



HM Courts &
Tribunals Service

Justice matters

Assessment Report

Findings from the TV Licensing Pilot of the
behaviourally redesigned Single Justice
Procedure Notice

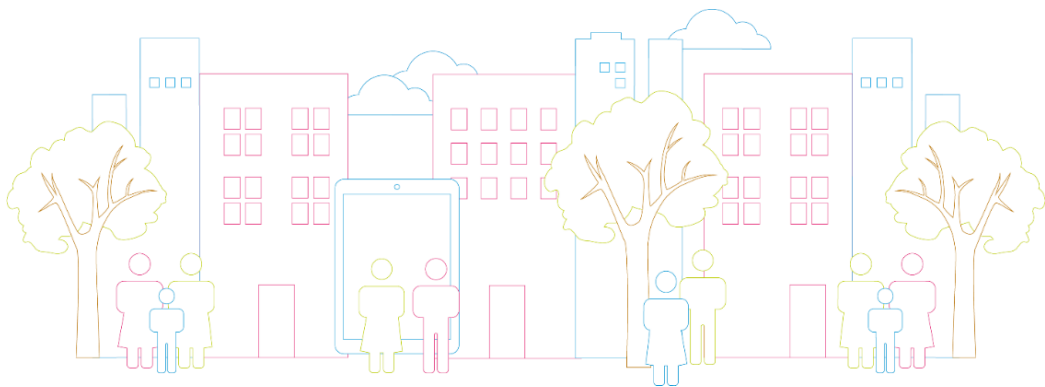
User Experience and Insight

April 2020



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Summary

This assessment report summarises key findings and recommendations from a pilot which trialled the redesigned Single Justice Procedure Notice (SJPN) with TV Licensing in the Midlands region between January and February 2020.

Key findings

- There was an increase in overall engagement rates from 21% to 27%, which is the highest ever recorded in the Midlands region.
- The implementation of the redesigned SJPN in the Midlands region caused a shift in the defendants' preferred channel type, from postal to online. Prior to the pilot only a quarter of those who engaged chose to plea online, whereas during the pilot over half of the defendants pleaded online.
- There was a substantial increase (47 percentage points) in the number of online pleas in the Midlands region over and above the increase of online plea numbers in all other regions
- There was a substantial decrease (41 percentage points) in the number of postal pleas in the Midlands region.
- Prior to the pilot on average 90% of defendants who engaged pleaded guilty whereas after the implementation of the redesigned SJPN the proportion decreased to an average of 85%. The proportion of 'not guilty' pleas has increased from 9% to 15%.
- The sample included in this report showed that 99% of the financial means form were returned, an increase of 16 percentage points. There was also an improvement in the amount of financial information provided by defendants.
- A large proportion of returned plea forms complied with machine reading requirements.
- There was no impact on call volumes to the Courts & Tribunal Service Centre (CTSC).

Key recommendations

Primary recommendation

Based on the findings presented in this assessment report, it is recommended that TV Licensing adopt the redesigned SJPN template in all other regions as they migrate to bulk scanning. Additionally, we recommend that all prosecutors adopt the redesigned SJPN.

Further secondary recommendations

- The findings indicated that small changes are needed to support machine reading.
- Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS) should monitor the effects of the redesigned SJPN template to flag up any problems/issues that might not have been captured by this pilot.

Introduction

Background

The Single Justice Procedure (SJP) applies to cases involving adults charged with summary-only¹ non-imprisonable offences. The purpose of the SJP is to deal more proportionately with minor criminal offences, such as speeding and TV licence evasion, which almost exclusively result in a financial penalty. It allows cases to be dealt with by a single magistrate on the basis of the papers alone without either party having to attend court for a hearing. Defendants can manage their cases in writing.

An adult charged with a summary-only non-imprisonable offence receives a single justice procedure notice (SJPN) detailing who has brought the case against them, how to make a plea (either guilty or not guilty), and if they can make a plea online.

However, approximately 80% of defendants fail to make a plea before the deadline set out in the SJPN. In addition, more defendants choose to submit a postal plea rather than use the online plea services.

Improving engagement using behavioural insight

To improve engagement rates before the deadline, and to encourage the use of online plea services, we (HMCTS) commissioned a review of the SJPN template. After gathering feedback from a range of stakeholders and experts², we created a template aimed to better meet user needs, encourage defendants to plead, and provide a standardised template that will be easier to process by prosecutors and us.

The redesigned content of the SJPN template included behavioural techniques to leverage engagement, clear reminders and prompts to encourage defendants to plead online, and used language and layout that makes it easier to understand and fill in. The redesigned SJPN pack included (see Annex A for examples):

1. **Cover letter** offering an easy to understand introduction to the notice
2. **SJP notice** clearly outlining the charge and statements of facts, and plea options
3. **Paper plea form** which consists of two parts:
 - a. SJPN100 includes personal details, plea, mitigating evidence, court hearing
 - b. MC100 includes financial information (e.g. income, benefits, outgoings)
4. **Leaflet** explaining the key information with regards to the SJP notice/process

¹ Summary offences are tried in a magistrates' court and tend to be minor offences with limited sentencing powers.

² Feedback was gathered from: Public User Engagement event (November 2018 and November 2019), SJPN user research, DVEP – Defendants Voice Engagement Panel (April 19, July 19 & April 20), HMCTS SJS CTSC (March 2019-March 2020), NCES (MC100), and from prosecutors (TV Licensing, Transport for London, DVLA, Met Police, West Yorkshire Police, Joint Police feedback [15 Forces] (Feb 2020)).

