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Transforming Our Justice System

By the Lord Chancellor, the Lord Chief Justice
and the Senior President of Tribunals

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Transforming Our Justice System

By the Lord Chancellor, the Lord Chief Justice and the Senior President of Tribunals

1. Introduction

Our justice system is the envy of the world. We have an outstanding independent judiciary that is widely admired as an international leader. Our lawyers have a global – and deserved – reputation for excellence. And we have a legal services industry that contributes billions of pounds every year to the UK economy.

We are right to be proud of our Common Law system, which has led the world for the past 1000 years and influenced so many jurisdictions. The right to trial by jury – “the lamp that shows that freedom lives,” as Lord Devlin described it – has been one of our great achievements. Across the world, the fairness of our criminal trial and the history associated with iconic courts such as the Old Bailey are celebrated.

But we should not just celebrate our history and tradition. Today our commercial courts are recognised as pre-eminent. International litigators come here because they know they will be treated fairly, and overseas they prefer our law to be the governing law for commercial contracts. That confidence translated into a £25.7 billion contribution to the UK economy by legal services in 2015¹.

But there are real challenges still to address. Looking ahead, we need to make sure that our justice system continues to lead the world – that its impressive reputation is strengthened and that legal professionals and ordinary people are equipped to seize every new opportunity. To do this, our system needs radical change, to have modern IT and processes and to be located in buildings which are fit for purpose.

The reforms outlined here will achieve that by combining our respected traditions with the enabling power of technology. The vision is to modernise and upgrade our justice system so that it works even better for everyone, from judges and legal professionals, to witnesses, litigants and the vulnerable victims of crime. When they have to engage with the system, we want everyone to have available to them the finest justice system in the world.

We have the will and now the means to achieve this. The Government is committed to investing more than £700 million to modernise courts and tribunals, and over £270 million more in the criminal justice system.

This work has already started. In the criminal courts, digital case files have already removed the need for mountains of paperwork. The Rolls Building – with its new online system which enables cases to be started and managed electronically – has underlined London’s international reputation as the leading centre for business dispute resolution. But modernisation will go much further – extending and enhancing this approach across all

¹ The City UK, <https://www.thecityuk.com/research/uk-legal-services-2016-report/>

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courts and tribunals will build on our extraordinary heritage, but provide a system that is straightforward to use for every citizen.

The Government and the judiciary have a shared commitment to make this a reality. Our overall aim is clear: a courts and tribunal system that is just, and proportionate and accessible to everyone – a system that will continue to lead and inspire the world.

2. The vision

This will be a justice system with people's needs and expectations at its heart. The transformation of the courts and tribunals across the country will be based on three core principles that build on its established strengths:

- Just
- Proportionate
- Accessible

The decisions made by our judges and the outcomes of cases should be regarded as **just** by all parties – not least the vulnerable victims of crime. The judiciary must be supported by modern, transparent processes that are consistent, and allow for like cases to be treated alike. The judiciary and the legal profession should be drawn from the widest possible pool of talent which includes women, those from the BAME community and those from a socially disadvantaged background. In this way the judiciary will continue to command the confidence of the public and uphold the Rule of Law.

We must make sure that the justice system is **proportionate** in order to save people time, shrink their costs, and reduce the impact of legal proceedings on their lives. Justice delayed is justice denied. Low value cases or those of modest social significance should be dealt with quickly. Victims of crime and vulnerable witnesses should be supported by clear and effective processes. Unnecessary escalation of disputes should be emphatically discouraged and kept out of court wherever possible. The cost, speed and complexity should be proportionate to the scale and substance of the case.

Our justice system should be **accessible**. This means that the procedures and remedies should be available and intelligible to non-lawyers. People with disabilities should never feel excluded because they cannot attend a physical courtroom or handle documents or traditional procedures. Likewise, people who are not comfortable with new technology must always be supported.

In practical terms, these core principles will make sure that our courts and tribunals always deliver **swift and certain justice** for everyone.

Building blocks of reform

We must ensure that the way in which justice is delivered is **proportionate**. In day to day, straightforward cases, the procedure will be made simpler and easy to use. For the justice system to work for everyone in such cases, we must ensure that everyday language is used. The structure of our courts and tribunals, which has evolved over centuries, will be streamlined making the process easier to navigate for everyone, not just lawyers. In more complex business and commercial disputes, the courts will offer a choice of approaches, enabling the judge and the litigants to decide on the most appropriate procedure for the resolution of the dispute.

