

## **Remote Hearings - Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Why are you not holding face to face hearings?**

Courts and tribunals have moved to remote hearings as a safe way of dealing with cases without causing delays during the COVID-19 pandemic. This avoids concerns regarding travelling to venues and social distancing.

### **What equipment do I need in order to access the hearing?**

The Tribunal will be using 'Microsoft Teams', but you do not need the software in order to partake. You will need either a mobile phone with camera, speaker and microphone or a computer with the same facilities.

### **I'm not sure whether my phone or laptop will work through Teams?**

Don't worry we will check with you prior to the hearing that your equipment will work

### **How do I access the hearing?**

We will email you a link to join it closer to the hearing date.

### **Is a remote hearing different to a face to face hearing?**

The process and the opportunities to present your case are the same for both. The case will be considered on the evidence/argument provided in your written submission and the presentations on the day. Please read the tribunal's protocol for parties prior to the hearing as it sets out what you need to do.

### **I would rather a face to face hearing took place. What should I do?**

If that is the case, then you can apply for a postponement of the hearing until face-to-face hearings can be resumed safely. You will need to have good reasons as to why a remote hearing isn't suitable.

### **Are there any other alternatives to waiting for a face to face hearing?**

We may be able to arrange the hearing through a telephone conference. In addition, if both parties are agreeable we can consider your appeal entirely on the papers without any hearing taking place.

### **Can I change the date of the hearing?**

Please contact us immediately if the date is not convenient and we will change it, if you have good reason for the change.

### **What time will the hearing take place?**

Tribunals hear a number of cases and often run all day, usually between 10:00 until 5:00pm. We will confirm the time you need to join the meeting to hear your appeal.

### **Can I change the start time?**

We may be able to vary the start time if it suits all those involved, please contact us immediately and we will look into it.

### **How long will the remote hearing take?**

The tribunal panel members will have already read your written submission before the hearing date. As they will be familiar with your arguments and evidence, it is anticipated that most hearings will be completed within one hour.

### **Can a friend or relative assist me?**

Yes, please let us know who they are. They may sit near you (provided you meet any Government rules on social distancing) when we hold the hearing, or we could invite them to join the hearing from another location such as their own home.

### **Will there be anyone observing?**

Anyone can observe a hearing, providing they make it known in advance. Their names will not be provided, they will not be seen on screen and they cannot participate in the hearing. In practice, very few hearings are observed by members of the public.

### **Do I have to have my camera on so my face appears on the screen during the hearing?**

You will need to have your camera on while speaking. If this presents a problem you should raise this with us prior to the start of your hearing.

### **What happens if I lose connection during the hearing?**

If you encounter any technical difficulties during the hearing you should make everyone aware if you cannot rejoin the hearing promptly through email to the clerk of the Tribunal (these details will be provided to you). We will be monitoring the connection during the hearing. Should connection be lost the hearing will be adjourned until you are able to reconnect.

### **I have some questions I want to ask at the hearing?**

Please remember to have the documentation open on your computer when you have the hearing. You will be given an opportunity to question the other side's case. It helps if you can refer to the page number in the documentation, so that everyone can see what you want to query.

### **Will the Tribunal inspect my property if it is needed?**

The Tribunal retains the power to inspect if it considers this necessary. However, it is the responsibility of the parties to ensure that any matters relied upon are adequately evidenced. Photographs usually avoid the need for inspections.

### **What do I do if I need the support of an interpreter?"**

Should you require an interpreter to translate you must inform us as soon as you receive the notice so that we may make necessary arrangements.

Please remember the translator cannot act as your advocate they will only be available to translate for you.