

Guildhall Chambers Employment and Discrimination Team Business Continuity and Support Arrangements

We are all acutely aware of the challenges and pressures that we and our professional and lay clients are facing, for at least the foreseeable future, as a result of the ramifications of COVID-19.

As a team, we always seek to put our clients at the forefront of everything we do. With this in mind, we are writing to communicate the steps we are taking to ensure that we act responsibly, whilst ensuring that our clients continue to receive exceptional levels of service and responsiveness.

Until yesterday, tribunals were only adjourning cases on an ad hoc basis, depending upon the circumstances. The latest Presidential announcement has changed that. As you will be aware, all in-person hearings have now been cancelled and replaced with telephone case management preliminary hearings on what would have been day 1 of the listing, with subsequent days cancelled (subject to the parties` rights to make whatever applications they see fit).

There are massive ramifications for every single case you have (whether listed previously or not) which we will as a priority want to discuss with you, to ensure our clients` interests are as protected as they possibly can be.

Please be assured also that we are acutely aware of the financial pressures our lay clients may be facing and that we will do our utmost to work with you to ensure that things are dealt with in a way which is fair to all concerned. Our team clerk, Kate Hather, will be more than happy to discuss what can be done to assist.

Chambers already has extensive video-conferencing and other facilities and where appropriate, we will do our utmost to persuade tribunals to reinstate the listing of any hearings which could proceed by way of video-conference or telephone, as well as continuing to offer client conferences and meetings via media such as this. We are also further exploring and investing in additional facilities to enable hearings and meetings to take place remotely, for as long as this proves necessary.

We are mindful of the pressures that our professional clients are under and of the potential for this to increase, for example, with school closures resulting in child-care issues for fee earners. If you find that any additional support is needed, we will be very happy to provide it. If you or anyone in your team requires assistance either generally or with a particular matter or issue, if you need cover for anything at short notice, if you have claims, responses or other documents that require urgent drafting, please let us know and we will respond immediately. The team is committed to doing all we can to help and that includes agreeing charging rates and agreeing timescales that work for you and your lay clients in these exceptional circumstances.

So far as your service to your lay clients is concerned, we are very happy to help you to help them, by fielding urgent enquiries from you (on a pro bono basis where appropriate) and by `sense-checking` any advice you may be giving to them. Similarly, if your firm has any internal issues on which it would like an objective, external steer, please do contact us.

Above all, every member of the team is committed to helping you and to doing everything we can to make sure we all come through these events intact and in strong positions to move forward. This is not the first very serious threat we have faced as employment lawyers. We are convinced that if we work together and support each other, this is a storm we can ride through and emerge from in great shape.

[Debbie Grennan](#)

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Team Clerk

For any queries and further information please contact our dedicated Team Clerk:

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Alternatively [email](#) any of our civil clerks who will be able to assist you

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