

Coronavirus Pandemic

Guidance for users

The First-tier Tribunal (War Pensions and Armed Forces Compensation Chamber)

1. The War Pensions and Armed Forces Compensation Chamber ('WPAFCC') has suspended operations as a result of the Coronavirus Pandemic. The Chamber's offices at Fox Court in London are closed. The Chamber cannot operate without access to papers and specialist members. It has no digital capability.
2. The position will be kept constantly under review. However, there is unlikely to be any change until the current restrictions on going out and travel are substantially relaxed. Any changes will be published.
3. This guidance is made by the Acting Chamber President of the War Pensions and Armed Forces Compensation Chamber. It will apply until further notice.

Hearings

4. All hearings have been cancelled. No cases are being listed for hearing. When the Chamber is able to do so, cancelled hearings will be re-listed. As far as possible the date order of the cancelled hearings will be respected, but this will be subject to other factors such as availability of parties, representatives, panels, etc. Hearings are likely to be carried out remotely (by telephone or skype or other similar technology). Further guidance will be issued regarding the conduct of hearings, when the Chamber is able to resume operations.

Case management directions and other paper determinations

5. The parties should seek to comply with any directions that have been made. Where the impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic leads to delay in complying with directions, a brief explanation should be provided.
6. Save in cases of urgency (see below) no applications will be determined and no new case management directions will be made or issued.

New appeals

7. The Rules require appeals to be sent to Veterans UK. Veterans UK will retain new appeals until the Chamber is able to process them.

Applications

8. Applications under Part 4 of the Chamber's Rules or for directions should be sent to the Chamber by email to the following email address: armedforces.chamber@justice.gov.uk. Note that appeals must not be sent to this email address, but should be sent to Veterans UK (see paragraph 7 above).
9. If it is not possible to use email, then post may be used and an explanation given as to why email has not been used.
10. As set out above, applications will not be determined at the present time.

Time limits

11. There has been no change to the time limits for appealing or complying with the Rules or case management directions.

Incoming post

12. Users should avoid sending items by post if at all possible. Post will be dealt with when the Chamber resumes operations.

Incoming emails

13. Emails will be monitored but it is unlikely that they will be responded to. They will be dealt with in date order when the Chamber resumes operations.

Telephone calls

14. Telephone calls will not be answered during this period, and there is no facility for leaving telephone messages.

Urgent matters

15. Urgent applications may be sent to the Chamber email address at paragraph 8 above and marked "URGENT". However, as staff do not have access to the files, there will be very little that they can assist with.

Upper Tribunal Judge Markus QC

Acting Chamber President, War Pensions and Armed Forces Compensation Chamber

24th March 2020