

Lockdown Update

Latest update: 13-04-2021

Contains all relevant information previously sent to members. New or updated content since the last Update of 30th March 2021 is highlighted in red below.

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Health and Wellbeing

Surviving Lockdown – keeping the show on the road



Our latest interview in this update: members have been talking to us about how they have worked since the first lockdown last year, offering some useful tips and ideas and, we hope, sharing some goodwill and positive messages.

NEW Today, Helen and Meyer have been speaking **Laura Bailey**, an Associate at Hugh James in Cardiff. Laura is also an APIL Senior Litigator and Secretary of APIL’s Welsh Regional Group. Laura has two small children, two dogs and a husband who is also working at home, so her work space location has moved around the house over the past year – and there is no down time. Laura talks about the need to physically step away from work to do other things, helping her clients through a traumatic time and the bonus of working from home which has given her the extra flexibility to collect her son from school and then carry on with her work. Read the full interview [here](#) and let us know what you think.

The Solicitors’ Charity

The charity offers impartial, non-judgemental help for all solicitors in crisis – no matter what your background. Don’t be afraid to get in touch. Its mission is to help solicitors bounce back from tough times.

The Solicitors’ Charity has pledged to do even more to help people bounce back from the devastating impact of the pandemic. Its annual ‘Big Report’ figures released show a 203% increase in solicitors needing support; a significant shift in the profile of solicitors helped and has published a new manifesto to combat issues in the wake of COVID-19. New research findings by the national charity has led to the launch of a dynamic new manifesto ‘For The Bounce Back’ to empower every solicitor in the UK during these tough times of personal and economic hardship. For more details [click here](#).

Working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19)

UPDATED Working Safely During Coronavirus

8th April 2021. Comprehensive list of 14 sets of guidance issued by the government for a range of different types of work. The manuals can be searched online or downloaded – both from [this linked page](#).

NEW Individuals can now order rapid lateral flow testing kits to be delivered by post [here](#). Each kit contains seven tests. One pack per household can be ordered daily.

Law Society:

- Latest updates for law firms and solicitors on business continuity, practical framework for law firms & sole practitioners on return to the office: [click here](#)

Law Scot Wellbeing: there are some useful links to external information and agencies [here](#)

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

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

Advice on re-entry issues when moving back to work university and college, what positive effect the ongoing pandemic could be having on us and how we can use our social skills to manage our uncertainty [here](#)

Charity offers £1m Covid-19 support to solicitors

SBA, the charity for solicitors and their families, has a personal hardship fund to aid practitioners in serious financial difficulty following the outbreak of Covid-19. [Click here.](#)

APIL issued best practice, letters, updates

APIL Covid-19 Hub

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

Best Practice Agreements

UPDATED Covid-19: Best Practice For Mutual Co-Operation

The Northern Ireland and Scotland Best Practice Documents have been reviewed and are now online.

- The Northern Ireland document contains new content on medical examinations, case progression, remote hearings and adjournments.
- The Scotland document contains much more detail on telephone calls/emails; service by email; medical examinations; progression of cases; adjournments; interim payments; BACS payments, forms of authority and limitation.

All the best practice documents APIL has agreed with FOIL can be viewed here:

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

ABI limitation agreements

The limitation protocol agreements with the ABI between Thompsons and APIL to deal with claims during the pandemic for England & Wales, Scotland and [Go back to top](#)

Northern Ireland are now closed.

The [APIL Covid-19 Hub](#) contains all agreements, with a link to the ABI website.

Emergency letter templates

John McQuater has produced two template letters for members to use and adapt for their own practice: (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 conditions [here](#)

APIL's Covid-19 related training

Cybersecurity and working safely from home (On demand webinar)

Presented by CEO of Wolfberry Security, David Rands, Details [here](#).

Remote video hearings and electronic bundles (On demand webinar)

Presented by Brett Dixon and Master Cook. Details [here](#)

Lockdown leads - Maximising your LinkedIn professional profile whilst working from home (On demand webinar) Presented by David Glenwright from the agency JC Social Media. Details [here](#).

Data protection for PI lawyers: how the lockdown helps us to understand it (On demand webinar)

Details [here](#).

