



HM Courts &  
Tribunals Service

# HM Courts & Tribunals Service Business Plan 2014-15




# HM Courts & Tribunals Service Business Plan

2014-15

# Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	5
<b>The Ministry of Justice's Strategy for Reform</b>	7
<b>Our aim and strategic objectives</b>	8
<b>Section 1: Setting the scene</b>	
1.1 HM Courts & Tribunals Service: who we are	9
1.2 Equality and diversity	9
1.3 Supporting an independent judiciary in the administration of justice	9
1.3.1 Tribunals judiciary	10
1.3.2 Civil and family court judiciary	10
1.3.3 Crown Court judiciary and the magistracy	10
1.4 Developing our staff	11
1.5 Savings information 2014-15	12
1.6 Resources	12
<b>Section 2: Business priorities for 2014-15</b>	
2.1 Transitioning into our future operating model	14
2.1.1 Reforming HM Courts & Tribunals Service	14
2.2 Improving the user experience and reducing costs	15
2.2.1 Putting user needs at the front of service delivery and design	15
2.2.2 Using technology to improve the user experience	15
2.2.3 Standardising a quality service across our business	17
2.2.4 Cost savings and efficiency	18
2.3 Working with justice system partners to increase performance	19
2.3.1 Tribunals	19
2.3.2 Civil and family	20
2.3.3 Crime	21
2.4 Legislative and procedural rule changes	22
2.4.1 Tribunals reform	22
2.4.2 Single Civil and Family Courts	23
2.4.3 Family Justice Review	23
2.4.4 Civil justice reform	23
2.4.5 Criminal justice reform	23
2.4.6 Youth justice	25
High Level Business Plan Roadmap	26

# Introduction

## by the Lord Chancellor, the Lord Chief Justice and the Senior President of Tribunals

We are pleased to introduce the 2014-15 Business Plan for HM Courts & Tribunals Service.

Since its creation three years ago, we and our predecessors have been committed to ensuring that HM Courts & Tribunals Service delivers a modern and responsive public service, with improved performance and efficiency across all aspects of the administration of the courts and tribunals. We have been and remain resolute in our determination to ensure access to justice for all.

Much has been done, but we believe that we can still do much more. We continue to live in difficult financial times with considerable constraints on public sector expenditure. Nevertheless, as this plan shows, HM Courts & Tribunals Service can continue to improve the service it offers to the public.

The culture of continuous improvement is already established in HM Courts & Tribunals Service, and has delivered efficiencies and tangible benefits for our users. That will grow in 2014-15 and beyond. We will also continue to build our relationships and work closely with other organisations in the justice sector so that our systems and processes deliver a better service for the future.

HM Courts & Tribunals Service has the enormous benefit of a dedicated, capable and flexible workforce. Their relationship with the judiciary, both locally and at national level, is strong. We are confident that HM Courts & Tribunals Service staff can meet the challenges which lie ahead building on their record for innovation and improvement. This is crucial if we are to maintain a high quality service.



The Rt Hon Chris Grayling MP  
Lord Chancellor  
and Secretary of State for  
Justice

The Rt Hon The Lord Thomas of Cwmgiedd  
Lord Chief Justice of England and Wales

The Rt Hon Sir Jeremy Sullivan  
Senior President of Tribunals



# Foreword

by Peter Handcock,  
Chief Executive of  
HM Courts & Tribunals Service

I am pleased to set out in this business plan our priorities for the year.

We plan to move forward with significant improvements to our day-to-day service and major reform of the courts and tribunals administration. But before I reflect on the key activities for the next financial year, I want to pay tribute to our staff across the agency for their commitment to providing a service they can be proud of, and which the public deserves. Our staff are our strength, and their dedication to continually improve work practices makes a real difference for the public and our users.

In March 2014, HM Treasury agreed new investment in the courts and tribunals system averaging up to £75 million each year over five years from 2015-16. This will enable us to undertake a reform programme which will deliver a more effective, efficient and high performing courts and tribunals administration through the use of modern technology, an improved estate, and modernisation of current working practices.

This investment supplements funding we have already secured to start the transformation of the services we provide to the public and our users. A major priority for 2014-15 will be increasing digital hearings in our criminal courts. This will be the start of a major programme of work we intend to complete in 2016, when hearings will take place in a modern digital way – with paper files only used by exception. We are also unifying criminal case management information across the Criminal Justice System (CJS): for the first time, criminal case information will be generated once, instead of

being re-entered and replicated on several different systems across a number of agencies.

We will also continue the drive to increase use of video in 2014-15; both in criminal courts and elsewhere. For example, we will work with the judiciary to pilot the extended use of video link technology for appeals heard by the First-tier Tribunal Immigration Appeals Chamber in spring 2014.

The launch of the single County Court will provide opportunities to centralise civil processes, so reducing costs and ensuring we can focus our valuable resources on supporting the judiciary in running court hearings. Similarly, the single Family Court will significantly simplify and improve the family court system for users. It will introduce streamlined and improved case management processes and further strengthen judicial leadership.

All this work will be taken forward in partnership with the judiciary. Our accountability as an agency not only to the Secretary of State, but also to the Lord Chief Justice and Senior President of Tribunals, means that our relationship with our judicial partners is absolutely crucial to our success, both locally and strategically. We work very closely with the judiciary at all levels, from day-to-day work in the courts and tribunals we administer, through to our discussions at Board level. We will continue in the year to come to focus on that partnership, to ensure the success of the reforms that will so greatly improve our service and the experience for our users.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Handcock'.

Peter Handcock CBE  
Chief Executive, HM Courts & Tribunals Service

# The Ministry of Justice's Strategy for Reform

As an agency of the Ministry of Justice, HM Courts & Tribunals Service strategic direction is defined by the department's strategic vision for reform, which is to create a more effective, less costly and more responsive justice system for the public.

