

Information for Users - The “Open” Family Court

This document should be read together with the Document entitled “Teesside Combined Court centre “Open Court” Guidelines”.

1. Parties and legal representatives will be given such notice of the hearing which the Court determines to be appropriate and sufficient in all the circumstances.
2. Anyone objecting to attending at the court building will have an opportunity to make representations, either in writing or orally, at a remote hearing in advance of the trial to a judge, preferably the trial judge. The judge will consider whether that person’s attendance at the court building is fundamental to the fairness and justice of the trial.
3. The Court will be dealing with short trials, either listed all day [10am-4.30pm] or one in the morning [10am-1pm] and another in the afternoon [2pm-4.30pm].
4. You must arrive no earlier than 45 minutes before the time fixed for your hearing and no later than 15 minutes.
5. There will be a break at lunch-time at which point the parties and legal representatives will be asked to vacate the court building promptly and return for the afternoon session on time. You should not seek to re-enter the building for the afternoon session any earlier than 1.45pm.
6. A maximum of 4 parties and their individual legal representative [4 maximum] will be allowed into the court building and the courtroom at any one time. In order to comply with social distancing rules, there should not be more than 8 people in the courtroom, in addition to the court staff and the judge during a hearing.
7. Two conference rooms will be made available adjacent to the open family court. Each room is of sufficient size to allow up to 2 people **only** to be present in the room with an acceptable distance maintained.
 - a. “Conference Room 1” is designed for one parent/lay party and their legal representative to have a short conference before the hearing commences, during or afterward. They will be required to use the same conference room **at all times** during the course of the hearing day. Conferences at the end of the court day should