Covid-19: Managing the impact on your firm's finances (On demand webinar).

Presented by Jon Cartwright and Jenny Staight. Details [here](#)

Becoming more COVID-19 resilient (on-demand). Presented by Professor Hugh Koch. Details [here](#)

The Lockdown Toolkit: guidance on practical and tactical issues facing claimant practitioners (on-demand). Details [here](#)

Witness statements: the statements of truth and social isolation (on-demand) presented by Gordon Exall. Details [here](#)

APIL's discussion forum: Share information with other members on the forums [here](#).

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Courts & Tribunals

Courts & Tribunals – England and Wales

Telephone and video hearings during the outbreak

HMCTS guidance on joining remote hearings can be found [here](#).
Including guidance in video format [here](#)

Conference service providers

The 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.

Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire & Lincolnshire Protocol No.2

HHJ Godsmark QC, the Designated Civil Judge has issued a listing and hearing protocol for use in the Nottingham, Derbyshire and Lincolnshire civil courts. It is guidance only and is subject to change: [Click here](#).

Civil circuit guidance

Civil court guidance and orders issued for different circuits around England, including emailing core bundles issued to the Midlands circuit, listings protocol issued by the North Eastern circuit, bundle guidance issued by the Northern Circuit. [Click here](#)

HMCTS

UPDATED The [Prime Minister's roadmap to cautiously easing lockdown restrictions](#) (link to full roadmap) means that courts and tribunals continue to operate within COVID-secure guidelines. HMCTS is following public health advice and is experienced in managing COVID-secure ways of working with a range of mitigating measures in place. Courts and tribunals continue to operate within the [alert levels in Wales](#) and [protection levels in Scotland](#).

Message from the Lord Chief Justice: Courts Recovery

17 March 2021

Following the Prime Minister's announcement of the Government's roadmap to ease restrictions in England and the announcement by the First Minister of the Welsh Government's approach to coming out of lockdown, the courts must adapt to these changes. Remote and hybrid hearings will still play their part, with social distancing, hand sanitising, the wearing of face coverings and any local arrangements. This will ensure that as restrictions are eased, the administration of justice continues to be delivered safely. [Full statement here](#)

Covid testing pilot for court users

HMCTS has launched a pilot to trial the use of home testing kits among court users. The home testing kits are available to collect on-site from Birmingham Crown Court, Croydon Combined Court, Liverpool Combined Court QEII, Snaresbrook Crown Court and Wolverhampton Combined Court. The kits will be offered to all professional court users, legal professionals, judiciary, contractors, jurors, witness services and staff who attend scheduled hearings at the pilot sites. This pilot will last until 23 April 2021. [Details here](#).

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NEW Testing is now also widely available in the community and HMCTS strongly encourages all court users to make use of it. Individuals can order rapid lateral flow testing kits to be delivered by post [here](#)

UPDATED Civil Courts Listing Priorities

- Latest update 5th April is [here](#)
- **UPDATED** Check if your court is open. The new Court & Tribunal Finder website now contains more information including court locations, opening times, disabled access facilities, Covid-19 safety precautions and the types of cases dealt with. [Details here](#)

Online County Court Legal Representative Pilot

APIL's user guide for the online county court pilot is on our website [here](#)

Law firms are able to issue proceedings online in the county court, following liaison between APIL and HMCTS. Firms can still sign up to the pilot protocol: the HMCTS invitation is [here](#)

Coronavirus COVID-19): the Judiciary website now has a comprehensive list of all court related guidance [here](#)

Royal Courts of Justice

The RCJ remains open, but some counter services have temporarily closed. The latest operation update (5th April) is [here](#).

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

Paying court fees

How to pay court fees including by debit or credit card. Full details are in this update [here](#)
There is also a new fee account form [here](#)

Court of Appeal

The Court is prioritising urgent business in the Civil Appeals Office. 'Urgent' means applications where it is essential in the interests of justice that there be a substantive decision within the next 7 days. The latest update (5th April): [click here](#)

QBD updates

The QBD has issued an update with listing and contact detail changes. Note that the phone number for contacting the QBD is now 0203 936 8957. [Details here](#).

