

# Capacity boost for Yorkshire courts

Press release

Temporary jury rooms have been installed at courts across Yorkshire as part of the Government's plan to tackle the impact of COVID-19 on the justice system.



- New temporary jury rooms will help more cases to be heard safely
- Eight courtrooms free to reopen for trials as a result
- Part of government plan to ensure justice continues to be served throughout the pandemic

Crown Courts in Leeds, Bradford, and Hull are the first to benefit from new Portakabin® buildings set up for jury deliberations. The step will free up eight courtrooms to hear more cases and deliver speedier justice for victims.

Crucially, the portable facilities provide sufficient space for two-metre social distancing between jurors and come equipped with hand-sanitation stations, to help stop the spread of COVID-19.

The buildings are being rapidly installed across the country as part of wider efforts to alleviate pressure on courts and tribunals resulting from the pandemic. This included the opening of a Nightingale Court at Cloth Hall in Leeds over the summer.

Courts Minister, Chris Philp said:

These additional facilities will help to boost the capacity of these courts – reducing delays and ensuring speedier justice for the people of Yorkshire.

This is the latest step in our plan to work with the judiciary and legal sector in pursuing every available option to ensure our courts recover as quickly as possible.

The move follows a recent £80m investment in the courts system to meet the

unprecedented challenge presented by the pandemic. This will fund the employment of 1,600 new staff to support the recovery, with more temporary Nightingale Courts and technology to boost capacity. These measures are beginning to show positive results:

- Magistrate courts are seeing the number of outstanding cases drop – dealing with over 21,000 cases a week
- Crown Courts are currently holding over 100 jury trials, and clear over 1,700 cases a week
- 250 Crown Court rooms will be available for jury trials by the end of October following the roll out of Plexiglass screens to more than 200 court rooms and 100 jury deliberation rooms

Meanwhile, a major £153 million investment across the courts system announced in July 2020 will speed up technological improvements and modernise courtrooms.

## **Notes to editors**

1. Two modular buildings have been installed at Bradford Combined Court, 4 at Leeds Combined Court and 2 at Hull Combined Court.
2. Further sites that modular buildings have been ordered for:
  - Great Grimsby Combined Court
  - Teesside Combined Court
  - Preston Combined Court
  - Newcastle Upon Tyne Combined Court
  - Guildford County and Family court
  - Birmingham Crown Court
  - Northampton Crown, County and Family
  - Leicester County and Family Court
  - Caernarfon Crown Court
  - Swansea Crown Court
  - Woolwich Crown Court
3. Portakabin® is the market leader in the design and manufacture of modular buildings and advanced off-site construction.

Published 20 October 2020