

## **Help for Users Guide**

### **(applicable during the Covid-19 pandemic)**

This guide briefly explains the changes that the First-tier Tribunal, Asylum Support (FTT-AS) has made to ensure that we continue to decide appeals fairly and efficiently during the pandemic, whilst also maintaining the safety of our users, staff and judiciary. If you would like to read more about the law, practice and procedure that has enabled us to make these changes, please go to our website:

<https://www.gov.uk/courts-tribunals/first-tier-tribunal-asylum-support>

#### **Making an appeal:**

Appeals can still be made by post or by email – see the section of our website which deals with how to appeal. However, we strongly recommend the use of email for submitting an appeal and communicating with the Tribunal during the pandemic. You can contact us on [asylumsupporttribunals@justice.gov.uk](mailto:asylumsupporttribunals@justice.gov.uk)

#### **Appeal hearings:**

A Tribunal judge will look at each appeal to see if it needs an oral hearing or can be decided on the papers. If the judge rules that your appeal can be decided on the papers and you disagree, you can write to the Tribunal to explain that you object and would prefer an oral hearing. Sometimes a judge may rule that your appeal will be dealt with on the papers, even though you have asked for an oral hearing. This will be in special circumstances – for example if the judge thinks that this is fair, your appeal is urgent and it is not possible to arrange a hearing.

If you have an oral hearing, it will probably take place on the telephone because of the pandemic. You will receive detailed instructions before the hearing and the telephone call will be free. You will need to give us a working telephone number on your Notice of Appeal form.

Interpreters will be provided for telephone hearings. Please make sure that you give us language and dialect details on your Notice of Appeal form. In time, we hope to arrange other options, such as video or face to face hearings, but only if it is safe and practical to do so.

#### **The appeal decision:**

No appeal is being delayed until after the end of the pandemic. The Tribunal will make every effort to list appeals as soon as possible.

We list appeals as quickly as we can, because we know that they concern important issues of accommodation and financial support. Because appeals are processed speedily, it is important to provide as many documents as you can with your Notice of Appeal form and to answer quickly (ideally by email) when the Tribunal sends you instructions about further documents that you need to send in.

We have extended our deadlines for gathering evidence during the pandemic, but you should contact us if you need to ask for more time. A judge will decide whether to grant your request, balancing the need for speed against the need for everyone to participate fully in the appeal process.

