



Ministry
of Justice

Civil Procedure Rule Committee

Annual Report 2024-25

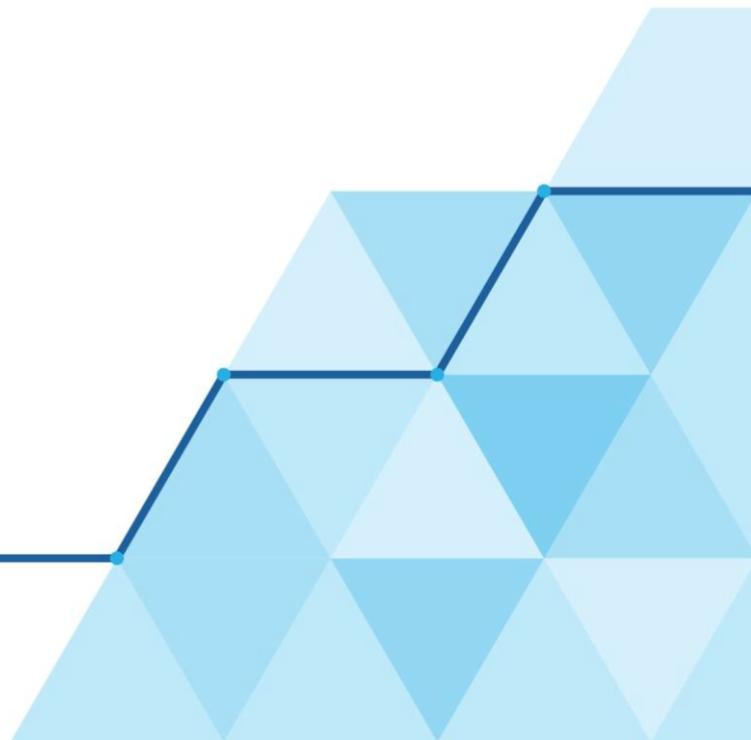
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<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/civil-procedure-rules-committee>

This annual report of the Civil Procedure Rule Committee includes references to rules and Practice Directions made, sub-committee work and consultations conducted, during the period of the report; the Committee's terms of reference, membership and number of meetings held.



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Introduction

It is with great pleasure that I introduce the Civil Procedure Rule Committee's Annual Report.

As regular readers will know, the Deputy Head of Civil Justice for England and Wales (DHCJ) Chairs the Committee on a day-to-day basis on behalf of the Master of the Rolls.

On 1st November 2025, I was honoured to be appointed DHCJ, and I very much look forward to leading this important Committee. I am extremely grateful to Carl Poole for his warm welcome and extensive support as I learn the ropes as well as to the fantastically effective secretariat that serves the Committee so diligently. I have been encouraged by the wholehearted support of the members and other officials, who give their time and expertise so generously to maintain and develop the rules that underpin an accessible, fair and efficient civil justice system.

I must, of course, begin by paying tribute to my predecessor, Lord Justice Colin Birss, now Chancellor of the High Court. Sir Colin served the Committee with distinction for many years, first as a High Court Judge member, and later, following his elevation to the Court of Appeal and to the role of DHCJ in 2021, as the *de facto* Chair. As such, his contribution to both the Committee and to civil justice more widely is immeasurable. I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate my deep personal thanks to him for his kind and thoughtful handover and his continued willingness to be a sounding board at need.

The work described in this report was undertaken during his stewardship, and what an exceptionally busy period it proved to be. In a speech at the Law Society in July, he observed that *"If the MR is the captain of the ship, then the DHCJ might be thought of as the chief engineer, getting your hands dirty, making it go and keeping it running."* As you read this report, I am sure you will recognise that sentiment and appreciate the breadth and significance of the work carried

out over the past year in particular. Every piece of it matters, and all of us involved in civil justice owe thanks to those who contributed. Their efforts have been outstanding.

I would also like to express my thanks to His Honour Judge Nigel Bird and Dr Anja Lansbergen-Mills, who completed their terms of office and left the Committee during the summer. Their valedictory remarks can be found in the minutes of the July meeting, but suffice to say, that each was an exceptional team member, whose insights and commitment were much valued.

