

# Civil news: updates to electronic handbooks to help with claims

News story

Changes have been made to our electronic handbooks to reflect the latest guidance.



We have made changes to our electronic handbooks which are available to help you when preparing claims for civil finance and escape cases.

These handbooks are used by our caseworkers when processing your claims.

They were created from real caseworker and provider enquiries. They are designed to help you with your everyday questions on claims in civil legal aid and escape cases.

## **What has changed?**

A full list of the changes is available in:

The updated versions were published on 3 March 2022.

## **How to use the handbooks**

The electronic handbooks contain our operational requirements and guidance.

They should be used together with the cost assessment guidance and relevant contracts.

## **Further information**

[Legal aid guidance](#) – to download civil finance electronic handbook

[Escape cases electronic handbook](#)

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# First UK-Bangladesh Defence Dialogue



“Delighted to have been able to initiate our UK-Bangladesh Defence Dialogue. The Dialogue provides an important opportunity for us to reflect on how our strong bilateral defence relationship, established at the time of Bangladesh’s independence over 50 years ago, can be developed in preparation for the next 50. With much in common, including importantly our shared commitment to peace and security, I am pleased that our talks identified so many areas for further cooperation. This effort should make an important and much needed contribution to global peace and security, including towards the free, open, peaceful, secure and inclusive Indo-Pacific that the UK and Bangladesh both want.”

## **Further information**

British High Commission Dhaka  
United Nations Road  
Baridhara  
Dhaka – 1212  
Bangladesh

Email: [Dhaka.Press@fco.gov.uk](mailto:Dhaka.Press@fco.gov.uk)

Follow the British High Commissioner to Bangladesh on Twitter: [@RCDicksonUK](https://twitter.com/RCDicksonUK)

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1. 3 March 2022

added further information

2. 3 March 2022

First published.

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## DCMS Secretary of State's oral statement on Ukraine

Mr Speaker,

We have entered the 8th day of Ukraine's fight for survival, and in the week since Vladimir Putin launched his unprovoked, premeditated and barbaric attack on a free and peaceful neighbour.

The UK has led a united Western response to his brutality.

We are working with allies around the world on multiple fronts, to ensure the Russian dictator feels the full cost of his invasion.

On the military front, we've provided Ukraine with the weaponry to inflict significant losses on the invading Russian forces. On the economic front, we've worked with international partners to cripple the Russian economy.

But as history has shown us, there are other powerful ways of isolating rogue regimes. Culture and sport can be equally as effective as economic sanctions if used in the right way.

And so in the last week I've been working to mobilise the full might of the UK's soft power against the Russian state, and applying pressure – both publicly and privately – across the sectors, to use every lever at their disposal to entrench Putin's position as an international pariah.

Culture is the third front in the Ukrainian war.

Earlier this week I brought together governing bodies from across sport, and I made the UK's position clear: Russia should be stripped of hosting international sporting events, and Russian teams should not be allowed to compete abroad.

Across sport, across the arts and entertainment, we're ostracising Putin on the global stage. The upcoming Champions League Final and Formula 1 Grand Prix will no longer be held in Russia. Likewise, Russia has been banned by UEFA, by FIFA, by World Rugby, by the International Tennis Federation, and the International Olympic Committee.

Venues across the country have cancelled upcoming performances by the Bolshoi and Siberian Ballets.

Disney and Warner have pulled their films from Russia. Netflix has stopped

its projects there; BBC Studios and ITV Studios have stopped trading with Russia too. And Russia has been banned from taking part in the Eurovision Song Contest.

Mr Speaker, Putin is now suffering a sporting and cultural Siberia of his own making, and it will be causing the Russian leader real pain.

Ask Ukrainian tennis player Sergiy Stakhovsky, who gave a very moving interview on the radio earlier this week. A few weeks ago, he was playing at the Australian Open. Now he's back in Ukraine, preparing to fight for his country's survival. He said that Putin loves nothing better than watching Russia's sports teams glory on the world stage, his athletes draped in the Russian flag.

Putin needs the kudos of these global events to conceal his illegitimacy and the hideous acts he is perpetrating in Ukraine. The Russian despot is desperately trying to hide the grim extent of his invasion from his own people.

It's why I strongly support, and continue to encourage, the kind of emotional displays of solidarity we've seen across sporting events in the last week, including the Carabao Cup Final and the Six Nations.

Lights and symbols cannot stop bullets and bombs, but when Russians see their favourite footballers wearing shirts emblazoned with the bright blue and yellow of the Ukrainian flag, it helps open their eyes to the cold reality of Putin's actions.

Likewise, every time an international organisation or figure publicly stands up against what he is doing in Ukraine, they chip away at Putin's wall of lies.

So I thank and applaud all those – in this country and internationally – that have done so, and I continue to push for organisations to exile Putin's Russia from their ranks.

