

News story: Improving wifi in our criminal courts

Good and reliable wifi is important in our courts and tribunals to ensure court visitors and legal professionals can work effectively in our buildings. We currently see over 46,000 active users a week using our wifi networks, 30,000 in criminal courts and 16,000 in civil and family courts and tribunals, exchanging 66TB of data, equivalent to over 29 million typewritten pages, over 106,000 CDs or over 14,000 DVDs. That is why we have started work to put the infrastructure in place to deliver better wifi in our criminal courts.

Our new full-building GovWifi allows more people to use the enhanced wifi network from a single logon – meaning easier access to online systems, less paper and improved ways of working for people who need to work out of multiple courts.

Wifi is already available in all courts and tribunals. All civil and family courts and tribunals have already got enhanced full-building wifi coverage. We are currently six months into a three-year programme to deliver faster wifi in all criminal courts by 2021. This new full-building wifi network will be in addition to the existing PCU wifi network already available in courts and tribunals.

Feedback has been positive and the earlier than previously planned roll-out of GovWifi to all courts, even where wifi has not yet been upgraded to full-building coverage, has already benefited local authority advocates, youth offender teams, presenting officers, UK visas and immigration in the Home Office, CAFCASS, and legal professionals visiting our court and tribunal buildings. We recognise that where wifi has not yet been upgraded, the bandwidth is not yet sufficient for downloading large case files and video clips but this will be improved as the infrastructure programme is delivered.

The following list shows where we now have full building coverage, improved bandwidth, and a resilient design in 31 criminal courts. We have prioritised Crown and Combined courts:

- Birmingham Crown Court
- Bradford Law Courts – Crown
- Bristol Crown Court
- Cardiff Crown Court
- Chelmsford Crown Court
- Coventry Combined Court
- Croydon Crown Court
- Derby Combined Court
- Inner London Sessions House Crown Court
- Isleworth Crown Court
- Kingston upon Thames Crown Court
- Leeds Combined Court

- Leicester Crown Court
- Lewes Combined Court
- Liverpool Crown Court
- Luton Crown Court
- Maidstone Combined Court
- Manchester Crown Court – Crown Square
- Newcastle Combined Court
- Norwich Combined Court
- Portsmouth Combined Court
- Preston Combined Court
- Reading Crown Court
- Salisbury Combined Court
- Sheffield Crown Court
- Snaresbrook Crown Court
- Southwark Crown Court
- Teesside Combined Court
- Wood Green Crown Court
- Woolwich Crown Court
- Wolverhampton Combined Court

Court visitors and professional users can text “GO” to 07537 417417 to set up a GovWifi account. Once an account has been set up it can be used at any GovWifi-enabled location. If a location you are visiting is using GovWifi it will appear as an available network to connect to on your device, and if your device is set up to connect automatically it will do so.

Advice to legal professionals is to connect to the wifi ahead of going into court.

If you have problems setting up the GovWifi account or connecting to the network please contact the helpdesk on 0845 600 6909.

This upgrade is another important step in the ongoing modernisation of the courts and tribunals system as part of the reform programme, bringing new technology and modern ways of working to the justice system.