In addition, it is time for **innovation** in our system. The resolution of cases has historically revolved around advocacy before a judge in a physical courtroom. We need to embrace new methods and approaches, and avoid and contain disputes as well as solving them. Learning lessons from existing practices, we will consider the introduction of problem-solving courts, whose decisions are aimed at avoiding reoffending as much as retribution, will be a significant step forward in addressing offenders' behaviour and preventing future

victims. In civil, family and tribunal cases, we will introduce new, often less combative, methods for disputes to be resolved. We will also use specially trained case officers to handle basic case management and case progression, to allow our judiciary to focus their time and expertise where it is really needed.

The revolution in **technology** will characterise tomorrow's justice system. We will provide online access by developing a single online system for starting and managing cases across the criminal, civil, family and tribunal jurisdictions. This will help people understand their rights and what options are open to them. Less visible to the public will be the widespread introduction of robust document and case management systems, to replace the highly inefficient paper filing systems of today – measures that will improve efficiency throughout.

Some cases will be handled entirely online. In the criminal courts, we are already seeing judges and magistrates working online rather than in the courtrooms, deciding suitable cases or parts of cases on the basis of papers submitted to them electronically. This is allowing the defence, prosecution and courts to work flexibly and conduct proceedings more efficiently. In future, we intend to extend these benefits further by introducing a structured process of online pleading, and by holding “virtual hearings” enabling lawyers, parties and witnesses to participate in traditional hearings by telephone and video conferencing. This will extend throughout the system, not just the criminal jurisdiction, making courts more convenient for all.

Tomorrow's justice system

Over time, the work of the courts and tribunals will use online, virtual and traditional hearings as best meets the circumstances of the case. As new technologies bed down, we anticipate that more and more cases or parts of cases will be carried out virtually or online.

In certain circumstances, of course, justice will require that parties, their advisers and judges conduct hearings in physical courtrooms.

Meanwhile, those who use our courts and tribunals – including legal professionals – should expect two significant developments. The first is our aim for **all** cases to be started online, whether or not they are scheduled for the traditional system or for online resolution. The second will be the completion of some cases entirely online, which will be much more convenient for everyone involved. Suitable cases – initially lower value debt and damages claims and appeals to the Social Security and Child Support Tribunal – will be able to be managed through affordable and simple online services, specifically designed to meet user needs.

There will be a new, highly simplified procedural code. An online form will guide people through their application and the progress of their case. This new approach will be designed to promote more conciliatory approaches to dispute resolution, and to be understandable to non-lawyers, helping ordinary people resolve their issues in a low-key way, without needing expensive legal representation to help them understand what to do.

Court as a resource

As the courts and tribunals are modernised we will need fewer buildings, used more efficiently with courtrooms which are more adaptable. In many cases, attending hearings in person will only be needed where there is no other alternative; parties will be able to

engage virtually or online rather than have to take time to attend hearings in person. We currently have over 400 court and tribunal buildings, many of them old, small, inefficient, yet expensive to maintain. In 2014-15, around half (48%) of courts and tribunals were used for less than half of the time². Many will be closed over the next four years to fund investment in fewer, more modern buildings that can better serve people's needs.

No one left behind

The reform programme assumes a wholesale shift to accessing justice digitally. For many people, improving our technology and putting more services and processes online will make justice more accessible and simpler than ever before. But we recognise that for some people this will present a challenge.

Although, in Great Britain, 86 per cent of homes had internet access in 2015, only 49 per cent of households with one adult aged 65 or over had internet access³. One in ten adults, including a quarter of disabled adults, have never used the internet⁴. Research shows that there is a small core of non-internet users who do not intend to get connected⁵.

We will provide support for those who cannot access services digitally, or who need help to do so. In designing different services we will always tailor the support around the needs of those who will use them.

Impact on the judiciary and legal professionals

The proposed reforms will have a major impact on the work of many judges, magistrates and lawyers.

It will call for some adaptability and a willingness to embrace new technology. In the magistrates' courts, much change is already underway with active case management and greater use of IT. We are also looking at how we can enable more flexible deployment of the judiciary across the different jurisdictions of the courts and tribunals. It is proving successful so far. The judiciary is embracing the opportunities offered by digitisation to simplify and modernise procedures across the courts and tribunals to create a more modern and digital system that works better not just for professionals like the police and lawyers, but also for ordinary people.

For lawyers especially, innovation will be invaluable: to find new ways of delivering services, of simplifying working practices, of focusing more on meeting the needs of all their clients, from defendants to families and civil claimants. Much is already being done by the legal professions, but the reforms will enable them to be much more ambitious. We are confident that they share our commitment to working together to shape a modern court system that will be a significant contribution to building a more just society.

² Response to the proposal on the provision of court and tribunal estate in England and Wales: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/499518/national-consultation-document.pdf

³ Office of National Statistics Statistical Bulletin 'Internet Access – Households and Individuals 2015': <http://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/householdcharacteristics/homeinternetandsocialmediausage/bulletins/internetaccesshouseholdsandindividuals/2015-08-06>

⁴ Office of National Statistics Statistical Bulletin 'Internet Access – Households and Individuals 2015': <http://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/householdcharacteristics/homeinternetandsocialmediausage/bulletins/internetaccesshouseholdsandindividuals/2015-08-06>

⁵ Oxford Internet Institute, Cultures of the Internet: The Internet in Britain 2013

3. Criminal Courts

The criminal justice system is among the most powerful instruments of the state, capable of depriving individuals of their freedom. It is an essential guarantor of the rights of the law-abiding citizen. In England and Wales, we are fortunate to have a criminal justice system which is admired and emulated around the world.

Building on those strengths, we will give our judiciary clearer leadership over our criminal courts and invest in smarter, more streamlined processes to deliver better justice for all, including victims, witnesses and society. We want to ensure that the majority of Crown Court trials are heard on the day on which they are listed to give everyone involved certainty, so that witnesses can be sure that they will give evidence as expected. And we want to reduce the system costs of ‘cracked’ trials (where defendants change their pleas to guilty at the last minute) and ineffective trials (where the trial cannot proceed on the day). This too will help to increase the confidence of victims and witnesses.

Some delays and adjournments are inevitable: cases may be complex, requiring careful forensic analysis or the examination of multiple files of electronic evidence, for example. But we need to make sure that cases are not simply delayed due to inefficient working practices.

Supporting vulnerable victims and witnesses

Making sure that the voices of victims and witnesses are heard is crucial for a just criminal justice system, and supporting them however we can is a central part of our reform programme. Already, vulnerable victims and witnesses can give evidence from behind a screen, or over video link, but we want to do more to give the court more choice and so give witnesses greater protection.

We have increased the number of locations from where victims and witnesses can give their evidence. In many cases this means that they do not even have to be in a court building, saving them time and allowing them to give evidence in an environment that feels comfortable. Following the roll out of digital case management across all Crown Court centres, statements, including victims’ personal statements, are now available to judges earlier in the proceedings, allowing more time for them to be considered.

But there is still more that could be done. Having piloted pre-trial cross examination, allowing vulnerable witnesses to pre-record their evidence ahead of the trial taking place, we will be rolling this out nationally from 2017. The pilot highlighted that this approach results in a better experience for witnesses, with the cross-examination taking place in around half the time compared to other cases, and also showed an increase in early guilty pleas by defendants. These measures should make a sometimes difficult experience a little less distressing.

Digitisation of the criminal justice system

The entire criminal justice system is being digitised, in partnership with the Crown Prosecution Service and police, with investment of £270 million agreed in 2015 and due to be completed in 2019. This new system will provide an online process to manage criminal cases from charge to conviction, linking the courts with others within the criminal justice system. It will also notify and update victims and witnesses of crime about the cases they’re involved in.

Wi-fi has been introduced for legal professionals in almost all criminal courts, the majority of magistrates' courts casework is now transferred digitally between the police and Crown Prosecution Service, prosecutors present magistrates' court cases using laptops and video screens, and judges in Crown Court centres manage all of their cases online. This digital working allows the defence, prosecution and courts to work better together, saving time and allowing them to focus their energy on the issues of the case.

But there is still too much evidence being carted around the country on CDs and CCTV tapes, and too many 'digital' ways of working rely on people scanning in pieces of paper⁶. That will change. All participants in a case, from the judge to the jurors, the Crown Prosecution Service and the defence, legal advisers and court staff, will soon become 'digital by default'.

