

# Lockdown Update

## Combined update: 18-05-2020

Contains all relevant information sent out to members up to and including 18 May 2020.

There is a lot of information in this document. For ease of reference the pages are organised as follows:

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## Health and Wellbeing

### Lawcare

Lawcare has created a section on its website with useful resources including signposting to all the professional bodies and regulators coronavirus information pages. It will be adding new content to this regularly, based on the issues it sees being raised by those turning to it for support: new resources on working from home, managing anxiety, difficult clients:

<https://www.lawcare.org.uk/covid-19>

**UPDATED** Lawcare is running a free webinar 'working well, staying well in the home office' on May 6, which is at capacity, but a recording will be available afterwards on its website.

New resources have been added to its covid support page including webinars, managing furlough, practical steps to stay well when working from home and tips for leaders: <https://www.lawcare.org.uk/covid-19>.

Contacts about covid account for 40% of all of Lawcare's support contacts with concerns about existing mental health issues getting worse and worries about furlough/lack of work emerging as current main issues.

LawCare is there for emotional support. Its helpline is open every day Monday to Friday from 9am to 5.30pm: email and webchat support is also available, see the website for details [www.lawcare.org.uk](http://www.lawcare.org.uk).

**Resources** : There is an updated dropbox of key covid-related resources here: [https://www.dropbox.com/sh/8w56vhcw68rdg2u/AAANy\\_t\\_7k73vv1RsY0nhi1Ca?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/8w56vhcw68rdg2u/AAANy_t_7k73vv1RsY0nhi1Ca?dl=0)

## **Working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19)**

### **NEW Offices and contact centres: Guidance for people who work in or run offices, contact centres and similar indoor environments**

Members have been contacting us to help locate information about how to ensure their offices are safe for staff to return to work / stay at work. The Government issued this guidance on 11<sup>th</sup> May: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/offices-and-contact-centres>. The manual can be searched online or it can be downloaded – both from this linked page.

The Law Society has summarised the guidance [here](#)

**Law Scot Wellbeing:** <https://www.lawscot.org.uk/members/wellbeing/>

**Mental Health & Wellbeing at the Bar:** <https://www.wellbeingatthebar.org.uk/>

### **Becoming more virus-resilient: tips on dealing with the COVID-19 coronavirus situation - Professor Hugh Koch**

APIL Expert and Speaker's blog in PIBULJ provides advice on managing our anxiety during this very stressful time: <http://www.pibulj.com/content/law-journal-summaries/news-position-1/5089-use-your-resilience-to-manage-your-coronavirus-risk-dr-hugh-koch>

### **Charity offers £1m Covid-19 support to solicitors**

SBA, the charity for solicitors and their families, is launching a £1m personal hardship fund to aid practitioners in serious financial difficulty following the outbreak of Covid-19. Article in Litigation Futures here: <https://www.legalfutures.co.uk/latest-news/charity-offers-1m-covid-19-support-to-solicitors>

## APIL issued best practice, letters, updates

### APIL Covid-19 Hub

This page will be used to add any new information issued by APIL and will also contain a link to this updaters document. <https://www.apil.org.uk/covid-19>

### Limitation Protocol Agreements

#### ABI and Thompsons review and extend protocol

Thompsons and the ABI have agreed to extend their joint limitation agreement to 17 June 2020. APIL has backed Thompsons and the ABI's protocol as a way of helping the system work for injured people.

#### APIL and ABI also review and extend agreements

All three limitation protocol agreements with the ABI to deal with claims during the pandemic for England & Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland have been extended until 17 June.

[This document](#) contains all three agreements ((including the agreement with Thompsons), with a link to the ABI website for details of how to sign up and the list of signatories.

#### Covid-19: Best Practice for For Mutual Co-Operation

All the best practice documents have also been reviewed with FOIL and extended to 17 June 2020. A further review of all documents will take place in the week before this date.

Each document can be viewed here:

- England, Wales & Scotland: [click here](#)
- Scotland specific agreement (with FOIL & MASS): [click here](#)
- Northern Ireland specific agreement: [click here](#)

### Emergency letter templates

John McQuater has produced two template letters for members to use and adapt for their own practice. The letters are (1) to the client to advise of temporary changes in arrangements and (2) to the opposing party relating to temporary acceptance of service by email, subject to certain conditions:

<http://www.apil.org.uk/files/Coronavirus2020/Emergency-Letters-2.zip>

## APIL's Covid-19 related training

APIL free webinar:

### **NEW** Issuing unspecified claims during COVID and the future of unspecified claims in the County Court

Broadcast date and time: 28 May 2020 Time: 13:00 - 14:00 and then on demand

**Speakers** - Justice Colin Birss  
Brett Dixon  
Emily Wickens

HHJ Bird (TBC)

Open to members and non-members [Link to content](#)

**NEW Cybersecurity and working safely from home (Live webinar)**

Broadcast date and time: 2 Jun 2020, 12:00 - 13:00 and then on demand

Presented by CEO of Wolfberry Security, David Rands, this webinar will cover: how the pandemic has changed the threat landscape; how your home network is vulnerable to attack; the threats software brings; how phishing exploits the new landscape. Details: [click here](#).

