

Piloting changes to prison video bookings

Pre-hearing conferences are not always used effectively, so we are strengthening the process with additional steps. These steps should help hearings and associated consultations to run smoothly, as well as tightening security to reduce any risk of unauthorised access to prisoners.

CJS professionals will be asked to inform magistrates' and crown courts of their name, at least 24 hours prior to the hearing/consultation. The courts pass lists of practitioner names to the prison, who then share this information with staff running the video hearing/consultation. This means prison staff know who to expect so they can cross-reference names and caller IDs before the video call.

To improve compliance with this process, courts will populate the pre-hearing consultation booking form with up to three previously associated CJS practitioners' names. Courts will then email law firms, asking for any changes to be confirmed 24 hours before the hearing. This will help courts provide the required names to prisons in time for them to fully authenticate CVP callers.

For more information, please email

ReconfigurationPMO@digital.justice.gov.uk

Please note that only prisons can host pre- and post-hearing consultations. Courts are not able to do this.

Prison video bookings are changing at this court

From 19/04/21, we are carrying out a 3-week pilot. During the pilot, we will ask CJS practitioners to provide their name and official email address to the court at least 24 hours ahead of any video hearing and associated consultations with prisoners. We will then evaluate the pilot before considering next steps.

Providing advance information will help consultations proceed on time. Thank you for helping us.



HM Prison &
Probation Service

Information about the pilot

From **19 April 2021**, we are carrying out a three-week pilot in two prisons and their associated crown and magistrates' courts. The pilot will enable us to test a two-layer authentication process, which will largely mirror the process for CJS practitioners visiting prisons in person.

After the pilot, we will evaluate the results to determine how feasible and sustainable this process is before considering next steps. We hope that by CJS practitioners providing this information in advance, pre- and post-hearing consultations will run more smoothly and on time, enabling hearings to proceed in a more timely manner. Thank you for helping us.

Prisons and courts taking part in the pilot

- [HMPs Elmley & Lewes](#)
- [Brighton, Medway & Folkestone Magistrates' Courts](#)
- [Lewes, Maidstone & Canterbury Crown Courts](#)

Participants still need to provide an accepted form of photographic ID (eg, driving licence or passport, plus proof of their profession like an introductory letter on headed paper or a photo identity card issued by HMPPS or the Bar Council). As with physical visits, prison staff visually verify the visitor by checking their physical appearance against their photo ID, which must be shown prior to the prisoner being introduced to the video call.

What you need to do

Courts



Courts will send an email to legal firms with the video link for pre- and post-hearing consultations. They will pre-populate the email with the names of up to three practitioners previously associated with the case.

Chambers/CJS Practitioners



No less than 24 hours before the hearing takes place, chambers or practitioners must confirm or amend the three names and provide **official** email addresses.

Prisons



Receive a list of names and emails from the courts the night before the hearing so they can do initial security checks. On the day, they examine ID by video and visually verify CJS practitioners before admitting them into the video room.