

UNREPRESENTED PARTIES / LITIGANTS IN PERSON (LIP)

BUSINESS CONTINUITY ARRANGEMENTS COVID-19

22 September 2020

This guidance revokes and replaces the guidance note issued on 12 May 2020.

Where a party involved in a case before a court is unrepresented, known as a Litigant in Person (LIP), they must read the following in conjunction with the **most recent Guidance for all Courts AND the most up-to-date specific guidance relevant to the nature of their case** as published at <https://judiciaryni.uk/coronavirus-covid-19>.

If there are legal representatives for another party in the case, they will copy the LIP into any correspondence submitted to the court in line with any specific guidance in place at that time.

If a LIP wishes any urgent matter to be listed for hearing, or wishes to have an agreement between the parties approved by the court in a case which is already before the Court, they should complete [FORM HR1](#) as directed (ie LIPs must not complete any other form). This Form cannot be used to initiate proceedings - it is in addition to any normal initiation procedures which still apply. All parties are asked to consider the need for applications in line with the changing situation and Public Health Agency (PHA) guidance.

The judge will decide how to proceed on receipt of **FORM HR1**, having reviewed the application and any relevant papers, given the circumstances at that time. The court office will advise what steps should then be taken, and issue any interim orders or further directions to the parties involved.

ALL contact must be made **via the appropriate court office email** address. These are accessible and monitored by multiple court staff, who will correspond with the assigned judge. NO contact should be made directly with any individual member of the court staff or the judiciary, who may have cause to be absent at any time.

Plea of guilty by post to certain offences

Where there is an option to enter a plea of guilty by post you will receive a summons from the Public Prosecution Service which is accompanied by a Form 3 Notice setting out details of how you can enter a plea of guilty by post together with a Form 6 or Form 6A. You may request that the case be dealt with on foot of this written plea of guilty without having to attend court by completing the appropriate Form 6 or 6A which should be returned at least three days before the date fixed for the hearing. The court will record a conviction and issue notification of the sentence. Should the Court decide to adjourn the hearing before passing sentence, you will be given notice in writing of the time and place of the adjourned hearing.

Further general information, not contained within Covid-19 business continuity arrangements, can be found at <https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/articles/information-litigants-person>.

These arrangements will be kept under review and will be revisited as circumstances develop.