Aims

The main aims of the pilot were to assess whether the redesigned notice:

1. Increased defendant engagement
2. Increased digital take-up (online plea rate)
3. Reduced the number of calls with regards to the plea process and paper applications

The pilot also helped us understand how the redesigned notice may impact:

- Prosecutors
- Courts
- Courts & Tribunal Service Centres

All returned SJPNs are now machine-read and automatically attached to the relevant case. The SJPN template was redesigned to adhere to the machine reading requirements which will allow more efficient processing of paper pleas. During the pilot the readiness of the redesigned SJPN template for machine reading was assessed.

Pilot details

Cases

TV Licensing piloted the redesigned SJPN template on the 1st January 2020. The redesigned notice was intended to be used for all cases in the Midlands region.

The Midlands regions was chosen for the following reasons:

1. All Midlands cases have been processed via the Common Platform³ since January 2019 which ensures reliable historic data.
2. Another SJPN pilot was simultaneously conducted in the London region with the Metropolitan police. Thus, to understand the impact of each pilot, a different population had to be used.

Defendants receiving the redesigned notice could either:

- Plead online by filling in and submitting the Online Plea application
- Plead by post by filling in the paper plea form

All postal pleas were returned to court where all cases are scanned in. Subsequently, all cases were distributed among other courts for further processing.

Timeline

The findings in this assessment report cover the pilot period between 1 January 2020 and 29 February 2020.

SJPN pack

TV Licensing used the template we provided to design the notice in their case management system. We replicated exactly and verified the SJPN pack before it was implemented.

Methodology

The assessment involved a mix of quantitative and qualitative methodologies. The quantitative methods included analysis of our management information data to measure engagement rates, channel type and plea type. Call data, from the our CTSC⁴ call management system, was also reviewed and compared to control groups or a baseline period. Qualitative methods involved reviewing a dip sample of returned SJPNs, a focus group with HMCTS CTSC staff and feedback from prosecutors. More detail on the metrics can be found in Table 1 and Table 2.

³ The Common Platform is the new digital case management system which allows all parties involved in criminal cases, including the judiciary, solicitors and barristers, the Crown Prosecution Service and court staff, to access case information.

⁴ Courts & Tribunals Service Centre (CTSC) are service centres which manage calls and queries from members of the public about their case.

Table 1 Overview of the quantitative metrics used.

Type	Measures
ATCM data extracts	Engagement rates, channel type (online/paper), plea type (guilty/not guilty/guilty requesting a hearing).
CTSC 8x8 call data	Volume of calls compared to control group or prior pilot. Reason for calling wrap code (e.g. paper application).

Table 2 Overview of the qualitative metrics used.

Type	Measures
Dip sample	Compare a random sample of returned SJPNs (redesigned vs. original style) for correctness/completeness of responses, patterns in completion error.
Focus group with HMCTS CTSC staff	Perception of the impact of the SJPN with call centre staff: reasons for calling about the SJPN, noticeable changes in query type.
Prosecution feedback	Prosecutor perception of SJPN redesign; implementing, printing and processing.

NB: Due to COVID-19 interviews with court staff and observations of SJPN sessions to assess the impact of the redesigned SJPN on court processes were unable to be conducted.

Findings

Caveats and assumptions

The following needs to be considered when interpreting the quantitative analysis:

1. ATCM data does not contain a variable for region. Midlands cases were identified using a list of postcodes provided by TV Licensing.
2. Although the historic data for the Midlands region goes back to January 2019, other regions migrated to the Common Platform in stages from August 2019. The other regions are a comparative group (control) which allow us to more confidently determine whether any changes in engagement are due to the implementation of the redesigned SJPN pack. Therefore, because of data availability, our comparison looks at data between 1 September 2019 and 29 February 2020.
3. Outcomes are not reported in the present analyses as a proportion of the cases were not completed at the time of writing.
4. In the present analyses, statistics related to Midlands cases are referred to as 'Midlands region' whereas all other cases are referred to as 'Other regions'.
5. Midlands case volumes remain relatively constant over time whereas there are more fluctuations in case numbers for other regions. This can be explained by the gradual migration of different regions from the legacy systems to the Common Platform.

Engagement rates

Overall engagement rates refer to the percentage of the defendants who submitted their plea either online or by post. It includes all types of pleas (i.e. guilty, guilty requesting a hearing, and not guilty). For simplicity, engagement rates will be referred to as plea rates.

Figures 1 and 2 show plea rates for the Midlands regions and Other regions. In January 2020, plea rates went up for both groups to 25%. This increase could be partially caused by the beginning of a new year and defendants being more motivated to respond to their notice.

In February 2020 the Midlands region plea rate continued to increase to 27%, the highest ever recorded. This plea rate is noticeably higher than the prediction based on historic data, which is at 21%. At the same time, the Other regions plea rate decreased to 23%.

This indicates a plea rate increase of 4 percentage points for the Midlands region compared to all other regions.

Figure 1 Engagement rates for the Midlands region before and after the implementation of the redesigned SJPN. Predication indicates a linear trend based on historic data.

