

Royal Court - COVID-19 (Coronavirus) update 05/03/21

Stage 2

Following the States of Guernsey announcement of a move to Stage 2 the Royal Court will operate as set out below from Monday 8th March 2021.

The Royal Court building will continue to be open from 8.30am until 4pm each day. Although the provision of court services does not fall within the government restrictions that have been imposed generally, the spirit of the legislation and the guidance will be followed. This means that whilst court users and the general public can enter the building, the number of people who can do so at any one time will be restricted to ensure their safety as well as that of the staff. Therefore, whilst there will be an increase in the number of cases that can be heard the stage of "business as usual" has not yet been reached.

Wherever possible we would request you contact us first on the below email addresses for your relevant enquiry and we will respond as to how best to manage this, and invite you in for an appointment if necessary.

hmgreffier@guernseyroyalcourt.gg - For Court related matters

pettydebts@guernseyroyalcourt.gg - For Petty Debt matters

HMSheriff@gov.gg - For summonses and Enforcement matters

Bailiff@gov.gg - Judicial matters and the Bailiffs Civic functions

conveyances@gov.gg - For Conveyance and Bond matters

Registrar@guernseyroyalcourt.gg - Births, Deaths, Marriages

StrongroomRoyalCourt@gov.gg - Litigation searches

Detailed below is more specific advice around some of the services we provide.

- **Courts**
- **Contracts Court**
- **Guardianships**
- **Liquor Licensing**
- **Criminal Courts**
- **Civil Courts (including Matrimonial, Family, and Child Care cases).**
- **Petty Debts**
- **Staffing**
- **Marriages**
- **Registration of Births**
- **Registration of Deaths**
- **Wills, Legalisation of Documents & Apostilles**
- **Public Counter**
- **Strongroom**
- **Litigation Searches**
- **Maintenance Orders**
- **Maintenance Orders with associated Wage Arrest - Employers**
- **Alderney & Sark**
- **General Information**

Courts

Each Court and each hearing is being looked at individually. We will always maintain provision of Court hearings as a core service to our community, however it may be a different looking service to normal. Wherever possible, we are reviewing matters brought to the Court to see how they can be undertaken safely. Where that is not possible, applications will be decided on the basis of written submissions unless an oral hearing is essential in which case we use video conferencing where possible in order to minimise person to person contact. If you have legal representation, your Advocate can guide you on the new measures. If you are unrepresented, consider getting legal advice, or contact the relevant Court department via hmgreffier@guernseyroyalcourt.gg.

Contracts Court

The Court will be continuing to sit in person on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 9.30 a.m. for all matters brought before it

Power of Attorneys are still being required, so no members of the public are able to attend Contract Court.

Procedures for taking consent to transactions and for registration of documents have been modified in agreement with the Guernsey Bar. The Court is constituted by a judge (usually a Lieutenant Bailiff) sitting alone in exercise of the power conferred under section 13 of The Royal Court (Reform) (Guernsey) Law, 2008. Please contact your legal representative who will be able to guide you through the process

Guardianships

Any person seeking to make application for the appointment of a guardian or for any matter related to guardianship shall first contact H M Greffier at hmgreffier@guernseyroyalcourt.gg.

Liquor Licensing

Applications to the Royal Court under the Liquor Licensing Ordinance 2006 must continue to be made to the Committee for Home Affairs in the first instance, as previously.

Criminal Courts

The Magistrate's Court continues to sit physically and virtually, and will review matters due before it under Stage 2.

If you are showing symptoms of Covid-19 and have been directed by Public Health not to leave your house, you must contact the Police to inform them.

The hearing dates for Royal Court criminal cases will be reviewed in Plea and Directions hearings when dates for trials and sentencing's in the Royal Court will be set. As with all Courts, the use of video conferencing facilities are being maximised to enable Justice to be served.

Civil Courts (including Matrimonial, Family and Child Care cases)

These Courts are continuing to sit but are encouraging written submissions or the use of video technology in preference to physical attendance. Where a dispute can be resolved by agreement or where an adjournment is agreed, the parties are asked to submit a consent order for approval by a judge. If the dispute cannot be resolved but could be decided 'on the papers' without an oral hearing, parties are invited to submit the application with supporting documentation so the case could be determined by a judge sitting alone, whether or not an urgent decision is needed.

If an urgent hearing is needed, the Advocate or litigant-in-person should contact the relevant Court via the email address above with a copy of the application, supporting documentation and an explanation as to why it is essential to have an urgent hearing, together with details of the persons who will be required to attend and stating whether they are able to appear by video link.

Petty Debts

If you are a Plaintiff who lodged a Petty Debt prior to Lockdown but your summons hasn't yet been served, or it has and you are awaiting a date for the case to be put before the Petty Debts Court, a member of staff will be in contact with you.

If you are a Plaintiff wishing to lodge a Petty Debt, please email a copy of the claim form (available from the Petty Debts section on this web page) to pettydebts@guernseyroyalcourt.gg A member of staff will then make contact with you to take payment for the summons fee over the phone. Please do not come to our public counter for enquiries. There will now be a member of staff answering the phones, so HM Sheriff staff can be contacted in that manner as well.