In most circumstances, preliminary hearings will not need to be face-to-face in court, saving time and money, with less need for defendants to be transported back and forth from prison to court.

We also want to make the processing of summary non-imprisonable offences where there is no clear identifiable victim – such as rail ticket and TV licence evasion, speeding, insurance and fly-tipping – even more efficient by allowing defendants to plead online, saving valuable court time. An early version of this for traffic offences is already being rolled out nationally.

In certain cases, we are proposing an even simpler process where defendants can resolve their cases immediately using an entirely automated system. This would mean when someone admits certain minor offences and chooses to opt in to an automated system, that system will provide an online conviction and issue a standard fixed fine and costs. This will enable defendants to complete their case and pay the penalty instantaneously, without having to attend court – a just, efficient and simple improvement. Removing the need for full hearings in this way also frees up magistrates to spend their valuable time considering the cases that need their attention most.

Unifying the criminal courts

Digitisation will help smooth the progress of cases through the criminal justice system, but we also need to improve efficiency in the allocation of cases.

We want cases to be heard as swiftly as possible at the most appropriate level, so that victims and witnesses do not feel that justice is being delayed. For this reason, we will unify the criminal courts under a single leadership structure and reform Local Justice Areas.

We have already increased flexibility as far as we can to ensure that cases are heard close to where offences are committed, but without reference to arbitrary lines drawn on maps. These changes allow for other factors, such as the availability of a timely hearing or convenience and facilities for victims, to be taken into account. We will build on the work we have already done, by stripping out unnecessary bureaucracy so that magistrates' courts have all the freedom and flexibility they need to make sensible listing decisions and manage their caseloads efficiently.

⁶ Criminal Justice Joint Inspection, Delivering Justice In a Digital Age, April 2016: <https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/cjji/inspections/delivering-justice-in-a-digital-age/>

Unifying the criminal courts will also enable effective oversight of the allocation of work between the Crown Court and magistrates' courts. In order to rationalise the system, as recommended in Sir Brian Leveson's Review of Efficiency in Criminal Proceedings, there needs to be flexible allocation between the two.

Transparency

The digitised criminal justice system will be underpinned by greater transparency. We have, for the first time, published an online tool⁷ which brings together data about the types of cases heard at each Crown Court centre; the time different types of cases take to be heard; what kind of outcomes result; how many cases are waiting to be heard; and how many trials fail to go ahead as planned. This is the sort of transparent and open data that a modern justice system should be recording and making available so that system performance can be properly scrutinised.

Problem-solving courts

We will also continue to explore the use of innovative 'problem-solving' criminal courts, which seek to change offender behaviour by tackling underlying problems, such as drug and alcohol addiction or mental illness. We will build on the work that has already been done to evaluate the international and domestic evidence. This will help inform how we can make best use of this type of approach in England and Wales.

⁷ Crown Court Information tool: <https://www.judiciary.gov.uk/crown-court-information/>

4. Civil courts

Our ambition for the civil courts is that they retain and enhance their world-class position as the trusted jurisdiction of choice for international disputes, while becoming easier to use for everyone, and more proportionate in resolving simpler legal disputes. The system must work for everybody, from international traders with complex market disputes companies filing claims in bulk, to the individuals filing one-off claims where they feel they have been wronged.

London is a global centre for commercial disputes. Over eighty per cent of commercial cases handled by London law firms now involve an international party. We must provide a system that matches the expertise of our judiciary and the quality of our legal services, building on the existing reputation of the Rolls Building as the premium venue for resolving international commercial disputes.

Our reforms will promote the full range of methods of settling disputes more swiftly, at less cost and with greater choice. This is likely to include a number of options: a dispassionate evaluation of the dispute, followed by negotiation, conciliation, mediation or a tailored hearing to resolve the issues on which the parties remain in dispute. These options are designed to minimise combative hearings and help parties settle their disputes with the minimum of stress and acrimony, whether they are members of the public or multi-national corporations. Depending on the complexity of a case – and the needs of all involved – it might be online, paper-based or face-to-face.

We want to build on simpler consumer-focused models. In the civil courts, we will automate and digitise the entire process of civil money claims by 2020. These account for more than four fifths of the 1.6 million claims issued in the county courts and the High Court each year – with the vast majority (83%⁸) of which are uncontested.

