

IFJ COVID-19 Ongoing Updates

16/04/20-20/04/20

Intermediaries and others continue to discuss the significant implications of Covid - 19 and its impact on hearings/trials/tribunals. The notes are divided into 'Remote Process', Covid-19 transmission and 'other'

Remote Process

The Law Gazette discusses a fictional trial run to test whether videolink could be a fair alternative to face-to face hearings during lockdown.

<https://www.lawgazette.co.uk/news/fully-remote-jury-test-a-success-for-open-justice/5103927.article>

The Youth Justice Legal Centre (YJLC) has produced a legal update providing an overview of the current position in relation to children who are facing criminal proceedings during this time. And addresses video and telephone hearings.

<https://yjlc.uk/covid-19-video-link-hearings-custody-time-limits-and-delays-for-children-in-the-criminal-courts/>

The Inns of Court College of Advocacy have now produced an updated version of 'Principles for Remote-Advocacy -

www.icca.ac.uk › remote-advocacy-guide

A question of how much work intermediaries are doing with defendants was raised. It would seem that a number of requests for intermediaries for both remote work and possibly face to face work are being received.

Other

Today on Radio 4 was a programme (apologise been unable to find link) on the very significant backlog of cases in the Crown Courts which was developing before pandemic.

'Rights of Woman has published guidance regarding Family Courts being open for urgent cases remotely.

<https://twitter.com/rightsofwomen/status/1251125566079750151>

HMCTS has published its family courts business priorities for the Covid-19 pandemic.

<https://mobile.twitter.com/hmctsgovuk/status/1251983415282368513>

HMCTS produces a summary of its operational position each day.

<https://mobile.twitter.com/hmctsgovuk/status/1250688950123016193?s=12>

A third IfJ survey will be sent out this week to members regarding experiences of working during the pandemic .

Covid-19 transmission

The MoJ produced 'Guidance for Intermediaries during the Covid-19 Pandemic' (see end of notes) on Friday 17th April.



Ministry
of Justice

Guidance for intermediaries during the Covid-19 pandemic

This guidance has been prepared for the use of all intermediaries working in the justice system, and covers all the areas in which intermediaries currently work, in line with the general principles on social distancing and shielding of high risk individuals.

1. General guidelines

[Government guidance](#) for the general public includes the following principles:

- Follow [social distancing guidance](#) and, where possible, keep a 2 metre distance from others and avoid contact with anyone displaying symptoms of Coronavirus. These symptoms include:
 - a high temperature; and/or
 - a new and continuous cough.
- Please see section 3 below for instructions about how to check that you are not exposed to unnecessary risk in the course of your work, and what to do if you develop symptoms yourself.
- If you are at [very high risk](#) of severe illness from Covid-19 you must be particularly stringent in following social distancing measures to shield yourself from Coronavirus.
- If you fall into this category, or who have members of your household that do, you are strongly advised to stay at home. You should avoid any face-to-face contact outside of your immediate household for at least 12 weeks from the day you receive a letter from the government.
- If you are self-employed you should be eligible for the [measures](#) that the government has put in place to provide financial support to self-employed individuals. If you are employed you should liaise with your employer about what general and financial support they are able to provide.
- [Avoid non-essential use of public transport.](#)
- You should travel by car if possible and only use public transport if there is no other alternative. You should also avoid travelling excessive distances. You should focus work on your home area and ensure that you can travel to and from appointments within the same day.

Handwashing and respiratory hygiene:

