

Nightingale Courts in Liverpool and Winchester open as temporary jury rooms rolled out

- 4 extra court rooms will be provided in Winchester and Liverpool
- 16 Nightingale Courts now operating across England and Wales – providing 29 courtrooms
- Part of plans to ensure the courts system recovers from the pandemic as quickly as possible

Located temporarily at the Winchester Guildhall and St George's Hall in Liverpool, they will free up jury rooms in nearby crown courts – allowing more cases to be heard and delivering quicker justice for victims.

It brings the total number of Nightingale Courts, set up nationwide to alleviate pressure on courts and tribunals resulting from the pandemic, to 16.

Justice Minister Chris Philp said:

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

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.

Alan Smith, General Manager at St George's Hall Liverpool said:

We are delighted to be able to accommodate, support, and host HMCTS in the Crown Court of St George's Hall.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, it is amazing how organisations have been able to adapt and cooperate to ensure that key services are supported.

It is also fantastic to see the magnificent Crown Court of the Hall come to life again and perform its original function as a court.

Photograph of St George's Hall in Liverpool

Winchester City Council leader, Cllr Lucille Thompson said:

One of our highest priorities at the moment is to help our high streets recover, and so I am delighted that HM Courts and Tribunals have signed an agreement with the City Council to use the Guildhall as a Nightingale Court for the next nine months.

Not only will this help our local economy and businesses by driving up footfall and bringing people back to the centre, but it also ensures that one of our very special buildings is being made use of during these challenging times.

In total, 16 Nightingale Courts are now open nationwide.

Today's announcement 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:

- Since August 2020, Magistrates' courts have been sitting on Saturdays, amounting to around 100 extra court sessions a month, dealing with thousands of cases
- Magistrate' courts are also now consistently completing more cases than they are receiving, reducing their outstanding caseload as a result
- 250 Crown Court rooms will be available for jury trials in the coming weeks 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.