We will speed up resolution as we replace paper and post with digital working: currently, a ‘fast track’ claim with a value between £10,000-£25,000 takes 11 months to be resolved⁹. Under our new digital model, cases will be handled faster and in a more convenient way, improving the experience for everyone making and defending claims in the civil courts.

More needs to be done to control the costs of civil cases so they are proportionate to the case, and legal costs are more certain from the start. Building on earlier reforms, we will look at options to extend fixed recoverable costs much more widely, so the costs of going to court will be clearer and more appropriate. Our aim is that losing parties should not be hit with disproportionately high legal costs, and people will be able to make more informed decisions on whether to take or defend legal action.

We also want to do more to make sure that if the court finds in your favour, you can get back what you are owed. We will be extending the powers of the High Court, enabling them to make attachment of earnings orders so that debtors pay back their creditors. The County Court already has this power and this change will provide a further enforcement option for users in the High Court. To make it clearer what will be paid back under those

⁸ Ministry of Justice Civil Justice Statistics Quarterly: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/civil-justice-statistics-quarterly-january-to-march-2016-and-the-royal-courts-of-justice-2015>

⁹ Ministry of Justice Civil Justice Statistics Quarterly: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/civil-justice-statistics-quarterly-january-to-march-2016-and-the-royal-courts-of-justice-2015>

orders, we will also be implementing fixed tables so that both debtors and creditors will understand exactly what the rate of deductions will be.

5. Family courts

The priority for the family courts is to find solutions to the most personal of disputes, often involving vulnerable children, and to set families on the best possible course for the future. These courts above all should be places of clarity and hope – not of complexity and process.

In the family law system, reforms will be guided first of all by the welfare of children. This is the paramount consideration. Our core principles of a system that is just, proportionate and accessible demand that undue delay, complexity and combativeness between parties be minimised in order to protect the welfare of children. We have made significant changes to the way the family courts work since the Family Justice Review of 2011, creating a single jurisdiction to provide smoother and more efficient justice for families and children, and dramatically improving the timeliness of public law (care) cases. But there is more to be done.

Private Law cases

Private law cases in the family court focus mainly on disputes between separating couples, over their children or finances. The majority of separating parents will make arrangements regarding their children privately. Only around one in ten children of separating parents have their contact arrangements made in court¹⁰. Even so, court use to resolve private family disputes in England and Wales is still high: almost 43,000 children cases and 38,000 finance cases were started in 2015¹¹.

It is important to offer separating parents the opportunity to resolve issues equably between them, avoiding the stress, expense and aggravation of legal proceedings. We are considering how we can best help separating couples to do this, and a major part of this will be digitising and simplifying our processes and providing more information to enable people to make the right arrangements themselves.

For those people who decide to divorce, the process will be simpler. The majority of these cases involve a very straightforward court process. Only around 2% of cases are contested¹². Yet the rules and forms are long and complex and have changed little since the 1970s. We will simplify the process and put as much as possible of it online.

These same principles of simplification will be applied to probate. Dealing with probate affairs can be difficult and complicated at a time when people may be coping with bereavement. The probate system will be digitised so that in uncontested cases, most of the application process will be done online, making it much simpler for people to use.

¹⁰ Peacey, V. and Hunt, J. (2008). *Problematic contact after separation and divorce? A national survey of parents*. London: Gingerbread

¹¹ Table 1, Ministry of Justice Family Court Statistics Quarterly:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/family-court-statistics-quarterly-october-to-december-2015>

¹² Family Justice - Guide to Family Law Courts:
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/512554/guide-to-family-court-statistics.pdf - Page 8 - 98% of petitions sent to the other party are consented too with the rest being contested

Public Law Cases

The family court also deals with public law cases where local authorities bring proceedings about the welfare of children, in which they seek to supervise parents, or have their children taken into care or adopted. While decisions in public law cases have been speeded up, there is a need to focus on how those decisions are reached and on the evidence of what works best for children. Resources need to be deployed where they can best secure the right outcomes for children, minimise conflict and treat those involved with dignity and respect.

