



JUDICIARY OF
ENGLAND AND WALES

High Court Business

Contingency Plan for maintaining Urgent Court Hearings

26 March 2020

Introduction to this Contingency Plan

1. The Royal Courts of Justice and the Rolls Building are putting in place plans to enable them to continue to conduct court hearings during the current pandemic.
2. This plan identifies (i) the “urgent business” and the “business as usual” that will be dealt with by the High Court during the pandemic, and (ii) the processes that have been put in place to enable that to happen.
3. In outline, any business that would be sufficiently urgent to warrant an out of hours application in normal times will be considered urgent business for the purpose of this plan. **Business that is not urgent business (“business as usual”) will also continue to be dealt with during this period, as far as possible and in accordance with the contingency plans put in place by the different Divisions and Courts.** Urgent business will, however, be given priority.
4. Further details on the way in which the work of different jurisdictions is being conducted, by remote hearings wherever possible, can be found at www.judiciary.uk.

What is urgent business?

5. Urgent business is business that would warrant an out of hours application in any of the courts covered by this plan. The courts covered by this plan are the Queen’s Bench Division, the Administrative Court, the Court of Protection, the Business and Property Courts of England and Wales, and the Family Division.
6. It is not appropriate to define urgent business any more closely. If the relevant duty judge [see [9] below] does not consider the application to be urgent business, it will not be dealt with.

What processes are in place for applications during normal court hours?

7. The process to be followed is similar to that followed in normal times to make an out of hours application in the court concerned.
8. In general terms, applicants should email the relevant email address below. They will then be referred to the duty listing officer who will work with the duty judges in the relevant Division or Court, depending on the nature of the business, to decide what arrangements will be made for a hearing, including a remote hearing, to take place. That email address should also be copied in for all communications to the court.
9. The Divisions or Courts will deal according to their own separate procedures with business as usual.
10. At any one time during the normal working week, at least one judge from each of the Queen's Bench Division, the Administrative Court, the Commercial Court, the Technology and Construction Court, the Court of Protection, the Family Division and the Chancery Division will be available to deal remotely with the business of that jurisdiction, including urgent business. A single duty judge from each of the Queen's Bench Division, the Family Division and the Chancery Division will be available outside normal working hours for the same purpose, in the usual way. The out of hours provision remains unchanged.

Contact emails:

QBD, including Media & Communications: qbjudgeslistingoffice@justice.gov.uk

Family Division: rcj.familyhighcourt@justice.gov.uk

Chancery Division: ChanceryJudgesListing@Justice.gov.uk

Commercial Court Listing: comct.listing@justice.gov.uk

Technology and Construction Court Listing: tcc.listing@justice.gov.uk

Insolvency & Companies Judges Clerks: rolls.icl.hearings1@justice.gov.uk

Chancery Masters Appointments: chancery.mastersappointments@Justice.gov.uk

Administrative Court: administrativecourtoffice.immediates@hmcts.x.gsi.gov.uk

The President of the Queen's Bench Division

The Chancellor of the High Court

The President of the Family Division