

COVID Criminal Endurance Group Update on w/c 18/1/2021

1. Information published

- Publication by SCTS of the [December criminal business statistics](#)
- Transfer of sheriff & juries to Ayr

[Switching Dumfries criminal trials to Ayr deemed 'completely irresponsible'](#)

Article in Dumfries & Galloway Standard. Online article published 18 January 2021.

- [Correspondence between Police Scotland and GBA](#) on risk assessments of interview rooms at police stations
- England and Wales – Law Society of England and Wales [news release about safety of court buildings](#).
- Scottish Parliament Justice Committee [writes to](#) HM Inspector of Prisons Scotland for further information on the decision to suspend on-site monitoring and liaison visits to prisons and court custody units.
- [SCTS news release](#) about further roll out of remote jury centres to support the restarting of Sheriff Court Jury Trials.

2. Update from the Law Society

- Regular Meeting with SCTS/COPFS

Update from SCTS:

- Jury trials going well. No further/more adjournments than in a normal week.
- Rolling out Sheriff & Jury will be harder as needs more jurors to engage.
- Fully virtual court pilot being rolled out in Falkirk, where all participants are virtual (i.e. no-one in Court). Co-operation from all parties will be essential.
- Custodies staying where they are (at Hub Courts).
- Local issues at first instance should be raised with the local Sheriff Clerk
- Technology is being focussed on. Boosting wifi in all courts and ensuring WebX rolled out everywhere. Seek help via local Clerks if tech not working.

From LSS (raised by Amanda Millar): Replies in Red

- PiTMs technology not practically working. Lots of work around happening - **COPFS to consider**
- Looking for more temp client consultation space around the patch (e.g. booths) **Doing their best. Looking at additional options (e.g. empty court rooms) but have restricted estate. Where consultation can be done off-site strong encouragement to defence agents to do so**
- Wifi and WebX not working everywhere **SCTS placing emphasis on this.**
- Improving general communication in Courts needed **Escalate issues through Sheriff Clerks and onwards to LSS if not being taken on board.**

From COPFS:

- Some discussion at Society of Sol Advocates AGM (held last week) re suitability of Preliminary Hearings (PH) Court - **SCTS agreed to look at**
- Doesn't recognise challenges with PiTM Tech

From Faculty of Advocates:

- General better attitude to health & safety around high courts. Masks being worn in well of court. Working well.
- Proposed solutions around PH court issues - **SCTS agreed to look at**

3. Meetings

Criminal Law Committee meeting on 27 January 2021 (internal)

Criminal Business Group (SCTS plus Faculty) meeting on 22 January 2021 (external)

Virtual Summary Group (SCTS) meeting on 26 January 2021 (external)

Virtual Custody Courts Group (Police Scotland) 22 January 2021 (external)

GM 20 January 2021