To deliver this, the Ministry of Justice is making changes to the things that it does and the way that it does them. The current phase of its reform programme is focused around five priorities:

**Transforming rehabilitation:** Driving down re-offending rates and improving value for the tax payer by opening up rehabilitation services for offenders to a more diverse market of providers; extending our rehabilitative approach to offenders sentenced for up to 12 months; and introducing payment by results.

**Protecting the public and punishing offenders as part of a more effective and cost efficient custodial system:** Reforming the prison system

to drive down cost across the estate and make every penny of public money count. Ensuring that the sentencing framework operates as efficiently and effectively as possible, to deliver appropriate punishment of offenders, without compromising on public safety.

**Transforming youth custody:** Reforming youth custody to create a more efficient system which ensures that young people are appropriately punished, while at the same time receiving the support and education required to turn them away from a life of crime.

**Transforming our courts and tribunals and the Criminal Justice System:** Continuing to improve the way our courts are run, while ensuring that cases are managed as well as they can be, and that victims are put first in the system

**Transforming legal aid:** Reforming the legal aid system to reduce the cost to the taxpayer and ensure that the system commands the confidence of the public.

# Our aim and strategic objectives

The Framework Document, which sets out the agreement reached between the Lord Chancellor, the Lord Chief Justice and the Senior President of Tribunals for the operation of HM Courts & Tribunals Service, sets out our aim and five key strategic objectives for the agency.

## **Our aim:**

To run an efficient and effective courts and tribunals system, which enables the rule of law to be upheld, and provides access to justice for all.

## **Our objectives:**

Provide the supporting administration for a fair, efficient and accessible courts and tribunal system;

Support an independent judiciary in the administration of justice;

Drive continuous improvement of performance and efficiency across all aspects of the administration of the courts and tribunals;

Collaborate effectively with other justice organisations and agencies, including the legal professions, to improve access to justice; and

Work with government departments and agencies, as appropriate, to improve the quality and timeliness of their decision making in order to reduce the number of cases coming before courts and tribunals.



# Section 1

## Setting the Scene

### 1.1 HM Courts & Tribunals Service: who we are

This plan sets out the business priorities for HM Courts & Tribunals Service and outlines how we will deliver these for the year 2014-15.

HM Courts & Tribunals Service is an agency of the Ministry of Justice and was established on 1 April 2011. It operates on the basis of a partnership between the Lord Chancellor, the Lord Chief Justice and the Senior President of Tribunals.

We provide a system of support for the administration of the business of the courts in England and Wales and those tribunals for which the Lord Chancellor is responsible across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

We play a fundamental role in the wider Ministry of Justice's vision and objectives. We are at the forefront of the Transforming Justice agenda and of delivering the department's key priorities, particularly efficiency across the wider CJS; and delivering front-line services which are transparent, accountable and provided at a lower cost.

As will be seen in the Annual Report 2013-14, the priorities set out in the 2013-14 Business Plan have now largely been met. In addition, the majority of the priorities which we outlined in the five year plan

(2011-15) have been met. Therefore, this plan sets out how we intend to continue to transform our services in 2014-15.

### 1.2 Equality and diversity

HM Courts & Tribunals Service is bound by the statutory requirements set out in the Equality Act 2010. We are committed to promoting equality of opportunity and eliminating unlawful discrimination in the way we design and deliver our services and act as an employer. Our commitment to this is demonstrated through the mandatory equality and diversity training our staff undertake annually and by listening and responding to the needs of our diverse user base.

### 1.3 Supporting an independent judiciary in the administration of justice

One of the core objectives of HM Courts & Tribunals Service is to provide independent support for the judiciary in the administration of justice. We have members of the judiciary sitting on the Agency's Board, and at every level in all areas of our business. The relationship between HM Courts & Tribunals Service and the judiciary is better than it has ever been with high levels of consultation, close working and collaboration. In the next year we will continue to develop and build on those relationships in all areas of work.

In 2014-15, we will be improving the digital services provided to the judiciary to ensure they have the modern software and hardware to execute their function and support digital working in the most effective way. We will be deploying 'e-Judiciary' (a package of judicial IT tools and support services) in 2014 from a single service point to enable more flexible working. This will reduce costs, improve efficiency, and have the added benefit of decreasing the use of paper throughout the court process.

### 1.3.1 Tribunals judiciary

During 2014-15 we will work with the tribunals' judiciary to harmonise tribunal judicial boundaries with HM Courts & Tribunals Service regional structures. In particular, we will progress plans to align the judicial boundaries of the Social Security and Child Support (SSCS) regions with HM Courts & Tribunals Service regional structures, which will deliver operational and strategic benefits in the future. In Special Educational Needs, we will work with the judiciary and users to review the impact of a pilot which introduces greater flexibility in the composition of tribunal panels.

Following the retirements of the current Presidents we will welcome the newly appointed Presidents of the Social Entitlement Chamber and the Employment Tribunals (England and Wales), and continue the effective relationships we have with these key judicial office holders.

### 1.3.2 Civil and family court judiciary

In April we worked with the judiciary to establish a single County Court and a single Family Court. The Civil and Family Business Authorities will continue to provide the governance and assurance required

to deliver these important structural changes and ensure that they are properly embedded throughout 2014-15.

The Family Business Authority will ensure that the judiciary and administration, through close working relationships, deliver on the recommendations of the Family Justice Review and other related improvements to the family court system.

In the same vein, the Civil Business Authority will ensure that performance improvement, procedural and process change and system modernisation continue to be driven in partnership with the judiciary.

We are also providing support to the judiciary on implementation of civil justice reforms, for example costs budgeting, arising from the Jackson costs reforms.

### 1.3.3 Crown Court judiciary and the magistracy

In recent years, HM Courts & Tribunals Service has worked with the judiciary to reduce unnecessary court hearings and supported the drive across the CJS to reduce bureaucracy. In 2014-15 we will build on this success and look to expand it through supporting delivery of the Senior Presiding Judge's Case Management initiative which will be implemented across the Crown Court. The initiative brings together all the CJS agencies, and has engaged with the defence community. The initiative emphasises the need for all parties in the CJS to play their part in supporting the judge to deliver successful case management. The Senior Presiding Judge has set what is expected of CJS agencies, including HM Courts & Tribunals Service, in terms of their roles and responsibilities.

