



HM Courts &
Tribunals Service

HM Courts & Tribunals Service Business Plan 2013-14

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HM Courts & Tribunals Service Business Plan

2013-14

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Introduction

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

We are pleased to introduce the 2013-14 Business Plan for HM Courts & Tribunals Service.

Courts and tribunals are at the centre of the justice system and the public rely on access to them to enforce their rights and to uphold the rule of law. Despite a difficult financial background and a reducing budget, we are delighted to see that HM Courts & Tribunals Service intends to press ahead with innovations and improvements across all the jurisdictions, seeking to improve the service that our courts and tribunals provide.

For 2013-14 HM Courts & Tribunals Service has three major priorities.

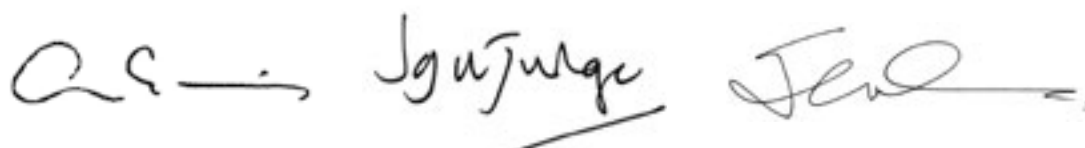
First, HM Courts & Tribunals Service continues to develop its long-term strategy to transform the way in which it presently supports the courts and tribunal system, in terms of the buildings it occupies, the centralisation of

much of the work it undertakes and in a better use of information technology.

Secondly, the organisation is looking to increase efficiency. Not only is this necessary at a time of austerity but we believe that it is also the right thing to do. We are confident that all the staff will rise to the challenge this presents.

Thirdly, HM Courts & Tribunals Service will be looking at ways to improve its links with those with whom the organisation works, thereby offering a better, more joined up service to its various users.

We look forward to continuing our support of HM Courts & Tribunals Service to enable it to support the efficient and effective administration of justice in our courts and tribunals.



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

The Rt Hon Lord Judge
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

Since HM Courts & Tribunals Service brought the administration of justice into one organisation for the first time two years ago, staff across the agency have worked tirelessly with our partners to bring about a more efficient and effective service for our users. We start our third year building on this strong foundation. We remain committed to a culture of continuous improvement, and we will make further change to deliver better for the public we serve.

The financial context is challenging but improving the way we deliver our services should in any case be an underlying principle for us all. This business plan sets out our priorities for the year ahead, both for our day-to-day services and our strategy to ensure that we can continue to do so in a sustainable way in the future.

Working across the justice system with partners and stakeholders will continue to be critical to improving what we deliver. A new Criminal Justice Board brings together Ministers and chief officers from across the criminal justice system, and we will continue to work with the Police and the Crown Prosecution Service to develop solutions to our joint challenges. We will also work closely with family and civil courts and tribunals stakeholders to take forward crucial work in those areas.

Our relationship with our judicial partners is at the heart of what we do, both locally and at a strategic level. Through close working, open lines of communication and joint accountability at board

level, this partnership has become the foundation of many of the innovations that have transformed courts and tribunals. This year we will continue to support our judicial partners in their work on early guilty pleas and the establishment of a single county court and a single family court, and I look forward to further embedding the strong links we have built.

In the next financial year we will continue to drive to make better use of technology – for example, by expanding the use of video links to reduce court visits and developing and promoting online services. We will continue to improve the efficiency of our services and we will move closer to full cost recovery in the civil and family courts and in tribunals. At the same time, we will look hard at a strategic level at the way in which the public interacts with the courts and tribunals system to ensure our business is delivering for its users.

All of these priorities will be delivered through the efforts of the people who work on the frontline of the agency. Our staff are our strength and I want HM Courts & Tribunals Service to be an organisation of which people are proud to be a part. I continue to be hugely grateful for their commitment and hard work.