It's why I've called on UNESCO to bar Russia from hosting its annual World Heritage conference in June. It's absolutely inconceivable that this event could go ahead in Putin's country, as he fires missiles at innocent civilians in neighbouring Ukraine. If it does go ahead, the UK will not be attending.

And it's why I urged the International Paralympic Committee yesterday to urgently rethink its decision to allow athletes from Russia and Belarus to compete.

Mr Speaker, this pressure works.

The IPC's decision was the wrong call, and I welcome the fact that overnight they have listened, and reversed that decision this morning, and I wish our athletes the best of luck in Beijing over the coming days.

Later today, I'll be hosting a summit with countries from all over the globe to discuss how we can continue to use the power of sport to isolate Putin at

home and abroad.

We have to keep ratcheting up the pressure. Putin must fail.

In my department, we've also been working tirelessly to use the power of tech and the media against the Russian dictator and to shut down and counter his propaganda and lies. They are key weapons in Putin's arsenal.

And so the department's Counter Disinformation Unit has been working to identify and remove Russian disinformation online.

Alongside the U.S. and others, we've also been working closely with platforms to take pre-emptive action against Putin, and to demonstrate the consequences of his brutality in real-time to the Russian people. Apple has paused all product sales in Russia. Google has added new safeguarding features to Google Maps and Search. Whatsapp is hosting a helpline for Ukraine's State Emergency Service that sends people information and critical news about the local situation.

While Big Tech has stepped up in a really positive way, we're also encouraging and supporting platforms to go even further to tackle certain challenges, including disinformation, service disruptions, and the humanitarian crisis triggered by the conflict.

In this digital age, the Ukrainian war is being fought on the ground and online.

And so we need to use tech wherever we can as a force for good, to counter Putin's aggression, to expose his weaknesses and to bolster the people fighting for their survival in Ukraine.

Mr Speaker, from the moment Putin began his invasion, I was also very clear that he must not be allowed to exploit our open and free media to spread poisonous propaganda into British homes.

RT's own Editor-in-Chief called the network an "information weapon" of the Russian state, and that's why I wrote to Ofcom last week, urging them to examine any potential breaches of the broadcasting code. Ofcom has since opened 27 investigations into RT, and are now reviewing whether to revoke RT's licence entirely.

In the meantime, those investigations have been taken over by events and I was very glad to see yesterday that the channel is now officially off-air on British televisions, after it was shut down on Sky, Freeview and Freesat.

In the meantime, I have written to Meta and TikTok, asking them to do everything they can to prevent access to RT in the UK, as they have done in Europe, and I'm glad that YouTube has already answered this call and done so.

Mr Speaker, we're on the side of free media.

That's why it was brilliant to see that the audience for the BBC's Russian language news website has gone up from 3.1 million to 10.7 million in the

last week. Despite his best efforts to censor reporting in Russia, Putin's own citizens are turning to factual, independent information in their millions.

And at this point, I'd just like her to offer my heartfelt thanks and admiration to all those journalists, working for the BBC, ITV and other news outlets, who are risking their lives to bring us unbiased and accurate news from a live war zone.

Mr Speaker, we will keep ratcheting up the pressure on Putin. I will use all the levers in my department to ensure he is fully ostracised from the international community.

I commend this statement to the House.

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## [Transformation update: two years till the new patents service](#)

It's 2022 and we're now a little over two years away from launching our new patents service, with trade marks following in 2025 and designs in 2026. The first step of our transformation is to build the core services that will be used across patents, trade marks and designs. Over the last few months we've been working on the first two of these, Manage IP and Secure IP.

### **Manage IP**

Manage IP will allow you to view and manage all of your IP through a customer account. We've been building and testing early designs of some of the most challenging parts of the service. So far we've made early designs for:

- the 'dashboard' of services that you can access from your account
- the initial registration process and linking IP rights to your account
- the 'change of owner' process, where you can transfer ownership of IP rights to other accounts

To find out more about the customer accounts, and see video demos of what we've been working on, take a look at the [Manage IP Project blog](#) from Chris Mitchell – Project Lead.

### **Secure IP**

Secure IP is where you can do everything involved in securing your IP rights, from application through to grant or registration. We completed our initial research in December and will start building early designs of the service in the coming weeks. We expect our Secure IP service to give you the following

benefits:

1. **The same experience across all rights** – want to align the application process across patents, trade marks and designs as much as possible
2. **Providing the services you need** – some customers have to shoehorn our services to meet their needs. In future, we want to offer a wider range of services which offer more flexibility. If you only want to, for example, apply for a filing date, there should be a service specifically designed for that.
3. **More effective services** – we want to help customers submit better quality applications to reduce errors and increase efficiency. We could do this through:
  - validation rules – checks built into forms to reduce errors
  - consistent high quality formats for supporting documentation
  - re-use business data from elsewhere (eg Companies House)
  - ensure image files are searchable
  - artificial intelligence to help customers with applications
4. **Guidance and communication** – our customers don't always apply for the correct IP rights, because our guidance isn't clear enough. To address this we will explore:
  - reviewing guidance to ensure it's clear and easy to find
  - building guidance into the application process
  - look at alternative guidance methods – videos, live chat etc
  - real-time notifications and status updates
5. **Access IPO services your way** – look to develop a tool that allows attorneys to access IPO services through the IP software they already use.