HM Courts & Tribunals Service will also support the Senior Presiding Judge in the delivery of the recommendations of the Disclosure Review, led by His Honour Judge Kinch and the Senior District Judge (Chief Magistrate). This seeks to improve the approach to listing at first hearings and the way disclosure issues are dealt with in the magistrates' court, which will increase the effectiveness of hearings.

We will continue to work with the judiciary to support the effective leadership and management of judicial business of the magistrates' court. In 2014-15 HM Courts & Tribunals Service will support the implementation of the decisions of the Senior Presiding Judge's Governance Working Group through the creation of new local Judicial Business Groups.

#### 1.4 Developing our staff

We will continue to build on the 2013-14 Staff Engagement Survey results which show a further 5% improvement (up 4% in 2012-13) on learning that improves performance and career development. We will do this by providing a simple and clear offer, with easily accessible courses, which will continue to raise business capability and develop leaders to meet our future needs.

Our simplified learning and development offer will clearly signpost the standard required for each grade and the courses that support achieving this. Our business skills training will continue to be delivered, using our e-learning and face-to-face coaching, through approximately 940 of our staff who are accredited and quality assured Business Skills Trainers and Coaches. All staff will continue to complete statutory or mandatory training relevant to their role.

The HM Courts & Tribunals Service Capability Plan, aligned to the Civil Service Reform and Ministry of Justice Capability plans, will prioritise two key development areas within HM Courts & Tribunals Service. Both 'Business Acumen' and 'Leading and Managing Change' will be launched in May 2014, across our three capability levels:

1. New to capability or general awareness (Band C - F)
2. Senior leaders or working knowledge (Band B - SCS) and
3. Specialist or expert level (Band B – SCS).

We will promote relevant, nationally recognised qualifications for all grades of staff. Our provision will include accreditation of our business skills learning for ushers and court clerks, a full programme of Apprenticeships including Generic Courts, Tribunals and Prosecution and Operational Delivery Profession. Continuing to build on the 550 qualified apprentices within HM Courts & Tribunals Service, we will roll out our business specific development programmes for Bands E and F and our leadership development programmes for Bands D, B and A to a further 450 staff this financial year.

This will be the third year of the National Future Leaders scheme which identifies and equips talented and committed staff to reach senior leadership positions. Currently 15 staff are taking part in the scheme, which includes a requirement to combine creativity and business knowledge to continuously improve our service. Their work has projected savings in excess of £2.8 million.

Over the course of 2014-15, we will continue to embed the new performance management system and our HM Courts &

Tribunals Service Way; continuing to build a high performance culture and maintaining our customer focus. We will ensure that appropriate time is given to identifying development needs of our staff and a minimum of five days per year is spent on their development.

### 1.5 Savings information 2014-15

HM Courts & Tribunals Service remains on target to achieve more than the £300 million of savings required over the four years to the end of 2014-15.

Work continues on finalising both capital and resource allocation figures and the level of likely savings required to deliver the organisation within budget.

### 1.6 Resources

Our strategic objectives enable us to prioritise how we spend our resource budget. Table 1 shows the planned distribution of the allocation across regions based on the workload anticipated in Table 2. During the year actual workload volumes will be monitored against those forecast and resources may be reallocated to meet pressures that arise as a result of variations to forecast workloads.

**Table 1 – HM Courts & Tribunals Service planned distribution of allocation across regions**

	2013-14	2014-15
<b>Gross Expenditure</b>	£m	£m
London region	250	265.9
South East region	114.2	117.0
South West region	65.8	65.75
Wales	57.0	54.3
Midlands region	129.2	124.45
North West region	108.1	108.7
North East region	105.8	106.2
Tribunals Scotland	26.2	23.1
Centralised frontline	299.8	321.9
Central estates	246.2	241.15
HQ	231.7	288.94
<b>Income</b>	<b>(565)</b>	<b>(731.6)</b>
<b>Total net expenditure</b>	<b>1069</b>	<b>985.79</b>

**Table 2 - HM Courts & Tribunals Service 2014 -15 workloads, resources and indicators**

Anticipated workload of our courts and tribunals, input indicators and impact indicators

Workload forecast	Input indicators	Impact indicators
<b>Crown Court</b>		
Receipts - All cases:136,501 Of which: Trial cases: 94,974	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff and judicial cost per sitting day</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The number of weeks it takes, on average, to commence<sup>1</sup> trial cases from receipt in the Crown Court</li> </ul>
<b>Magistrates' Court</b>		
Completed proceedings: 1,412,670 Of which: Indictable: 335,348 Summary 1,077,322	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff and judicial cost per sitting day</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The number of weeks it takes, on average, to complete<sup>2</sup> all cases from first listing</li> <li>• The number of working days it takes, on average, to result court registers</li> </ul> <p>For financial penalties:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Amount of cash collected</li> <li>2. Outstanding balance in arrears</li> <li>3. % of accounts closed or compliant within 12months of the imposition month.</li> </ol>
<b>Tribunals</b>		
Receipts – all tribunals: 837,248 Of which: Social Security and Child Support (a jurisdiction within the Social Entitlement Chamber of the First-tier Tribunal): 516,949 Employment: 150,300 Immigration and Asylum: (First & Upper Tier) 93,284 Mental Health: 37,321 Other: 39,394	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The cost of tribunals (judicial and administrative)</li> <li>• Total tribunals costs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The number of weeks it takes, on average, to dispose of cases across each of the largest four jurisdictions:</li> <li>• Social Security and Child Support (a jurisdiction within the Social Entitlement Chamber of the First-tier Tribunal)</li> <li>• Employment</li> <li>• Immigration and Asylum</li> <li>• Mental Health</li> </ul>
<b>Civil and Family Justice</b>		
Civil courts All cases: 1,497,343 Money claims: 1,100,885 Repossession: 244,309 Other civil: 125,587 Insolvency: 26,562	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff and judicial cost per sitting day</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civil – The number of weeks it takes, on average, to hear cases from when the claim was received at court</li> </ul>
Family courts Receipts – All cases: 212,341 Of which: Adoption: 14,244 Public Law: 17,000 Private Law: 37,699 – 55,001 Family Law Act: 18,128 – 22,536 Divorce: 114,415		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family<sup>3</sup>– The number of weeks it takes, on average, to achieve a final outcome for the child in care and supervision cases</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> A case commences at the start of the first main Crown Court hearing. A main hearing is one where the defendant enters a plea to all charges or the jury is sworn in.