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

Peter Handcock CBE
Chief Executive of HM Courts & Tribunals Service

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, sets out our aim and five key strategic objectives for the agency; namely:

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

1.1.1 This plan sets out the business priorities for HM Courts & Tribunals Service and outlines how we will deliver these for the year 2013-14.

1.1.2 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.

1.1.3 We provide the 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.

1.1.4 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 around rationalisation and reform of the court estate and wider criminal justice system; and additionally, delivering front-line services which are transparent, accountable and provided at a lower cost.

1.1.5 By the start of the period covered by this 2013-14 Business Plan all aspects of the HM Courts & Tribunals Service implementation programme will be complete¹. The implementation has included a complete review of business priorities and resource requirements and its successful completion has put HM Courts & Tribunals Service on a sound footing for the ongoing development and implementation of its strategic vision, which will form the focus of change activity during 2013-14.

1.2 Equality and Diversity

1.2.1 HM Courts & Tribunals Service is bound by the statutory requirements set out in the Equality Act 2010. We promote equality and eliminate unlawful discrimination in the way we deliver our services and act as an employer. Our anticipatory duty aligned to the Act and our commitment to this is demonstrated through the mandatory equality and diversity training our staff undertake annually and by listening to the needs of our diverse customer base and responding to their needs.

1.3 Supporting an independent judiciary in the administration of justice

1.3.1 This is one of our primary objectives which we will pursue in 2013-14 by:

¹Refer to the 2012-13 annual report for detail on the transformation undergone by HM Courts & Tribunals Service during that period (due for publication in July 2013).

- Supporting the Senior Presiding Judge in his work to establish efficient early guilty plea schemes at all Crown Courts across England and Wales with implementation in London and the final seven Crown Court areas completed by March 2013. Following this there will be a requirement to support areas in raising the volume of cases going through the early guilty plea scheme. A joint approach with the Crown Prosecution Service and judicial office is planned throughout 2013-14;
- Continuing work to establish a single county court in 2014-15;
- Continuing to work closely with the judiciary to implement the single family court in 2014-15 and maintain momentum in delivering against the recommendations of the Family Justice Review;
- Working in partnership with the senior judiciary in the Civil and Family Business Authorities and their counterpart tribunal jurisdictional boards provides an essential element of governance and assurance to performance management, procedural and process changes in the civil, family and tribunal jurisdictions;
- Supporting the judiciary with the development of training and guidance on new processes or legislative changes; and
- Continuing judicial membership of key project and jurisdictional oversight boards will ensure that the reform agenda safeguards judicial independence, and access to justice, as well as maximising system-wide efficiencies.

1.4 Developing our staff

1.4.1 To meet our objectives it is vital that we have a motivated workforce equipped with the skills that they need to succeed. To achieve this in 2013-14 we will:

- Ensure that support and learning is available to raise skill levels through effective use of development plans; and a review of how training needs are identified, collected and provided for. To support this the skills matrix and learning needs process will be refreshed and re-launched in April 2013;
- Support the Ministry of Justice review of capability which was undertaken in March 2012. This resulted in the launch of the three year People Plan and a Capability Action Plan to make sure we have the right skills for current roles, and the right skills for the future;
- Continue to ensure that there is sufficient local resource to deliver business skills training through identification, training and support of a network of Business Skills Trainers and Coaches. A Business Skills Trainers Academy will be set up and available from May 2013;
- Ensure the effective delivery of business skills through a blended approach of learning solutions which best meet the needs of HM Courts & Tribunals Service. This includes conversion of some business skills training to either e-learning or computer-based training; the development of supporting handbooks and guidance; and the development of a Learning and Development toolkit (due to commence in April 13);

- Remain committed to the ongoing development of the Operational Delivery Profession through continued enrolment of staff onto business specific National Vocational Qualifications and apprenticeships. This builds capability and delivers on the Government's Skills Pledge, raises capability and performance of operational staff and equips them with professional skills that will improve public service to our customers; and
- Embed the new Civil Service staff performance management system that will introduce in April 2013 three levels of performance across all grades below the senior civil service.