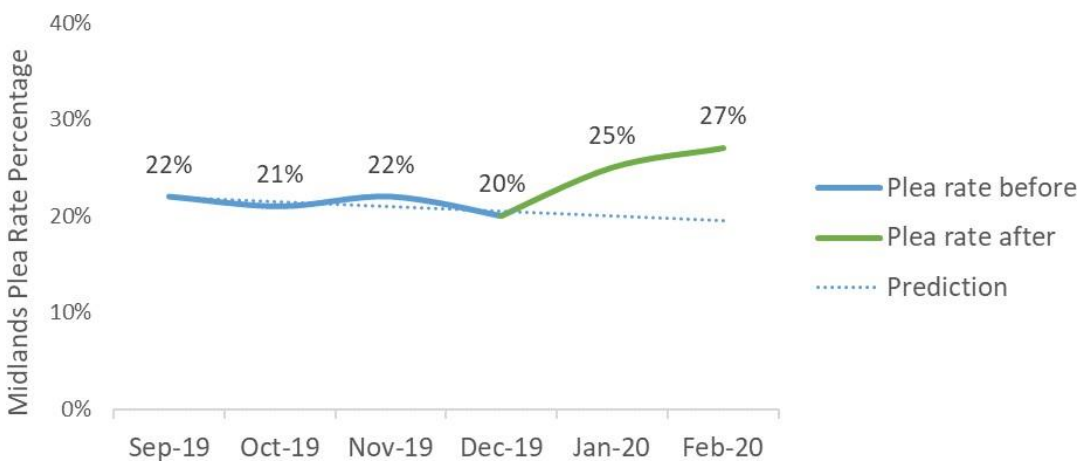
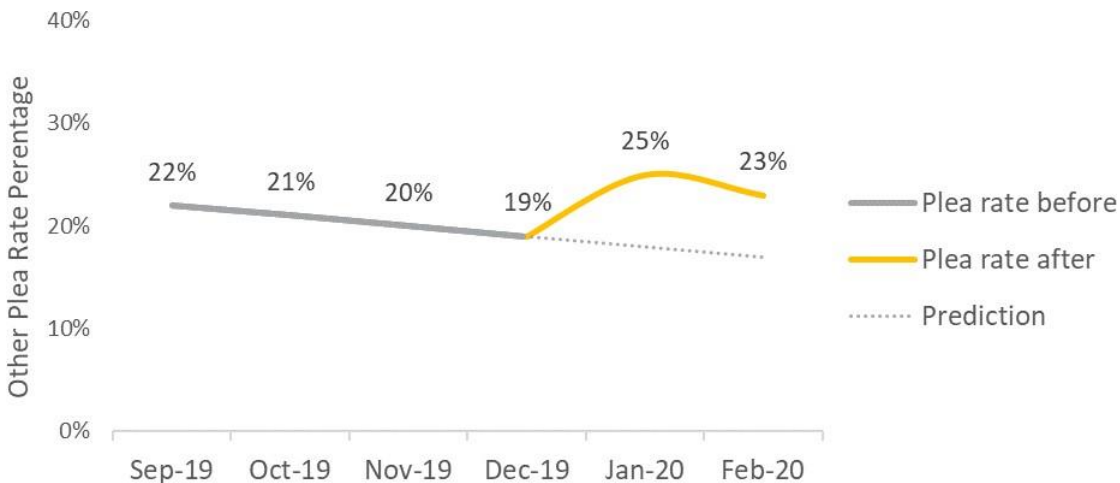


Figure 2 Engagement rates for the Other regions before and after the implementation of the redesigned SJPN. Predication indicates a linear trend based on historic data.



Channel type

Online and postal plea rates were used to identify the impact of the redesigned notice on defendants' channel choice⁵.

Figures 3 and 4 show plea rates for the Midlands region and Other regions split by online plea rate and postal plea rate. Figure 3 shows that in the Midlands region prior to the pilot the majority of defendants who made a plea opted to return the postal plea form (average of 74%). However, after the implementation of the redesigned SJPN the majority of defendants chose to plead online (average of 58%).

Figure 4 shows that prior to the pilot on average 22% of defendants in all Other regions chose to plead online whereas during the pilot the figure increased to 35%. However, it should be noted that the majority of defendants still prefer to use the postal form.

Taken together, this indicates that the redesigned notice is effective at nudging people to use the online service.

Figure 3 Midlands region plea rate split by channel choice (online vs postal). The vertical dotted line indicates the start of the pilot.

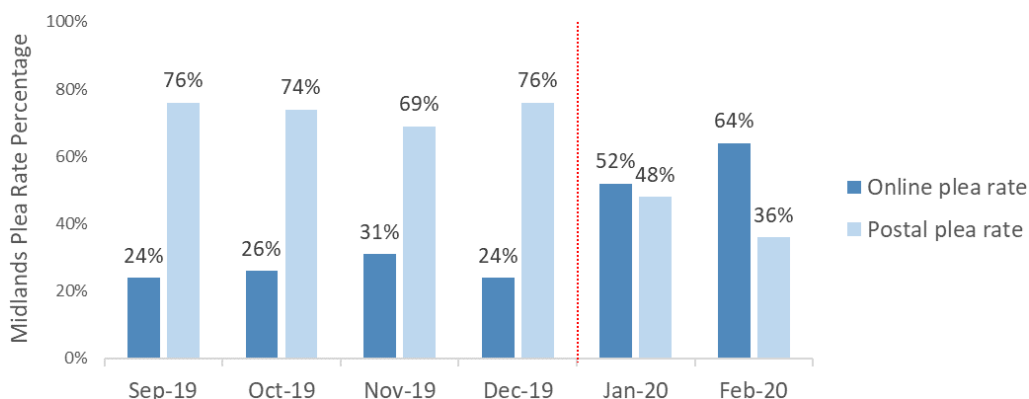
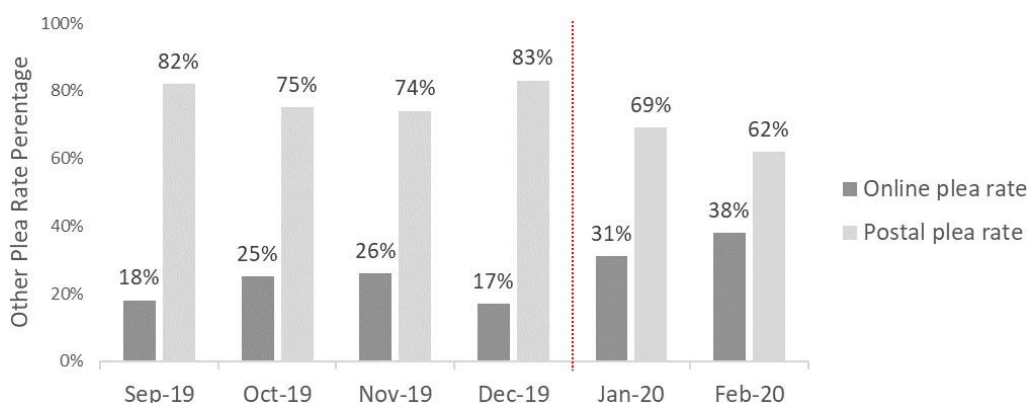