**Remote video hearings and electronic bundles (On demand webinar)**

Presented by Brett Dixon and Master Cook, High Court Master in the QBD.

It covers practical guidance on: preparation for remote video hearings before the courts; advocacy tips for remote hearings; protocol for trial using Skype; the County Court view. For more details, [click here](#)

**Lockdown leads - Maximising your LinkedIn professional profile whilst working from home: LIVE webinar - 27 May 2020 Time: 12:00 - 13:00**

This webinar will be led by David Glenwright from the award-winning agency JC Social Media. It is ideally suited for anyone working from home who is looking to continue networking and generate leads and opportunities for themselves or their business.

More details: <https://www.apil.org.uk/training/lockdown-leads-maximising-your-linkedin-professional-profile-whilst-working-from-home-live-webinar>

**Data protection for PI lawyers: how the lockdown helps us to understand it (28 April**

12.00 – 13.00 live webinar) The changes created by Covid 19 provide a new perspective through which we can make sense of it. The crisis has thrown up some issues which enable us to get a better handle on the underlying principles: details [here](#).

**Covid-19: Managing the impact on your firm's finances (13<sup>th</sup> May 12.00 – 13.00 live**

webinar). This one hour live session is presented by Jon Cartwright, Accountant and Chartered Tax Adviser and Jenny Staight, specialising in regulatory compliance, both of at Hazelwoods, business advisors and chartered accountants. It will cover financial assistance during/after Covid, including: furlough bank borrowing; getting better payment terms on leases; deferring tax payments; implementing temporary pay reductions; effective profit and cash flow forecasting; thoughts on how the current challenges might unwind from a financial perspective; managing tax liabilities. Full details: <https://www.apil.org.uk/training/covid-19-managing-the-impact-on-your-firm-s-finances-live-webinar>

**Personal injury litigators and the Coronavirus (live webinar) 13<sup>th</sup> May 12.00 – 13.00.**

This webinar, presented by Gordon Exall, looks at the practical implications for personal injury lawyers that have arisen as a result of the coronavirus and social isolation including the rules, have they been changed, how long will they last; key cases; protecting your client's interests; protecting your interests. Full details:

<https://www.apil.org.uk/training/personal-injury-litigators-and-the-coronavirus-live-webinar>

**Becoming more COVID-19 resilient (on-demand).** Presented by Professor Hugh Koch, a clinical psychologist and visiting Professor in Law and Psychology at Birmingham City University. Access it [here](#)

**The Lockdown Toolkit: guidance on practical and tactical issues facing claimant practitioners.** This webinar was streamed on 16<sup>th</sup> April and is now available on demand [here](#)

## Special Q&A webinar

The webinar recording can be accessed [here](#)

**Witness statements: the statements of truth and social isolation (on-demand)** Presented by Gordon Exall, this webinar looks at the rules and guidance for litigators drafting witness statement, providing guidance for gathering evidence, drafting witness statements, explaining the statement of truth in a time of social isolation. More details [here](#)

**Social media & Covid-19: Help available for personal injury lawyers during difficult times (on-demand)** Presented by Gordon Exall, this webinar aired on 31 March and is available on demand from APIL's website [here](#)

**Civil procedure and the Coronavirus: practical solutions in an uncertain time** Gordon Exall presented this webinar on 25<sup>th</sup> March. It is now available on demand on the APIL website. If you would like to listen to and watch the webinar, [click here](#) for more information.

## Text of letter sent from Mike Benner, APIL CEO, to all members 20-03-2020:

This letter was emailed to all APIL members on Friday, 20 March, outlining details of the joint letter to the Lord Chief Justice.

<http://www.apil.org.uk/files/Coronavirus2020/Email-MB-Letter-from-APIL-FOIL-MASS-SCIL&AIRMIC-20-03-20.zip>

**APIL's discussion forum:** Share information with other members on the forums:

<http://forum.apil.org.uk/>

# Courts & Tribunals

## Civil Justice Council

### Rapid Consultation - The impact of COVID-19 measures on the civil justice system

The Civil Justice Council is asking for feedback from court users on the impact of changes to the civil justice system in response to COVID-19 by **15 May 2020**.

Court users who have participated in or observed a remote hearing since 19 March 2020 are invited to complete a survey of their experiences. The CJC is also inviting those who have published relevant material such as guidance, blog posts or opinion pieces to share these via [consultation@theLEF.org](mailto:consultation@theLEF.org). A virtual meeting for stakeholders will be held on 11 May.