1.5 Savings information 2013-14:

- 1.5.1 HM Courts & Tribunals Service is on target to achieve more than £300m of savings required over the four years to 2014-15.
- 1.5.2 Our approach to finding further savings for 2013-14 has been to continue to bear down on overhead costs and to make sure that resources for the front line match workload demands. We have further reduced the cost of HQ and continued to achieve savings through the successful programme to close under-utilised court buildings. Delivery Directors are putting in place plans that will target resources in ways that match changing workloads at local level, so that HM Courts & Tribunals Service can continue to deliver priorities and provide effective access to justice.

1.6 Resources

- 1.6.1 Our strategic objectives enable us to prioritise how we spend our resource budget. Table 1 shows the planned distribution of allocation across regions.

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

	2012-13	2013-14
Gross Expenditure	£m	£m
London region	278.25	262.7
South East region	119.14	114.9
South West region	68.39	66.1
Wales	55.91	58.6
Midlands region	136.25	135.4
North West region	115.60	111.7
North East region	113.98	107.7
Tribunals Scotland	25.48	27.6
Centralised frontline	61.02	58.5
Central estates	259.83	246.3
HQ ¹	376.95	358.4
Total Expenditure	1,610.80	1547.9
Less: Income	-567.13	-565.0

- 1.6.2 As part of the Ministry of Justice's Open Data Strategy and the Government's Transparency Agenda, over the coming year we will publish information about the operation of the courts and tribunals to assist the public in understanding how we are performing. These indicators, listed in table 2 below, will identify service inputs and the impact on our performance. Table 2 also sets out what we will deliver with our resources by setting out anticipated workload levels for the courts and tribunals.

¹Includes Non Voted Consolidated Fund and Enforcement (Higher Judiciary Salaries).

Table 2 - HM Courts & Tribunals Service 2013-14 workloads, resources and indicators

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

Workload indicators	Input indicators	Impact indicators
Crown Court		
Receipts – All cases: 129,214 ² Of which: Trial cases: 77,712	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff and judicial cost per sitting day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of weeks it takes, on average, to commence³ trial cases from receipt in the Crown Court
Magistrates' Court		
Completed proceedings: 1,465,887 ⁴ Of which: Indictable: 381,338 Summary 1,084,549	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff and judicial cost per sitting day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of weeks it takes, on average, to complete⁴ all cases from first listing The number of working days it takes, on average, to result court registers <p>For financial penalties:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Amount of cash collected Outstanding balance in arrears % of accounts closed or compliant within 12months of the imposition month.
Tribunals⁵		
Receipts – all tribunals: 921,360 Of which: Social Security and Child Support (a jurisdiction within the Social Entitlement Chamber of the First-tier Tribunal): 593,166 Employment: 177,389 Immigration and Asylum: (First & Upper Tier) 74,360 Mental Health : 31,949 Other: 44,496	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The cost of tribunals (judicial and administrative) Total tribunals costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of weeks it takes, on average, to dispose of cases across each of the largest four jurisdictions: Social Security and Child Support (a jurisdiction within the Social Entitlement Chamber of the First-tier Tribunal) Employment Immigration and Asylum Mental Health

² Source: Forecasting & Modelling Development Unit (FMDU) forecasts.

³ 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.

⁴ Cases are completed in the magistrates' courts either when they are disposed of or are transferred to the Crown Court.