Figure 4 Other regions plea rate split by channel choice (online vs postal). The vertical dotted line indicates the start of the pilot in the Midlands region.



⁵ Caveat: The redesigned SJPN was implemented in the Midlands from the beginning of January but users receiving the original SJPN in December 2019 could have been making their plea by post or online throughout January. Midlands user pleas received in January 2020 will therefore include users who received the redesigned SJPN and original SJPN as users have 21 days to return their plea.

In order to further assess the impact of the pilot on channel choice, the increases in numbers of online pleas were examined. Volumes of online/postal pleas received during a period of two months prior to the pilot (October and November 2019) were compared with the two months during the pilot (January and February 2020).

The Midlands online pleas increased by 113% between the period before implementation and after implementation, with 118 more pleas being submitted online per month. The comparative group of all Other regions shows an increase of 66% for the same time period, which is 206 more online pleas per month.

This indicates an increase in numbers of online pleas of approximately 47 percentage points more for the Midlands region compared to all Other regions.

The Midlands postal pleas decreased by 41%, with 109 fewer postal pleas per month, whereas in the Other regions postal pleas increased by 3%, with 30 more postal pleas being returned a week.

Plea type

Defendants are asked to indicate whether they want to plead guilty or not guilty to the offences they are charged with. The SJPN aims to increase plea rates overall, rather than influencing the type of plea submitted. The analysis examined whether the increase in plea rates was driven by equal increases in both guilty and not guilty pleas.

Figures 5 and 6 show the proportion of guilty and not guilty pleas for those defendants who submitted their plea. First, the proportion of 'guilty requesting a hearing' pleas remained unchanged at 1%.

Figure 5 shows that in the Midlands region prior to the pilot on average, 90% of defendants who engaged plead guilty. After the implementation of the redesigned SJPN the proportion decreased to an average of 85%. Figure 6 shows that the plea type remained unchanged for other regions.

Figure 5 Midlands region plea rate split by plea type (guilty vs not guilty). The vertical dotted line indicates the start of the pilot.

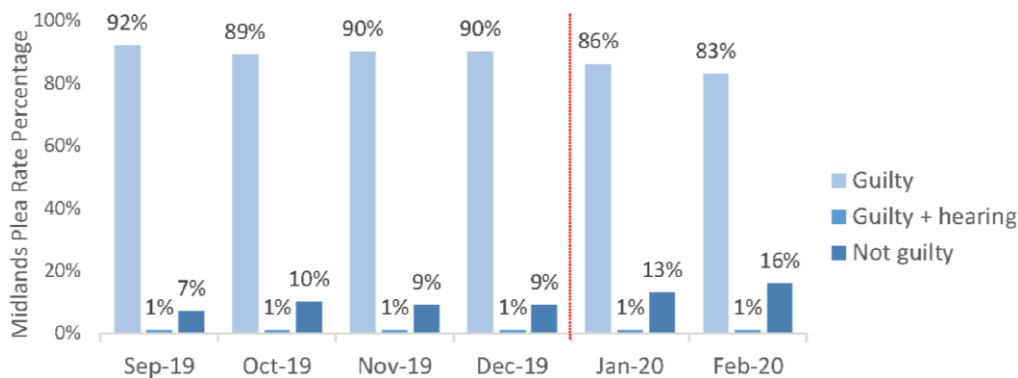
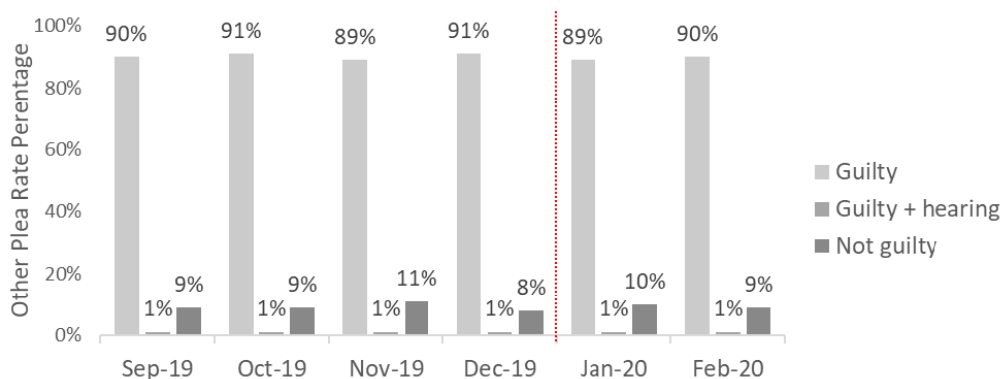


Figure 6 Other regions plea rate split by plea type (guilty vs not guilty). The vertical dotted line indicates the start of the pilot in the Midlands region.