<sup>2</sup> Cases are completed in the magistrates' courts either when they are disposed of or are transferred to the Crown Court.

<sup>3</sup> These measures along with measures from the Legal Services Commission and Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS) form part of a cross system measurement framework.

# Section 2

## Business Priorities for 2014-15

### Our priorities for 2014-15:

Transitioning into our future operating model

Improving the user experience and reducing costs

Working with justice system partners to increase performance.

Legislative and procedural rule changes

### 2.1 Transitioning into our future operating model

#### 2.1.1 Reforming HM Courts & Tribunals Service

The public relies on our justice system to enforce their rights, provide timely access to justice, to support enterprise and uphold the rule of law. The courts are a fundamental arm of the state and a key public service. Whether as victims or witnesses of crimes, consumers in debt, businesses involved in commercial disputes or individuals seeking redress - all look to the courts and tribunals for timely and reliable access to justice. This is the heart of our justice system and an indispensable part of our public services.

However, reform of the administration and the infrastructure which supports this is needed to provide a long-term and sustainable future for courts and tribunals services and to ensure we continue to meet the expectations of users.

In 2013 the Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice made a Written Ministerial Statement in which he announced he was exploring proposals for the reform of the resourcing and administration of courts and tribunals.

In March 2014 HM Treasury agreed new investment averaging up to £75 million each year over five years from 2015-16. This will enable us to undertake a reform programme which will deliver a more effective, efficient and high performing courts and tribunals administration through the use of modern technology, an improved estate, and modernisation of current working practices.

Funding for this work has been secured from the financial year 2015-16 and supplements the funding already provided through the Ministry of Justice for the CJS IT and Common Platform programmes and to support the upgrading of the estate.

This reform programme will give the administration of justice a sustainable and affordable infrastructure for the future. We look forward to delivering more efficient and high-performing courts and tribunals administration, meeting the needs of the public, as well as providing significant benefits to the taxpayer and the legal profession.

## 2.2 Improving the user experience and reducing costs

### 2.2.1 Putting user needs at the front of service delivery and design

#### 2.2.1.1 Improving our user service

HM Courts & Tribunals Service puts the user at the centre of service design and delivery in all areas of our organisation. Improvements included sharing best practice examples on user service to celebrate successes and putting in place initiatives that will improve the quality of complaint handling and correspondence with the aim of reducing the overall number of complaints that are dealt with at appeal stage. This, in turn, will help to reduce the number of Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman investigations. In 2014-15 we will also evaluate how many ex-gratia payments have been made as a result of maladministration by HM Courts & Tribunals Service.

#### 2.2.1.2 Continuous Improvement / Lean

The primary focus of 'Continuous Improvement' is delivering an efficient and more effective service, eliminating wasteful behaviours and processes. At a strategic level we are committed to improving our end-to-end process and standardising the quality of the service we offer, which means designing how it will look in the future in order to deliver a service in the most efficient and effective way possible. At an operational level, we will be using evidence and feedback from national 'Go see' visits to continue to drive user value through the reduction of waste, use performance information to drive improvement, and develop the capability of our leaders and staff in applying Continuous Improvement methodology and thinking.

#### 2.2.1.3 Improving the tribunal users' experience

In 2014-15 HM Courts & Tribunals Service will embed recent reforms across the employment jurisdictions, with a real focus on continuously improving our systems, processes, and guidance. The past year has seen significant change, including the introduction of fee charging and new procedural rules. In April 2014, Early Conciliation through the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (Acas) was implemented for all workplace disputes. Over the coming year we will continue to work in partnership with the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS); Acas; and the Ministry of Justice, to ensure that the benefits of reform are maximised for tribunal users

#### 2.2.1.4 Civil management information and performance

We will continue to develop our civil management information to identify areas for performance improvement, and enable more sophisticated analysis of trends and developments within the jurisdiction. This will enable us to allocate administrative resources more efficiently and work with the judiciary to assure the appropriate distribution of sitting days.

### 2.2.2 Using technology to improve the user experience

#### 2.2.2.1 Improving the tribunal users' experience

We will build on the new digital channel for employment tribunal users, which enables users to issue their claim, and pay fees, online, by listening to user feedback to make improvements and make the digital process an exemplar across government.



We will work with users to enhance and improve the Immigration and Asylum digital web form and payment system to encourage increased use by appellants and their representatives from spring 2014.

HM Courts & Tribunals Service will work with the judiciary to pilot the extended use of video link technology in hearings by the First-tier Tribunal Immigration Appeals Chamber in spring 2014.

#### **2.2.2.2 Digitalising civil and family administrative functions**

In July 2014 we will introduce a new secure bulk transfer facility, which will deliver a significant improvement for our civil bulk users. This will enable medium and large volume users to issue civil claims digitally using a quick and secure data transfer process, to track the progress of their cases on-line, and create efficiencies for users and for HM Courts & Tribunals Service.

From July 2014, we will be expanding a pilot payment by account service, which allows bulk business users to pay court fees electronically when issuing at any court or business centre. This service will reduce HM Courts & Tribunals Service and user overheads by removing the cost of raising and accounting for cheque payments. It will also enable refunds to be made directly to user accounts.