⁵ Source: Forecasts from originating agencies (1) as at 13 Feb 2013 for SSCS, Mental Health and other tribunals; and (2) as at 7 March 2013 for Employment and Immigration & Asylum

Civil and Family Justice ⁶		
Civil courts All cases: 1,441,483 Money claims: 1,080,162 Repossession: 214,085 Other civil: 116,948 Insolvency: 30,288	• Staff and judicial cost per sitting day	Civil – The number of weeks it takes, on average, to hear cases from when the claim was received at court
Receipts – All cases: 201,445 of which: Adoption: 11,109 Public Law: 14,897 Private Law: 44,784 Family Law Act: 15,500 Divorce: 115,155		Family ⁷ – The number of weeks it takes, on average, to achieve a final outcome for the child in care and supervision cases
Corporate and other Financial Indicators		
The number of complaints recorded by HM Courts & Tribunals Service		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The percentage of complaints concluded by the first tier in HM Courts & Tribunals Service • The average number of days it takes to finalise the answering of complaints • All spending and contracts over £25,000 		

⁶ Source: Forecasting & Modelling Development Unit (FMDU) forecasts.

⁷ These measures along with measures from the Legal Services Commission and the CAFCASS form part of a cross system measurement framework

section 2

Business Priorities

Our priorities for 2013-14:

1. Establishing our long term vision
2. Increasing efficiency and reducing cost
3. Working with justice system partners to increase performance

2.1. Establishing our long term vision

2.1.1 Now that the HM Courts & Tribunals Service implementation process is complete we are focused on developing our long-term vision and delivery strategy. On 26 March 2013 the Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice made a Written Ministerial Statement where he announced that he was exploring proposals for the reform of the resourcing and administration of courts and tribunals. This developing work will form the basis of the future strategy for HMCTS.

2.1.2 The key principles that inform the developing strategy are to:

- Continue reform of our estate including increasing hearing room utilisation across all jurisdictions and to ensure that our capacity is increasingly aligned to the workload we receive;
- Ensure that future services we develop or commission have continuous improvement and Lean principles at their heart. This means a continued focus on the needs of

our customers and users as well as on cost effectiveness;

- Increase efficiency through improvement in use of our current assets, operating procedures and new technologies to enable join-up and efficiency; and
- Continue to deliver and expand an outstanding service to users through our business centres in a new and innovative way, ensuring they are consistent and accessible, whilst delivering value for money.

2.2. Increasing efficiency and reducing cost

2.2.1 Embedding continuous improvement

- The HM Courts & Tribunals Service Business Plan places continuous improvement at the heart of how we manage our work (utilising 'Lean' tools and techniques). This approach places the customer, and their needs, at the front of service delivery and design. It is ambitious but transformational, and whilst it takes a long time to establish a 'true' continuous improvement culture the organisation has made significant improvements across the board and is well placed to build on this success going forward. We invest in building the capability of staff and leaders, map our processes end-to-end in order to identify areas of 'waste', drive consistency and improvement to the levels of service, review our performance measures, and have developed a maturity tool to assess our continuous improvement maturity.

- Plans are being developed to harmonise the tribunal judicial boundaries with the regional structures across HM Courts & Tribunals Service. Aligning these boundaries will deliver operational and strategic benefits for HM Courts & Tribunals Service in the future. Options will be discussed in 2013-14.
- We will continue to work with court and business centres to make process improvements which enable increased efficiency. Measures taken so far include: replacement of affidavits in family courts; introduction of bulk printing to social security tribunals; and development of bulk printing plans for civil and family work.

2.2.2 Reforming our estate

The formation of HM Courts & Tribunals Service has enabled greater flexibility within the courts and tribunals estates to respond to the challenges we face. To this end, during 2013-14 we will:

- Continue to deliver estate reform to ensure that we operate an effective and efficient courts and tribunal service; this will see us progress with the next phase of Court Estate Rationalisation Programme announced in 2010;
- Continue to increase the utilisation of our courts and tribunals to ensure capacity is aligned to workload, and consideration be given to further opportunities for reform of the estate; and
- Continue to move work that does not require judicial intervention into business centres, to streamline front offices as hearing centres which focus on supporting the judiciary.