HMCTS Calls

TV Licensing calls are dealt with by the courts through Courts & Tribunal Service Centres (CTSC). Call data from the CTSC was examined to assess the impact of the redesigned SJPN template. The analysis focused on changes in the number of calls as well as reasons for calling. Wrap codes relating to the region and reason for calling were used to achieve this. Wrap codes are tags used to note the key information for inbound and outbound calls.

Figures 7 and 8 show weekly call volumes over time. In the Midlands region, on average there were 50 calls a week before the pilot and 64 calls a week after the implementation of the redesigned SJPN. This indicates an increase of 28% (14 calls). Furthermore, in all Other regions there were 207 calls a week before the pilot and 256 calls a week after the implementation of the redesigned SJPN. This indicates an increase of 19% (49 calls).

NB: In January 2020 the online plea service experienced a time-out error which prevented some users from submitting their plea online. This could have contributed to the increase in call volumes.

Although the increase in calls in the Midlands region is slightly higher than for Other regions, there is no evidence to suggest that the redesigned SJPN caused the increase in call volumes.

Figure 7 Weekly volumes of call for the Midlands region between 28 Oct 2019 and 23 Mar 2020.

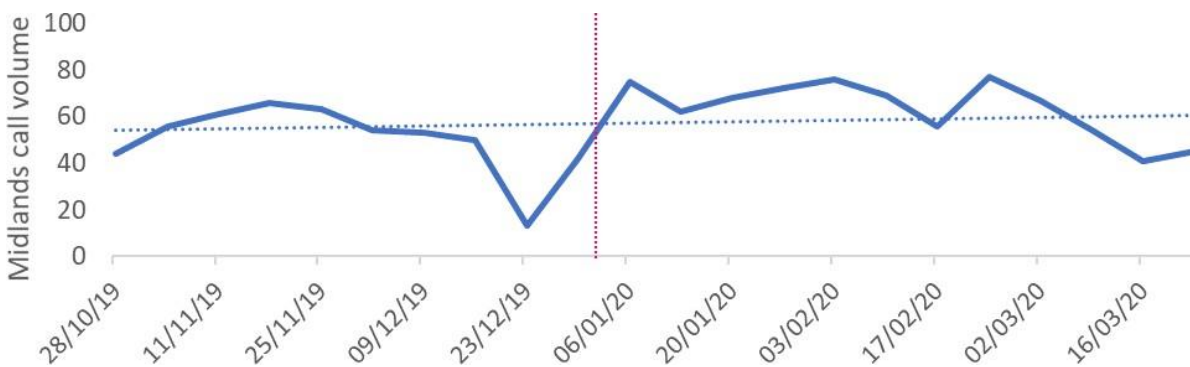
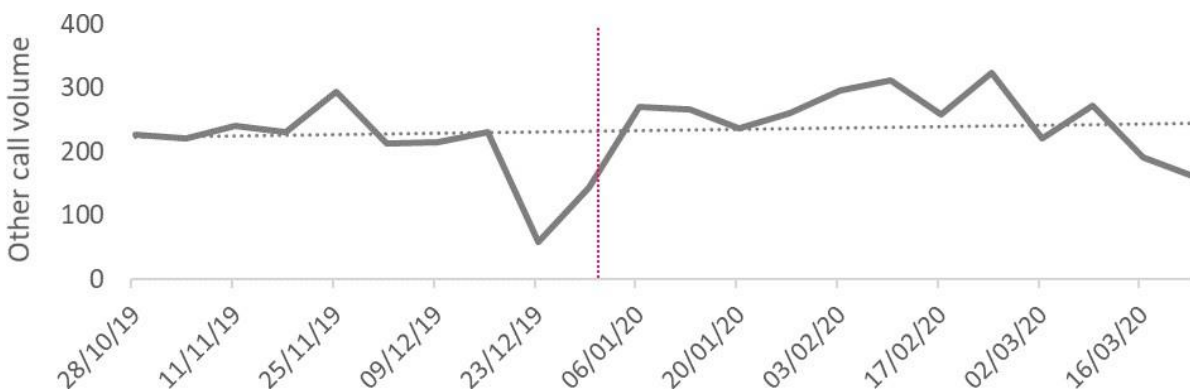


Figure 8 Weekly volumes of call for all Other regions between 28 Oct 2019 and 23 Mar 2020.



Dip sample

A dip sample of 204 returned postal plea forms were reviewed to examine accuracy of completion and information provided by defendants. The sample included 100 of the redesigned SJPN issued in the Midlands region and 104 of the original TV Licensing SJPN issued in all other regions. The sample included both guilty and not guilty pleas. The gender split across both samples was identical; 78% female and 22% male.

The sample showed that in general defendants understood how to fill in the redesigned SJPN plea/MC100 form. Respondents generally completed the necessary sections only, and not those they should omit based on their selections.