Earlier in the reporting cycle, in December 2024, Campbell Forsyth joined the Committee as one of the solicitor members, succeeding Virginia Jones. Kelly Stricklin-Coutinho, joined as a barrister member in July 2025, following Anja's departure. Most recently, in September 2025, Her Honour Judge Emma Kelly, the Designated Civil Judge for Birmingham and a former District Judge, joined as the new Circuit Judge member, succeeding Judge Bird. Although these appointments fall outside the formal reporting period, the timing of publication means that it is right to acknowledge and welcome them. Each of them has taken up the work of the Committee with insight and enthusiasm and it is already clear what an asset they each are to the Committee.

One significant area of work this year, in which I was directly involved, was chairing the sub-committee responsible for developing a new pilot scheme to improve public access to documents deployed by parties in court proceedings. As part of wider efforts to advance the principle of open justice within the civil courts, the Access to Public Domain Documents Pilot was introduced. From 1st January 2026 it operates in the Commercial Court, the London Circuit Commercial Court of the King's Bench Division, and the Financial List (Commercial Court and Chancery Division). The pilot will run until 31st December 2027 and marks a positive step in supporting greater transparency and understanding of both the courts and the cases heard within them.

I am deeply committed to promoting access to justice, and I am eager to build on the principles developed through my role on the Lady Chief Justice's Transparency and Open Justice Board, as I take forward my responsibilities as DHCJ. I am especially keen to raise the profile and visibility of the CPRC's work - including by holding meetings outside London. I will also be exploring how my visits across England and Wales as DHCJ might be coordinated with Committee activity, helping to maximise engagement and understanding of our uniquely important work.

I look forward to seeing you at the annual open meeting in May, which in line with that aspiration, will take place in Birmingham!



The Right Honourable Lady Justice Cockerill, DBE

Deputy Head of Civil Justice

Terms of Reference

The Civil Procedure Rule Committee is an independent, statutory body, sponsored by the Ministry of Justice. Its function is to make rules of court governing the practice and procedure in the:

- Civil Division of the Court of Appeal;
- High Court; and
- County Court.

Its power to make rules should be exercised with a view to securing that the civil justice system is accessible, fair and efficient and the rules are both simple and simply expressed. The terms of reference are derived from the Civil Procedure Act 1997 (as amended by the Courts Act 2003, the Constitutional Reform Act 2005, the Crime and Courts Act 2013 and the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014).

Background, Rule Making & The Committee's Strategy

The Civil Procedure Rule Committee was established in 1997 to make rules of court (Civil Procedure Rules) to replace the previous Rules of the Supreme Court and the County Court Rules.

The committee's aim is to provide rules of court in line with the principles stated in Lord Woolf's 1996 report "Access to Justice".

Before making any rules, the committee is:

- obliged to consult such persons as it considers appropriate and
- to meet (unless it is inexpedient to do so).

Rules are made into legislation by way of a Statutory Instrument. The committee aims to sign Statutory Instruments in June and December each year, to come into force in October and April respectively. The Civil Procedure Rules (CPR) are supplemented by Practice Directions (PD), and whilst these are not the direct responsibility of the committee, the committee is involved in their drafting because of their close relationship with the rules.

However, both Statutory Instruments & Practice Direction Updates (as well as Pre-Action Protocols) may be made throughout the year.

The power to make Civil Procedure Rules is to be exercised with a view to securing that the civil justice system is accessible, fair and efficient. The committee's strategy serves to achieve its statutory function and the Overriding Objective that the rules should be 'simple and simply expressed'.

Both the committee, and the team of officials and lawyers which support the committee, are a limited resource, and often overstretched. It is, therefore, necessary to be able to prioritise the work which the committee is asked to undertake.

Suggestions for amendments to be considered outside the following three priority areas will either need to be held back for incorporation into an appropriate review or pass a reasonably rigorous test for consideration based on urgency, scale of (potential) injustice, political imperative and scale of difficulties being encountered in practice.

