

Attended hearings plan Taunton Shire Hall

COVID 19

1. No individual should attend the hearing if they are or become symptomatic of Covid-19 or are required to self isolate, or live in a household or are in a household bubble where someone else is symptomatic of COVID-19.
2. On entry to the building you will be asked to confirm that you do not have symptoms of Covid 19 and that you are not required to self-isolate.
3. If you become unwell during a hearing, you must immediately notify the Judge or a member of court staff and follow instructions.
4. Safe 2 metre distancing must be maintained at all time.

Conferences

5. Where possible, pre-hearing conferences should be conducted before the day of the hearing.

Bundles

6. The legal representative for each party must provide their lay client with a paper copy of the bundle for use in court and when giving evidence.
7. In Public law cases, SCC must provide any unrepresented party a paper copy of the bundle for use in court and when giving evidence.
8. In private law cases, the judge will give directions as to the provision of a paper copy of the bundle to any unrepresented party. Represented parties must ensure that this is dealt with before the hearing.

Test of platform

9. There will be a test of the proposed video platform a week before the hearing with those who will be attending remotely. Those attending in person will not participate in this test.

Travel to court

10. The solicitor for each represented party shall provide a letter to their client and any relevant witnesses to bring to the court each day confirming:
 - a. They are a party or witness to these proceedings.
 - b. It is necessary for them to attend xxxxxx between xxx and xxxx 2020 to give evidence.
 - c. Their travel to the Court building and presence at Court is essential.

Arrival at court

11. Your case will begin at 10.30am.
12. The arrival of parties at court is to be staggered. Please attend promptly at the time indicated below.
 - a. Any representative of the Local Authority and/or Guardian is to arrive at 09.50
 - b. The Mother, her legal team, intermediary and/or interpreter are to arrive at 10.00
 - c. The father, his legal team, intermediary and/or interpreter are to arrive at 10.10
 - d. The Intervenor, his/her legal team, intermediary and/or interpreter are to arrive at 10.20
13. If you wish to attend at an earlier time, this must be expressly agreed with the Judge in advance. Any such requests must be received by 12 noon on the day before the hearing and should be sent to Somerset-diaries@justice.gov.uk marked Urgent and copied in to the Judge hearing the case.

Security checks

14. Usual searches will be conducted by security staff at the entrance. A 2-metre gap must be maintained between people entering the building and security staff. You should not enter the building until invited to do so by a member of the court security staff.
15. You will be asked to confirm that you do not have symptoms of Covid 19 and that you are not required to self-isolate.
16. Safe 2 metre distancing must be maintained at all time.
17. You must maintain a 2-metre distance during the bag search and when asked, empty your bag completely into a tray and step back. Security will then search through the items. You will then be asked to put the contents back in your bag and sanitise the tray ready for the next use.
18. If you bring drinks into the court building, security will ask you to drink a sample before admission.
19. If you bring hand sanitiser into the court building, security will ask you to apply some to yourself to prove it is not harmful.

Where to go on arrival

20. The security staff will inform you where to go on arrival.
21. Wherever possible, separate conference facilities will be made available for each party. The conference room will be identified on the door for each party. No one should enter any conference room other than their own without the permission of the occupants. The conference rooms can double as the waiting area for each party. The conference rooms

allocated to you will be of sufficient size to ensure there is 2 meters safe distancing between all concerned.

Entry into court

22. Parties will be separately invited into court by the Usher from their conference rooms in the same order as they enter the building.
23. On entering the court room, advocates and parties should go direct to the allocated space as directed by the usher. This ensures that there is 2-meter safe distancing 360° for everyone.

Breaks

24. The first session will be from (10.30 – 12.30.)
25. The lunch break will be from (12.30 – 13.30).
26. The second session will be from (13.30 – 15.30).
27. There will be a short break from (15.30 – 15.45)
28. The third session will be from (15.45 – 16.45).

Cleaning

29. There will be regular cleaning throughout the day of touch points.
30. There will be thorough cleaning of the building after court each day.

Refreshments and Water

31. You may bring bottled water to the hearing provided that it has been tested at security.
32. There are no refreshment facilities available at the court.
33. Bottled water will be available in the court room if you have not brought water with you.
34. You may bring food into the building.

Toilets

35. The security staff or usher will direct you to the toilets which you are to use.
36. There is a one in / one out system in operation for the toilets; you are asked to turn the notice on the outside of the door to the entrance of the toilet as you enter and leave it in order to allow others to know whether they may or may not enter it.
37. Please observe social distancing if you have to queue outside the toilets and observe the floor markings and instructions of marshalls.
38. Additional toilets for professionals will be available in order to minimise queuing. The usher will let you know which ones are available for use that day.

Hand sanitiser

39. This will be available but you may bring your own provided that it has been tested at security.
40. Hand sanitiser and tissues will be available at the entrance to Council Chambers.

Leaving the hearing/building

41. Please leave the courtroom as directed by the usher. This will be on the basis that the last people to enter will be the first to leave.
42. There is a one-way system in place for entry and exit from The Shire Hall. Please ensure you leave the building as directed by the usher and do not attempt to leave by the Main entrance doors.