Links to the court users' survey, details of the 11 May meeting, and further information can be found here: <https://www.judiciary.uk/announcements/rapid-consultation-the-impact-of-covid-19-measures-on-the-civil-justice-system/>.

## Courts & Tribunals – England and Wales

### Conference service providers

We have had a number of members contact the APIL office expressing concerns about the decision by BT to close to new bookings on its BT Legal Hearing service.

The telecommunications service provider used to facilitate a telephone hearing under Practice Direction 23 must be an approved service provider as indicated at 6.10 (1) of the

Practice Direction. From 1st April 20011 the following providers have demonstrated the capability to facilitate hearings:

- LegalConnect 0800 953 0405 E-mail: [support@legalconnect.co.uk](mailto:support@legalconnect.co.uk)
- Kidatu 0800 279 4595 E-mail: [info@kidatu.co.uk](mailto:info@kidatu.co.uk)
- Arkadin 0800 279 5596 E-mail: [legalevents@arkadin.co.uk](mailto:legalevents@arkadin.co.uk)
- BT MeetMe Contact the court to arrange

### **Videoconferencing**

For videoconferencing HMCTS has started using Skype for Business on HMCTS and judicial systems. Participants in a hearing do not need Skype for Business to join these videoconferences, however they will need the free Skype meetings app.

**Details of systems to use also here:**

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/hmcts-telephone-and-video-hearings-during-coronavirus-outbreak>

### **HMCTS**

#### **UPDATED HMCTS Civil Court Listing Priorities**

The new Court Listing Priorities are out and can be found [here](#).

The main changes are that the priorities now include: “*All Multi Track hearings (including trials) which the judge considers to be i) urgent and ii) suitable for hearing (either remotely or in a physical hearing).*”

And the Priority 2 list has been removed and replaced with: “*Other work which should be done: All other applications/hearings/trials which (subject to staff support and listing capacity) the judge considers: i) should be heard and ii) suitable for hearing (either remotely or in a physical hearing).*”

#### **UPDATED HMCTS opens Legal Representative Pilot**

APIL members’ are able to issue proceedings online in the county court, following liaison between APIL and HMCTS. Firms can sign up to the pilot protocol immediately. The invitation from HMCTS is on the APIL website here:

<https://www.apil.org.uk/files/members/pdf/SearchableDocuments/3867.pdf>

Practitioners who have already accepted the HMCTS invitation to sign up to this pilot so that they can issue Part 7 proceedings are part of an enthusiastic group of practitioners embracing this new facility.

HMCTS has been sending out links to firms to join the scheme once they have successfully signed up. If the link to the service within the CPR (PD 51S) does not work, then you can (once you have been registered) access the service using this ULR:

[www.moneyclaim-legal.platform.hmcts.net](http://www.moneyclaim-legal.platform.hmcts.net)

## Royal Courts of Justice

### RCJ – working with the Court online

This useful set of pages sets out updated guidance and support for those who want to file documents online in the Royal Courts of Justice:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ce-file-system-information-and-support-advice>

The Royal Courts of Justice remains open to the public, but some counters and court facilities have temporarily closed. See this link for more information:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/880315/HMCTS\\_RCJ\\_Update\\_Template\\_21\\_April\\_2020.pdf?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/880315/HMCTS_RCJ_Update_Template_21_April_2020.pdf?utm_medium=email&utm_source=)

**Royal Courts of Justice Fees Office** The office is temporarily closed: [Details here](#)

## Court of Appeal

The court is only dealing with urgent application in the Civil Appeals Office. Urgent work means applications where it is essential in the interests of justice that there be a substantive decision within the next 7 days. For contact details [click here](#)

## QBD updates

### Coronavirus –Information for Queen’s Bench Division Court Users Bulletin

This bulletin contains Master Fontaine’s guidance on electronic bundles which is extremely useful. [Click here.](#)

**Coronavirus –Information for Queen’s Bench Division Court Users (Bulletin 2)** This bulletin contains Master Fontaine’s guidance on hearings before the QB Masters [here](#)

### Coronavirus –Information for Queen’s Bench Division Court Users (Bulletin 3)

This document contains Master Barbara Fontaine’s guidance on electronic signatures [here](#)

**Coronavirus –Information for Queen’s Bench Division Court Users (Bulletin 5)** This document contains guidance on service of court documents, requests for taking of evidence from foreign courts and registration of foreign judgments [here.](#)

### Telephone and video hearings during the outbreak

Cloud Video Platform (CVP) will start to be used in some civil and family hearings, as well as Skype. Here is updated telephone and video hearings guidance: [here.](#)

Here is a guide on how to join a telephone and video hearing: [click here](#)

## County Court Money Claims Centre (CCMCC)

### FAQs for CCMCC

Salford has issued an updated FAQ document, now that there is a Practice Direction which allows parties to agree an extension of up to 56 days. This update deals with briefly with documents via post and email, extensions and digital signatures:

<https://www.apil.org.uk/files/members/pdf/SearchableDocuments/3853.pptx>

### **Emails to CCMCC**

Ensuring that the correct subject line is used when emailing CCMCC will help its system automatically sort the emails. CCMCC's email guidance is here:

<https://www.apil.org.uk/files/members/pdf/SearchableDocuments/3854.pdf>

### **Chasing emails sent to CCMCC**

CCMCC is receiving a high volume of chase up emails and some second chase up emails. Members are asked not to send chase up emails unless you have checked the CCMCC's processing times and confirmed that the date for action has passed here:

[www.gov.uk/guidance/hmcts-civil-business-centres-performance-information](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/hmcts-civil-business-centres-performance-information)

If your systems are set up to automatically send chase ups once a number of days have passed, please review this and extend the time by four weeks or switch this off so that you can check CCMCC's processing times first. If when checking processing times and the time for response has passed, please contact CCMCC and attach your original email.

## **Practice Directions – England & Wales**

### **120th Practice Direction Update to the Civil Procedure Rules - Coronavirus Pandemic related**

Amendments to Practice Direction 51Z to Stay Possession Proceedings

<https://www.judiciary.uk/announcements/120th-practice-direction-update-to-the-civil-procedure-rules-coronavirus-pandemic-related/>

### **119th Practice Direction Update to the Civil Procedure Rules – Online Civil Money Claims in support of the Covid-19 effort**

Amendments to PD 51R in relation to the Online Civil Money Claims pilot scheme. The PD amendments came into force on 14 April 2020 and apply to all claims submitted to the court on or after 11.00 a.m. on that date.

<https://www.judiciary.uk/announcements/119th-practice-direction-update-to-the-civil-procedure-rules-online-civil-money-claims-in-support-of-the-covid-19-effort/>

### **118th Practice Direction Update to the Civil Procedure Rules - Coronavirus Pandemic related**

#### **Practice Direction 51ZA Extension of Time Limits and Clarification of PD51Y**

The Master of the Rolls and the Lord Chancellor have signed Practice Direction 51ZA (PD) principally in relation to the extension of time limits during the Coronavirus pandemic.

<https://www.justice.gov.uk/courts/procedure-rules/civil>

### **117th Practice Direction Update to the Civil Procedure Rules – Coronavirus Pandemic related 27 March 2020**

The Master of the Rolls and the Lord Chancellor have signed [Practice Direction 51Z \(PD\)](#) in relation to possession proceedings during the Coronavirus pandemic. Effective immediately.

<https://www.judiciary.uk/announcements/117th-practice-direction-update-to-the-civil-procedure-rules-coronavirus-pandemic-related/>

### **116th PD Update to the Civil Procedure Rules**

Practice Direction on Video or Audio Hearings in Civil Proceedings during the Coronavirus Pandemic: <https://www.justice.gov.uk/courts/procedure-rules/civil/pdf/update/116th-civil-pd-making-doc.pdf>

### **Practice Direction on video or audio hearings in civil proceedings**

The Master of the Rolls and the Lord Chancellor have signed [Practice Direction 51Y \(PD\)](#) in relation to video or audio hearings during the Coronavirus pandemic. It is a technical amendment.

### **Pilot Practice Direction: Contingency Arrangements in the First-Tier Tribunal and the Upper Tribunal**

This Practice Direction is a pilot for a period of six months. Sir Ernest Ryder, Senior President of Tribunals, has issued a Practice Direction to allow tribunals to adjust their ways of working to limit the spread of the virus and manage their workloads appropriately. <https://www.judiciary.uk/publications/pilot-practice-direction-contingency-arrangements-in-the-first-tier-tribunal-and-the-upper-tribunal/>

## **Other HMCTS, MoJ related information – England & Wales**

### **Priority courts open**

#### **Courts and tribunals tracker list during coronavirus outbreak**

This page holds a tracker list of open, staffed and suspended courts during the coronavirus outbreak. The page now indicates changes to status by date order (last update 23 April): <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/courts-and-tribunals-tracker-list-during-coronavirus-outbreak#changes-to-status-23-april-2020>

### **UPDATED Changes to court services**

- The South East region will only be taking calls between 10am to 2pm in all jurisdictions (with the exceptions on the next line);
- Chelmsford, Norwich, Ipswich and Basildon Crown Courts are temporarily unable to answer calls. The recorded message will advise you what to do.

### **Oaths and affirmations during the Coronavirus outbreak**

Guidance on taking oaths and affirmations: [scroll down here](#)

### **Applications to adjourn civil and family hearings because of coronavirus (COVID-19)**

The Lord Chancellor has authorised that from 19 March 2020 in certain cases the fee can be waived for applications to adjourn a civil or family hearing because of coronavirus (COVID-19). Guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/applications-to-adjourn-civil-and-family-hearings-because-of-coronavirus-covid-19>

## **HMCTS - Wales**

### **NEW Gwasanaethau Cymraeg / Welsh language services –w/c 11 Mai / May 2020**

Rhestr o ddiweddariadau coronafirws sydd ar gael yn Gymraeg, ynghyd â thudalennau gwybodaeth ychwanegol yn Gymraeg.

