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IN BRIEF: Dentons says two U.K. offices will work remotely, forever

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(Reuters) - Dentons on Friday said it is closing two of its U.K. locations and moving employees who had been based in those offices to full-time remote status, making it one of the first law firms to shrink its real estate footprint because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The decision impacts Dentons' 54 employees, including four partners, in Watford, England, and 12 employees, including two partners, in Aberdeen, Scotland, the firm said in a statement. Dentons isn't moving any other U.K. employees to permanent remote status for now, but it is reconsidering its London office space, it said. Its lease is up in 2025. It has also delayed the opening of a new office in Dublin.

"The success of remote working during lockdown has made us really stop and think about how we can learn from this new way of working to accelerate the physical and behavioral changes that form part of our strategy to build the law firm of the future," said Lisa Sewell, Dentons' managing director for the U.K., Ireland and Middle East, in the statement.

Dentons has more than 10,000 lawyers in more than 75 countries, according to its website.

As law firm offices across the globe have shuttered physical offices to slow the spread of the virus, keeping them empty for months in some countries, many law firms leaders have reconsidered whether they require as much space.

In May, a survey of 222 law firm leaders during a Managing Partner Forum webinar on the pandemic, mostly including small or mid-sized firms, found that 72% of respondents expected to need less office space in the future.

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