



TRIBUNALS
JUDICIARY

GENERAL REGULATORY CHAMBER (FIRST-TIER TRIBUNAL)

HELP FOR USERS

1. During the Covid 19 pandemic, the General Regulatory Chamber (GRC) has identified the following priorities:
 - (a) The health and safety of users, judiciary and staff;
 - (b) The identification and swift determination of urgent cases;
 - (c) The orderly case management of the non-urgent Chamber caseload;
 - (d) The use of technology to enable remote oral hearings.
2. All face to face oral hearings listed until the end of June 2020 have been postponed. Whether face to face oral hearings which have already listed beyond that date will also require postponement will be considered during April 2020.
3. Parties have been asked to consider if they would like their case to be determined on the papers without a hearing, or at a "remote" oral hearing using telephone or Skype. The determination of appeals on the papers is on-going where there is consent to this. Where appropriate, remote oral hearings will start to be listed soon.
4. The GRC Chamber offices are open but with a reduced staff. Some staff have been provided with lap-tops so they can work remotely. In most cases, GRC staff will be able to access the case management database and administer cases remotely, albeit at a slower rate than from the office.
5. GRC's legally-qualified Registrars are working remotely and can access all case files.
6. Salaried judiciary are also working remotely. They have no remote access to the file storage system but GRC staff can and do refer case management requests to them by email with relevant documents attached. Case management applications therefore continue to be dealt with in most jurisdictions. All parties and representatives have been asked to communicate

with the Tribunal by email rather than phone. Post is still being opened but it has slowed to a trickle since the lockdown.

7. Urgent cases in the GRC are listed in [the fast track protocol](#). Every new appeal received is triaged by a Registrar and we have agreed procedures for the identification and swift determination of urgent matters.
8. The GRC deals with cases involving many different Regulators who are the Respondents to appeals. Some of these Regulators are able to file responses to appeals and prepare electronic bundles for hearings. Others are finding this more difficult. GRC is working with each Regulator to manage the flow of work in their particular jurisdiction as best we can. A temporary stay has been granted in respect of non-urgent appeals where the Information Commissioner is the Respondent. See [the 'Directions for a General Stay' guidance](#).
9. With the co-operation of the parties and the continuing hard work of staff and judiciary, we aim to process much of our caseload in good time and continue to provide a good service to the public even where offices are closed.

15 April 2020