



Practice note 2/2020

Covid-19 crisis: temporary changes to procedure

The purpose of this practice note is to provide guidance for all users of the Council Tax Reduction Review Panel in respect of temporary changes to the Panel's procedure and processes with regard to hearings and documentation required for hearings during the on-going covid-19. Whilst the Panel will continue to have cognisance of "The overriding objective" set out in paragraph 2 of the Practice note 1/2015, the exigency of the covid-19 situation requires a flexible approach to hearings of review applications and decisions that are required to be made. We shall endeavour to offer participatory hearings by way of telephone conference calls, and, if possible, by video conferencing or hybrid hearings, i.e.- with some participants present face to face and others by way of telephone or video conference. As already stipulated in the Council Tax Reduction Regulations, parties can opt to have the review determined by a convener on the case papers without oral evidence

This practice note comes into force from the date given below and will apply to all CTR applications including those that are pending a hearing or a final decision and will apply until revoked by the senior convener or acting senior convener of the Panel by a further practice note.

D W Ferguson

Senior Convener

Council Tax Reduction Review Panel

Glasgow

4th JUNE 2020

Procedural Guidance

1. Instructions

This guidance is to be read along with the relevant provisions of The Council Tax Reduction (Scotland) Regulations 2012 (as amended), The Council Tax Reduction (State Pension Credit)(Scotland) Regulations 2012 (as amended) and the CTRRP senior convener's Practice Note 1/2015 (as revised).

2. Hearings

With regard to regulation 90D of the Council Tax Reduction (Scotland) Regulations 2012 and regulation 70C of the Council Tax Reduction (State Pension Credit)(Scotland)



Council Tax Reduction Review Panel

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Regulations 2012, the reference therein to “an oral hearing” shall include: “ a hearing by telephone or video conference or a hybrid hearing”.

3. Format of hearings

In every review application, the senior convener will decide the most suitable format of the hearing taking into account the safety, health, personal data security and welfare of all participants (including Panel conveners and administration staff) during a hearing and the availability of the necessary technology that would be required to allow a participatory hearing to take place that is not on a face to face basis. Before reaching such a decision, the senior convener shall consult with the parties, through a member of the CTR administration staff on his instructions, in order to ascertain the most suitable and practical format of a hearing in the circumstances of the review, bearing in mind that oral face to face hearings will not normally be possible during the period in which UK and Scottish Government regulations are in place as a result of the covid-19 public health crisis.

4. Recording of telephone and video conference hearings.

Telephone and video conference hearings shall be recorded if it is practical to do so but can be dispensed with on the instruction of the convener hearing the review, at his or her discretion.