## What's next?

Over the next few months we'll:

- **Manage IP** – we'll build and early design for how you will share access to your IP rights with others and how you will change your account details
- **Secure IP** – we'll start building our early designs of the service, covering the key points described above
- **Research IP** – we'll begin investigating the tools you need to search, research and analyse UK IP

## How you can help

It's vitally important that you shape these services, not us. We urgently need you to take part in our user research to give us feedback on what we're building and shape its direction. We only need 90 mins of your time. You can sign up to take part by [emailing \[usertesting@ipo.gov.uk\]\(mailto:emailing\_usertesting@ipo.gov.uk\)](mailto:emailing_usertesting@ipo.gov.uk).

Alternatively, if you just want to be kept up to date, sign up for our transformation updates by [emailing transformation@ipo.gov.uk](mailto:emailing_transformation@ipo.gov.uk).

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## [Norovirus outbreaks increasing in England](#)

The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) is reminding the public of simple actions that they can take to reduce the spread of norovirus. The advice comes after routine surveillance in England shows that the number of outbreaks caused by the vomiting bug has increased in recent weeks (4-week period from end January to February), initially in educational settings and now in care home settings.

Norovirus is highly infectious and causes vomiting and diarrhoea but usually passes in a couple of days. It is easily transmitted through contact with infected individuals or contaminated surfaces.

The increase in reported outbreaks was initially in educational settings, particularly in nursery and childcare facilities, with 48% more incidents reported to UKHSA than would be expected.

Reports of norovirus outbreaks in care home settings to UKHSA have also increased in recent weeks in 2022 – with a rise from 24 reported in week 6 (week commencing 7 February), to 40 reported in week 7 (week commencing 14 February).

While outbreaks reported in care home settings overall remain below pre-pandemic expected levels, it is likely they will continue to increase in the coming weeks and a rise in norovirus outbreaks in care home settings often precedes an increase in outbreaks in hospital settings. Therefore, it is important to take steps to limit the spread of norovirus.

Professor Saheer Gharbia, Gastrointestinal Pathogens and Food Safety Directorate, UKHSA, said:

Norovirus, commonly known as the winter vomiting bug, has been at lower levels than normal throughout the pandemic but as people have begun to mix more, the numbers of outbreaks have started to increase again.

Symptoms include sudden onset of nausea, projectile vomiting and diarrhoea but can also include a high temperature, abdominal pain and aching limbs. Stay at home if you are experiencing norovirus symptoms and do not return to work or send children to school or nursery until 48 hours after symptoms have cleared.



Please avoid visiting elderly relatives if you are unwell – particularly if they are in a care home or hospital. As with COVID-19 and other infectious illnesses, hand washing is really important to help stop the spread of this bug, but remember, unlike for COVID-19 alcohol gels do not kill off norovirus so soap and water is best.

## **How to reduce the spread of norovirus**

1. Stay at home if you are experiencing norovirus symptoms. Do not return to work or send children to school until 48 hours after symptoms have cleared. Also avoid visiting elderly or poorly relatives, particularly if they are in hospital or a care home.
2. Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly with soap and warm water. Alcohol hand gels don't kill norovirus.
3. When an infected person vomits, the droplets contaminate the surrounding surfaces. A bleach-based household cleaner or a combination of bleach and hot water should be used to disinfect potentially contaminated household surfaces and commonly used objects such as toilets, taps, telephones, door handles and kitchen surfaces.
4. If you are ill, avoid cooking and helping prepare meals for others until 48 hours after symptoms have stopped, as norovirus can be spread through food contaminated by the virus when food is handled by symptomatic people or infected individuals.
5. Wash any contaminated clothing or bedding using detergent and at 60°C and, if possible, wear disposable gloves to handle contaminated items.

Norovirus activity has risen as people have begun to mix more – it is possible that unusual or out-of-season increases could be seen in the coming months.

UKHSA's National Norovirus Surveillance Team will continue to closely monitor all available surveillance data to ensure early detection of any unusual norovirus activity and outbreaks.

You can view the [National Norovirus and Rotavirus Bulletin here](#).

Those showing symptoms should avoid visiting their GP, but if they are concerned should contact NHS 111 or talk to their GP by phone.