

Crown Court at Nottingham

To solicitors, barristers, Crown Prosecution Service and all other interested parties

The staff and judges at Nottingham Crown Court are reacting as rapidly as possible to the fundamental change in circumstances. Taking one day at a time for the moment, we are looking at the draft list for Wednesday 25 March 2020.

In some cases there will be a judge's direction, sent by email and recorded in Notes on the Digital Case System. For these cases there will not be a hearing on 25 March 2020.

For those cases in which a hearing is necessary or otherwise likely to be helpful to any party, the hearing will take place by conference call or Skype for Business. In the short term, most hearings will be by telephone. The current plan is to begin with a few Skype hearings and increase.

A practical consideration. As with most other organisations, staff numbers are already significantly reduced.

For the time-being at least, the hearings, whether by telephone or video, will require a member of staff to arrange the hearings – sending a calendar invite for a video link or notifying the necessary telephone number. Court staff will also be required to record and to action any Directions. At present we may be able to operate four remote courts in this manner. That number may decline.

All such hearings will be given a fixed time. This will have to be selected by Listing. This may leave some advocates with a clash of hearings. For now, at least, we will not be able to act upon requests to alter the timing, because this would create to an impossible administrative burden. However, only a small number of hearings will be listed for each courtroom and they will be well space out in time. If necessary, please ask the judge at the start of the hearing at the appointed time whether it is possible to put back the hearing to another more convenient time that day.

For the time-being, these hearing will be legal representatives and judge only, with the judge and a member of staff at court. The aim, of course, is that we will soon be able to include defendants and others with an interest in the case, but it is essential to set up a fair and reliable system before we start do this

I hope that this is of some help. Please be patient with us. Many of us have worked together well for a long time. We will continue to do so.

All good wishes,

Greg Dickinson

HH Judge Dickinson QC
24 March 2020