The following priorities apply:

- **Legislation (where necessary)**

Amendments to the rules driven by primary or other legislation are often required on a timetable outside the committee's direct control or that of the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). However, these items should take precedence wherever necessary; but sometimes legislation which impacts civil justice will not require amendment/s to the CPR.

- **Modernisation**

This mainly refers to the incorporation of the scheduled rules into the main body of the Civil Procedure Rules. When the Civil Procedure Rules were made in 1998, not all of the Rules of the Supreme Court (RSC) and County Court Rules (CCR) had been transformed into Civil Procedure Rules. The remaining RSC and CCR were placed in 'schedules' to the Civil Procedure Rules to be incorporated at a later date, if necessary and thus became known as the Scheduled Rules. The incorporation of these remaining rules continues to form a regular feature of the committee's work wherever possible. In 2021 a new "simplification" project was established (under the auspices of the Section 2(7) Sub-Committee) with the aim of complimenting and to accelerate the delivery of this priority. In 2025, the Committee completed its task of reviewing and updating Parts 1 to 30 of the CPR, which broadly represent the generic parts of the rules. These reforms and consequential amendments provide for a reduction in overall length of the CPR, simplify the language, improve clarity and provide gender neutrality. This has coincided with advances in the establishment of the Online Procedure Rule Committee (OPRC) and the creation of the OPR, which has given both committees the opportunity to work more closely. The overall principle of simplification remains an active part of our main work.

- **Comprehensive Reviews**

These will be led by the Ministry of Justice, but topics will be agreed with the committee and preferably focused around issues of concern to the judiciary, practitioners and litigants. They will focus on a particular CPR Part or topic and will include a full review of the drafting of that Part, seeking to simplify language and procedure, and eliminate duplication (between the rule and the practice direction, for example).

Membership

The rules of committee membership are set out in section 2 of the Civil Procedure Act 1997. Terms of office generally last a minimum of three years and a maximum of six years. All non-judicial members are appointed, in accordance with the Office of the Commission for Public Appointment's Code of Practice and are advertised periodically in an open and transparent way. The process is managed by an independent public appointments team. Anyone (who qualifies) can apply to be a member of the committee. The role is unremunerated. Further information can be seen online via the "[Apply for a public appointment - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/public-appointments)" here: website <https://www.gov.uk/public-appointments>

During the period covered by this report (unless stated otherwise), the committee comprised the following members:

- The Head of Civil Justice, Master of the Rolls, Sir Geoffrey Vos, Ex Officio
- The Deputy Head of Civil Justice, Lord Justice Birss, Ex Officio
- The Hon. Mr Justice Pepperall, High Court Judge Member
- The Hon. Mr Justice Trower, High Court Judge (Chancery Division) Member
- Master Sullivan, High Court (King's Bench Division) Master Member
- His Honour Judge Bird, Circuit Judge Member (until August 2025)
- Her Honour Judge Emma Kelly (with effect from September 2025)
- His Honour Judge Hywel James, Welsh Judge Member
- District Judge Clarke, District Judge Member
- District Judge Johnson, District Judge Member
- Dr Anja Lansbergen-Mills, Barrister Member (until July 2025)
- Kelly Stricklin-Coutinho, Barrister Member (with effect from July 2025)
- Ms Isabel Hitching KC, Barrister Member
- Mr Tom Montagu-Smith KC, Barrister Member
- Mr David Marshall, Solicitor Member
- Mr Ben Roe, Solicitor Member
- Mr Campbell Forsyth, Solicitor Member (with effect from December 2024)
- Mr Ian Curtis-Nye, Lay Advice/Consumer Affairs Member
- Ms Elisabetta Sciallis, Lay Advice/Consumer Affairs Member

Remuneration & Member Interests

The Chair and members are not remunerated for their service on the committee.

Members of the committee are permitted to submit reasonable claims for travel and subsistence expenses, which are administered by the Secretariat and paid by the Ministry of Justice; travel claims paid during the period of this report (April 2024 to March 2025) amount to £1339.00. This is made up of £644.10 for this reporting period and historical payments amounting to £694.90 for travel expenses incurred outside this period.