A list of coronavirus updates which are available in Welsh, along with additional information pages in Welsh.

Subjects include:

- Atwrneiaeth arhosol: gweithredu fel atwrnai (lasting powers of attorney);
- Chwilio am lys neu dribiwnlys (court search);
- Ffurflenni Llysoedd a Thribiwnlysoedd (court forms);
- Ffioedd llysoedd a thribiwnlysoedd (court fees);
- Help i dalu ffioedd llysoedd a thribiwnlysoedd (help with fees);
- Gwneud cais am brofiant (apply for probate).

You can also follow HMCTS on its Welsh language Twitter account [@GLITEMgovuk](#).

Apologies in advance for my translations. Link to full details here: <https://bit.ly/2WnuXma>

## Government Legal Department

Documentation should be sent to the GLD by e-mail rather than by post to avoid handling of materials. GLD would strongly prefer electronic service of new legal proceedings in the UK that are required, to be served on the Treasury Solicitor. Details [click here](#).

## Court Funds Office

This page explains how the Court Funds Office is affected by the coronavirus pandemic:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-impact-on-the-court-funds-office>

## Office of the Public Guardian

### Coronavirus (COVID-19): Office of the Public Guardian response

The OPG page is continuously updated during the outbreak (last update 17 April)

Information includes contacting the OPG; lasting power of attorney applications; visits; guardianships; protecting older and vulnerable people:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-office-of-the-public-guardian-response>

## Courts and Tribunals – Scotland specific

### All Scotland Sheriff Personal Injury Court

Full set of guidance notes and updates

<https://www.scotcourts.gov.uk/coming-to-court/attending-a-court/coronavirus>

### UPDATED Covid-19 Guidance

This guidance has been updated and remains in force until 25 May to facilitate, as far as is possible, the efficient disposal of business in the All Scotland Sheriff Personal Injury Court during the current COVID19 emergency. [Click here](#) for the latest version.

### Guidance note issued by the Court of Session

The latest guidance note issued by the Court of Session will remain in effect until 1 June 2020.

- It deals with the use of electronic signatures, delivery of documents to court by email and remote Court of Session hearings.
- Inner House – hearings to be conducted remotely.
- Outer House: some ‘by Order’ hearings will be cancelled and re-scheduled.
- Other procedural hearings – see note for detail.
- The note also deals with all callings lodged between 23 March and 28 April 2020 and provides a list of useful email addresses for court business.

Full note: <https://www.scotcourts.gov.uk/docs/default-source/default-document-library/coronavirus-docs/covid19-emergency-guidance---11052020---final.pdf?sfvrsn=2>

<https://www.scotcourts.gov.uk/docs/default-source/default-document-library/coronavirus-docs/covid19-emergency-guidance---11052020---final.pdf?sfvrsn=2>

## **Sheriff Appeal Court**

The Sheriff Appeal Court - Civil - has issued further guidance (28-04-2020). It sets out that new Notes of Appeal will be accepted and first orders issued. From 11 May the SAC Appeal Court expects to schedule procedural hearings and will contact parties regarding arrangements to proceed by written submission or teleconference:

<https://www.scotcourts.gov.uk/about-the-scottish-court-service/scs-news/2020/04/28/sheriff-appeal-court-update---civil>

## **Court of Session: Guidance note for practitioners**

Updated Guidance note for practitioners – to run from 21 April to 10 May unless extended, to facilitate insofar as is possible the efficient disposal of court proceedings in the Court of Session during the ongoing Covid-19 emergency: includes electronic signatures, use of Webex video conferencing; all documents lodged in respect of current and new actions in the Inner House to be submitted by email; details of specific email inboxes for personal injury work in general and urgent matters; substantive hearings with witnesses and payment of fee arrangements:

<https://www.scotcourts.gov.uk/docs/default-source/cos-general-docs/covid19-emergency-guidance---17042020---finalf86ec0a7898069d2b500ff0000d74aa7.pdf?sfvrsn=2>

**Court of Session actions - Use of electronic documents and alternative means of appearing at hearings:** <https://www.scotcourts.gov.uk/docs/default-source/default-document-library/cos-covid-emergency-guidance-20-03-20.pdf?sfvrsn=0>

**Sheriff Appeal Court:** <https://www.scotcourts.gov.uk/docs/default-source/default-document-library/sac-covid-contingency-arrangements-20-03-20.pdf?sfvrsn=0>