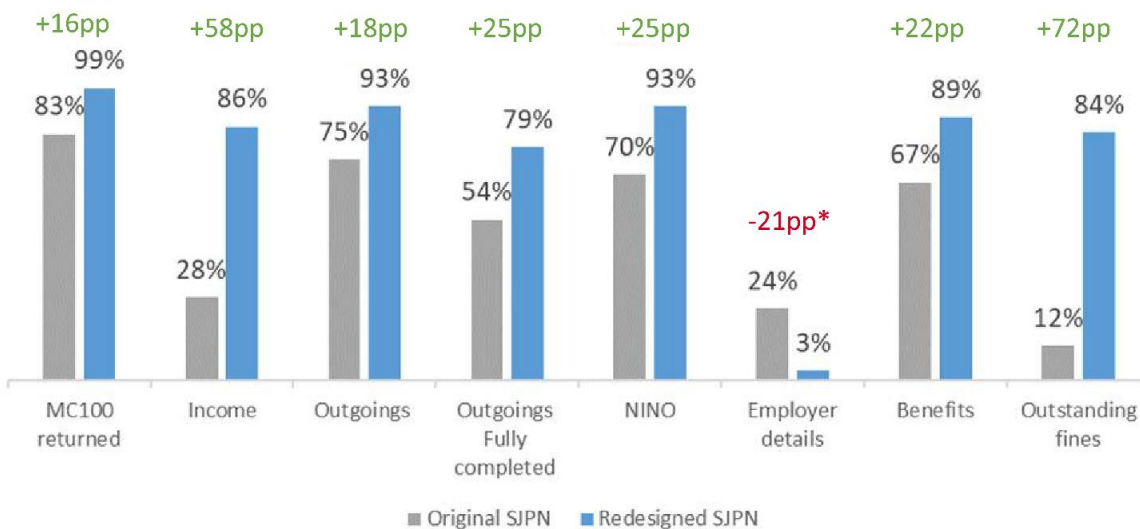
In the original SJPN sample, 83% of defendants returned their MC100 form. For the redesigned SJPN this rose to 99%. Additionally, in the redesigned SJPN sample defendants were more likely to return a fully completed MC100 form. There was an increase in defendants providing their personal details with the redesigned SJPN compared to the original SJPN. In the redesigned SJPN, 97% of defendants confirmed or amended their details, 85% provided a contact number and 57% provided an email address. There was no discernible difference in plea type or requests for court hearings.

Financial information

When a defendant is found guilty, the courts base the financial penalty on the information the defendant provides on the MC100 form. The aim of the redesigned MC100 was to increase completion of the necessary sections to assist the courts in setting the appropriate level of penalty.

The sample showed an increase in the financial information provided by defendants on the redesigned MC100. This increase was across all sections needed by the courts including from a 58-percentage point increase in income to a 72-percentage point increase in outstanding fines (see Figure 9).

Figure 9 Proportion of defendants providing financial information: comparison between original and redesigned SJPN.



*The 21% decrease in employer details could be attributed to an additional question on the redesigned MC100. The question asks defendants whether they want any subsequent penalty to be deducted from their earnings. 59% of defendants answered this question; with the majority checking the 'NO' box and therefore only 3% of defendants went on

to provide their employer details. To also note a proportion of defendants answered this question even though they appeared to be only in receipt of benefits, and this therefore may have impacted the overall figure.

Documents returned with the plea form

The redesigned SJPN included messaging to make clear which documents needed to be returned and which should be kept. We were unable to determine if this had an impact on unnecessarily returned documents as the CTSCs decided to only scan and attach documents to the Common Platform case if they were relevant and so these documents did not form part of the sample.

Readiness for machine reading

Since January 2021 the redesigned SJPN has been returned by defendants to a central P.O. Box instead of to the courts. Key Optical Character Recognition (OCR) fields will be machine read and automatically attached to the relevant case and a scanned image of the plea and MC100 forms will also be attached. To support this the redesigned SJPN adheres to OCR and scanning requirements. To achieve compliance the redesigned SJPN is longer.

The redesigned SJPN sample was assessed to determine whether respondents completing the plea/MC100 form adhered to on-form instructions and the likelihood of form elements being correctly machine read (OCR) and scanned.

In general respondents adhered to instructions, however, lowercase text was often used for the email address resulting in some characters exceeding box boundaries. This means that it would not be read correctly by scanners. Additionally, only 40% of respondents inputted figures correctly on the MC100 section.

See Table 3, Annex B for detailed machine reading sample results.

These findings have informed recommendations to improve the forms (see Recommendations section).

Internal HMCTS feedback

Key internal stakeholders were consulted regarding the redesigned SJPN template to assess the impact on operations. Feedback was provided by team leaders and staff members from the CTSC.

Courts & Tribunal Service Centres (CTSC) feedback

Feedback from team leaders

Team leaders were positive about the redesigned SJPN. They said that having one standard SJPN adopted by all prosecutors would be of considerable benefit to the CTSC and would:

- Make it much easier for staff to deal with queries
- Make training simpler for new staff
- Support and speed up the admin associated with pleas.

Staff feedback

A focus group was held with staff members. They liked the clear layout of the redesigned SJPN. The staff felt that standardisation across prosecutors would make it easier for the CTSC to support defendants and eliminate the need to refer to the knowledge bank to look up a specific prosecutor's SJPN. They identified some improvements, such as the prominent placement and duplication of the return address and the deadline date for submission being clearer.

Additionally, they felt that a standardised SJPN would help with processing plea forms and that the clear and easy to follow layout would help in the updating of cases on Common Platform.

Prosecutor feedback

Feedback from TV Licensing prosecuting team

Implementation and processing

It initially took some time to agree the layout and content for the revised SJPN pack for the pilot. The prosecuting team outlined that this required TV Licensing to keep calling on developer resource to make the changes each time the forms were revised. Even relatively small changes took time to implement due to the developer resource needed to make and test them.

Once the layout and content had been finalised, implementation of the revised forms was relatively straightforward, since this represented very little change to any of the operational processes once the TV Licensing SJPN print solution had been updated with the revisions.

Consideration will need to be given to the timings for national roll out of the revised SJPN pack and the availability of developer resource should any further changes be needed.

Printing and posting

The revised SJPN pack requires the printing of an additional five sides of A4 paper (three sheets when printed double-sided). The TV Licensing team set out the cost for the additional paper and toner required is estimated to be circa 4.5p per case.