When committee meetings are held in person, the Ministry provides refreshments for members in lieu of subsistence claims. For the period of this report, this amounted to £1242.70

A register of member interests, for the period of this report, is held by the Secretariat. Should you wish to view it, please contact the Secretary via the means at the end of this report.

Meetings

The committee met nine times in the period covered by this report. Meetings did not take place in August 2024, September 2024 or January 2025, as is customary. The committee meeting held in May 2024 was the annual open meeting, when members of the public and interested parties observed the committee in session. This was conducted in a hybrid format, with observers attending remotely via video conference technology. Public questions were provided in advance for the committee to answer during the open forum element of the meeting.

Sub-Committees and Working Parties

The committee establishes sub-committees and working parties to consider the detail of the rules relating to specific projects and/or other proposals. Much of the initial work is conducted in this way. Generally, there are around seven standing sub-committees and approximately 10 ad-hoc (project specific) sub-committees operating at any one time. They include (listed in alphabetical order):

Standing sub-committees:

- **Business and Property Courts** – to consider matters related to the Business & Property Courts.
- **Court Forms** – to consider changes to, or new, court forms.
- **Costs** – to consider cost related matters.
- **Housing Possession** - to maintain a general watching brief on Housing & Possession related matters. Specific ongoing work includes legislative reforms in relation to the Renters' Rights Bill.

- **Lacuna** – to consider possible gaps in the CPR as alerted by the judiciary/judgments and to review requests received from any interested party, including general enquiries received via the secretariat, to determine suitability as to whether it merits full committee consideration.
- **Service** – to consider issues regarding service, both in and outside the jurisdiction of England and Wales.
- **Simplification (Section 2(7))** – to review the CPR, over a phased programme in order to reduce and simplify the rules, pursuant to the committee’s statutory duty under s.2(7) Civil Procedure Act 1997 to, ‘...try to make rules that are both simple and simply expressed.’

Other sub-committees:

- **Access to court documents by non-parties** - to consider the Lacuna Sub-Committee referral regarding access to court documents by non-parties (prompted by the Supreme Court judgment in *Cape Intermediate Holdings Ltd v Dring* (for and on behalf of Asbestos Victims Support Groups Forum UK) [2019] UKSC 38
- **Civil Restraint Orders (CRO)** – to consider points raised by the Chancellor of the High Court regarding the operation of CROs.
- **Closed Material** – to give effect to recommendations made in the 2021 Independent Report on the operation of closed material procedure (CMP) under the Justice and Security Act 2013, by Sir Duncan Ouseley.
- **Damages and Money Claims (online reforms)** - creation of rules to support the online reformed services (principally the Online Civil Money Claims portal PD 51R, and Damages Claims portal PD 51ZB).
- **E-working** - to review and draft amendments for replacement provisions to pilot PD51O and other related work.
- **Judicial Review** – to consider Judicial Review changes for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP) in response to the recommendations made in Lord Banner KC’s independent review.
- **Official Injury Claims (Whiplash) Portal** – to consider amendments to the rules which underpin the operation of the online service, in response to issues in practice.
- **Parole Case Referrals** - to draft CPR amendments in consequence of the parole referral measure to the High Court contained within sections 61 and 62 of the Victim & Prisoners Act 2024.
- **Simplified Costs Budgeting** – to consider the recommendations from the Civil Justice Council’s Report on Costs.
- **Small Claims Mediation Pilot** – subject to government policy, to draft the CPR changes required to provide for integrated mediation for small claims proceedings in the county court.

New Rules, Statutory Instruments and Practice Direction Updates

This year, two Statutory Instruments, 17 Practice Direction Updates (166th to 182nd), and a set of Pre-Action Protocol (PAP) amendments have been made.