**Sheriffdom of Glasgow and Strathkelvin - Coronavirus Guidance in respect of Civil Business No. 2 of 2020:** [https://www.rfpg.org/images/Coronavirus\\_Guidance\\_-\\_Civil\\_Business\\_No\\_2\\_20-03-20.pdf](https://www.rfpg.org/images/Coronavirus_Guidance_-_Civil_Business_No_2_20-03-20.pdf)

## **Scottish Courts and Tribunals**

Communication from Scottish Courts and Tribunals relating to all proofs, proof before answers and civil business involving witnesses:

[http://www.apil.org.uk/files/Info\\_Exchange-Files/Outer-House-Proofs-in-COS-18-03-2020.zip](http://www.apil.org.uk/files/Info_Exchange-Files/Outer-House-Proofs-in-COS-18-03-2020.zip)

## **HMCTS Scotland customer contact centre opening hours**

This note supersedes the temporary opening times previously in this document (9 April) [click here](#)

## **Scottish Government**

The Scottish Government has now passed the Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020. Schedule 4 in particular is relevant for personal injury lawyers. See here:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2020/7/contents/enacted>

## **Courts and tribunals - Northern Ireland**

### **UPDATED Guidance of the Lord Chief Justice**

Latest status update on courts in Northern Ireland as at 12 May 2020: [click here](#)

## **UPDATED Covid-19 Guidance – Masters’ Courts 12 May 2020**

This guidance replaces the guidance for Masters’ Courts that was published on 19 and 23 March 2020. [Click here](#).

### **Courts and Tribunals NI**

There is now information on its website here: <https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/news/coronavirus-covid-19-pandemic-court-business-continuity-arrangements>

### **Legal Services Agency – Northern Ireland**

The agency has issue a key messages document for those dealing with it:

<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/key-messages-legal-suppliers-march-2020>

### **NEW Office of the Lord Chief Justice**

COVID-19 Guidance for the Courts (24 April) <https://judiciaryni.uk/sites/judiciary/files/media-files/Covid-19%20-%20Guidance%20for%20Courts%20-%202024.04.20.pdf>

### **Department of Justice – Northern Ireland**

Statement by the Justice Minister outlines details of court proceedings during the outbreak

<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/news/statement-justice-minister-naomi-long>

## **Experts**

### **Coronavirus update – remote examinations**

Medco has issued updated guidance which should be followed for remote examinations for the purposes of Medco reports. This page is a summary of the guidance:

<https://www.medco.org.uk/news-and-updates/coronavirus-update-remote-examinations-v20/>

The detailed updated guidance is here: <https://www.medco.org.uk/media/1189/remote-examination-guidelines-v20.pdf>

### **Annual fees suspended until 6 July 2020**

In an effort to assist the financial impact during the current crisis the MedCo board has decided to suspend the payment of annual registration fees by MROs and DMEs until 6th

July 2020: <https://www.medco.org.uk/news-and-updates/coronavirus-update-annual-fees-31-march-2020/>

**BMA guidance on telephone and video consultations** [click here](#)

## **Professional Regulators / associations**

### **SRA – Anti Money Laundering checks – compliance during the pandemic**

We have had a couple of enquiries about how to conduct AML checks during the pandemic. The Legal Services Affinity Group, of which the SRA is a member and includes regulators across the UK, has drawn up more detailed guidance on dealing with anti-money laundering compliance during the coronavirus pandemic. [Click here for the guidance](#)

### **Solicitors Regulation Authority**

Its main information page: <https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/coronavirus-update/>

## Association of Costs Lawyers

### Guidance for the Conduct of Remote Hearings

The Association of Costs Lawyers (ACL) is hosting new guidance on the conduct of remote detailed assessments, which has been produced by a group of costs professionals with the support of the regional costs bench. It has also been welcomed by the masters at the Senior Courts Costs Office: [click here](#)

## Bar Council

The Bar Council has a well-maintained dedicated page which includes a FAQ section, Government and HMCTS Guidance, Courts Information and Updates, Key worker status, Financial support measures and other Bar Council updates:

<https://www.barcouncil.org.uk/useful-information/coronavirus-advice-and-updates.html>

## PIBA

Information page: [http://www.piba.org.uk/covid\\_guidance](http://www.piba.org.uk/covid_guidance)

## Law Society – England & Wales

### **NEW** Position on the use of virtual execution and e-signature during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic

The Law Society has published a helpful note on this topic which consolidates existing guidance in one place relating to virtual execution and the use of e-signatures.

The law has not changed, so this note provides tips and an update on recent relevant advances in the use and acceptability of electronic execution:

<https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/support-services/advice/articles/position-on-virtual-execution-e-signature-during-coronavirus-covid-19-pandemic/#>

- **Furlough guidance**

The Society has published new guidance for law firms considering use of the government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme: [here](#)

- **Business continuity toolkit**

The Society has produced a toolkit for law firms and practitioners could and should consider when looking at how to strengthen their business in these challenging times. It includes: tips for firms to preserve their cash-flow; an online tool to determine your and your firm's eligibility for government support measures, [click here](#)

- **Coronavirus (COVID-19): advice and updates**

The Society's Covid-19 page has been updated with information on business support [here](#)

## Law Society Library services

These are closed to members and visitors until further notice. A limited enquiry and document delivery service is available 10am and 4pm. Please email

[library@lawsociety.org.uk](mailto:library@lawsociety.org.uk). The enquiry telephone number is 020 7320 5946.

