

## Carine Patry

**SEN Video Hearings: Practical Steps and Tips**

This is going to be the format of my short talk:

- Practical steps BEFORE the hearing
- Practical steps DURING the hearing



## **Practical Steps Before the Hearing: How Will I Know How the Hearing is to be held?**

- The FTT (HESC Chamber) are holding hearings via their own video conferencing facility
- You will receive notification from them and a link to their website with the right link
- And a detailed note with guidance on how to conduct the hearing (read this!)
- You, client and witnesses do not need to download any special apps or software. You should just be able to connect, as long as you have wifi/data

## Practical Steps Before the Hearing: What Else Do I Need?

- If you only have the bundle electronically, having a second device or screen is absolutely invaluable – then you can see everyone and still look at the bundle/working document at the same time
- If you need to communicate with anyone during the hearing itself, setting up some sort of Whatsapp group, email group or something else is useful. There is a 'chat' function on the website during the hearing, but you are bound to mistakenly send a message to the judge/panel by mistake so avoid this!
- Make sure you have a quiet room with a neutral background.

## Practical Tips Before the Hearing: Preparation

- Obviously, you will not meet your witnesses, clients or the other side outside court as usual
- Schedule a conference in advance, and I also find it useful to touch base just before the hearing starts
- The Working Document will need to be discussed as far as possible in advance with the other side, as there is no last minute negotiation
- Make sure last minute documents are submitted as early as possible

## Practical Tips During the Hearing

- Perhaps the most important thing: don't be self-congratulatory about making the technology work, or become less formal because you are in your living room. This is still a real case, about a real child and litigants in person will be just as keen for the case to be taken seriously.
- There is a useful 'message/chat' function which is useful when the WD is being discussed with the judge – you can type out a new form of wording into it and then all the parties can see it
- Mute yourself when you aren't speaking: this cuts out background noise.

## Practical Tips During the Hearing

- It looks a bit strange, but putting your hand up if you want to say something when it is not your turn to speak is more effective than using the chat function
- The hearings work well and judges are still as structured. Only issues tend to come with connectivity
- Personally my biggest bugbear is not being able to talk properly with the other side during breaks – much can be agreed them. Set up a way to speak!

# Questions?

# Thank you for listening

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