The various updating instruments make a suite of [changes across the Civil Procedure Rules](#) and can be read in full online at [Civil - Civil Procedure Rules \(justice.gov.uk\)](#). However, the following list provides a flavour of the amendments, which vary in scale from small but important changes to larger scale reforms and pilot schemes to test new initiatives. Taken as a whole, they serve to keep the rules up to date and relevant:

- A new pilot scheme (PD51ZE) for automatic referral of certain civil cases to a free one-hour mediation session was introduced; the pilot was also further revised to provide greater clarity and efficiency.
- The operative period of the Small Claims Paper Determination Pilot (PD51ZC) was extended to allow time for a review.
- Consistent with previous years, various changes were made, throughout the year, to the Online Civil Money Claims Pilot (PD51R) and the Damages Claims Portal Pilot (PD51ZB) to further develop these important online services. Amendments provided for several new features, such as those in relation to issuing, responding and progressing claims allocated to the intermediate track and multi-track and to enable litigants in person to make general applications online. The claim limit for litigants in person using PD51R was also increased and amendments introduced so that claims can also be issued in Welsh.
- Amendments to introduce a pilot scheme under PD51ZF for civil courts during the phased introduction of the Domestic Abuse Protection Order, aligning procedures with relevant family court rules where possible.
- A suite of amendments to the CPR's Overriding Objective in Part 1 and to other parts, to promote the use of alternative dispute resolution (ADR).
- Various amendments concerning the definition of "judge" were made, across the CPR to provide consistency of language.
- Time limits to appeal from the Court of Appeal and Supreme Court were updated, following collaborative work with the Supreme Court and others.
- A new Part 68 was introduced to outline new procedures in regard to Retained EU Law.
- Updates to Part 81 Contempt Warning.
- Amendments to Writs and Warrants of Possession, including clarifications and restructuring to Notice of Eviction procedures, with new prescribed forms.
- A full rewrite of Part 25 streamlined interim remedies and security for costs, revoking PDs 25A and 25B, and introducing updated model orders for search, imaging, and freezing injunctions. You can read more on this under the simplification section (later in the report).
- Introduction of PD49H for the Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Act 2024, setting out procedures for consumer law enforcement by the Competition and Markets Authority.

- Launch of two pilot PDs for simplified costs budgeting. This includes new Precedent forms, to come into effect in April 2025. This work followed an important report by the Civil Justice Council on Costs. The reforms aim to simplify the process by introducing more proportionate costs budgeting procedures.
- The Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act 2023 required new procedural rules to bring measures into force in relation of SLAPPs (Strategic Litigation Against Public Participation) cases. Commencement is anticipated later in 2025.
- Amendments to Part 23 to clarify the right to apply to set aside a judgment were introduced to remove ambiguity, following experiences in practice. The amendments intend to clarify that parties in proceedings do not lose their right to make an application to set aside a judgment, where they have previously been given an opportunity to make representations where the court is invited to proceed without a hearing.

More details can also be found on the CPR and legislation websites at the following links:
<https://www.justice.gov.uk/courts/procedure-rules/civil> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/>.

Consultations

The committee has the power to run consultations when evidence/opinions are sought during their consideration of the rules of court governing the practice and procedure in civil proceedings.

The committee consults, as it considers appropriate to the rules or amendments to rules in question, in a number of ways of differing degrees of formality. This can include specific correspondence with bodies considered appropriate to be consulted; involving representatives of interested organisations in the work of sub-committees reviewing particular aspects of the rules; inviting and reviewing suggestions and observations solicited by its members from among the groups from which each is drawn; and inviting and reviewing suggestions from relevant Government Departments and other authorities affected by rules of civil procedure.

During this reporting period, the following public consultations have taken place:

- **Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)**
 This work flowed from the Court of Appeal judgment in *James Churchill -v- Merthyr Tydfil Borough Council*, in which it was decided that the court could ‘lawfully stay proceedings for, or order, the parties to engage in a non-court-based dispute resolution process provided that the order made does not impair the very essence of the claimant’s right to proceed to a judicial hearing, and is proportionate to achieving the legitimate aim of settling the dispute fairly, quickly and at reasonable cost.’
 The consultation ran from 17th April 2024 to 28th May 2024.
- **Appellant’s Notice: proposed amendments to CPR 52.12(3)**
 Views were sought on both the principle and the proposed wording of the draft amendment to rule 52.12(3) (appellant’s notice) following consideration by the Lacuna Sub-Committee. The consultation ran from 1st February 2025 to 21st February 2025.