This comprehensive update replaces earlier Bulletins and contains guidance on electronic bundles, interim applications, paying court fees online, attending court, remote hearings [here](#). There is also a fully updated (January 2021) **Queen's Bench Guide** [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](#).

County Court Money Claims Centre (CCMCC)

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](#).

Chasing emails sent to CCMCC

CCMCC receives 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](#).

Practice Directions – England & Wales

UPDATED

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

Although these modifications were expedited in support of the Covid-19 effort, they are made as part of the ongoing process of building the Online Civil Money Claims process under Court Reform and as such, unless varied, will remain in force under the current terms of PD51R, which has a review date of 30 November 2021. [Click here](#)

Practice Direction on video or audio hearings in civil proceedings

The MR and the Lord Chancellor have signed [Practice Direction 51Y \(PD\)](#) in relation to video or audio hearings during the Coronavirus pandemic.

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

This practice direction has been extended again and will remain effective until 18 September 2021. There have also been amendments to paragraphs 3,7A and 10. [Full text here](#).

Other HMCTS, MoJ related information – England & Wales

Oaths and affirmations during the Coronavirus outbreak

Guidance on taking oaths and affirmations can now be found on the Thomson Reuters Practical Law page [here](#) (open to non-subscribers).

Applications to adjourn civil and family hearings because of COVID-19

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). [Details here](#)

Courts & Tribunals – Wales specific

Gwasanaethau Cymraeg

Crynodeb gweithredol wythnosol GLITEM am y llysoedd a'r tribiwnlysoedd yn ystod lledaeniad y coronafeirws (COVID-19) [cliciwch yma](#)

Welsh language services

A list of coronavirus updates which are available in Welsh, along with additional information pages in Welsh. Link to full details [here](#).

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](#).

Office of the Public Guardian

The OPG page is continuously updated during the outbreak (last update 24 March). Information includes contacting the OPG; lasting power of attorney applications; visits; guardianships; protecting older and vulnerable people. [Click here](#)

Courts and Tribunals – Scotland specific

All Scotland Sheriff Personal Injury Court (ASSPIC)

SCTS guidance for court users effective from 1 April 2021 is available [here](#)

Scottish Courts – updated 17 March 2021

The vast majority of civil business in the Court of Session, Sheriff Court and the All Scotland Sheriff Personal Injury Court will continue to be conducted remotely. Update [here](#)

Sheriffdom Hub Courts Operating throughout Coronavirus

List can be found [here](#)

All SCTS Coronavirus guidance, directions and orders are now in listed online [here](#) and [here](#) (scroll down for ASPIC documents)

Courts and tribunals - Northern Ireland

UPDATED Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service Operational Update

10th March 2021 [Click here](#)

Practice Direction 06-11 – Court of Appeal (Civil and Criminal Divisions), Chancery, Queen’s Bench and Family Divisions - Revised March 2021 [click here](#)

Interim Practice Direction 01-2020 [Rev 1] - Remote Hearings

Delivered 22 January 2021 [click here](#)

UPDATED COVID-19: UPDATE March 2021 [Click here](#)

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Weblinks for Access to Case Information - This guidance provides links to the key documents which allow practitioners and parties to access information about their case and also how to attend remote hearings [Click here](#)

Office of the Lord Chief Justice

This section contains the latest notices and directions from the Lord Chief Justice's Office in relation to the coronavirus pandemic.

- [Latest updates from Office of LCJ](#) – comprehensive list of links and practice notes
- [Minister confirms courts will continue to operate remotely](#)
- [Covid-19 - Guidance for Courts - 30 September 2020](#)
- [County Court and District Judge - Allocated courts and business - 25 Sept 2020](#)

Experts

Coronavirus update – remote examinations

Medco has issued updated guidance (26 March 2021) which should be followed for cross border examinations and more general remote examinations for the purposes of Medco reports [here](#) and [here](#)

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

Professional Regulators / associations

Solicitors Regulation Authority

The SRA main information page: [click here](#)

SRA - Anti Money Laundering checks – compliance during the pandemic

The Legal Services Affinity Group, of which the SRA is a member and includes UK regulators, has drawn up detailed guidance on dealing with anti-money laundering compliance during the coronavirus pandemic. Guidance [here \(updated link\)](#).

