

Press release: Transformation of Birmingham Civil Justice Centre – the future of courts and tribunals

12 new multi-purpose and digitised courtrooms, more modern public space, and 19 new rooms for the judiciary have been built – bringing together all the courts and tribunals for the first time, within a combined Civil, Family and Tribunal Justice Centre. The building now hosts 59 courtrooms and chambers, 60 judges and around 223 members of staff – whose roles range from ensuring trials progress and assisting the judiciary to helping people who are attending court.

The investment into Birmingham Civil Justice Centre is part of the Government's £1bn reform and modernisation of the justice system – ensuring Britain's courts and tribunals are fit for the 21st century.

The County Court is one of the busiest in the country and was responsible for 3.3% of all national civil cases issued in the past 12 months. The Family Court is also one of the largest and received 496 care and 1,945 private law applications. 3.5% of national Social Security and Child Support cases were listed at Birmingham over the last 12 months.

The state-of-the-art Civil Justice Centre is bringing together knowledge and expertise in managing court and tribunal cases from across the region – meaning a better service for citizens in the county and beyond.

Justice Minister Lucy Frazer, said:

We are ensuring the justice system is fit for the 21st century. This investment is just one example of how our reform programme will modernise our courts and ensure swifter justice.

HMCTS CEO Susan Acland-Hood, said:

Birmingham Civil Justice Centre is a prime example of the future of our courts and tribunals.

We are spending £1 billion to make our system more accessible for all citizens, more sensitive for witnesses, and to deliver better value for taxpayers' money.

Regional Tribunal Judge Rhead said:

Myself and my colleagues are delighted to relocate to the

refurbished 4th Floor at Birmingham Civil Justice Centre. The refurbishment is the result of the determination and hard work of HMCTS staff and all associated with the project.

It provides 12 multi-jurisdictional hearing rooms suitable to hear a range of tribunal hearings including social security and child support appeals with appropriate facilities for tribunal users. The hearing rooms and judicial accommodation are an excellent example of a modern 'fit for purpose' justice centre.

HMCTS have developed digital services so that, where appropriate, instead of taking time out to attend a physical court building, working people can now make a number of claims online. These include filing for divorce, challenging rogue traders for money owed, or making a tax appeal. In criminal courts the increasing use of video links means more vulnerable victims can give evidence away from the courtroom and without having to meet their attacker face to face. Across the country, people are also now able to indicate their plea online for low level motoring offences – 80,000 online pleas were made last year. This enables the court to better prepare for the hearing – saving time in the courtroom. £114.7m has already been raised from the sales of underused and poorly-equipped courts to reinvest in the reform and modernisation of the justice system.