Simplifying the Civil Procedure Rules (CPR)

In 2021 the “simplification” project was established (under the auspices of the Section 2(7) Sub-Committee). It proposed amendments to simplify the rules, with reforms focused on drafting amendments rather than substantive changes. However, some revisions did relocate or dispense with provisions altogether.

In 2025, the task of reviewing and updating Parts 1 to 30 of the CPR (broadly the generic parts of the rules) reached a natural conclusion as it coincided with the establishment of the Online Procedure Rule Committee (OPRC) and developing the OPR. This has given both committees the opportunity to work more closely. Nonetheless, the overall principle of simplification remains an active part of our main work.

The most significant piece of work conducted by the simplification sub-committee during this reporting period was the review of Part 25 (Interim Remedies and Security for Costs).

The committee ran a consultation from 18th December 2023 to 9th February 2024 (it also included a proposed amendment to CPR Part 4 (Forms) in order to accommodate express reference to Model Orders). This was mentioned (in the simplification section) in the previous report. Thanks are reiterated to everyone who submitted responses, which were considered with great care.

In February, the Civil Procedure (Amendment) Rules 2025 and 179th Practice Direction Update were published, to come into effect on 6th April 2025.

The Part 25 reforms consist of a completely rewritten Part 25, having been restructured into a more logical order and the supplementing PDs 25A and 25B revoked (some provisions are incorporated into the reformed rules). Consequential changes were also made to Part 4 (Court Forms), Part 52 (Appeals) and Part 74 (Enforcement of Judgments in Different Jurisdictions).

Additionally, a suite of three revised model orders were introduced, intended to provide better consistency and contain general updating improvements. The new forms of model order are:

- Model Search and Imaging Order
- Model Order for Propriety and Freezing Injunctions
- Model Order for a Freezing Injunction

All forms are readily accessible, online as part of a new dedicated suite of forms pages within the rules online: <https://www.justice.gov.uk/courts/procedure-rules/civil/forms>

Future Business

The committee’s work programme and resulting amendments to the CPR are driven by many and often competing priorities. It is not always possible to identify, well in advance, the core topics to be considered. Primary or other legislation is often required on a timetable outside the committee’s direct control or that of the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). Other topics focused around issues of concern to the judiciary, practitioners, litigants and other users will feature throughout. Issues such as urgency, scale of (potential) injustice, political imperative and the extent of difficulties being

encountered in practice, all form part of the process to manage the programme of work to best effect.

Wherever possible, amendments to the CPR will follow the two common commencement dates of October & April. However, given the weight and urgency of some work, additional updates are to be expected.

As such the agenda programme is under constant review and is subject to change. However, topics likely to drive the work programme for the ensuing year are expected to include a mixture of projects already started, alongside new strands of work; together they include the following (this list is not exhaustive):

- Business as usual activity arising from:
 - referrals to the Lacuna Sub-Committee and Forms Sub-Committee
 - items flowing from across Government and related to Primary Legislation
- Civil Restraint Orders
- Extending Fixed Recoverable Costs (FRC) – post implementation review
- HM Courts & Tribunals Service’s Reform Programme, specifically, the online reformed services governed by PD 51R (Online Civil Money Claims) and PD 51ZB (Damages Claims Pilot)
- Integrated mediation for small claims proceedings in the county court
- Liaison and overlapping work with the Online Procedure Rule Committee
- Pilot PDs for review, such as the Small Claims Paper Determination pilot (PD51ZC) and E-Working pilot (PD51O)
- Pre-Action Protocols & Alternative Dispute Resolution
- Recommendations from the Civil Justice Council’s Enforcement Report
- Recommendations from the Civil Justice Council’s Report on Mental Capacity
- Simplified Costs Budgeting
- Service & E-signatures
- Strategic Litigation Against Public Participation (SLAPP) – post implementation review
- Traffic Enforcement Centre procedures
- Welsh Language

Contact

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