

Freedom of Information Request	FOI 21-286	26 th July 2021
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I am writing to request that you provide me with any policy documents or related materials concerning the organisation and running of Associate Hospital Managers Hearings under s.23 of the Mental Health Act 1983 which have been adjusted or created during the course of the on-going Covid-19 pandemic. This might include, for example, policy changes on moves to remote hearings and in relation to so-called 'paper' hearings, and policies on facilitating the engagement of patients, Nearest Relatives and others with remote modes of conducting hearings.

The Mental Health & Learning Disabilities Division moved from 'face to face' Associate Hospital Managers Hearings to 'virtual' hearings at the beginning of the pandemic as a solution to ensure that hearings were still facilitated. This has not been described in the format of a policy.

Prior to the pandemic, there had been discussions to trial 'paper hearings' as a patient had requested these and it was planned to monitor the effect on the numbers of requests for hearings received from patients. This was to test the hypothesis that some patients do not exercise their right to a 'Managers Hearing' as they find the process and meeting strangers too stressful.

A questionnaire was also devised to canvass feedback from patients on their experience of these. Discussions are planned for the future around policy development to include all modes of hearing and triggers for best practice in different scenarios.