

# **COVID-19 HEALTH AND SAFETY PROTOCOL**

## **CATTERICK and BULFORD MILITARY COURT CENTRES**

1. **KEY POINTS** This protocol is based on current HM Courts and Tribunals Service and Public Health England guidance and governs the behaviours of staff, court users and visitors as well as the occupation of the Catterick and Bulford Military Court Centre.
  - This protocol is a 'living' document and is subject to change in accordance with Government guidance. A copy will accompany each listing notification and will be available to view both on the Military Court Service website (see [www.gov.uk/guidance/the-military-court-service](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-military-court-service)) and on the notice board in the reception area. It is the responsibility of each individual court user to read and fully appraise themselves of its contents before entering the Court Centre.
  - Its purpose is to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 and protect the health and safety of all members of staff, court users and visitors. Any breach of protocol may result in either disciplinary action or contempt proceedings being taken against the perpetrator and/or immediate expulsion from the Court building.
  - **Face coverings must be worn (unless exempt) and social distance of 1m rules must always be followed in all public areas. Members of the public and Press are required to wear face coverings within the Courtroom.**
  - **In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19, ALL participants and attendees must take a Lateral Flow Test the day before attendance (for those attending for a prolonged number of days, a mid-week test will also be required).**

2. **ARRIVAL AT AND ENTRY TO THE COURT CENTRE**

**Members of the public and Press must provide proof of vaccination upon arrival. Admittance will be denied without supporting documentation.**

**You must not enter the Court Centre if:**

- i) **You are displaying any symptoms associated with COVID-19<sup>1</sup>;**
- ii) **You tested positive for the virus within the past 10 days;**
- iii) **You have been advised by NHS track and trace that you are to self-isolate, due to the emergence of new variants such as Omicron.**

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<sup>1</sup> A new continuous cough or fever or a loss or changed sense of normal smell or taste (anosmia)

**If you have been knowingly exposed to others, including friends or family, who have displayed such symptoms or tested positive for the virus within the past 10 days, you must ensure you take either a Lateral Flow or PCR test and return a negative result before entering the Court Centre.**

**If in doubt, please contact the Court Centre in advance of attendance.**

- Upon arrival all court visitors and users (including members of the press) must report to the main reception area to book in with the member of MPGS staff. A member of the court administration team or court staff will direct you to your designated room or seating area.
- If attending Bulford Court using the military entrance, please ring the bell and wait for assistance.
- Board members, Prosecuting officers and Judiciary have their own entry/exit points into the building and will be notified of these individually.
- No parties are to access the building any earlier than 1 hour before the hearing time stated on their listing notification.
- Parties are to depart the building as soon as their respective hearing has concluded.
- In the event of an emergency requiring evacuation of the building, all personnel are to locate the nearest available exit and assemble at the appropriate evacuation points.

### **3. DESIGNATED WAITING, CONFERENCE, SMOKING AND SEATING AREAS**

- Upon arrival, court users and visitors will be directed to their respective room or seating area by a member of the court administration team or a member of court staff.
- A tannoy system will be used to alert court users of when they should enter the courtroom. A court orderly will be present within the courtroom should any court users require assistance.
- Courtroom users must retain their designated seats throughout the duration of the hearing.
- Smoking areas will be clearly designated and social distancing rules of 1m are to be applied.

- **Under no circumstances should anyone attempt to gain entry to any other part of the building. If in doubt, obey the signage clearly displayed on each door.**

#### **4. HYGIENE AND HAND SANITISATION**

- Hand sanitisers and antibacterial wipes are located throughout the building and on each main desk within the courtroom. All court users must sanitise their hands at regular intervals.

#### **5. COURTROOM**

- Defendants, Defendant's Assisting Officers (DAOs) and counsel (both prosecution and defence) are to attend trials in person.
- It is envisaged that most sentencing hearings will be conducted remotely with the defendant co-located at their Unit with their DAO and escorts. Where this is not possible, escorts are to be present in the public gallery unless prior judicial approval for non-attendance has been granted.
- Paperwork must be kept to a minimum. Where paperwork needs to be shared with the Court, this must be placed in unsealed envelopes before arrival.
- For sentencing hearings, if a party wishes to submit documentation for consideration by the Board (such as a reference), this must be emailed to the Court at least **48** hours in advance of the hearing to allow sufficient time for court staff to print and prepare a bundle; otherwise, it is the responsibility of the party seeking to rely upon the document to ensure sufficient copies are brought to court in pre-prepared sealed envelopes.

#### **6. LAVATORIES**

- Court users, Board Members, visitors, and court staff must use the lavatory facilities specifically allocated for their use.

## 7. REFRESHMENTS

- Tea and coffee making facilities are available for court attendees. All court users are responsible for the disposal of their paper cups and any rubbish within the bins provided.
- There are no cafeteria facilities located within the Court confines, therefore all attendees (except for Board Members) should make their own arrangements to bring lunch with them.

## 8. BOARD MEMBERS

- **Each Board Members is required to take a Lateral Flow Test the day before attendance and mid-week if attendance is longer than three consecutive days.**
- Each Board Member will receive a copy of this protocol prior to their arrival at Court.
- On arrival, a member of court staff will meet them and direct them to their respective deliberating room.
- Board Members must ensure they always follow the 1m social distancing rule when out of the courtroom; if this is proving difficult, they must immediately inform the Court Officer. Protective screening is provided in the courtroom where it is not feasible to implement the 1m distancing rule.
- Hand sanitisation, anti-bacterial wipes, refrigeration, water, and basic tea/coffee refreshments will be provided in the deliberating room. Packed lunches will be provided daily.
- Board Members will be shown to the courtroom and their designated seating (this is to be retained for the duration of the assize) during their briefing.
- Board Members will be provided with a plastic wallet containing a notepad and other stationery at the beginning of the assize which will remain theirs to use for the duration.

## 9. PRESS AND PUBLIC

- Face coverings must be worn at all times in the courtroom.
- Parties will be asked not to enter the courtroom until requested to do so by a member of court staff or when directed by the tannoy.
- In Court parties must use the seats allocated for their use.