



Introduction

1. The purpose of this guidance is to set out the revised arrangements for hearings in all civil proceedings in order to facilitate the efficient management of civil business bearing in mind the stage which has been reached in the Covid 19 pandemic.

Hearings

2. In accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 4 of the Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020, any requirement physically to attend court remains suspended unless the court otherwise directs in circumstances where that would (i) result in prejudice to the fairness of the proceedings or (ii) otherwise be contrary to the interests of justice.
3. The requirement for written submissions to be lodged in advance of the procedural calling will no longer be necessary unless specifically directed by the Sheriff.

4. If physical attendance at court is directed, government guidance and regulations on physical distancing, gathering and hygiene must be complied with. Any discussions should take place outside the court building.
5. Otherwise, from 4 October 2021 all civil hearings (with the exception of Summary Cause Heritable Procedural Courts and Social Work Referral Procedural Courts and including those cases with hearings already assigned) will be conducted by video conference call. Where for practical reasons it is impossible to proceed by way of video conference call, it remains permissible to use telephone conference facilities, but they should be regarded as the exception.
6. Sheriff Clerks are available to discuss the arrangements for hearings by electronic means where required.

Sheriff Principal D C W Pyle

2 September 2021