2.2.3 Business Centre working – centralising and standardising to increase efficiency

2.2.3.1 National Business Centres

- In 2013-14 we will deliver further performance gains in our existing business centres through improving processes. We will share experience across the business centres to find better and more effective ways to deliver common functions and will seek further technology to aid key functions like post opening and fee taking.
- A Direct Lodgement Business Centre will be established in 2013-14 to implement Section 102 of the Welfare Reform Act. This will require Social Security and Child Support appeals (a jurisdiction within the Social Entitlement Chamber of the First-tier Tribunal) to be lodged directly with HM Courts & Tribunals Service. We will ensure lessons from previous business centre start ups are learnt to ensure the centre is in the best possible position from day one.
- In 2013-14, we will introduce a mechanism for the electronic transfer of cases for our civil bulk customers, which will allow system to system transfer of information for claims. This will improve efficiency by removing manual processes for both our staff and our customers. It will allow additional customers to use our services and also provide updated and current technology to our largest customers.
- We will continue to build our contact centre network. A fully functioning cross jurisdictional contact centre has been established with performance now consistently high. Further centralisation of contact is being actively pursued in both civil, family and tribunal jurisdictions. Compliance and Enforcement Services will extend their compliance contact

centre model which currently operates successfully in two regions.

- We continue to evaluate a range of alternative models for the future collection of criminal fines, compliance and enforcement services. During 2013, following appropriate approval and endorsement, we will implement delivery of the agreed business model.
- 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 existing estate and using the business centre approach.

2.2.4 Scaling our capacity to match demand and make savings

- We will release Immigration and Asylum efficiency savings to reflect the reducing appeal volumes whilst improving our customer experience through the efficient and speedy delivery of justice. Where possible we will free up capacity to enable HM Courts & Tribunals Service to make the most effective use of its estate.
- We will increase Social Security and Child Support capacity to match demand. The workload in the Social Security and Child Support tribunal (a jurisdiction within the Social Entitlement Chamber of the First-tier Tribunal) is expected to increase further in 2013-14, with 570,000 appeals forecast (up from 515,000 2012-13).

2.2.5 Utilising technology effectively

2.2.5.1 Video technology

- As part of the criminal justice system efficiency programme HM Courts & Tribunals Service plays a key role in the priority of increasing the use of video links. We are working with criminal justice system partners to maximise the use of the video technology that we have invested in over recent years and to use it to reduce costs and increase efficiency across the criminal justice system.
- Opportunities for the use of video technology continue to be developed including allowing police witnesses to give video evidence, defendants to appear by video from police custody and video links for victims and witnesses. In particular increased use for witnesses will reduce the inconvenience and distress of the witness experience.
- A comprehensive upgrade has taken place to ensure every Crown Court has the equipment and facilities available to provide police cell video links. This initiative will continue in 2013-14 supporting an incremental increase in facilities available and also to drive an increase in system usage.
- Video technology is also being used in civil and tribunal cases such as giving evidence from abroad in War Pensions appeals and from detention centres in Immigration Appeals bail cases.
- We will continue to invest in more video technology where appropriate and work with other criminal justice system agencies to ensure that the amount of technology keeps pace with the demand placed on it from justice system partners.

2.2.5.2 Electronic transfer and electronic working

- In 2013-14, we will have introduced a bulk data transfer mechanism for our civil bulk customers to allow them to submit claims, requests for warrants and judgements in a modern digital manner.
- We will continue supporting the criminal justice system efficiency programme to deliver a move to digital working throughout 2013-14. We aim to move towards paperless processes within the courtroom and work closely with our criminal justice partners leading to efficiency savings and more efficient ways of working.
- We will support the delivery of digital working in magistrates' and Crown Courts including processes for transferring and storing data, presenting evidence in the courtroom and access to networks for professional users of the courts.
- We will work with the Legal Services Commission following the introduction of Crime On Line in April 2013 to begin digitalisation of the processing of the legal aid applications. This will enable legal aid applications to be sent on line directly to magistrates' courts for consideration in circumstances where supporting evidence is not required. From October 2013 the aim will be for data to transfer from the on line application straight into MAAT (the Legal Services Commission's IT system) thereby removing the need for data entry.

