



Number 19

IfJ COVID-19 Updates.

20/05/20-27/05/20

These notes are a summary of information shared with IfJ and organisations involved in the justice system and those working with users of the system. In sharing these comments and providing links to resources, IfJ provides this material but does not accept responsibility for its content which may not represent the opinions of IfJ.

IfJ news

IfJ films are now accessible to view and share from the website home page. The films are free to use and are a fantastic training resource for anyone or organisations that would benefit from a greater understanding of the intermediary role .

There is now a new IfJ members WhatsApp group: IfJ-Ww Children. Any members wishing to join please contact secretary@intermediaries-for-justice.org

Results of IfJ survey of intermediaries and summaries of on-line meetings are all available to read on our website.

IfJ have been working with Sally Kedge of 'Taking Trouble', IfJ member in New Zealand, to produce a checklist and information to assist intermediaries and others with remote assessments and hearings. This valuable and informative resource can be found on the IfJ website.

The Update notes are divided in to: 'Remote process', Covid-19 transmission, children, Gov.UK, updates, other and resources.

Remote Process

Discussions continue regarding the enormous array of information about remote hearings, what is acceptable and what technology is now being used such as WhatsApp.



Penelope Gibbs comments 'Do video hearings cause unconscious bias in judges?'
<https://twitter.com/penelopegibbs2/status/1263359187368755200?s=21>

The Advocates gateway are currently working on a remote hearing toolkit and has been contributed to by intermediaries.

BPS has produced guidance for undertaking assessments remotely:

<https://www.bps.org.uk/coronavirus-resources/professional/psychological-assessment-undertaken-remotely>

Covid-19 Transmission

RCSLC latest Bulletin edition Rising to the challenge: the speech and language therapy profession respond to covid-19 can be found on www.rcsltc . The issue of communication with vulnerable individuals whilst wearing a mask is discussed.

Judith Townend comments on working to undertake an assessment in court buildings that potential present risks.

<https://twitter.com/jtownend/status/1263074520249831425?s=21>

The Family Law Bar Association (FLBA) has produced national and local guidance :
<https://wmflba.co.uk/covid-19-update/>

Staff at Wood Green Crown Court have made a YouTube presentation on safe working in the court environment:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=02KvzMjMc2I>

Lip reading face masks are available: <https://www.breathe-easy.info/our-face-masks/lip-reading-face-masks>

The New York Times has produced an article that compares and contrasts risks of coronavirus with other life events: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/22/well/live/putting-the-risk-of-covid-19-in-perspective.html>

The Law Society has produced a building status document :

<https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/support-services/advice/articles/coronavirus-court-and-tribunal-building-status/#>

Children

New rules have been made to protect children whilst at school with distance drop off being introduced.



<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2020/may/19/distanced-drop-offs-and-protective-bubbles-englands-new-school-rules>

Intermediaries have been discussing the best time for memory refreshing to occur for a child witness, OIC and others sometimes suggest it is best done on the morning of a trial ,but the CPS recommend against doing so which can result in a child watching it twice in a day.

<https://www.johnscottsewingworld.com/>However, a child would not be expected to watch it twice in the same day but would need to wait whilst it is watched in court. Further guidance can be found in : <https://www.judiciary.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/crim-pd-amendment-no-8-consolidated-mar2019.pdf>

Other

Shadow disabilities minister has said Commons return is discriminatory for those who have shielding status : <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2020/may/22/shadow-disabilities-minister-says-commons-return-is-discriminatory>

Do police sketches actually help catch criminals?: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/ideas/videos/do-police-sketches-actually-help-catch-criminals/p08dllt4>

The UK faces a backlog of 400,000 criminal cases due to coronavirus

<https://www.theguardian.com/law/2020/may/24/uk-faces-backlog-of-400000-criminal-cases-due-to-coronavirus>

Gov.UK guidance

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-courts-and-tribunals-planning-and-preparation>
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/courts-and-tribunals-tracker-list-during-coronavirus-outbreak>

Resources

<https://www.johnscottsewingworld.com/> produce dolls that may be of use to intermediaries working with children.