## Law Society – Scotland

**UPDATED** This Coronavirus update contains useful information specific to Scottish practitioners, last updated 29 April. The updates include:

- a link to the announcement of a £2.2m package of financial support for members;
- details comprehensive practice guidance for Panel Members on the conduct of virtual hearings, published by Children's Hearings Scotland;
- confirmation that the minimum CPD requirement has been suspended for solicitor-advocates for the current practice year.
- Practice updates|CPD requirements for 2019/20.

<https://www.lawscot.org.uk/news-and-events/law-society-news/coronavirus-updates/>

### **Law Society – Northern Ireland**

The Society's update is behind a member log in page here:

<https://www.lawsoc-ni.org/law-societys-response-to-the-coronavirus-outbreak>

### **Cilex**

Changes to apprenticeship assessments and professional examinations: [click here](#)

### **ACSO & ABI**

ACSO and the ABI have agreed a statement of intent for progressing claims during the COVID-19 crisis for their members: [Click here for details.](#)

## **Other Government departments, announcements, statutory bodies**

### **NHSR**

#### **NEW COVID-19: NHSR Position Statement**

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its unprecedented impact on members of NHSR and beneficiaries of its schemes, the NHSR has set out its position statement. It will remain in place for three months and will be reviewed at that point. A copy of the position statement is on the APIL website here:

<https://www.apil.org.uk/files/members/pdf/SearchableDocuments/3877.pdf>

### **Department of Health & Social Care COVID-19: our action plan for adult social care**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-adult-social-care-action-plan/covid-19-our-action-plan-for-adult-social-care>

### **Coronavirus business support**

This page helps businesses find out how to access the support that has been made available, who is eligible, when the schemes open and how to apply.

<https://www.businesssupport.gov.uk/coronavirus-business-support/>

### **CICA**

Information on arrangements for new and existing applications:

<https://www.apil.org.uk/files/members/pdf/SearchableDocuments/3830.pdf> and on the CICA website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/important-information>

### **Motor Insurers' Bureau (MIB)**

#### **MIB digital services**

The MIB has sent a letter to some practitioners, advising that it is making it easier to submit claims under the **Uninsured Drivers Agreement**, via a new digital service. Firms are asked to register, by visiting <https://www.mib.org.uk/making-a-claim/claiming-against-an-uninsured-driver/> and following the registration process. FAQs can be found here:

<https://www.mib.org.uk/media/478286/new-service-faqs.pdf>

This does mean that from 18 May, the MIB will no longer be accepting paper claim forms for these types of claims. Members will need to register fairly promptly.

## Contacting the MIB on current cases

**UPDATED** We know some members are having significant problems with contacting the MIB, if this is the case on a particular claim of yours, let APIL know: if you are able to give APIL permission to contact the MIB on your behalf, we will do so.

The MIB is not running at full capacity. It has moved the entire organisation to remote working and has now opened our virtual switchboard. For claims enquiries, please call 01908 830001 between the hours of 9am to 5pm. At present, MIB is unable to answer calls to direct dial lines. It has asked members to write to [enquiries@mib.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@mib.org.uk) which is being monitored and triaged, but it may take a little longer than usual to respond.

## HMRC

### Requests for work histories during the pandemic

APIL wrote to HMRC to find out what interim measures it would be putting into place to assist practitioner who are working from home with no access to their firm's mail room. We asked HMRC whether it would agree to deal with requests via email. HMRC has responded as follows: "Thank you for your email of 14 April 2020 enquiring how HMRC are dealing with requests for deceased persons work history. At present, HMRC are not implementing any changes to the current process. If this is reviewed, I will ensure that you are updated."

## Other useful sources / information

### Working remotely

#### **NEW** There's no place like home

Richard Barr's informative article in this month's PI Focus on working from home is on [page 24 here](#)

#### **Working remotely – using Skype – what's my id?**

A regularly asked question at the moment is 'how do I find my Skype ID?'