Association of Costs Lawyers

Guidance for the Conduct of Remote Hearings

The Association of Costs Lawyers (ACL) is hosting 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: [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: [click here](#)

PIBA

Information page [here](#)

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Law Society – England & Wales

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

The Law Society 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: [read it here](#)

Law Society Library services

A remote enquiry and [document delivery](#) service is available 10am and 4pm. Please email library@lawsociety.org.uk. The enquiry telephone number is 020 7320 5946.

Law Society – Scotland

The current restrictions on court business will be extended throughout March, the Lord President has announced. [This Coronavirus update](#) contains useful information specific to Scottish practitioners, last updated 17 March 2021.

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

The Institute has a Covid-19 information page with links to relevant information: details are [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

Scottish Legal Aid Board

SLAB has updated its guidance on obtaining applicants' signatures in legal aid declarations for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic. Full details can be found [here](#).

NHSR COVID-19 Protocol

This protocol outlines a best practice approach to litigation. Update 11 March 2021 details [here](#)

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. [Click here](#)

CICA

Information on arrangements for new and existing applications on the [CICA website](#).

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Motor Insurers' Bureau (MIB)

The MIB has advised practitioners should submit claims under the **Uninsured Drivers Agreement**, via a new digital service. Firms should register, by visiting [here](#) and follow the registration process. FAQs [here](#).

This does mean that from 18 May 2020, the MIB has not accepted paper claim forms for these types of claims. Members should register promptly.

Contacting the MIB on current cases

The MIB's virtual switchboard is now open and there is an online contact form which can also be used to contact the Bureau [here](#)

We know some members have had 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.

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. Updates on progress will follow.

Other useful sources / information

Working remotely

There's no place like home

Richard Barr's informative article in 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 [here](#)

E-bundles

The most regular questions coming up at the APIL office have been about e-bundles. Here are the most useful resources available to members to help with creating e-bundles:

- 1. Information for Queen's Bench Division Court Users (Document Upload Centre)**

The High Court has introduced a solution to allow the upload of all document bundles for court hearings and paper applications. Upon issue of a claim you will be invited by the court administration to upload your bundles to the repository: [Details here](#)

HMCTS has produced a short professional user's guide [here](#)

- 2. Uploading e-bundles to a 'cloud-based room'**

This terminology is now appearing in Directions. What is a 'cloud based room'? Assuming you have not been invited to use the QBD upload centre above, then you

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should read the **guidance** on e-bundles from the Family Court which uses this terminology and goes into detail [here](#)

The cloud delivery systems suggested are: **iCloud, OneDrive, Dropbox** or **Google Drive**. Here are the links to each one:

- OneDrive: <https://www.microsoft.com/en-gb/microsoft-365/onedrive/online-cloud-storage>
- Dropbox: <https://www.dropbox.com/login>
- Google Drive: <https://www.google.co.uk/drive/>
- icloud: <https://www.icloud.com/>

3. **Coronavirus –Information for Queen’s Bench Division Court Users Bulletin**
Master Fontaine’s guidance on electronic bundles: [click here](#)
4. **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](#)
5. **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](#):
6. **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](#)
7. **APIL guide to e-bundles** Read it [here](#)

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. The eBook version is available on Amazon. It is priced at £3.95, with all profits going to NHS Charities Together. The paperback edition is available for £7.99, again with all profits going to the charity:

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

Remote attendance from outside the jurisdiction

Huber (1) Lieskovska (2) v X-Yachts (GB) Ltd (1), X-Yachts A/S (2) [2020] EWHC 3082 (TCC) In this recent decision the court permitted parties in Denmark and Spain who were unable to travel to the UK due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, to appear by video from outside of England and Wales while giving evidence and attend and observe the entirety of the remote hearing from outside of England and Wales. Decision is on Bailii [here](#)

ACAS

Coronavirus: advice for employers and employees. Updated section on the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme [here](#)

HSE issues Covid-19 specific guidance:

- RIDDOR reporting of Covid-19 [guide here](#)
- Regulating occupational health and safety during the COVID-19 outbreak: [here](#)

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- The full set of updates can be found on the HSE website [here](#)

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 latest version of the Lockdown Update: <https://www.apil.org.uk/covid-19>

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