



**JUDGE M SUTHERLAND WILLIAMS**

CHAMBER PRESIDENT  
HEALTH, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL CARE CHAMBER

4 April 2024

**TO ALL HOSPITAL CHIEF EXECUTIVES**

**IMPORTANCE: HIGH**

Dear Chief Executive

**Safety and security of tribunal members and others attending hospital mental health hearings.**

I am writing to ask for your assistance in the important matter of the safety and security of judicial office holders who enter hospital premises within your remit to conduct mental health hearings.

Following some national security concerns, His Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS) has been reviewing safety measures across the courts and tribunals estate and where judicial hearings take place. This includes the hospital and trust premises where we hold mental health hearings.

**I understand that HMCTS has written to your hospital trust, but has to date received no reply. I enclose a further copy of that request.**

We value very much the historic goodwill that has been built up between the hospitals, HMCTS and the independent judiciary. In that spirit, I would urge your office to please ensure that not only the questionnaire is replied to, but that any measures that need to be taken to meet the minimum safety and security requirements for tribunal hearings are taken.

In the meanwhile, HMCTS has taken the difficult decision to suspend face to face hearings at those venues that are not compliant with minimum safety standards or have not replied to say they are. This is likely to remain the position until HMCTS has a clearer picture of what the issue is for each hospital and how quickly HMCTS can resolve it.

At venues where the safety of panel members has not been confirmed, cases will be listed as 'Video Hearing Only' for the time being. It is therefore essential we obtain compliance as soon as possible.

The proposed listing regime will come into effect from Monday 8 April 2024.

May I thank you in advance for your co-operation in this regard.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Sutherland Williams', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**MARK SUTHERLAND WILLIAMS**  
**President, HESC**