



Magistrate's Court of Jersey

Magistrate's Court Greffe

Our ref: AC/C19

Your ref:

FAO ALL COURT USERS

BY EMAIL ONLY

24 March 2020

Dear all,

Re: closure of the Magistrate's Court

Yesterday I contacted you with a press release indicating that the Court would continue to sit only in certain circumstances. Today, after considering the amended Government advice regarding social distancing, it has become necessary to close the Court to the public. As of now, no access will be given to the court building to any court user or stakeholder until further notice. The court will however continue to inform the public of the outcome of hearings and we are actively working on a process of so doing that we will keep you updated of in the coming days.

Practically, what this will mean is that the Magistrate's Court will continue to sit but it will only deal with those cases where the defendant is in custody, be that either from the prison or at Police Head Quarters. I will be contacting those agencies that the Court works in tandem with to ensure that we are able to hold those hearings via virtual means, with the defendant, defence Advocate and those from the prosecution appearing via videolink using the starleaf application.

It is accepted that this is both highly unusual and far from ideal. These are however, highly unusual times. Undoubtedly, there will be teething problems with the use of virtual courts, but I remain positive that these can be addressed successfully with the cooperation of the profession and stakeholders and I thank you in advance for your assistance.

We are working hard to consider all matters that are currently listed before the Court with a view to contacting parties to let them know any new hearing dates. For those of you with clients who are due to appear before the Court on bail, we will consider their bail position in Chambers prior to the next date of appearance and may ask you to inform your client of the new date and any renewal of conditions. For those of you with clients who wish to vary their bail conditions during this time, the Court will endeavour to deal with such applications provided they are urgent. We would ask you to put the application in writing, along with the reasons for any variation, and send it to the email address outlined below. We will then progress matters as appropriate.

With the closure of the Court to the public comes the adjournment of matters, but we will do our best to progress what we can on the papers and in Chambers. We realise that for many, ongoing proceedings will be an additional stress at a time when they may already be anxious. I would hope

that defence Advocates and those investigating/prosecuting are able to assure clients, victims and witnesses as best they can that where progress can be made, it will be.

In furtherance of the above, I ask that all members of the profession please download the starleaf software and register for an account if you have not already done so. This is the only way that you will be able to appear before the Court until further notice. The software is free and can be downloaded on a tablet and/or smartphone via the relevant app store by simply searching for “starleaf”, or on a web browser at <https://www.starleaf.com/> by clicking on the “Download Starleaf” button. The Court will arrange all virtual court hearings and you will receive an email from starleaf to the email address used on the application detailing how you should join the meeting. Defence Advocates will be given time prior to court commencing to take instructions from clients if needed.

Please could I ask that all future queries relating to matters are sent to the relevant shared inboxes of mcg@gov.je for all criminal court matters and pdcc@gov.je for all petty debts court matters. The Court will continue to operate but with a reduced rota of staff. We will continue to respond to you but it may take a little longer than usual to do so and we appreciate your patience at this time.

Yours faithfully,

Aimee Crowder
Magistrate’s Court Greffier