2.2.5.3 Maintenance and improvement of existing case management systems

- We will continue to maintain and support existing case management applications within civil, family and tribunals whilst

progressing initiatives that support the strategy of increased digital working within civil business. The main legislative requirements in 2013-14 in regard to case management will be the introduction of Employment Tribunal Fees and direct lodgement in Social Security and Child Support Tribunal (a jurisdiction within the Social Entitlement Chamber of the First-tier Tribunal).

- Analysis is taking place to support redevelopment of the civil claims systems (Possession Claims On-Line and Money Claims On-Line) as one of the Ministry of Justice's digital by default exemplars. By March 2015, we aim to provide a much improved on-line service for our customers. Through these systems we will encourage greater use of digital channels and reduce the dependency on paper at our business centres. This work will include providing improved accessibility and improved payment channels for users of the County Court Money Claims Centre.

2.2.6 Moving towards full cost recovery

2.2.6.1 Employment Tribunal fees

- The Government response to the Employment Fees Consultation was published in July 2012. Plans have been developed to ensure introduction of fee-charging mechanisms for Employment Tribunals and the Employment Appeal Tribunal by the summer of 2013. In implementing this ministerial priority as part of the employment reform agenda, we will collect fees and process remission applications centrally, alleviating pressures on frontline offices. We will also aim to increase digital channels, enhancing user access and ensuring further efficiencies for the system.

2.2.7 Promoting early settlement

- Early conciliation proposals will incentivise settlement of workplace disputes outside the Employment Tribunal helping to maximise proportionate dispute resolution. The proposals are currently before Parliament in the Enterprise & Regulatory Reform Bill (led by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills) and, subject to Parliamentary process, it is envisaged that the scheme will come into effect from early 2014.
- We introduced the small claims mediation automatic referral pilot in December 2012 which is informing plans for the introduction of mediation referral in all small claims cases. This pilot will continue into 2013-14.

2.3. Working with other justice system partners to increase performance

2.3.1 Civil and family

- In the civil courts we will continue to work closely with the Department for Business, Innovation, and Skills and their agencies on a number of areas, specifically effectiveness of enforcement, debtor petition reform (through the Insolvency Service) and the changes to patents courts (with Intellectual Property Office). We will work closely with Department for Work and Pensions in assessing the impact of Universal Credit with particular reference to court fee remissions.
- At national level HM Courts & Tribunals Service is a key member of the cross-Government, independently-chaired Family Justice Board, and chairs its Performance Improvement Sub-Group. Delivery partners include the Children and Family Court

Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS), CAFCASS (Cymru), representative bodies of local authorities, the Departments for Education and of Health, the Legal Services Commission, and the Welsh Government. We will maintain and improve close contacts in order to increase the effectiveness of the Family Justice system. More locally, we are also a member of the 46 Local Family Justice Boards across England and Wales. The judiciary attend as observers at both levels.

- We will continue to investigate the feasibility of online submission of private law applications in Family cases with the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service to enable faster and more efficient processing of cases.

2.3.2 Tribunals

- We will continue to work with colleagues in the Ministry of Justice, the Scottish Government, the Welsh Government, the Northern Ireland Executive and the judiciary in those areas, to ensure the effective delivery of tribunal business in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and any change to that business which is agreed.
- The Immigration and Asylum Tribunal will work with the UK Border Agency to review and implement improvements to the end-to-end appeals system. We will be jointly taking forward the appeals improvement plan which brings together a number of activities which will deliver efficiencies and savings. These activities are identified by holding continuous improvement and problem solving workshops with the UK Border Agency to review current processes and identify improvements that are subsequently introduced.

