



Coronavirus – Information for Queen’s Bench Division Court Users (Bulletin 1)

QUEEN’S BENCH JUDGES HEARINGS

During the current COVID-19 outbreak the work of the Queen’s Bench Judges Listing will continue so far as possible. However, it is inevitable that the outbreak of the virus, and the Government and NHS guidelines on self isolation, means that there are, and will continue to be, absences of both Judges and court staff.

In order to deal with court business in the most efficient way possible, taking into account the current constraints, we are making certain changes to our usual procedure.

Steps to be taken by the Judges Listing Office

1. Hearings are currently being conducted by either telephone conference or Skype for Business. If the parties decide that the hearing will not be possible under either of these, then they must contact the Queen’s Bench Judges Listing Office to request an adjournment setting out full reasons. If a draft order is submitted, a copy should be in word form.
2. We may have to adjourn non-urgent hearings if we do not have sufficient Judges available to hear them. If so, we will try and list them as soon as possible either before another Judge.
3. To accommodate any backlog of adjourned hearings we plan to list during July and in the Long Vacation in August and September, as far as we are able, depending upon the availability of Judges.
4. Where possible, we will have hearings by telephone or Skype, either direct to the court, or where a Judge is working. Either the Queen’s Bench Judges Listing Office, or the clerk to the judge assigned to the case will provide the parties with the relevant details. The parties will be informed of the details of the telephone conference and ensure that it is recorded. Skype hearings will be



instigated by the court. CPR 39.3 (3) (g) permits the court to hold a hearing in private if 'the court considers this to be necessary, in the interests of justice'.

5. **An electronic bundle should be provided at least three working days before the hearing. The guidance set out in Annex A to this note must be followed in respect of an electronic bundle.**
6. A Cause List will continue to be produced but it may be subject to change at short notice.
7. At present, the QB Judge Listing office is not being manned. Please do not ring the office. Please communicate with the court via email to qbjudgeslistingoffice@justice.gov.uk.

Professional Court Users

1. Court users should continue to E-File as usual but are likely to experience significant delays due to a reduced workforce.
2. Please let us know as soon as possible if a hearing is likely to be vacated or a representative cannot attend through illness/self isolation.

Litigants in Person

Litigants in person are encouraged to use E-Filing, but if this is not possible documents should be filed by e-mail to qbjudgeslistingoffice@justice.gov.uk

The position may change in the forthcoming days /weeks as we respond to developments and future government guidance, and we shall provide details of any changes as soon as possible.



ANNEX A

QB Judges - Electronic hearing bundles

If an electronic bundle is ordered or requested by the court the bundle **must** be prepared as follows and be suitable for use with Adobe Acrobat Reader:

1. The document **must** be a **single** PDF.
2. The document **must** be numbered in ascending order regardless of whether multiple documents have been combined together (the original page numbers of the document will be ignored and just the bundle page number will be referred to).
3. Index pages and authorities **must** be numbered as part of the single PDF document (they are not to be skipped; they are part of the single PDF and must be numbered).
4. The default display view size of all pages **must always be 100%**.
5. Texts on all pages **must be selectable** to facilitate comments and highlights to be imposed on the texts.
6. **The bookmarks must be labelled** indicating what document they are referring to (**best to have the same name or title as the actual document**) and also display the relevant page numbers.
7. The resolution on the electronic bundle **must** be reduced to about 200 to 300 dpi to prevent delays whilst scrolling from one page to another.
8. **The index page must be hyperlinked** to the pages or documents they refer to.