

The Covid diaries came to be an outlet for [Darren](#) and I, as we blogged, moaned and tapped our way through countless weeks of upheaval and change. But as I look back through the posts it was shocking to see just how much was happening in such a short amount of time. Furlough schemes, lockdown rules, travel restrictions and public health guidance were all changing on a weekly (if not daily) basis. Some policy decisions that would have taken months to figure out in the past were lashed out into the wild in days.

So when people talk about the 'next normal', I often chuckle to myself. Trust homo sapiens to try find order among chaos. A random collection of stars in the sky does not indicate you're going to fall in love on Monday, and thousands of employers doing their best to react to an ever changing situation in uncharted territory is not a blueprint for what will happen in years to come.

But I am not a nihilist, I am not even a pessimist. In fact, this situation makes me more optimistic than most. Even in this chaos we have seen employees, companies and governments show enormous amounts of resilience and flexibility. People are losing their jobs, but there are also a lot of people safely staying in work that no one thought possible. The economy is shrinking, but the wheels are still turning.

There is not a lot of normal right now, but at least one thing is consistent. Humans will improvise, adapt, overcome. We have done it before - we will do it again.

Stay safe out there.

If you would like to read our **Covid diaries starting from day 1** please click [here](#).