

## **PRACTICE NOTE SETTING OUT THE PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED DURING THE PILOT FOR THE CENTRALISATION OF ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS WITHIN FINANCIAL REMEDY PROCEEDINGS TO LIVERPOOL**

1. This note is intended to assist with the procedures to be followed during the pilot for centralised administration FOR FINANCIAL REMEDY PROCEEDINGS in Liverpool for the Cheshire and Merseyside cluster. Any reference in this document to 'local courts' shall mean Birkenhead, Chester, Crewe and St Helens.
2. As from 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025, all applications and orders will be issued from Liverpool, although some functions will continue to be carried out by the local courts.

### **ISSUE**

3. It shall continue to be the position that all applications for financial remedy and provision under Schedule 1 Children Act 1989 shall be issued from Liverpool. All interim applications will now be issued from Liverpool.
4. Practitioners should continue to upload applications to the Portal. They will be referred to Liverpool for processing. Substantive applications will be subject to allocation and gate keeping in the ordinary way.
5. Practitioners should be mindful of the introduction of the Express Pilot and identify those cases which have a value of £250,000 or less (excluding pensions) as suitable for the Express Pilot.
6. Interim applications will be processed by Liverpool and referred to the relevant judge at the relevant local court.
7. If an application for an urgent hearing is made, the judge will determine whether it is urgent. If it is deemed to be urgent, the application will be listed as soon as is reasonably practicable. Any emails chasing a response to urgent applications sent less than 24 hours after the application was submitted will not be responded to and will be deleted.
8. Urgent for the purposes of financial remedy proceedings means the following;
  - a) A significant risk of a miscarriage of justice;
  - b) Significant financial hardship to the prospective applicant;
  - c) Irretrievable problems in dealing with the dispute (including the irretrievable loss of significant evidence);

- d) There is significant risk that proceedings relating to the dispute will be brought in another state in which a valid claim to jurisdiction may exist such that a court in another state would be seised of the dispute before a court in England and Wales.

If the application is genuinely urgent, it should be made clear in the application or in a certificate of urgency why it is urgent.

9. For the avoidance of doubt, an application is not urgent simply because it is being made shortly before a hearing.

## **BUNDLES**

10. Bundles must be uploaded to the Portal in the usual way. They must not be emailed to the court unless the judge specifically requests it. Any bundles sent by email to the court that have not been requested by the judge will be deleted. All bundles must be prepared in accordance with Family Procedure Rules Practice direction 27A.

## **ADVOCATES' NOTES FOR HEARINGS**

11. Advocates' Notes must be uploaded to the portal. If they are Notes for the purposes of the FDR, they must be uploaded to the FDR tab. Otherwise, they should be uploaded as the Applicant or Respondent's document, under the tab "Position Statement".
12. Advocates may send their Notes for any hearing directly to the judge. They should be sent to the judge by 11am the working day before the hearing (PD27A, para 6.4). If they do so, they must copy in the other advocate in accordance with FPR Part 5.7(1), even if the other advocate is not ready to send their Note. In such case, the expectation is that the advocate who has not sent their Note does not read their opponent's note until they have sent theirs to the court.
13. If an Advocate does send their Note to the judge directly, they must not copy in the staff in the court where the judge is sitting. Instead, they must arrange for the Note to be uploaded to the Portal.

## **ORDERS**

14. All orders will now be processed in Liverpool. Unless the judge directs otherwise, Practitioners must upload draft orders, in Word format, to the Portal not more than 3 working days after the hearing. The draft order will be referred to the Judge and any amendments dealt with. The staff in Liverpool will then process the order.

15. If the draft order provides for a further hearing date, the Advocates must submit with the draft order joint availability for the future hearing. It will be possible to submit the draft order with 'other documents', which is where the joint availability is to be uploaded. If the availability is not submitted with the draft order, it will not be taken into account when the next hearing is listed.
16. The format of the joint availability should be a full list of dates where the relevant Advocates and parties are all available.
17. The local courts will continue to be responsible for diarising hearings and therefore after the order is submitted, there will be communication between the relevant court and Liverpool as to when the next hearing can be listed. It is expected that the date will be identified by the local court within 24 hours of the request being made.

#### **REMOTE HEARINGS**

18. Remote hearings will be arranged by the local court. Practitioners must provide the relevant details to the local court office not less than 1 working day before the hearing.

#### **INTERPRETERS, INTERMEDIARIES AND QUALIFIED LEGAL REPRESENTATIVES (QLR)**

19. The local courts will continue to organise interpreters, intermediaries and QLRs for hearings. The order should record the need for the interpreter/intermediary/QLR and the local court staff will make the necessary arrangements.

#### **PVP**

20. Any risk assessments and arrangements for PVPs will also be dealt with by the local court staff.

#### **REVIEW**

21. The arrangements for the centralisation of the administration for Cheshire and Merseyside will be reviewed in or around October 2025. If there are any changes, everyone will be notified.

District Judge Guirguis

Financial Remedy Lead Judge for Cheshire and Merseyside

March 2025