

# Press release: London hosts inaugural international online courts forum

- Up to 200 judges, senior court officials, academics and legal experts due to attend
- More than 20 countries represented to discuss online courts and court reform
- Justice Secretary and Lord Chief Justice to address attendees

Academics, legal professionals and court reform experts will also be attending the two-day event, which begins today, at the headquarters of global law firm DLA Piper with up to 200 guests expected.

The forum will focus on the development of online courts and is being hosted jointly by HM Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS) and the Society for Computers and Law (SCL), a charity focused on the development of IT-related law.

The government is delivering an ambitious programme of court reform, which aims to bring new technology and modern ways of working to the way justice is administered. In collaboration with the senior judiciary and HMCTS, £1bn is being invested to reform the courts and tribunals system.

Speaking ahead of the event, Susan Acland-Hood said:

The forum is a unique opportunity to hear and learn from those countries reforming their court systems and developing online courts.

We have the highest calibre of delegates attending this ground-breaking event demonstrating how the changes we are making here are at the forefront of a wider international movement to improve both access to and efficiency of our court systems.

President of the Society for Computers and Law, Professor Richard Susskind said:

More people in our world now have access to the internet than access to justice. Against that backdrop, we are delighted to have assembled experts from more than 20 countries to work together in bringing our court services into the 21st century.

Online courts, in my view, are the most promising way of ensuring that many more people are able to understand and enforce their legal rights.

The first day of the forum will include speeches from Justice Secretary David Gauke and the Lord Chief Justice, as well as presentations from HMCTS and a range of international jurisdictions including the US, Singapore, India, Denmark and New South Wales.

The day will conclude with the Sir Brian Neill Lecture to be delivered by Shannon Salter, Chair of the Civil Resolution Tribunal, British Columbia in Canada.

Day two will feature debates on common issues facing policymakers, judges, technologists, and lawyers such as the use of Artificial Intelligence and technology platforms and obstacles. These will include contributions from Lord Briggs, Justice of the Supreme Court, Andrew Walker QC, chair of the Bar Council, Christina Blacklaws, President of the Law Society, and Dame Hazel Genn, Professor of Socio-legal Studies at UCL.

The event will be co-chaired by Susan Acland-Hood, Chief Executive of HMCTS, and Professor Richard Susskind, President of SCL. Sir Ernest Ryder, the Senior President of Tribunals, will be the forum's rapporteur.

Justice Minister Lucy Frazer said:

I am delighted that so many leading court reform figures from around the world are able to come together in London to share ideas and build new partnerships on digital reform.

We face common challenges and opportunities in ensuring our justice systems work for the people who use and need them, and this forum will ensure we continue to learn from each other.

The court reform programme in England and Wales has already delivered:

- A new fully accessible online civil money claims service giving the public the ability to make a small claim online – with more than 35,000 claims made since its launch in March and user satisfaction at 90%;
- A new system for applying for divorce online, which has cut errors in application forms from 40% to less than 1%;
- A new probate system in testing, which has cut errors, quickened the process and has a user satisfaction rate of 93%;
- A pilot of fully video hearings in tax tribunals to test the potential for roll-out where appropriate across the courts and tribunals system;
- The national implementation of a new in-court system to record the results of cases digitally and instantly
- The 21 countries represented at the forum were Albania, Argentina, Australia, Azerbaijan, Canada, China, Denmark, Estonia, India, Japan, Kazakhstan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Northern Ireland, Portugal, Qatar, Ireland (Republic), Scotland, Singapore, Ukraine and the USA.
- The [full forum programme](#).