We will also be working with colleagues in the Ministry of Justice's Digital Services Division to identify how the service provided by our current digital civil claims systems (Possession Claims On-line and Money Claims On-line) can be improved to enable us to maximise the proportion of our civil claim business issued digitally.

In 2014-15, we will explore the potential for digitalising the divorce process and

further consider, with the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), the potential for greater sharing of technology. We will also continue to maintain and support existing case management applications within civil, family and tribunals.

#### **2.2.2.3 Digitalising criminal courts administrative functions**

A major priority for HM Courts & Tribunals Service in 2014-15 will be increasing in-court digital hearings in our criminal courts. Following the successful trials of a range of technological solutions in pilot courts in early adopter areas, we will introduce the use of digital case files and digital evidence presentation in criminal courts across the country. This will be the start of a major business change and implementation programme with a target date for completion of 2016 when in court hearings will take place in a modern digital way with paper files only used by exception.

#### **2.2.2.4 Unified criminal case management across the CJS**

Closely linked with the digitalisation of criminal courts (above), we are also unifying criminal case management information across the CJS. This will provide real time access to the digital case file. For the first time, criminal case information will be generated once, instead of being re-entered and replicated on numerous different systems across a number of agencies. All agencies and parties will be able to access this one system, and update the same data-set based on their security profile and associated access rights. It will enable the individual agencies within the CJS and the judiciary to change the way they work, to be more efficient and effective and to deliver a better service for defendants,



witnesses and victims of crime, society and taxpayers.

This piece of work will also underpin the legislative changes arising from the Courts and Sentencing Bill. This includes a proposal to remove over 800,000 low-level 'regulatory' cases from the traditional magistrates' courtroom, where the defendant has either entered a guilty plea or not entered any plea at all. These cases will still be dealt with by a magistrate, but will be supported by new IT and more proportionate administrative processes.

#### 2.2.2.5 Magistrates' rota

A new, national magistrates' rota system will replace the various manual and other IT systems currently used to schedule magistrates' sittings. The project will deliver a single, flexible business process that is enabled by a web-based IT system in 2014. This will improve processes around the production of a rota; improve the management of sittings, leading to increased confidence in the process; enable magistrates to update and maintain their sitting availability and view their sittings online; and allow access to historical rota data.

#### 2.2.2.6 Video links

A key enabler of the Ministry of Justice's Transforming Justice agenda is the drive to increase utilisation of video across the CJS in 2014-15. We will continue to increase the use of existing prison to court video links so that the movement of defendants in and out of prisons is reduced. We will continue to make it easier for witnesses, including expert witnesses and police officers, to give evidence through video link. We will be conducting a review of progress by the summer 2014, which will include testing of internet based video services.

#### 2.2.2.7 Jurors

Throughout 2014-15, we will improve management and utilisation of jurors through better business processes. To support this, we will explore the potential of digitalisation of the summoning process with the aim of developing a less paper-based more responsive process for summoning jurors.

#### 2.2.2.8 Bulk printing

Following the successful introduction of bulk printing in 2012-13 in the civil and family jurisdiction, we will make more use of this facility in 2014, diverting further county court paperwork to be printed in bulk and reduce costs. We aim to deploy further bulk print items in September 2014. Similarly, in 2014-15, we will investigate a bulk printing solution for magistrates' courts to reduce costs and increase digitalisation.

### 2.2.3 Standardising a quality service across our business

#### 2.2.3.1 National Business Centres

The creation of the HM Courts & Tribunals Service National Business Centres has seen significant improvements for users in the way they access our services. This year we will increase the range of services we offer through the centralised business centres, including the creation of the National Mediation Service (Small Claims). This will see for the first time over 10,000 mediations administered through one office, with a consistent set of guidelines and processes. It will ensure we are more flexible to users' needs and able to help deliver mediation interventions sooner, improving the service and reducing costs for users.

Registration of all Social Security and Child Support appeals will have been fully centralised, providing a single contact

point in England and Wales and a single point in Scotland. This will enable users to lodge their appeals with HM Courts & Tribunals Service direct rather than through the Department for Work & Pensions (DWP).

We will continue to improve performance across the whole range of centralised business, using continuous improvement tools to build confidence in the service through driving up the quality of service for users. We will further develop engagement channels so that we can work with users to resolve problems and proactively manage demand and expectation.

We are exploring new opportunities for centralising contact for services delivered by HM Courts & Tribunals Service in 2014-15, and providing a high quality, timely and consistent contact experience for users. We will further drive improvements to end-to-end-systems, working with the judiciary stakeholders and partners to reduce delay and add value for users.

## 2.2.4 Cost savings and efficiency

### 2.2.4.1 Full cost recovery

In December 2013 the government published a consultation on proposals to reform civil court fees. The government's policy has been to set fees on the basis of full cost recovery; that is, the use of fee income to recover the full cost of the court system minus the cost of fee remissions (waivers). Fee remissions ensure access to justice for those that cannot afford a fee. Until now, the civil courts have been operating at less than full cost recovery. The government has consulted on a set of new fees that reflect the cost of providing services, and for certain types of proceedings, those using the court system would be expected to contribute more than the cost. Fee remissions would

continue to be provided for those that qualify, so that access to justice is not denied.

It is the intent of the government to introduce Enhanced Fees, which are not limited to the cost of providing services for certain types of proceedings, because the government believe the party bringing the case will be able to pay a fee which better reflects the value of the proceedings to them.

The government is expected to respond to the consultation early in 2014. HM Courts & Tribunals Service plans for 2014-15 are based on the assumption that the majority of government's fee proposals will be adopted by Parliament, with limited impact on the volume of proceedings brought to court. Work to manage the transition to a new fee system, including training staff and updating systems and processes, is also expected to continue into 2014-15.

