

## COVID-19 GUIDANCE FOR COURTS

### ADMINISTRATIVE BAIL APPLICATIONS - MAGISTRATES' COURT

8 February 2021

Administrative Bail Variations for the Magistrates Court will return to the pre-Covid arrangements. This includes a resumption of the Belfast Magistrates' Bail Protocol. Other local bail protocols will remain unchanged.

Legal representatives should follow the local pre-Covid arrangements by completing the relevant administrative bail variation form including all relevant ICOS numbers. This should be served by the legal representatives on the PPS, Police Court Liaison Officer assigned to the correct Administrative Court Division and the Court. The PSNI Court Liaison Officer or PPS should make contact with the officer-in-charge to ascertain if there are any objections to the proposed variation ensuring the named defendant is currently on bail on the charges indicated by the applicants' legal representation.

The PSNI Court Liaison Officer will complete the appropriate section on the form and return to the Defence.

The Defence should serve the completed application on the Court and the PPS by email by 4.00pm on the day prior to the application being made. A list of Court email addresses can be found [here](#).

If the PSNI **do not object** to the proposed variation:

- Court Staff will check ICOS to ensure defendant is currently on active bail;
- if the defendant is currently on bail Court Staff will place the completed application before a Judge sitting in chambers before 10.30am for his/her approval;
- Court staff will result and confirm the variation on ICOS as soon as practical or by 4.00pm following judicial approval.

If the PSNI do object to the proposed variation for the following reasons - risk of failure to attend court; risk of interference with witnesses; risk of commission of further offences; or risk of public disorder:

- The application will be listed for hearing before the Court on the next available date and parties will be notified. Hearings will be via Sightlink unless otherwise directed by the judge;
- The PSNI officer should advise the PPS of his objections and should attend for the hearing of the application before a District Judge (Magistrates Court)

Legal aid arrangements, including certification, will apply as usual.