

Solicitors and CPS join professional users' access scheme

From today (1 February), solicitors will be able to register for the [professional users' access scheme](#), which permits enhanced access through security in courts and tribunals for registered holders with the appropriate scheme ID.

The London Criminal Courts Solicitors' Association (LCCSA) and Criminal Law Solicitors Association (CLSA) have become the latest legal professional organisations to sign up, following the Bar Council which has been part of the scheme since it launched in May 2019. Alongside this, HMCTS is also delighted to welcome the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) as a member organisation, demonstrating the continued broadening of the scheme to a wider cohort of professional court users.

Significantly, access to the LCCSA and CLSA registration portal is not restricted to their membership only, and all solicitors with a practising certificate are able to sign up via this route from today, a move that has been advanced by investment and support from the Law Society.

Today's news means that barristers, solicitors and CPS staff can now benefit from entering HMCTS buildings without needing a [routine security search](#) on each visit, by verifying credentials which satisfy our robust, risk-based safety and security policy.

This benefits scheme members and assists the smooth running of courts and tribunals by helping to minimise delays on entry. Separate fast-access lanes for members are available during the busiest times of the day, where possible. A QR code on members' ID cards is scanned to enable entry without further security checks, other than random screenings.

The professional users' access scheme is currently rolled out at over [300 HMCTS sites](#).

Welcoming today's news, President of the LCCSA, Mark Troman, said:

Solicitors play a crucial role in the day-to-day administration of justice in court and tribunals across England and Wales. From today their trusted status will be recognised and this will enable faster, less restrictive access to court buildings and allow them to get on with their work.

I'm delighted we're now in a position to roll out registration for the access scheme, not just to LCCSA members, but all practising solicitors in England and Wales, whom I strongly encourage to apply via our website.

Daniel Bonich, Chair of the CLSA, gave his reflections:

We are delighted to be able to deliver on one of the most frequent requests from our members. This scheme is recognition of the crucial role our members and fellow solicitors play in the proper administration of justice. We are pleased that their status as officers of the court has been so recognised and awarded 'trusted status' which will enable much improved and quicker access to court buildings.

We are also thrilled to be able to make these cards available not just to our members, but all practicing solicitors in England and Wales, thanks to the assistance of the Law Society, and we look forward to issuing these cards via our website.

President of the Law Society of England and Wales, David Greene, added:

The work solicitors do underpins justice. We're therefore very pleased that we've been able to come to an arrangement with partner organisations so our members can obtain ID which helps them fast-track into court premises in a way that helps court security for everyone using the courts or working there.

Mark Gray, Director of Operations, Digital and Commercial at the Crown Prosecution Service, said:

All our staff have passed security checks before joining us, so to enable fast track access for our regular attendance at court buildings is very welcome. As well as benefiting CPS professionals entering court for work by being quicker, the inclusion of more professionals into the scheme will free up capacity through security for others going to court. I would like to thank everyone involved both at the CPS and HMCTS who have worked to make it easier for us to enter our place of work without compromising safety for everyone using court.

The professional users' access scheme was jointly introduced by HMCTS and the Bar Council in response to concerns raised by legal practitioners in particular about queues to get into HMCTS buildings, and the frustration when personal items are confiscated for security reasons. This needed to be balanced against the requirement for tightened security processes to prevent dangerous weapons and other prohibited items from being brought into court.

Many participating HMCTS buildings have been able to maintain the scheme, which now has over 5,000 members, throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, with nearly all those that did need to temporarily pause operation to ensure social distancing, having resumed. As part of HMCTS' response to COVID,

rollout to 26 new sites was brought forward and those locations went live during the summer. The number of legal professionals participating in the scheme is increasing each week and there are typically over 1,100 successful entry scans every day.

HMCTS is continuing to work with other organisations to onboard more groups onto the scheme and further improve entry to buildings for a wider cohort of professional users.

- solicitors can register for the professional users' access scheme via the [LCCSA](#) and [CLSA](#) websites
- CPS members can apply via the CPS intranet.
- members of the Bar Council can register for the scheme using [the Bar Council's secure My Bar portal](#).