- The Employment Tribunal will work closely with the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service and the Department for Business, Innovation, and Skills and will prepare for the future implementation of early conciliation in a way that maximises benefit for users.
- The Social Security and Child Support Tribunal (a jurisdiction within the Social Entitlement Chamber of the First-tier Tribunal) will work with the Department for Work and Pensions to implement Section 102 of the Welfare Reform Act 2012 in April 2013. This will require benefit claimants to go through an improved process of mandatory reconsideration by Department for Work and Pensions decision makers, before applying direct to the tribunal, at a national lodgement centre, where a dispute remains. Registration of appeals at a national centre will free up resource in the existing processing centres to deal with the increased workload.
- We will continue to work closely with the Department for Work and Pensions to respond to the operational impacts of the Government's welfare reform agenda. This will be specifically important following the changes to the current Disability Living Allowance system and the introduction of Universal Credit from April 2013. Neither change is expected to produce significant changes in workload for the Tribunal in 2013-14.
- We will continue close working with other Government departments across the full range of mutual activity such as improving the end to end process for handling special educational needs appeals.

2.3.3 Crime

- A new Criminal Justice Board was established by the Ministry of Justice in February 2013, chaired by Damian Green MP. It brings together Ministers and chief officers from across the Criminal Justice System as well as the judiciary (who attend the Criminal Justice Board as observers). It advises on Criminal Justice Strategy and aims to improve performance across the Criminal Justice System. The Chief Executive of HM Courts & Tribunals Service attends as a member of the Board.
- HM Courts & Tribunals Service officials will hold quarterly Joint National Improvement Board meetings with the Crown Prosecution Service with the aim of working jointly to drive up performance in both organisations. The Joint National Improvement Board will also be a national forum for sharing good practice, identifying areas of concern relating to performance and developing solutions with frontline colleagues.
- We will implement Schedule 3 of the Criminal Justice Act 2003 which abolishes the committal process in the magistrates' court. We will issue publicity for the defence community and carry out a series of best practice workshops.
- We will embed the judicial led Early Guilty Plea Scheme and case management initiative across the Crown Court estate by supporting areas to raise the volume of cases going through the scheme. A joint approach with the Crown Prosecution Service and Judicial office is planned throughout 2013-14.

Both the above initiatives are designed to reduce costs per case and reduce the resources each agency need to commit per case. In addition we will:

- Work with the police, Crown Prosecution Service and HM Courts & Tribunals Service operational teams to identify areas of the system, across both criminal jurisdictions, where cross criminal justice service performance can be improved;
- Develop protocols for joint working between HM Courts & Tribunals Service, Crown Prosecution Service and National Offender Management Service – specifically protocols for custody time limits and Production of category A Prisoners;
- Continue to work towards reduction of the outstanding debt owed to Government by increasing fine collection. We will develop possibilities to establish new data sharing opportunities with HM Revenue and Customs and Legal Services Commission and extend existing data sharing with Department for Work and Pensions to increase intelligence in order to reduce the debt owed to Government and increase the compliance rate; and
- Explore with the Crown Prosecution Service the opportunities for more efficient and effective ways of sharing data, managing workflow and recording the outcome of case hearings. This will deliver cost savings, increase efficient and effective working practices and support the HM Courts & Tribunals Service target operating model and estates reform.

Annex A:

Legislative and procedural rule changes

- HM Courts & Tribunals Service is committed to changing 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 more user friendly and responsive to customer needs. The following legislative and procedural rule changes are planned for 2013-14:
- HM Courts & Tribunals Service also works within the cross-agency governance of the Family Justice Board, and in close conjunction with the significant programme of judicial modernisation, culture change and training. The timeliness in which care and supervision cases are concluded improved during 2012: the average duration fell by more than six weeks between January and September, and further improvement will be seen in 2013-14.

A.1 Civil and family courts

- The single family court will drive further improvement through better gate-keeping, more judicial flexibility, clearer judicial leadership, improved business efficiency, and a better court user experience.
- The single county court will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the civil justice system by enabling further centralisation of certain administrative functions, improving case allocation and the transfer processes and ensuring better use of administrative and judicial resources.

