

Press release: Court users to benefit from new service centres

- Centres now open in Stoke-on-Trent and Birmingham
- Providing support to people across the country and freeing up court staff
- Part of £1bn court reform programme to improve the criminal justice system

The new centres bring a number of justice services together under one roof to offer an improved and more consistent experience for victims, witnesses, and anyone who uses the court system.

Once fully operational, more than 600 people will be employed across the sites to process cases, issue orders from courts and tribunals, and answer queries from the public. In turn, that will free up court and tribunal staff on the ground to better support the judiciary and help the public and legal professionals during hearings.

Speaking at the opening of the Stoke centre, HMCTS Change Director, Richard Goodman, said:

These centres will make it quicker and easier to give the public the support they need to use our courts and tribunals.

This is just one example of how the reform programme will provide easier and more efficient justice for all.

The roll out of Courts & Tribunals Service Centres are part of the £1 billion court reform programme and will help provide better access to justice services. They are based on research into what users want and need, and in consultation with judges, magistrates and legal professionals, as well as agencies that represent the public and support people with cases going through the justice system.

The next Service Centre will open in Loughborough and is expected to be fully operational by May 2020. The £1 billion reform programme has already delivered:

- A pilot of fully-video hearings in the tax tribunals.
- The national implementation of a new in-court system to record the result of cases digitally and instantly.
- A pilot of a new digital system providing shared case information in criminal cases to the police, CPS, courts and legal professionals.
- A Civil Money Claims service with more than 39,000 claims made since it first launched in March 2018, with the fastest claim being lodged and paid under two hours.

- An online Divorce Service, with more than 23,000 applications made since it launched in April 2018.
- Online Probate Service with more than 7,500 applications made since July 2018.
- More than 1,400 online pleas have been made within the Single Justice Procedure for Transport for London fare evasion cases since its launch in April 2018.

Notes to editors:

- Courts & Tribunals Service Centres opened today (28 January) in Bennett House, Stoke-on-Trent and Hagley Road, Birmingham.
- Social Security and Child Support (SSCS) tribunals and the probate digital telephone service will move into Birmingham, while Single Justice Service (SJS) and divorce services will move to Stoke-on-Trent.