### 2.2.4.2 Compliance and Enforcement Services Project (CESP)

We continue to look at ways to increase the collection of criminal fines and improve compliance and enforcement. In July 2013 we commenced a procurement process to identify an external provider to deliver these services on behalf of HM Courts & Tribunals Service. In the summer of 2014, we anticipate having identified the preferred bidder to deliver this service. The service will include all compliance and enforcement activity with regards to criminal financial penalties. This would bring the necessary investment and technology we need to achieve our aspirations of a more streamlined and efficient service in the future. It is expected that the project will achieve benefits as a consequence of greater revenue generation from more effective enforcement, lower

total resource costs from more efficient administration and enforcement, and enhance confidence in the criminal justice system through the successful collection of financial penalties.

## 2.3 Working with justice system partners to increase performance

### 2.3.1 Tribunals

We will continue to work with colleagues in the Ministry of Justice, the Scottish Executive, the Welsh Assembly, the Northern Ireland Executive and the judiciary in those areas, to ensure the effective delivery of HM Courts & Tribunals Service administered tribunals in devolved administrations.

Building on the success of the introduction in 2013-14 of directly lodged appeals to HM Courts & Tribunals Service against decisions made by DWP, the SSCS Tribunal will continue to work to respond to the operational impacts of the implementation of the government's welfare reform programme. We will work closely with DWP to understand the volume and type of appeal workloads ensuring there is sufficient capacity within the tribunal to continue to reduce caseloads and drive down waiting times for appellants.

Drawing lessons from the above reforms, HM Courts & Tribunals Service will work with HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) to introduce direct lodgment of appeals to the SSCS Tribunal, against decisions made about tax credits claims from April 2014.

This will require claimants to go through a process of mandatory reconsideration by HMRC decision makers before lodging an appeal direct to the tribunal where a dispute remains.

The SSCS Tribunal will work closely with DWP to respond to the operational impacts of the implementation of the government's welfare reform programmes, including the procedural changes introduced by the Migrants' Access to Benefits programme and the further rollout nationally of Universal Credit.

HM Courts & Tribunals Service will work closely with DWP to support efforts to improve the quality of original decision making. Building on the introduction of a revised decision notice in 2012 which provides feedback on reasons for overturned DWP decisions, we will work with the judiciary in 2014-15 to expand the provision of summary reasons so that both parties to an appeal better understand the reasons for a tribunal's decision. As DWP and other stakeholders learn from this feedback this will help ensure only appropriate appeals need to reach the tribunal.

HM Courts & Tribunals Service will continue to work with the Home Office to improve the end to end appeals system to deliver speedier resolution to appeals. This includes expanding the use of digital channels and electronic documents to help speed up the process and enable the Home Office to improve their decision making and be able to effectively review new evidence from appellants at an earlier stage in the process.

In the course of 2013 a joint group made up of members of the tribunal judiciary and HM Courts & Tribunals Service staff undertook a fundamental review of the First-tier Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum Chamber) and made a large number of recommendations ranging over several areas. HM Courts & Tribunals Service will work with the Home Office,

the judiciary and wider stakeholders to pilot key recommendations from the review including how appeals are listed and cases managed; how the outcome of an appeal is decided and communicated; and how parties to the proceedings can contribute to more efficiently resolving the appeal. Pilots are expected to commence in spring 2014.

We will continue to integrate new jurisdictions into the two-tier tribunal structure and to work with other government departments to ensure that appeal processes are proportionate to the issues at stake. We will also seek to accommodate the administration of new jurisdictions within the existing estate and using the business centre approach.

We will work with the Department of Communities and Local Government to implement the final provisions of the Mobile Homes Act 2013 in the Property Chamber.

We will work with the Government Equalities Office to implement Equality Pay Audit reforms in the Employment Tribunal's jurisdiction; and with a range of partners and stakeholders to ensure effective post-implementation monitoring and compliance.

We will work with HMRC to increase the capacity of the Tax Chamber to process and decide significantly increased levels of appeals in the First-tier and Upper Tribunal following the government's announcement that accelerated payments will apply to taxpayers who have used tax avoidance schemes subject to the Finance Bill 2014 receiving Royal Assent.

### 2.3.2 Civil and family

In the civil courts we will work in partnership with BIS and the Insolvency Service to plan for the introduction of reforms to the debtor petition bankruptcy process in 2015-16, and to support their plans to make Insolvency Service forms and processes more accessible for the user. We are also supporting the Intellectual Property Office in their work to establish the Unified Patents Court.

We will continue to work with the Home Office to develop the proposals to change anti-social behaviour powers that are currently going through Parliament, and to facilitate the transfer of youth gang-related injunctions from the County Court to the Youth Court.

We will maintain our key role in the cross-government, independently chaired, Family Justice Board. We chair the Board's National Performance Improvement Sub-Group and we are active members of all 46 Local Family Justice Boards. In all of these we work closely with our delivery partners, including Cafcass, CAF/CASS (Cymru), representative bodies of local authorities, the Departments for Education and Health, the Legal Aid Agency and the Welsh Assembly. The judiciary attend as observers at both national and local level.

We will also work closely with Cafcass to identify cross-system efficiencies and the scope for moving to more joined-up processes and technology to improve efficiency and for the benefit of our users.

### 2.3.3 Crime

The Criminal Justice Board was established by the Ministry of Justice in February 2013, chaired by Damian Green MP, Minister of State for Policing, Criminal Justice and Victims. It brings together ministers and chief officers from across the CJS as well as the judiciary (who attend as observers). It advises on Criminal Justice strategy and aims to improve performance across the CJS. The Chief Executive of HM Courts & Tribunals Service is a member of the Board.

We are working with partners across the CJS to develop an IT enabled business change programme, which will enable us all to be more efficient and effective, and deliver a better service for victims, witnesses and defendants. This piece of work will revolutionise how we work together, and therefore it is critical the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), police, National Offender Management Service (NOMS), the defence community and judiciary are engaged in and part of the design and delivery. The first tranche of the project will deliver by 2016, and after that, we hope to explore options for extending it to civil and family courts and the tribunals.