Although the revised SJPN pack requires an additional three sheets of A4 paper this has not impacted on the postage costs, which remain the same for a large letter still not exceeding 750g.

Feedback from TV Licensing call centre⁶

We also asked for feedback from the TV Licensing call agents who deal with some of the SJPN enquires, specifically related to withdrawing cases. This is where a defendant contacts the TV Licensing call centre to take late advantage of the offer of an out of court settlement (providing a TV Licence was then purchased in full).

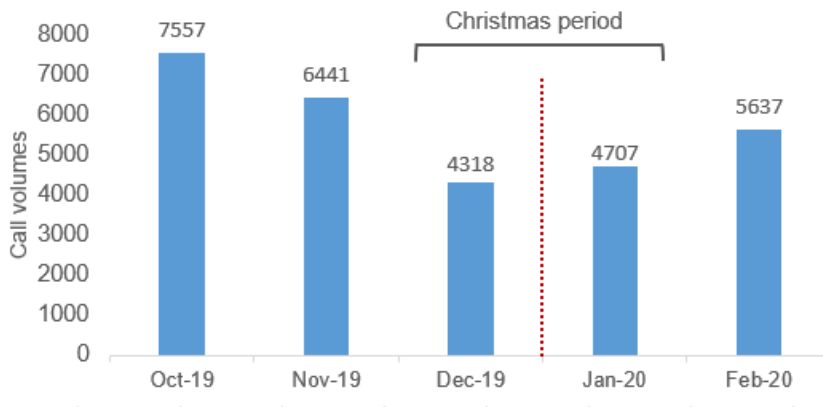
Call volumes

Call volumes are closely linked to the numbers of SJPN packs and summons served within each month. The average number of calls from England and Wales received by the TVL Prosecution Team call line generally vary between an average of 5.5k – 7.5k. Figure 10 shows the call volumes to the TV Licensing prosecutions team call line during the three months prior to the pilot (Oct, Nov, Dec 2019) and the first two months of the pilot (Jan & Feb 2020).

⁶ TV Licensing will provide most first-time offenders with an opportunity to avoid prosecution by the purchase of a licence. If an out of court disposal is offered, the case is reviewed 12 weeks after a suspect is interviewed and if a licence has been purchased in full or an instalment scheme has been set up and sufficient payments have been made, the case will be dropped or closed. If no (or insufficient) payments have been made, the case will proceed to prosecution and a defendant will have to pay the licence fee in full to stop the case from proceeding to court.

Where a defendant has a previous TV Licensing-related warning of conviction or there are aggravating factors (such as a fraudulent claim that no licence was required or the use of a search warrant was required to secure evidence), then no out of court disposal will be offered and a case will be 'fast tracked' to court.

Figure 10 Call volumes to the TV Licensing prosecutions team call line from October 2019 to February 2020.



The lower volumes in December 2019 and January 2020 are most likely due to the seasonal influence of the Christmas and New Year period, as well as a potential difference in the mix of case types (more 'fast tracked' and less with out of court settlement offers).

The call volumes for February 2020 are noticeably fewer than those in October and November 2019 and less than would normally be expected outside of the months impacted by the Christmas / New Year period.

Figures for March 2020 are unavailable due to the Covid-19 suspension of activities.

Whilst the only really representative call volumes available during the period in which the revised SJPN pack was being piloted in the Midlands area are for February 2020, this lower than expected volume could be attributed to defendants being provided with clear, additional information in the revised pack, as well as being better sign-posted to where they could find further information on the web. It is worth noting that some of the TV Licensing website content which refers to visits and prosecutions was revised to include additional information to mirror and complement that contained in the revised SJPN pack.

Feedback from the TV Licensing prosecutions telephone team appears to support this, i.e. there seemed to be fewer people calling to query and challenge things and/or to see if they could seek an out of court settlement even though none had been offered.

Comments from TV Licensing prosecutions team:

"...customers seem to be more aware of what options are available to them at this stage as the SJPN is more informative"

"Much simpler for the customer. Easier to follow, more clarity on which sections need to be completed and returned."

"...feel it has informed the customers more. The customers seem to know what direction the call is going to go in from the very start. So, they know if they have an option for an out of court disposal etc"

"Less escalated phone calls"

"The FAQ section explains the proceedings in more detail"

"Occasionally people are still misreading the £120 but nowhere near on the scale as before"

TV Licensing summary

Whilst there has been an increase in costs for producing the revised SJPN pack the early indications are that this will be more than off-set by the likely reduction in prosecution case related call volumes and therefore the resource required to deal with these.

Again, the early indications from the withdrawn cases figures, together with anecdotal feedback from the TV Licensing prosecutions telephone team, are that more defendants who have been offered an out of court disposal but not acted on it prior to receiving an SJPN pack are now contacting TV Licensing as a result of the clearer information in the pack. Whilst this means TV Licensing still have to fully process these cases for court without the opportunity to recover the costs incurred, it will result in additional licence fee revenue being generated for the BBC.

Limitations

Pilot

When considering the pilot findings presented in this report, it is important to understand the following limitations:

- Due to operational limitations it was not possible to conduct a randomised control trial where defendants would either be sent the original SJPN template or the redesigned SJPN template. Therefore, to assess the impact of the pilot, it is necessary to compare baseline figures (before the pilot) with figures following the implementation. The findings presented in this assessment might be affected by other causal factors.
- It should be noted that the present findings are of a pilot conducted in the Midlands region. Findings presented here might not be precisely replicated in other regions due to differences between the present sample and the whole population (e.g. varying levels of defendant digital capability).
- Covid-19 impact and changes in behaviours should also be considered. However, the data included in this report excludes any cases in March 2020 onwards, when social distancing measures were introduced.

