

ENGLAND AND WALES

The President of the Family Division issued new guidance last month, which stated that while all family court hearings should be conducted remotely via email, phone, video or Skype, court-based hearings should take place 'where the requirements of fairness and justice' require it, and it is safe to do so.

[Read more.](#)

IRELAND

Remote hearings are set to begin in Ireland this month after the successful trial of existing court services technology. The Lord Chief Justice is due to give further guidance this week (week beginning 20 April)

[Read more.](#)

SCOTLAND

All Sheriff Court business has been consolidated into ten Courts, across Scotland, with guidance for all of the Courts through one website. All civil hearings involving witnesses have been adjourned and essential hearings are to proceed by telephone.

The Court of Session, Sheriff Court and All Scotland Sheriff Personal Injury Courts advise that (where the parties agree) hearings may proceed by written submissions, video conference or telephone, and that interlocutory hearings (motions) will be dealt with electronically where possible.

[Read more.](#)

FRANCE

On 15 March, the Justice Minister said that only "essential" litigation will proceed. That includes hearings for people in custody, urgent cases handled by judges for children and procedures related to the eviction of a violent partner.

New guidance outlined on 13 April allows for the extended use of closed sessions and videoconferencing when judicial hearings are normally meant to be public.

[Read more.](#)

ITALY

Italy has recently introduced civil "e-trials" - that is, proceedings where the exchange of complaints, motions, appeals, services of process, notifications, exhibits, evidences, judgments, or equivalents, for example - are exclusively performed on secure online platforms.

From April 16, 2020, to June 30, 2020, e-trial measures should be implemented and used for any type of court activity, both civil and criminal. Each court will establish its own practices and procedures in this regard.

[Read more.](#)

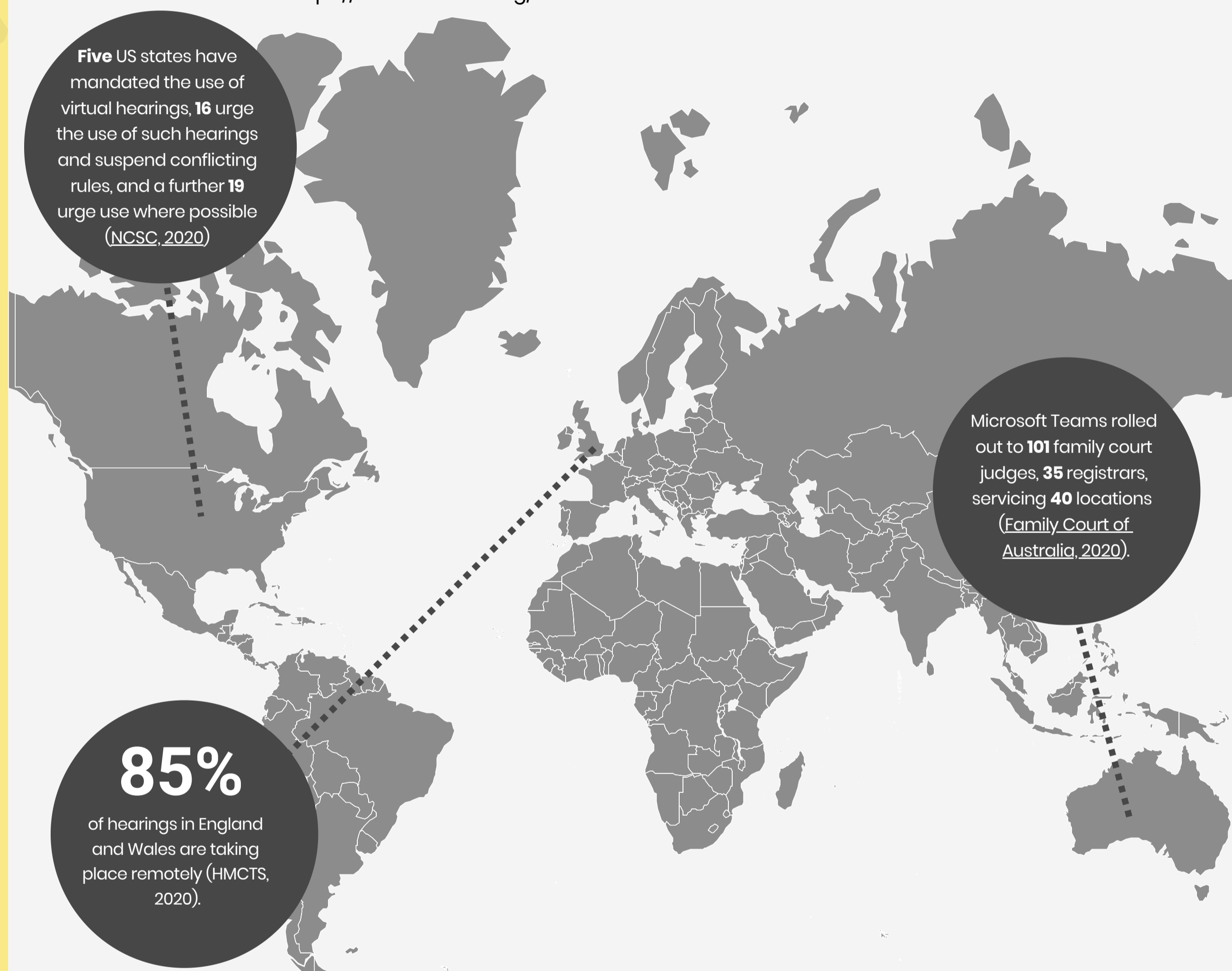


REMOTE HEARINGS IN LIGHT OF COVID-19

This infographic draws together the latest information on the use of remote hearings in court systems around the world. Countries have been included where information on the use of such systems is publicly available. Where available we have collated information on family courts, in some countries we only have information on all hearings rather than family or child protection hearings.

The information in this infographic was valid as of 20 April 2020.

Daily updates on remote hearings around the world can be found here: <https://remotecourts.org/>



UNITED STATES

In order to address health and safety concerns in federal courthouses and courtrooms, the Judicial Conference of the United States has temporarily approved the use of video and teleconferencing for certain criminal proceedings and access via teleconferencing for civil proceedings.

Family courts around the country have started to suspend or restrict court operations by holding only emergency hearings. This leaves a lot of pending reunifications largely on hold. Remote hearings have been mandated in some states and strongly urged in others.

[Read more.](#)

CHINA

During the height of the outbreak in February, the Supreme People's Court of China ordered courts at all levels to guide litigants to file cases or mediate disputes online, encouraging judges to make full use of online systems.

The Supreme People's Court has promoted the use of 'mobile micro courts' on the social media platform WeChat in a number of provinces and cities to help courts conduct trials on the Internet.

[Read more.](#)

AUSTRALIA

The Federal Court is putting in place the technology needed to hear all trials 'to the extent necessary' via videoconferencing facilities. Ongoing improvements are being made to the system, including an increase in server capacity for remote matters.

The Chief Justice advises that all Judges of the Supreme Court now have the capacity to hear cases using Microsoft Teams as an alternative to the Court's audio visual link.

Some courts do not have online systems, but are encouraging more to be done on paper as well as the use of video links.

[Read more.](#)

SPAIN

Hearings in the family, investigative and criminal courts resumed on 12 April, though courts have been advised to carry out proceedings remotely where possible.

Guidance from the Spanish General Council of the Judiciary has advised courts to begin using open source technological means (video and audio technology).

[Read more.](#)