HM Courts & Tribunals Service will continue to work with the Chief Magistrate, magistracy, CPS, police and defence representatives to bring improvements to a number of areas in the summary justice arena. In 2014-15 we will focus on improving first hearing effectiveness, with the aim of ensuring that, where appropriate, a defendant is in a position to enter a guilty plea at that first hearing, and setting a clear framework to support the management of cases to trial where a not guilty plea is entered.

HM Courts & Tribunals Service holds bi-monthly Joint National Improvement Board (JNIB) meetings with the CPS with the aim of working jointly, but independently, to drive up performance in both organisations. JNIB is a national forum for sharing good practice, identifying opportunities to improve performance and developing solutions with frontline colleagues. It is currently focusing on bringing in exemplars of best practice and challenges from across the business to form a basis for its future work implementing recommendations from the CJS Strategy and Action plan.

We will continue to work towards reduction of the outstanding debt owed to government and individuals by increasing fine collection. We are working with HMRC to develop processes to share information between us to enable criminal fines to be more effectively enforced. This follows the implementation of legislation in the Crime and Courts Act 2013.

HM Courts & Tribunals Service is working closely with the Legal Aid Agency (LAA) Crime Change Programme. The Programme's objective is 'to process all criminal legal aid applications and bills in a paperless and electronic environment by April 2015.'

The 'Transfer of Grant' project will, as part of the programme, transfer and centralise the processing of criminal legal aid applications from HM Courts & Tribunals Service to the LAA, aligning process delivery with legal aid fund accountability, and with the aim of improving efficiency and quality.

We are also supporting the wider crime change programme, working closely with LAA on building a link between case management systems to facilitate 'Transfer of Grant' and ensure HM Courts & Tribunals Service retain essential information regarding legal aid status in individual criminal cases.

We are working with the CPS and the police to explore how the recording of data regarding individual victims of hate crime can be improved. Understanding the scale, severity and nature of disability harassment enables better monitoring of the performance of those responsible for dealing with it.

Moj Policy will be working closely with HM Courts & Tribunals Service Equality and Diversity and other agencies to identify gaps in the end-to-end process from charge to sentence. This is to enable effective and consistent flagging of these cases, to ensure the appropriate provision of support is provided to all victims of hate crime.

HM Courts & Tribunals Service will continue to work with our CJS partners to provide support to victims and witnesses when they come to court. Our aim is that victims and witnesses will:

- Be safe and comfortable at court
- Be well informed about their role and what is expected when they come to court
- Have their time valued
- Be appreciated for the vital role they play.

## 2.4 Legislative and procedural rule changes

HM Courts & Tribunals Service is committed to supporting reforms to legislation and updating procedural rules in order to make the legal process more straightforward and transparent. This contributes to the modernisation of the legal system, helping to make courts and tribunals more user friendly and responsive to user needs. The following legislative and procedural rule changes are planned for 2014-15.

### 2.4.1 Tribunals reform

We will work with the Ministry of Justice and the Home Office to implement the operational and legislative changes arising from the Immigration Bill which is expected to receive Royal Assent in May 2014. HM Courts & Tribunals Service will support the reforms of judicial review by embedding the transfer of judicial reviews to the Upper Tribunal, which took place in November 2013 and supporting government reforms to judicial review.

In conjunction with HM Courts & Tribunals Service, the Tribunals Procedure Committee will introduce harmonised rules in the First-tier Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum Chamber) following consultation in 2013-14.

HM Courts & Tribunals Service will work to implement changes to the Gender Recognition Application Process resulting from the introduction of the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013.

We will work with the Department for Education and others to introduce changes to the Special Education Needs Tribunal arising from the Children and Families Bill – this will include the introduction of



mediation awareness sessions prior to the appeal stage, piloting the introduction of childrens' right to appeal and extending appeal rights to child-minding agencies.

#### 2.4.2 Single Civil and Family Courts

The launch of the single County Court will provide HM Courts & Tribunals Service with a greater opportunity to centralise civil processes, thus reducing costs and ensuring we can focus our valuable resources on supporting the judiciary in running court hearings. Similarly, the single Family Court will significantly simplify and improve the family court system for users. It will introduce streamlined and improved case management processes and further strengthen judicial leadership. The new courts will be launched in April following commencement of the provisions in the Crime and Courts Act 2013. Over the year we will be maximising opportunities for reform, including the delegating of responsibility for dealing with non-contested and straightforward divorce cases to trained, legally-qualified staff allowing the judiciary to focus on more complex work areas. This will result in a better justice system.

#### 2.4.3 Family Justice Review

HM Courts & Tribunals Service will maintain a clear focus on working with the judiciary to continue to improving the performance of the family courts and embedding the reforms already made in response to the Family Justice Review. Following introduction of the single Family Court (above), we will continue to work closely with the President of the Family Division to introduce improvements to family court systems and processes and support the President in his ongoing programme of modernisation and culture change.

This includes maintaining the focus on public law process reforms, and working with the judiciary in implementing the new Child Arrangements Programme for private law. Timeliness of care and supervision cases during 2013 has improved significantly (the average duration dropped by 12 weeks between September 2012 and September 2013 - from 48 to 36 weeks), and we fully expect this improvement will continue in 2014-15.

#### 2.4.4 Civil justice reform

We will implement the changes arising from a consultation on transforming bailiff action, and take opportunities to make efficiencies and savings where possible. We will also explore the potential for centralising the administration of charging orders and attachment of earnings orders.

We will implement three further recommendations from the Solving Disputes in the County Court consultation that the government published its response to in February 2012. Specifically to: increase the value of equity claims that can be heard in the county court; increase the financial limit below which non personal injury claims can not be commenced in the High Court; and to give jurisdiction to the County Court to issue freezing orders.

#### 2.4.5 Criminal justice reform

We will work with the judiciary and lead departments on a programme of legislation ensuring that the impact and considerations for HM Courts & Tribunals Service are taken into account. We will work together with CJS agencies and stakeholders in planning the implementation of any new initiatives following from the legislation. We will

provide guidance and best practice to criminal court staff on operational process changes and continue to support the courts and other users in the continuous development and improvement of their business following implementation. The following paragraphs outline some of the specifics we will be focusing on in 2014-15.

