

# Crown Court sentencing remarks to be broadcast for first time

- Judges' sentencing remarks to be filmed for TV and made available online
- Move welcomed by national broadcasters after successful pilot
- Sentencing of Ben Oliver at the Old Bailey expected to be the first broadcasted case

It will allow the public to see and hear judges explain the reasoning behind their sentences, giving a better understanding of how these decisions are reached.

The move will open up some of the most high-profile courts across the country, including the Central Criminal Court, which is more commonly known as the Old Bailey.

The sentencing at the Old Bailey of Ben Oliver, who pleaded guilty to the manslaughter of his grandfather in south London, is expected to be the first broadcasted case.

Only the judge will be filmed during any sentencing that is broadcast to protect the privacy of victims, witnesses and jurors.

Deputy Prime Minister, Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice, Dominic Raab said:

Opening up the courtroom to cameras to film the sentencing of some the country's most serious offenders will improve transparency and reinforce confidence in the justice system.

The public will now be able to see justice handed down, helping them understand better the complex decisions judges make.

Previously, proceedings were only broadcast from certain Court of Appeal cases. The contract has now been extended to the Crown Court and Sky, BBC, ITN and Press Association are able to apply to film and broadcast sentencing remarks, with the judge deciding whether to grant the request.

The reform has been welcomed by national broadcasters who were involved in a successful pilot that allowed not-for-broadcast sentencing remarks to be filmed in eight Crown Court sites.

John Battle, Head of Legal and Compliance at ITN, and chairman of the Media Lawyers Association said:

This is a landmark moment for open justice. This reform reflects the public's right to see justice being done in their courts. It will promote better public understanding of the work of the courts and greater transparency in the justice system.

Court reporting is vital to democracy and the rule of law and this long overdue change is welcomed.

John Ryley, Head of Sky News, said:

Filming judges' sentencing remarks in the Crown Court of England and Wales is a victory for the viewer. It will allow for greater transparency in our courts and is something that broadcasters, including Sky News, have campaigned for more than a decade to achieve.

Our users and viewers will now be able to see and understand the criminal process and the complexities and constraints under which judges work.

Interim Director of BBC News Jonathan Munro said:

Justice must be seen to be done, so this is a crucial moment for transparency in the justice system – and for our audiences, who will be able to understand the judicial process better by witnessing it for themselves.

This move has come after a successful campaign by the BBC, ITN and Sky, and I'm delighted we are now seeing the results of our work.

Joe Pickover, Head of Video at PA Media said:

This is a crucial milestone, giving us access to film judges' sentencing remarks in Crown Courts for the first time.

Audiences across the UK will gain a much better understanding of the criminal process by witnessing the judicial system first hand and PA is delighted to be playing its part in this vital development.

The sentencing remarks of any case recorded will be hosted by Sky News on a dedicated YouTube channel. Footage is subject to the usual reporting restrictions and there will be a 10 second delay when broadcasting live to avoid any breach of restrictions or errors.

This provision is part of the government's wider court reform and digitalisation programme to increase access to justice, including the roll out of video technology to facilitate thousands of remote hearings and the use of video-recorded evidence for victims of rape and sexual offences.

## **Notes to editors**

- Judge Munro QC will sentence Ben Oliver on 28 July. Ben Oliver pleaded guilty to the manslaughter of David Oliver. The judge will decide whether to permit broadcasting of her sentencing remarks on the morning of 28 July and, if she does, this will be the first case when this will happen.
- Broadcasters will be able to film High Court and Senior Circuit judges sitting in the Crown Court. Footage will be under Crown Copyright.
- Broadcasting of sentencing remarks is allowed under the [The Crown Court \(Recording and Broadcasting\) Order 2020 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- Guidance for media parties is [available on GOV.UK](#).