Data

In addition, there are a number of caveats regarding the quantitative analysis:

- No identifier for different geographic regions is present in the dataset. There may be a small margin of error in identifying Midlands cases.
- Varying case volumes due to migration of the various region onto the Common Platform.
- The present assessment does not report figures on outcomes as, at the time of writing, a proportion of the pilot cases had not been processed.
- Call estimates in this report are based on HMCTS call data collected at the CTSC and although TV Licensing call volumes are referred to within the prosecutor feedback these are not included in the present analysis.
- The impact on fines collection is out of the scope of the present project which aims to increase defendant engagement. As such it should be investigated in the future when the relevant enforcement data becomes available.

Caution is also advised when interpreting the qualitative findings due to small sample sizes.

Recommendations

Based on the findings presented in this assessment report, it is recommended that TV Licensing adopt the redesigned SJPN template in all other regions as they migrate to bulk scanning. Additionally, we recommend that all prosecutors adopt the redesigned SJPN.

In addition, there are several further recommendations listed below:

- As only 37% of respondents used uppercase letters for email addresses in the character boxes this meant that the tails of some characters (e.g. g and y) exceeded box boundaries. Thus, we should repeat the instruction to use capital letters at this point in the form to increase compliance. This should also be repeated for the employer's details.
- Change the OCR box format for figures to encourage accurate completion.
- Ensure that the blank space at the end of each page is kept to a minimum to help avoid defendants using this space to write in.
- HMCTS should monitor the effects of the redesigned SJPN template to flag up any problems/issues that might have not been captured by this pilot.



Annex A

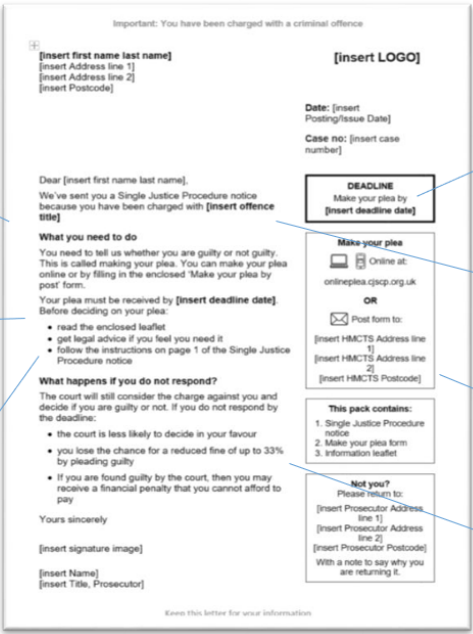
Example pages of the redesigned SJPN pack

Cover letter

Cover letter explains the accompanying SJPN

Reassuring tone to avoid panic phone calls

Simple 3-step call to action for the defendant



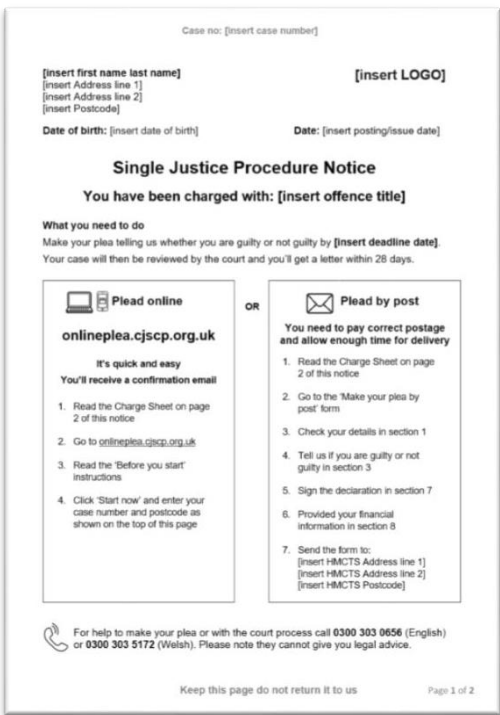
Clear reply-by deadline & indication of which pages should be kept/returned

Charge simply stated on front page, with further detail provided in later pages

Uncluttered layout is attractive and encourages reading

Importance of making a plea explained in terms of loss aversion – a behavioural science theory that people react more strongly to the fear of a loss than to a gain.

SJPN page 1



Signposting online and post plea options, framing the benefits of online (less hassle, instant acknowledgement of receipt) to encourage take-up

Annex B

Readiness for machine reading (redesigned SJPN only)

Table 3 Machine reading sample result.

	Section	%	Results
OCR	Ink Colour	98%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 85% of responses were completed using the recommended black ink, 10% in blue ink and 3% and mixture of both ink colours One respondent used pencil
	X ✓	100%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 38% of responses used the recommended crosses to mark their selection, 57% used ticks and 5% used both Crosses were more common on the first page of the plea form, which also includes the completion instructions
	Character box	84%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 84% of responses were inside the character box 16% were responses were outside, this was generally the 'tails' of lowercase letters e.g. 'g' and 'y'
	email	37%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 37% of respondents used the recommended uppercase 33% used a mixture of both upper and lower case 30% used lower case
	Figures	40%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only 40% of respondents inputted figure correctly from right to left 60% of respondents inputted figures incorrectly either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> From left to right Mid-section Included additional decimal points
Scanning	Text Boxes	77%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 77% of responses were contained within the text boxes 22% of responses went outside the text boxes, with some of these exceeding the boxes completely by continuing in any blank space; the bottom of the page and/or margins

