

Hearings in Lansdowne House COVID-19 Protocols

Lansdowne House is now open for hearings in a restricted manner. We have put arrangements in place to ensure hearings are conducted in line with public health guidance – physical distancing and hygiene protocols, including extra cleaning. **We all have a responsibility to follow this guidance to keep users of the Court, members and staff safe. PLEASE READ IT CAREFULLY.**

Before Attending

- Access to Lansdowne House is limited to 2 persons/party plus witness(es).
- Each party must identify a 'lead interactor' for their party who will communicate with the Court.
- At least 2 working days in advance of the hearing, the lead interactor must provide the Court Secretary with the names/contact details (for contact tracing purposes) of all persons who will attend the hearing. Access to Lansdowne House will not be permitted to persons whose names are not provided in advance.
- **If you answer YES to any of the COVID-19 questions below, you should not attend Lansdowne House.**

On the Day

- The parties/witnesses should arrive at Lansdowne House no more than 15 minutes ahead of the Court hearing. When ready to enter the building the lead interactor must ring the Court Secretary at the mobile number provided in advance.
- Access to the building will be via Northumberland Road entrance only and will be controlled by reception staff to maintain social distancing. Starting times for hearings are being staggered to minimise the need for people to queue at 2 meters apart before being permitted to enter. However, you may experience some delays.
- All persons must wear a face mask on entry to the building and until they reach their designated socially distanced seat in the Court room including while using the lift and stairways. The face mask must be worn for all movement in the building outside the Court room and including while utilising toilet facilities. The face mask must be worn as the person exits the building through the designated exit route including while using lift and stairways.
- The lead interactor will be required to check in at reception and to confirm the attendance of parties/witnesses.
- **All persons must follow signage and observe social distancing. HSE guidelines on coughing/sneezing etiquette and hand hygiene must also be followed.**
- **Lifts** are used to **go up** to the 3rd Floor where Court Rooms 1 and 2 are located.
- Parties will be met by the Court Secretary on the 3rd Floor and will be directed to go straight to

Court Room 1 or 2.

- Witnesses will be directed to their respective waiting areas. Should a witness prefer to remain outside the building until called, he/she must be no more than 5 minutes away. The lead interactor must have the means to communicate with the witness(es) to enter the Court Room at the appropriate time.
- Court Rooms 1 and 2 have been laid out to ensure physical distancing is maintained.
- Parties and witnesses must use hand sanitisers before entering and leaving the Court Room and are encouraged to use wipes provided as appropriate in the Court Room.
- Persons giving evidence will be sworn in by the Chairman during the hearing. Witness(es) will be required to wipe the Bible/Koran before use with the wipes provided.
- Once the hearing is finished all parties and witnesses must leave the building without delay.
- **Stairwells** are used to **go down**. Where it is not possible to use the stairwells (e.g. mobility or carrying heavy files) a lift may be used. Please step aside or retreat in the lobby area when a person is leaving the lift.
- There are no canteen facilities in the building. For day long hearings parties will be required to leave the building at lunchtime and re-enter following the same check-in procedures.
- On the ground floor, please follow the signs for exiting the building.

Travel from Outside the State

- Parties/representatives/witnesses travelling to the Court for a physical hearing from outside the State should do so in accordance with EU/Government advice which is available at [gov.ie - International Travel \(www.gov.ie\)](http://www.gov.ie)

Given the changing nature of public health safety measures in response to COVID-19, it is the responsibility of persons travelling from outside the State to ensure they are compliant with the procedures/restrictions in place before attending the Court.

26th July 2021

If you answer YES to any of the following questions you should not attend Lansdowne House:

- 1. Have you been diagnosed with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 infection in the 14 days preceding the hearing date?**
- 2. Have you been a close contact of a person who is confirmed or suspected of COVID-19 in the 14 days preceding the hearing date?**
- 3. Have you been advised to self-isolate or cocoon?**