

Press release – Jersey Magistrate’s Court

20 March 2020

The nature of the concerns regarding Covid-19 means that all services to the public are materially impacted, including those in the justice sector. The Magistrate Court wishes to minimise personal interaction between court users in order to limit the potential for spread of the virus. The focus of the Magistrate’s Court during this time will be to continue to ensure access to justice with as minimum disruption as possible.

In order to assist in this regard the following practical measures have been implemented at the court building with immediate effect:

- All court users will be actively advised to utilise the alcohol gel dispenser at the entrance hall to the building;
- No bookings for school/student visits and/or training shall be honoured or accepted until further notice;
- Trainees and/or court assistants shall not be admitted to the Advocates benches - only those with conduct of a matter should attend at the court building;
- Defence Advocates are asked to remind their clients that only their attendance is required at court; friends and family members should not attend;
- Regular cleaning of the benches in courtrooms is taking place during the day;
- A new cleaning regime has been implemented at the Court that means efforts are focused upon the cleaning of bannisters, handrails, lift buttons, door handles and desks/benches each day;
- The submission of paper should be reduced to a minimum. All papers that can be submitted electronically shall be so submitted using the email addresses:
 - mcg@gov.je – for all criminal cases, including youth and parking matters
 - pdcc@gov.je – for all Petty Debts Court matters, including mediation.
- Parties in cases will no longer be placed in front of the Greffier and shall instead stand in the dock or witness box;
- Court 3 shall be used for all Youth Court matters with the Youth Panel seated on the Bench rather than at the level of the Court;
- Court 1 shall be used for all Remand Court hearings;
- Court 2 will continue to be utilised for videolink matters, which shall take place at the beginning of the Remand Court, upon completion of which the Court will retire and resume in Court 1. In the event of a trial being listed, videolink hearings will take place prior to the commencement of the trial.

In relation to listing, the Magistrate’s Court takes the following approach with immediate effect:

Petty Debts Court

- No parties should attend at the court building unless absolutely necessary. Any paperwork to be submitted may be provided electronically to the email address pdcc@gov.je. In the event that the law requires submission of hardcopy paperwork, such as an affidavit, then a scanned copy may be provided. The hardcopy shall be produced at the hearing.
- The Petty Debts Court will continue to be listed every Wednesday to deal only with any urgent matters. Should parties believe their action to be urgent they are invited to contact the Court

via email on pdcc@gov.je outlining the nature of the urgency. All urgent listing shall be at the sole discretion of the Court.

- In the absence of any representations regarding urgency, all matters currently tabled will be adjourned "*sine die*" and a date will be fixed in the future for the resumption of proceedings. Parties whose cases are so adjourned will be contacted by the Court and informed when their matter will be heard.
- All new cases received by the Court for tabling will be adjourned "*sine die*" and a date will be fixed in the future for resumption of proceedings. Parties whose cases are so adjourned should not attend Court. They will be contacted by the Court and informed what action they need to take and when their matter will be heard.
- All eviction actions already tabled have been considered by the Magistrate and parties have been consulted whenever possible. All such matters are adjourned "*sine die*". A date will be fixed in the future for resumption of proceedings. Parties whose cases are so adjourned will be contacted by the Court and informed when their matter will be heard.
- All cases relating to arrears of Maintenance will be dealt with by way of written representations. Parties are invited to submit their representations to the Court via email to pdcc@gov.je
- All litigants are advised to contact the lawyer, debt collection agency or other organisation they are dealing with concerning the Petty Debts Court action to enquire about their case. If no such person or body is acting they should contact the court via email at pdcc@gov.je. In the event that parties do not have access to email then they may contact the Petty Debts Court on 01534 440481

Criminal Courts

Parking

All current parking summonses listed are adjourned until 2.30pm on 1 September 2020. No new arrest orders will be issued. Existing arrest orders shall not be executed.

All matters with outstanding arrest orders where the individual has already contacted the Viscounts office will be listed in consultation with the Magistrate's Court Greffier and all dates provided will be subject to change at the discretion of the Court.

Remand Court - matters currently listed:

- The Remand Court will continue to sit;
- Defendants, Advocates and Centeniers should not attend unless strictly necessary;
- Priority will be given to custody cases and cases in which defendants pose a risk to the public or to an individual;
- Previous listing practices regarding "walk-ins"/"fast-tracks" no longer apply. Those prosecuting who wish to place a defendant on bail before the Court must contact the Court to request a hearing date. We will continue to work with the Parishes and States of Jersey Police to ensure this is practicable;
- Every step will be taken to minimise the number of people attending at the court building, including the increased use of videolink hearings with all parties attending virtually, if deemed appropriate by the Court;
- Members of the profession are asked to ensure they have access to the "starleaf" software, currently used by parties to take instructions from clients in HMP La Moye. This can be

accessed either using a web-browser at <https://www.starleaf.com/> or alternatively on a smartphone or tablet through the App Store;

- Everything that can be dealt with on the papers or by videolink will be so dealt with;
- The Court is currently reviewing matters that are listed and will contact parties to determine what progress may be made as soon as possible. All representations made by parties will be considered, however the Court reserves the right to adjourn any case should it be deemed necessary to do so.

Trials

- The Court is currently reviewing listed trials on a case-by-case basis. Priority will be given to custody cases and cases in which the defendant poses a risk to the public or to an individual. The Court will contact parties to inform them of any proposed changes to their listing or new directions that are made;
- Where trials do proceed, every effort will be made to ensure that evidence is given remotely.

Youth Court

- The Court is currently actively reviewing all Youth Court cases currently listed and contact will be made with individuals and parties to determine what progress may be achieved by way of email or videolink hearing whenever possible. All representations made by parties will be considered, however the Court reserves the right to adjourn any case should it be deemed necessary to do so.

New Matters -

- The Magistrate's Court is working in tandem with the Parishes to consider those matters that may have been due to be listed in the future. Priority will continue to be given to cases where the defendant is in custody or they pose a serious risk to others.

All Magistrate's Court users should read the latest information about prevention, treatment and staying at home. These include but are not limited to witnesses, defendants, professional court users and stakeholders, such as Probation and the Police.

If you, or the people who are coming to court with you, have confirmed or possible coronavirus (COVID-19) or need to self-isolate in line with advice, you should not attend at the court building. Instead you should contact the Magistrate's Court either on mcg@gov.je (criminal cases) or pdcc@gov.je (petty debts matters) or by phone on 01534 440080 to explain that you cannot attend.