A handy guide from Business Insider tells you how to do this:

<https://www.businessinsider.com/what-is-my-skype-id?r=US&IR=T>

#### **UPDATED** E-bundles

The other regular question coming up this week is about e-bundles. Here's a reminder of the useful resources available to members to help with creating e-bundles:

- **Coronavirus –Information for Queen's Bench Division Court Users Bulletin#**  
Master Fontaine's guidance on electronic bundles: [click here](#)
- **James M Turner QC**  
James has created a useful explainer for those who need to create PDF court bundles <https://www.dropbox.com/s/4tev6aynvxv9sb8/EBundlingGuide.pdf?dl=0>
- **Guidance which was issued to the Mersyside and Cheshire courts** – which is useful for all circuits. Page 6 onwards deals with e-bundles, lodging etc: [click here](#)
- **Remote video hearings and electronic bundles (on demand Webinar)**  
Presented by Brett Dixon and Master Cook, High Court Master in the QBD. It includes practical guidance how to prepare e-bundles [click here](#):

- **The Lockdown Toolkit: guidance on practical and tactical issues facing claimant practitioners.** This webinar was streamed on 16th April and is now available on demand. [Click here](#) :
- **Tailby, Re TPS Investments (UK) Ltd [2020] EWHC 1135 (Ch)** His Honour Judge Hodge QC has used his decision in *Tailby* to issue some useful guidance on producing electronic bundles during the pandemic and a plea for at least a searchable index! His comments are “intended to be of assistance to the legal profession generally in the difficult circumstances in which this court appreciates, and acknowledges, that they are currently operating...”

The decision is here: <https://www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWHC/Ch/2020/1135.html>

### **The Virtual Workspace: 50 Tips for Effective Video Conferencing**

After taking part in a virtual trial, APIL member Andrew King of Lennons Solicitors has written a short book with 50 tips for effective video conferencing, which has been published this week.

The eBook version is available on Amazon. It is free for until Friday (1<sup>st</sup> May) and

then priced at £3.95, with all profits going to NHS Charities Together. The paperback edition will be available later this week, again with all profits going to charity:

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/B087P9G6JC>

### **ACAS**

**UPDATED** Coronavirus: advice for employers and employees. Updated section on the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme: <https://www.acas.org.uk/coronavirus/furlough-closing-workplaces>

### **Caring for the disabled during coronavirus crisis**

This article, written by Angharad Hughes of JMW Solicitors LLP contains some useful links on organisations which can assist clients whose carers have temporarily been lost due to the Covid-19 outbreak: <https://www.jmw.co.uk/services-for-you/clinical-negligence/blog/caring-disabled-during-coronavirus-crisis>

### **Claims portal**

Claims Portal has issued a note on access to the portal for homeworkers

<https://www.claimsportal.org.uk/news-and-updates/2020/important-notice-accessing-the-portal-for-homeworkers/>

### **NHS to pause dealing with Complaints**

NHS England has paused the investigation of new and existing complaints to enable clinical staff, including GPs, to focus on front line patient care. The NHS will continue to review and acknowledge all new complaints and will act upon any concerns about patient safety or safeguarding, but will not investigate the complaint or respond until further notice:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/contact-us/complaint/>

### **HSE issues Covid-19 specific guidance:**

RIDDOR reporting of Covid-19: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/riddor-reporting-coronavirus.htm>

Regulating occupational health and safety during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/hse-regulatory-activity-during-coronavirus.htm>

The full set of updates can be found on the HSE website here:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/coronavirus.htm>

### **Riverstone Insurance – letter to APIL members**

**Limitation and time limits:** RIUK has subscribed to the recent ABI protocol<sup>1</sup> which took effect on 24th March 2020, however it believes that further steps should be taken to help the smooth running of claims. A copy of the letter is on the APIL website here:

<https://www.apil.org.uk/files/members/pdf/SearchableDocuments/3840.pdf>

## **UK Parliament**

### **NEW Industrial disease benefits and deaths from Covid-19**

Two questions have been answered in Parliament which relate to ensuring that family members of people who have underlying industrial diseases, but who die from covid-19, are allowed to put in posthumous claims for industrial injuries disablement benefit and to the Coal Workers Pneumoconiosis Compensation Scheme. For the details, follow these links:

- Industrial injuries disablement benefit:  
<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-04-27/40820/>
- Coal Workers Pneumoconiosis Compensation Scheme:  
<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-04-27/40821/>

### **NEW Coronavirus (COVID-19): safer transport guidance for operators**

Safer working principles and risk assessment for transport operators and organisations.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-transport-guidance-for-operators/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-transport-guidance-for-operators>

## **Scottish Parliament**

### **NEW Introduction of the Coronavirus (Scotland) (no.2) Bill.**

Details: <https://beta.parliament.scot/bills/coronavirus-scotland-no2-bill>. Schedule 2 contains modifications to the law in response to the coronavirus outbreak in relation to various matters concerning the Justice System including: *replacement of requirement for intimation on walls of court, etc.*

## **Stay up to date**

Update your subscription preferences for automatic updates on information added to the APIL website. Follow this easy 'how to' [set of instructions](#).

Follow this link for the full Lockdown Update containing all the information from previous updates: <https://www.apil.org.uk/covid-19>

Last updated: 18 May 2020

Helen Blundell

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## **Association of Personal Injury Lawyers**

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