



Phase 2 of lockdown easing: What does it mean for Guernsey property transactions?

April 2020

With the easing of restrictions and the implementation of Phase 2 commencing this Saturday 25 April at 00:01am, the Contracts Court has determined that it can now safely deal with non-essential property matters.

Surveyors, estate agents and conveyancers will now be able to attend on site providing they adhere to the strict guidelines implemented by the States of Guernsey. This means bank valuations will also be able to be carried out, properties viewed and conveyancers will be able to carry out their site visits to inspect boundaries and ensure that properties comply with all contractual, customary and statutory provisions.

The Greffe will now also be open 0900 to 1600 each weekday to professionals so that advocates and conveyancers can carry out title researches and carry out Bond checks.

This means, to an extent, the conveyancing process can again begin to function as it did before lockdown, albeit with the same strict rules relating to the filing of conveyancing documents and parties attending by their attorney's written confirmation.

This is a great step forwards but it leaves as a very live current issue the logistics of how will people move between properties. The current position appears to be that removal companies cannot operate as they cannot adhere to social distancing rules. This means, for many people, transactions may still need to be delayed.

From first impressions therefore, Phase 2 will enable the completion of Bonds, some family and de-enveloping transactions, commercial property matters and some residential transactions where people are able to self move. It is not however likely that the bulk of residential property transactions will be able to complete until removal companies are permitted to operate.

It remains to be seen as to what uptake the agents get in relation to people wanting to physically view properties but that is where the embracing of video technology can really help.

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