A.2 Family Justice Review

- In 2013-14 we will continue the implementation of our response to the Family Justice Review. Additional resources will again be allocated to the family courts; management information systems will be further improved and a strong management focus maintained through regional planning.

A.3 Civil Justice reforms

- We will manage the effective implementation of civil justice reforms, ensuring that policy changes stemming from proposals such as those made in 'Jackson' and 'Solving Disputes' are introduced into the courts in a practical and cost neutral way, and taking any opportunities to make efficiencies and savings as we do so. We will explore the options for the centralisation of civil enforcement administration.

A.4 Tribunals

- The Immigration and Asylum Tribunal will plan for the legislative proposal in the Courts and Crime Bill which removes Family Visitor appeal rights, review appeal fees pricing and update the remissions policy following the removal of legal aid in April 2012. These changes will reduce workloads in the jurisdiction and we will review the current delivery model to

identify the most effective future model. The work will be completed by October 2013.

- We will implement Immigration and Asylum procedural rule changes made following the Tribunals Procedure Committee consultation on harmonising the current rules with the First-tier Tribunal Chamber structure. This will be an opportunity to introduce new ways of working which should enable appeals to be processed more quickly and efficiently. We aim to have the new rules drafted and agreed by October 2013.
- We will introduce in 2013-14 new simplified procedure rules for Employment Tribunals, following the fundamental review led by Mr Justice Underhill and the subsequent consultation led by the Department for Business, Innovation & Skills. The new rules are expected to be introduced in 2013.

A.5 Criminal Justice reform

- We will continue to support the courts and wider criminal justice reform agenda through implementation of the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (April 2013) including:

- o **Magistrates' fines powers (s85-87)**

The provisions that allow for the creation of unlimited fines in the magistrates' court and changes in current fine levels – five affirmative resolution orders are required and a large number of offences are potentially affected by the changes;

- o **Deductions from Prison earnings (s129);**

- o **Out of court disposals (s132-138);**

- o **Rehabilitation of Offender Act Reforms (s139-141)**

Implementation of the Rehabilitation of Offender Act reforms depend on putting in place the infrastructure necessary to provide basic disclosure certificates that can reflect the new legislation in England and Wales and this is under discussion at present;

- o Supporting the implementation of Section 3 and Section 14 of the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012, which deal with applications to retain use of fingerprints/ DNA/physical evidence. Section 3 comes into force in spring 2013, Section 14 implementation date is to be confirmed;

- o Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 – Powers of Entry provisions – dealing with the implementation issues where powers of entry require the authorisation of the courts; and

- o Social Services and Well Being Bill (Wales) – this draft Bill contains provisions (s105) that introduce powers of entry in the form of an Adult Protection and Support Order.

A.6 Youth justice

- We are engaging with the Youth Justice Board and Ministry of Justice youth justice policy leads responding positively to the changes being brought in by new legislation and policy decisions to rationalise the youth custody estate. Our overall aim is to increase the efficiency and quality of how young people are dealt with at court.
- We will work with the Ministry of Justice to consider the implementation of Section 28 of the Youth Justice Criminal Evidence Act 1999 to enable pre-recorded cross examination and re-examination to be shown as evidence at trial in cases involving vulnerable or intimidated witnesses; this will be in addition to the existing provision for a video recording to be admitted as evidence in chief.

A.7 Broadcasting proceedings in the Court of Appeal

- Subject to Parliamentary approval of the Courts and Crime Bill work will begin in 2013-14 to implement the filming of certain proceedings. This forms part of the Government's transparency agenda and is aimed at increasing knowledge, understanding and confidence in the justice system. We will work with the Ministry of Justice and judiciary to contract broadcasters to film and broadcast certain proceedings in accordance with the legislation. We will be testing the technology and processes in the first half of the year and plan to start allowing broadcasting from October 2013 subject to successful passage of primary legislation in the Crime, Communications & Courts Bill in autumn 2012 of provisions that remove restrictions on filming in court.

