



## ALTERNATIVE STAGE 4 PROCEDURAL ARRANGEMENTS

### Introduction

The NJC has agreed to use alternative arrangements to settle issues normally decided upon at Stage 4 Hearings at Spirella House. As a result of COVID-19 restrictions, hearings with the appellants, respondents and Panel members in attendance are not possible. As such, Stage 4 cases will be considered by Panels which will now convene using Zoom and decide issues based on the usual written submissions as well as additional written responses to questions from the Panel members.

The NJC recognise the security limitations of Zoom Conferencing and cannot guarantee confidentiality. Using solely the Panel limits the risks and it has been decided to proceed on that basis.

This temporary procedure is time limited and will expire on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2020. \* *EDIT – These alternative arrangements have since been agreed by the NJC to be a permanent option within the NAECI, where both local parties to a case agree.*

### Applications for a Stage 4 Adjudication or Arbitration Hearing

Applications should be submitted in the usual way and in line with the proscribed time limits. As there will be no opportunity to emphasise or clarify points at a face to face hearing, consideration should be given to the content of the application with this in mind. Similarly, the respondents should also bear this limitation in mind when drafting the response.

On receipt of applications, the NJC Office will follow its usual procedure and timescales. The application and response will be bundled electronically for distribution to the parties and the Panel. There will be no paper bundles sent out.

The NJC Office will arrange for a Panel to convene using Zoom. In advance of the Zoom Hearing the Panel will be sent the joint bundle which it will review. Within 5 working days, the Panel members may submit questions of clarification or for additional information to the NJC Office who will contact the applicant and/or respondent as appropriate with Panel questions. Answers must be submitted in writing within 5 working days to be considered.

The Panel will then convene on Zoom and will consider the full complement of information submitted by the Parties and endeavour to reach a decision. The Finding will be final and binding and will be communicated on the day in the usual way.