

New contracts awarded to support vulnerable court and tribunal users

For people who need specialist communication support to participate in a court or tribunal hearing, finding the right intermediary service is vital in assuring access to justice. Until recently, these support services have been unregulated, with no approved suppliers or set quality standards.

The new service framework will standardise support for vulnerable court and tribunal users, by providing clear guidance, standard booking processes and will set prices to ensure fairness and quality of service. The service will start in April 2022.

Julie Parkin, Senior Head of Intelligent Client Capability at HMCTS said,

HMCTS' Appointed Intermediary Service will provide users who have specialist communication needs the professional support to participate in proceedings. These contracts ensure there is a consistent service and access to justice for all.

The [Intermediary Cooperative](#) are one of the successful suppliers and Paula Backen said,

We applaud this development of a structured and quality-assured service initiated by HMCTS and look forward to working collaboratively to ensure the very best HAIS service to all vulnerable people engaging with the justice system.

Intermediaries are communication specialists who work on behalf of HMCTS to support vulnerable users to participate in a court or tribunal hearing. They provide impartial recommendations to HMCTS about a service user's specific communication needs and outline the steps needed to achieve them.

Legal representatives and HMCTS staff can select an intermediary from an approved list of suppliers.

There are two types of suppliers – Managed and Approved Service Providers (MASP) are larger providers who manage the service on behalf of HMCTS nationally; and Approved service providers (ASP) who are usually small companies or self-employed individuals.

Carly McAuley from [Triangle](#) said,

Triangle are so excited to be awarded this contract. Intermediaries are vital to the justice system and we look forward to working with

HMCTS to provide communication support and assistance to more children and young people.

William Scrimshire, Managing Director at [Communicourt](#) said,

We are delighted to be selected as a Managed and Approved Service Provider for the HMCTS Appointed Intermediary Services. We have always strongly supported more regulation in this area and welcome the opportunity to be part of this new scheme. We are committed to delivering a high-quality and consistent service.

Further guidance and information about the Appointed Intermediary Service will be available on GOV.UK in April 2022.