

From: Jennifer Bartley <JenniferBartley@psplaw.co.uk>

Sent: 26 May 2020 15:30

To: William.Breame@justice.gov.uk

Cc: Greg Powell <GregPowell@psplaw.co.uk>

Subject: RE: FAO Chief Clerks

Dear William

Many thanks for your helpful reply and for including the assessment tool.

I am concerned about access to individual court risk assessments. Your letter is not entirely clear and gives me the impression that you may mean there will be a physical paper document which court users can inspect.

I hope I have misunderstood what is intended. I cannot see any reason why these risk assessments cannot be made available to solicitors in general using for example CJSIM, so that everyone can make informed decisions and raise issues in the light of those assessments.

I have noted that you are aware of the higher risk involved in face to face consultation and that the approach will be on a court by court basis. All the more reason to make the risk assessments available.

I am also very concerned about the social distancing issue set out in section 8. The document says that if social distancing is compromised by congestion then a one in one out system may be required.

Some courts have started to operate by, for example, holding two trials in an afternoon when the numbers attending are very limited and social distancing easy to maintain. The obvious analogy is supermarket shopping where shops have gone to great length to limit the total numbers entering in order to control social distancing.

If courts begin listing numbers of trials and bail cases it is easily foreseeable that congestion will occur and I hope that thought has been given by individual courts to the maximum number of people who will be in circulation in the public parts of the building, or indeed custody area, in order to ensure that congestion does not occur. Addressing this issue once congestion has occurred will allow the risk to have materialised and undo the effect of the other safety measures.

Finally, but very importantly, I also hope that there will be a very clear and detailed explanation of each court's ventilation system as this appears to be a very neglected area where no one is sure whether mechanical ventilation is simply recirculating contaminated air.

I look forward to hearing from you

Yours sincerely

Greg Powell

Senior Partner

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