Work is being undertaken to understand better what works, and to test and promote innovative problem solving approaches: the Family Drug and Alcohol Courts (FDACs), the Pause programme (which works with mothers who have had more than one child removed from them to try to break the cycle) and judge-led settlement conference pilots (a voluntary, non-adversarial process to help negotiate agreement between parties).

Such approaches provide an alternative to the current process which can at times tip into a battle between the parents and local authority, and in turn make it harder to focus everyone on the child's best interests and to work together once a decision is made.

6. Tribunals

Tribunals are an essential component of the rule of law. They enable citizens to hold the state and employers to account for decisions that have a significant impact on people's lives. The hallmark of the tribunals system is the delivery of fair, specialist and innovative justice. That must not change.

The case for reform of the tribunals is nonetheless compelling. Over 400,000 claims a year come to tribunals¹³. The necessary ingredients are already in place to help our judges and members to adopt a more inquisitorial and problem-solving approach, focused around the needs of individuals so that claimants can be more confident that their needs will be understood. This will be underpinned by a plan to create one system, one judiciary and better quality outcomes.

Innovative 'problem-solving' opportunities will be created to improve the determination of a range of issues which have historically been spread across courts and tribunals. This 'one stop shop' approach is being piloted with property disputes which can be dealt with before one specialist Judge, giving claimants a speedier and conclusive resolution to their complaint. The potential to extend this into other areas such as Mental Health and Employment will be explored.

Tribunals will be digital by default, with easy to use and intuitive online processes put in place to help people lodge a claim more easily, but with the right levels of help in place for anyone who needs it, making sure that nobody is denied justice. Once a claim is made, automatic sharing of digital documents with relevant government departments will mean that the tribunals and the parties will have all the right information to allow them to deal with claims promptly and effectively, saving time for both tribunal panels and claimants. Those who use tribunals will have access to specialist judicial expertise using tools and technology that they use routinely in other parts of their lives. This will allow the nub of a case to be identified quickly, wrong decisions resolved, and hopeless causes weeded out - improving justice for everyone involved.

In the next 18 months, online dispute resolution will be tested in Social Security & Child Support hearings, with people making their appeal and receiving a response online, and tribunal judges providing dispute resolution through "continuous online hearings". This ongoing process will enable judges to gather evidence and make informed decisions at a pace that is right for the case and the parties.

By 2020, tribunals will be part of a single justice system with a single judiciary. They will offer a range of choices to resolve appeals and claims with the needs of people who use the tribunals being put at the centre; from virtual hearings, online decision making, early evaluation, mediation and conciliation to the traditional face-to-face hearing. Cases will be resolved at the right level for the issues at hand, giving all parties better quality, faster and less stressful resolution of claims.

¹³ Tribunals and gender recognition certificate statistics quarterly: January to March 2016
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/tribunals-and-gender-recognition-certificate-statistics-quarterly-january-to-march-2016>

7. Conclusion

These reforms build on what we already have – a justice system that is revered around the world for its excellence. But they also recognise something important in that system's unique history. It has always evolved.

Every generation has updated or reformed the justice system to adapt to changing times. From the sealing of Magna Carta, to the protection of judicial independence in the 1701 Act of Settlement, to the creation of the Crown Court in the 1970s – there has never been a moment of stagnation or complacency. We have not inherited this remarkable justice system by accident but thanks to the foresight and the hard work of all those who came before us.

Our times – with the advent of the internet and an explosion in new technology – provide the opportunity for radical change. Traditional ways of working are being upended, not just in justice but across the board. To secure and enhance the global reputation of our justice system, therefore, we must respond to those changes radically and quickly – and the rapidly evolving needs and expectations of everyone who uses our courts and tribunals.

At their heart, these reforms are about meeting the needs of all those people – judges, magistrates, the legal professions, witnesses, victims, defendants, individual citizens and businesses of all sizes.

In delivering a proportionate and effective justice system to them, we should be competing not just with the best jurisdictions around the world, but with every modern consumer experience they have in their lives, from skyping their family and friends, to online banking, to entering into contracts with businesses on the other side of the planet.

In delivering a system that is just and accessible to everyone who needs it, we will be competing not just with modern practices around the world but respecting the practices of our own history. From experience, we know that first and foremost our courts and tribunals uphold the rule of law – maintaining the order and individual liberty that all of us enjoy. The rule of law is fundamental to every civilised society. Above all, these reforms will help to protect it.



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