

New Nightingale court opens in Monument

- Boost for justice across the capital as fifth Nightingale court opens its doors
- Monument site will begin hearing non-custodial criminal cases this week
- Part of government's plan to ensure justice system recovers from the pandemic

The Monument venue joins other temporary courts located in Southwark, Westminster, Barbican and Croydon – set up to increase capacity and tackle the impact of coronavirus on the criminal justice system. Together they have heard hundreds of cases during the pandemic, helping to minimise delays for victims, witnesses and defendants.

The new site – which usually hosts conferences for international businesses – is a stone's throw from Monument tube station, making it easily accessible to court users. Its two courtrooms will hear non-custodial jury cases for crimes such as theft and low-level drug possession. In the event of a guilty verdict, the trial judge may decide to relist the case at a nearby Crown Court for sentencing.

The court comes equipped with the latest technology rolled out at speed by HM Courts & Tribunals Service (HMCTS) during the pandemic – meaning defendants can appear remotely by video to avoid any delays to proceedings. It comes after ministers recently confirmed some 32 Nightingale courtrooms hearing criminal trials up and down the country will have their leases extended to Spring 2022 – continuing to help alleviate pressures on nearby Crown Courts.

Justice Secretary, Dominic Raab, said:

We're continuing to pull on every lever to ensure the criminal justice system recovers as quickly as possible from the pandemic.

The new Nightingale court in Monument is the latest step in this fight, providing vital additional capacity to minimise delays for Londoners.

Major challenges remain which is why we are investing hundreds of millions to further increase capacity, deliver swifter justice and support victims.

Today's announcement forms part of the significant action taken since the start of the pandemic to ensure the courts can recover from the pandemic and tackle delays. This includes:

- opening a super courtroom in Manchester to tackle trials with up to 12

defendants on trial suspected of crimes including, but not limited to, gang-related crime such as county lines drug trafficking, murders, and money laundering

- modifying a further 71 courtrooms to host trials with three or more defendants
- setting up Nightingale courtrooms across the country to increase capacity and ensure more trials can be heard – with a commitment to extend 32 Crown courtrooms that deal with criminal trials until March 2022
- working to reopen an additional 60 existing Crown courtrooms following the lifting of most restrictions – including social distancing – in England and Wales
- ensuring there is no limit on the number of days that Crown Courts can sit for this year
- putting in place measures to make over 300 jury trial rooms available to safely run trials
- hosting more than 20,000 hearings using remote technology each week (across all jurisdictions) – a huge rise from a standing start in March 2020

The impact of these measures is already being seen. England and Wales was among the first major jurisdictions in the world to resume jury trials, the number of outstanding cases has dropped by tens of thousands in the magistrates' since last summer, while the Crown Courts are dealing with cases at around pre-COVID-19 levels – listing thousands each week.

Dominic James, Venues Director of etc venues who owns the site said:

Our relationship with HM Courts & Tribunals Service (HMCTS) goes back to the middle of 2020; working in partnership with HMCTS at our Prospero House venue in London, which was the first Nightingale court to mobilise in early August 2020. HMCTS then selected our Maple House venue in Birmingham as part of the second phase.

We are delighted to further support HMCTS in providing a third Nightingale court at Etc.Venues Monument in London. It is a great compliment to our Covid-secure operations and strong relationship with HMCTS that a third venue has been selected to further assist the Ministry of Justice to reduce the backlog of trials.

We welcome the opportunity to host cases from late September onwards whilst our core business of providing inspiring space for events, meetings and conferences recovers back to full strength.

Notes to editors:

1. Monument Nightingale court is an annex of the Central Criminal Court (CCC), and its cases will appear on the court list for the CCC. Like Aldersgate House (Barbican) Nightingale court it will hear cases from any Crown Court in London.
2. This marks the fifth Nightingale court in London – joining Prospero House,

102 Petty France, Jurys Inn Croydon, and Barbican.

3. [Plans for more courts to reopen to help recover from the pandemic](#) were announced in July.

4. The Lord Chancellor recently set out his [plan for court recovery](#) in a speech delivered to the Law Society.