

Birkenhead email 25 March 2020

We are doing our best to service the work in this court but it will come as no surprise to you, that in the current public health emergency, urgent work will be taking priority

Here is an update on how hearings listed at Birkenhead County Court will proceed (or not) over the forth coming weeks. We will of course be reviewing the position on a daily basis and if things don't go as smoothly as we had hoped we will revise our practices/procedures , any input from your selves both positive and negative (with suggestion) would be appreciated .

1. All Fast Track trials listed for the next 4 weeks will be vacated and you will receive a new hearing date
2. ALL Pcol lists are vacated until after 1st June 2020. New dates will be sent out in due course
3. All small claims will be adjourned until a date to be fixed after 1st June 2020
4. Any civil interlocutory matters , parties are urged to agree directions/issues where you can. Any matters where a hearing is still required will be accommodated as far as we are able by telephone and it is the responsibility of the parties to arrange a Legal Connect telephone hearing
5. All infant approval hearings will be dealt with on paper , as per the instructions by e mail issued earlier this week by the court (I have attached again for your convenience)
6. All stage 3 hearings are currently being managed by the court dialling out to counsel , as per the e-mail instructions sent earlier this week however I have copied instructions into this email again for your attention

“Stage 3 lists Birkenhead

For as long as we continue to operate, please note the system that we will attempt to operate for stage 3 lists at Birkenhead from 24 March 2020:

1. The hearings will take place remotely using BT meet me facilities.
2. The Judge will dial out to you at the time of the hearing.
3. That means that **each night before the next day's list**, you need to check the lists on COURTEL and email Rachel Beddows on rachel.beddows@justice.gov.uk with your name, which case/s you are appearing on and your contact phone number.
4. You will then be called at or around the time of the hearing which will be conducted by phone and recorded by the court.
5. **IT IS VITAL THAT YOU TRY AND NARROW ISSUES OR IF YOU CAN, SETTLE ANY HEADS OF DAMAGE to ensure that we can get through the lists.**
6. **PLEASE SEND THIS EMAIL TO OTHER CHAMBERS, PARTICULARLY MANCHESTER CHAMBERS IF YOU THINK ANY REGULAR OPPONENTS MAY NOT BE INCLUDED IN THIS LIST.**
7. All back to back Disposals hearings will be dealt with in the same way as the stage 3 hearings Please see above
8. All Block listed stay claims will be vacated and a further hearing date sent out in due course

9. Any ongoing family work is being looked at by each judge with judicial responsibility for those cases and you will receive an order in due course
10. Any upcoming FHDRA's will be dealt with by phone with the court dialling out to the parties, save where the matter is not deemed to be urgent, in which case it may be adjourned on a case by case basis
11. Any urgent injunctions, please telephone the court to seek guidance as to the procedure, which will shortly be made known to you.. They are likely to be conducted by telephone once the papers have been assessed by a full time District Judge

We have up until today been trying to contact solicitors individually on a case by case matter to advise of these procedures we cannot keep doing this as we do not have the resources to do it so this is your notification for all of these hearings from tomorrow onwards . I know that in this e mail I may not capture all of the solicitors/counsel who use this court so if you have colleagues in other firms/chambers who need to know this information please feel free to forward on my e mail

Like yourselves we are operating on a severely depleted work force due to many members of staff being absent from work as they are self isolating and the work is building up . The staff that are in are working very hard to deal with your queries as soon as we can and dealing with the most pressing matters first so could I ask you please as much as possible try not to contact the court unless the matter is urgent or your query is in relation to a hearing date listed in the next fortnight .

Kim Halliday

Delivery Manager

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