

## 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](#).

### 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 FTT-AS 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 and decide which mode of hearing or type of hearing is best suited to your appeal. This may be an oral hearing (which includes a face to face, telephone, or video hearings) or it may be a decision without a hearing based on the papers. If you have asked for an oral hearing, the judge will write to inform you of the type of oral hearing that will take place, or they will ask for your permission to decide your appeal on the papers without a hearing. If you do not want your appeal decided on the papers, you can write to the judge to explain that you would prefer an oral hearing.

Sometimes a judge may suggest a decision without a hearing because your case is strong and likely to succeed but sometimes it may be because your case cannot succeed even if you take part in the hearing. Whatever the reason, the judge will explain this to you and the final decision is yours.

If you have asked for your appeal to be decided without a hearing but the judge decides that a hearing is necessary for the appeal to be decided fairly, they can list the appeal for an oral hearing without your permission. You can, however, write to the judge to explain if there is a type of hearing you prefer e.g. a telephone hearing, but there is no guarantee that your preferred mode of hearing will be available. If you have a representative, please ask them to write to the FTT-AS for you.

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.

Face to face hearings will take place at Import Buildings, in East London. You may either attend in person or you may participate by telephone or video. The FTT-AS will try to arrange your preferred type of hearing, but this may not be possible.

It may also be possible for you to attend your hearing by video with the help of your representatives, if they allow you to use their equipment and premises. Please discuss this with your representatives before choosing a “CVP” hearing on the notice of appeal form.

Interpreters will be provided for all types of hearings. Please make sure that you tell us the language and dialect you speak on the notice of appeal form.

[The appeal decision:](#)

The FTT-AS will make every effort to list appeals as soon as possible. However, in some cases it may be necessary for the tribunal to delay or “Stay” your appeal. We will provide you with an explanation for why we have taken this step.

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 FTT-AS 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.

Finally, please note that the FTT-AS is aiming to return as quickly as possible to our pre-pandemic timetable and time limits. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated, and we thank you for your patience.