



HM Courts &  
Tribunals Service

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**To:** All Stakeholders

**From:** Mental Health Tribunal

6 April 2020

**Subject: Video Conference Hearings**

Dear Stakeholders,

We are about to roll out video hearings for all hearings in the Mental Health Tribunal. We are using a system called the Common Video Platform (CVP) provided by Kinly. All stakeholders will be sent joining instructions for the hearing just as you are for telephone hearings. We intend to start listing hearings to the virtual hearing room from 13 April 2020. This will mean that the first hearing in the general roll out will happen the in next week.

You will need a device such as a computer/laptop/tablet. You will need to have an internet connection. The CVP works best if you use Google Chrome as your browser although it does work on Internet Explorer & Firefox if updated. If you have an Apple Mac it also works on the Apple browser, Safari.

The system is Ministry of Justice approved and secure. Once the participants for the hearing are in the virtual hearing room it is locked and no one else can enter unless allowed to by the Judge. The Special Educational Needs Tribunal are using it now and they need tight security as their hearings are also private and they may have child witnesses.

All participants can join the virtual hearing from different rooms and on different devices. This will help you in ensuring that no witness needs to be on the ward except the patient and the nurse. So if the RC, Social Worker and the patient's representative are at home they can join from there. This will help to reduce the chance of transmission of Covid 19 to patients and staff.

Whilst telephone hearings have been successful we are noticing that they are taking longer. The benefit of this system will be to shorten the length of hearings in a secure way. We have also found in our trials that communication is much easier when the patient and witnesses can see the panel, and vice versa.

If the video facility does not work the witnesses can telephone the hearing room and can be heard. This is again a secure function and the room is locked once all have joined.

For more information please follow this link

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-courts-and-tribunals-planning-and-preparation#telephone-and-video-hearings-during-coronavirus-outbreak>