We will continue to support the courts and wider criminal justice reform agenda through the passage and implementation of the cross-over Courts and Sentencing Bill due to receive Royal Assent by the end of 2014. This work includes the following:

- Allowing summary offences in certain circumstances to be tried and sentenced by a single magistrate, supported by a legal adviser. This is being done by amendments to section 12 of the Magistrates' Courts Act 1980 (guilty plea by post procedure). The offences include, but are not limited to, summary motoring offences, such as speeding, and summary non-motoring offences such as TV licence and vehicle excise licence evasion.
- Removing the usual procedural requirements for case details to be read aloud by a prosecutor for cases following this process.
- Creating a statutory exception to the obligation to sit in open court for these prescribed cases, including providing greater flexibility as to the date and time at which these cases can be heard.
- Creating a modified requisitioning process, in addition to the current system, which gives the defendant a date by which a response should be made to the court rather than a set hearing date.

Both public bodies (for example the police, CPS, and HMRC) and non-public bodies such as the Television Licensing Organisation, and rail companies may be authorised to prosecute criminal matters using this new procedure.

The new procedure enables decision making by a single magistrate, supported by a legal adviser, and provides for decisions to be made anywhere on HM Courts & Tribunals Service estate.

Single magistrates will have the power to impose a fine to the same extent as a full bench (and any other necessary ancillary orders, such as endorsement of licenses), but not imprisonment.

Consequent modification to the process of Statutory Declarations and re-opening cases.

The Crime and Courts Act 2013 came into force in December 2013 and made explicit the court's existing power to defer passing sentence for up to six months after conviction, to allow for Restorative Justice (RJ) activities by the offender. In collaboration with criminal justice partners and the voluntary sector we will support Pathfinder programmes for RJ across ten Crown Court locations. Following evaluation at the end of 2014, an RJ model will be available for all court locations to adopt by the end of 2014-15.



#### 2.4.6 Youth justice

HM Courts & Tribunals Service will work with NOMS and the Youth Justice Board to utilise video technology better for those aged 17 and under who are in custody, reducing the need to travel to and from court and increasing the input by support services for those in custody. We will work with HM Young Offenders Institute (YOI) Feltham and the Youth Justice Board with the aim of developing a model for the use of video technology by spring 2014, with the aim of this being in place in other YOIs by the end of the year.

We will work, with the guidance of the judiciary, to complete the pilot of Section 28 of the Youth Justice Criminal Evidence Act 1999 to enable pre-recorded cross examination and re-examination in cases involving vulnerable witnesses; this will be in addition to the existing provision for a video recording to be admitted as evidence in chief. Witnesses will be eligible for the Section 28 pilots if they:

- Are under the age of 16 at the time of the special measures hearing; or
- Suffer from a mental disorder within the meaning of the Mental Health Act 1983; or
- Have a significant impairment of intelligence and social functioning; or
- Have a physical disability or a physical disorder, and the quality of their evidence is likely to be diminished as a consequence.

The pilots are based at Leeds, Liverpool and Kingston-upon-Thames Crown Courts. Following completion of the pilots we will work with the Ministry of Justice and criminal justice partners to evaluate the operation of the pilot to allow ministers to make decisions on if and how full commencement of this provision should be taken forward.

### High Level Business Plan Roadmap

	April 2014	May 2014	June 2014	July 2014	August 2014	September 2014	October 2014	November 2014	December 2014	January 2015	February 2015	March 2015
Supporting an independent judiciary	Deployment of 'e-Judiciary'											
	Delivery of SPJ Case Management Initiative						Delivery of Disclosure review recommendations					
Developing our staff	'Business Acumen' & 'Leading and Managing Change development' launched											
	Continuance of Apprenticeships, leadership programmes and National Future Leaders scheme											
HMCTS Reform	[Timeline bars for HMCTS Reform]											
Using technology	Secure bulk data transfer											
	Further bulk printing											
	Extension of Payment by Account service											
	New Magistrates rota system											
	Review of Video link utilisation											
Tribunals	Increased digitalisation of criminal courts and administrative functions - Unified criminal case management system											
	Introduce recommendations from First tier review											
	Final provisions of Mobile Homes Act 2013											
	Implement Equality Pay Audit											
	Implement Gender Recognition Application process											
	Royal Assent Immigration Bill											
Civil & Family	Implement operational legislative changes of the Immigration Bill											
	Introduce changes to the Special Needs tribunal - Children and Families Bill											
	Implementation of Closer Working arrangements with Cafcass											
	Single County & Family Court											
	Implement the Planning Court											
	Maximise Single County and Family Court opportunities											
	Implement a centralised Small Claims Mediation Service, and scope further opportunities to demonstrate the benefits of mediation											
	Work with Department for Business, Innovation and Skills to support planning for Unified Patent Court, improve processes for handling insolvency claims, and 'scope opportunity for improving our service to business users											
	Implement statutory requirement to dispose of most care and supervision cases within 26 weeks											
	Develop proposals to change Anti-Social behaviour powers											
	Scope and deliver improvements to IT interface for civil court users through the Civil Exemplar											
	Crime	Implement Child arrangements programme for Private Law										
Embed the changes to certificated bailiffs introduced in the Tribunals and Courts Enforcement Act; and deliver a programme of improvement work with county court bailiffs												
Implement the remaining recommendations from the solving disputes consultation												
Identified bidder for CESP project												
Work with colleagues across CJS in the delivery of the Transforming the CJS - Strategy and Action Plan												
Legal Aid Transfer of Grant project												
Collaborating and support of the Courts and Sentencing Bill (Royal Assent end 2014)												
Introduction of Pathfinder programme for Restorative Justice												
Completion of pilot of Section 28 - Youth Justice evidence Act												
Refocus on 'Every Witness Matters' strategy												



