

Statement of the Chief Justice and Presidents of All Courts

Concerning the Wearing of Face Coverings

5th October 2020

All persons attending any court venue are expected to strictly comply with current public health guidance concerning Covid-19. Physical distancing (currently 2m) must be maintained at all times and all attending should engage in frequent handwashing and comply with respiratory etiquette.

Whilst face coverings are not mandatory for those attending a court venue, in light of public health guidance as to the value of face coverings in reducing the spread of Covid 19, it is strongly recommended that all persons, save for those who for medical or other welfare considerations cannot wear a face covering or who are behind a protective screen, should do so whilst on any court premises or within its precincts.

This strong recommendation, contrary to any earlier guidance, applies with equal force to anyone giving evidence, questioning witnesses or addressing the court, unless they are doing so from behind a protective screen or the presiding judge considers the same prejudicial in all of the circumstances. Proper and effective use of available microphones should overcome any difficulty in those addressing the court being heard.

The wearing of a face covering does not lessen in any way a person's obligation to comply with social distancing and other public health guidance.

Finally, for your own safety and that of others, please ensure you use your face covering correctly and safely. Do not place it on any surface and ensure that you dispose of it safely.