



JUDICIARY OF  
ENGLAND AND WALES

District Judge Stephanie Cope

Lead Judge for Financial Remedy Work for Bristol

**Financial Remedy Court update**

As you know, the launch of the FR pilot on the Western circuit has been delayed as a result of Covid 19.

I will keep you updated. In the meantime, here is information on the interim plan for financial remedy work at the Bristol Civil and Family Justice Centre.

Despite the disruption and difficulties presented by Covid 19 financial remedy work is well suited to take place remotely. This potentially includes some final hearings. Everyone is to be commended for embracing the technology at such short notice and I am keen for us all to continue developing our skills to ensure as many hearings as possible are effective.

Some practitioners have expressed concerns about financial remedy work not being prioritised and this potentially increasing following the inevitable adjournment of children cases during the lockdown; which it is feared will take priority when the courts open for attended hearings in due course.

While the FR pilot cannot yet formally launch, an expression of interest exercise has been completed and the approved judges informed of the outcome. There is now a list of accredited financial remedy judges. Further, following discussions with my colleagues, we have agreed an allocation process can start solely for Bristol cases. The new procedure will only be available to parties with representation. In addition to the application, the court will require a completed allocation questionnaire and, if further information would assist, a letter (no more than one side of A4) to help ensure the case is appropriately allocated by one of the District Judges. I hope you understand the need for it to be no longer than one side of A4 to allow the system we are putting in place to be manageable. Everyone is feeling the pressure of remote working, including court staff and judges. I do not want to overburden the court staff and my colleagues at an already difficult and stressful time. To this end, if the 'one side of A4 rule' is breached the application will be returned.

The additional information in the covering letter should simply be a short summary of the case, if indeed this is needed. It should contain sufficient additional information that is not covered by the allocation questionnaire to allow an informed decision on the appropriate judicial allocation and any need for continuity up until the final hearing.

The system will be utilised for all new applications for hearings at Bristol after 6 July 2020. The applications (and additional documentation) should continue to be sent to the RDC.

I hope you will find this a helpful development pending the formal launch of the FR pilot.

Best wishes

District Judge Stephanie Cope

12 June 2020