Marriages

We are pleased to be able to offer our marriage service again.

Any person wishing to make marriage enquiries, we would ask to email Registrar@guernseyroyalcourt.gg. One of our team will be able to provide you with all the information you require by email initially, followed by booked appointments to take Notice. Please do not attend the Royal Court building to make Wedding enquiries in person, attendance is by pre-booked appointment only.

We will provide further specific instruction on how this will be practically undertaken when Notice is taken.

Should any member of the Wedding party be symptomatic for COVID – 19, currently self-isolating or awaiting test results, they will not be able to attend the ceremony, and we reserve the right to exclude any person there are concerns about.

Face coverings must be worn by all persons, with the exception that the Deputy Registrar will ask the bridal couple to remove them to confirm identity.

Registration of Births

Please [CLICK HERE](#) for information.

The Greffe have reviewed its procedures and the service it offers to new parents. New babies must be registered within 30 days of the birth.

Previously new parents had to attend the Greffe public counter, often with their baby, to register the birth, however we are looking to move to the new procedure set out below, to maximise the safety of your new family.

AT HOSPITAL:

In the information pack given to you by the Hospital after the birth of your child, will be our Registration Form. Please complete it, and then either send a clear photograph of the Form or use an app such as Adobe Scan to scan the document and email it to Registrar@guernseyroyalcourt.gg.

MARRIED PARENTS:

For married parents the declaration must be signed by the Father.

UNMARRIED PARENTS:

Unfortunately if the baby's parents are not married to each other, by Law the father cannot be named on the birth certificate unless both parties consent.

- Please register the birth naming the MOTHER on the declaration in the above manner.

- Please then contact the Greffe by email at Registrar@guernseyroyalcourt.gg and we will explain how the father can be added to the birth register.
- This can be done at any time but we advise that it is done within 12 months of the birth.
For both married and unmarried parents, to request a copy of the birth certificate, please email us at Registrar@guernseyroyalcourt.gg. We charge £20 per certificate and you can pay over the phone with a card and we will then post one to you.

Registration of Deaths

This is a function which will be carried out by the Funeral Directors on your behalf. We have arranged a digital process with Her Majesty's Procurer to remove the requirement for anyone to attend in person with paperwork, making this more efficient for all.

Wills, Legalisation of Documents & Apostilles

These types of document can be dropped off at the Royal Court for action. If a contact number is left when it is dropped off, we can subsequently contact to confirm registration has been completed or the Legalisation has been done and is ready for collection. We will not be providing our 15 minute premium service at this time. If you have questions on this area please contact conveyances@gov.gg.

Public Counter

We would urge you to contact us by email in the first instance as we can resolve most queries in that way, and we can arrange appointments should attendance in person be necessary.

The Royal Court building is open for payments to be made as ordered by a Court, which can't be done over the phone, and for any documents that need to be served, to be delivered.

Strongroom

The Strongroom will be open and accessible for professional users only between 8.30am and 4pm each day, however there will be a restriction on how many persons who can attend at any one time to manage numbers in the room. Please contact the Strong room on the below email address to arrange when you would like to attend.

Member of the public who wish to conduct research in the Strong room will not be able to do so until Stage 3, please contact a member of Strongroom staff by email StrongroomRoyalCourt@gov.gg.

Litigation Searches

These will be able to be undertaken in person once again

Maintenance Orders

If you are subject to a Maintenance Order but your financial circumstances have changed and you are unable to maintain current payments, you do have the option to apply to the Court to vary the order. Should you wish to do so you will need to email hmgreffier@guernseyroyalcourt.gg. and someone will respond to advise of the process which needs to be followed. It is the Court's intention to process any applications for variation as soon as practicably possible.

Maintenance Orders with associated Wage Arrests - Employers

If you are an employer facilitating a wage arrest in respect of one of your employees, whilst it is understood that they may be subject to reduced, or minimum wages, the Court Order remains and the Office of H.M. Sheriff is still bound to enforce the arrest of wages in full whilst they are in employment. As such, monies need to be remitted as they normally would be, unless you hear otherwise from the Office of H.M. Sheriff. Please email hmsheriff@gov.gg with any queries in this regard

Alderney & Sark

We support the Court officials of Alderney and Sark in the provision of Court services in their islands. We are in regular contact with them, it is requested that where possible, if you need to contact them, it is done by phone or email in the first instance. We have resilience plans in place to support them should any escalation occur. If residents of Alderney or Sark have any questions about upcoming events please make contact with the relevant officials in your islands for further advice.

Sark Greffier - greffier@sarkgov.co.uk

Alderney Greffier - jonathan.anderson@gov.gg or court@aldernsey.gov.gg

General Information

The Courts are still being cleaned thoroughly when they are used to maintain a high standard of cleanliness. In line with current guidance our cleaners are focussing on handrails, door handles and other obvious areas of regular contact. We also have supplies of PPE in the form of hand sanitisers available for use.

We are regularly reviewing local and national guidance and will continue to update this site with the latest information. If you have specific questions please call or email the details above and we will help.