

Crime news: secure file exchange 'sign-up' guidance available

News story

We have new guidance and advice about our secure file exchange platform for the online transfer of information and documents.



Secure file exchange is already being used widely for crime billing work and we're encouraging providers to register now to prepare for further rollouts.

New guidance is available on GOV.UK with resources and information to help you understand the platform.

What is secure file exchange?

The platform allows for the secure submission of large files, discs or USB sticks through the platform instead of post or email.

Who is using it now?

Providers are currently able to upload files and evidence in support of the following crime billing areas:

- Advocates Graduated Fee Scheme
- Litigators Graduated Fee Scheme
- Criminal Cases Unit – Special Preparation
- Criminal Finance – CRM7, 18 and 18A claims)

The plan is to bring more areas of work on board, which is why we need all crime providers to register so they can access the system.

How do I register?

Guidance on how to register and access support is available on our Secure File Exchange page on GOV.UK.

You can also find browser recommendations and contact points depending on your area of work.

Further information

[Secure file exchange](#) – for guidance and advice on the platform

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[Merger of viagogo and StubHub raises competition concerns](#)

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) is concerned that the loss of competition brought about by the merger could result in customers who buy and resell tickets losing out as a result of higher prices and fewer options.

viagogo purchased StubHub in February 2020. Both companies have a significant presence in the UK's secondary ticketing market. Together, they have a combined market share of more than 80% and are the number 1 and number 2 players respectively in the UK.

After completing its initial Phase 1 investigation, the CMA found that viagogo and StubHub are close competitors in an already very concentrated market with limited alternatives. It is particularly concerned that the merger would raise the prices for customers, including fans, who resell and buy secondary tickets to live events.

As part of its investigation, the CMA undertook extensive market testing and looked at evidence from a number of third-party stakeholders including consumer groups, customers and competitors. It also examined the companies' internal documents.

The CMA is mindful of the heavy impact that the Coronavirus (COVID-19) is currently having on the live events industry. However, it anticipates viagogo and StubHub will remain important competitors in the online secondary ticketing market in the longer term. The CMA has seen no evidence that either company would be more adversely affected by the current market climate in comparison to other competitors.

Andrea Gomes da Silva, CMA's Executive Director for Markets and Mergers said:

viagogo is already the largest secondary ticketing company in the UK by some considerable margin and has purchased an established rival, with no other significant competitors in the market. We are therefore concerned that this transaction could lead to customers losing out through higher prices, less innovation and a lack of real choice.

viagogo now has 5 working days to address the CMA's concerns by offering remedial undertakings in lieu of a reference to a 'Phase 2' investigation. For the CMA to accept undertakings, viagogo would need to deliver a clear-cut solution that will preserve effective competition in the UK market. If viagogo is unable to do so, the deal will be referred for an in-depth (Phase 2) investigation.

For more information, [visit the case page](#).

For media enquiries, contact the CMA press office on 020 3738 6460 or press@cma.gov.uk.

Illegal fishing net recovered at North East beauty spot

On Tuesday 9 June Fisheries Enforcement Officers received information from the [Northumberland Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Authority \(NIFCA\)](#) that the 50-metre unlicensed illegal gill net had been set on the beach at Holy Island.

It's suspected the net had been set to take salmon and sea trout as well as any other sea fish. Migratory fish were entangled in the net when it was recovered.

The Environment Agency is investigating where the nets have come from and the whereabouts of any migratory fish and sea bass that were taken from the nets.

It's the fourth net of its kind that the [Environment Agency](#) has seized in recent weeks.

Last week (1 June) they recovered two illegal and unlicensed gill nets – one measuring 75 metres and the other 15 metres – from the River Blyth Estuary at East Sleekburn. And at the end of May (27 May) they recovered a 40-metre net at Skinningrove in Redcar and Cleveland.

And NIFCA also previously seized a similar 100-metre gill net on the beach at Lynemouth, Northumberland on 21 May.

One of the fish caught in the illegal net

Nets are indiscriminate

John Crowl, Enforcement Team Leader for the Environment Agency, said:

These nets are indiscriminate in nature and are illegal for a reason which is why we take these recoveries so seriously.

We've had a series of reports and recoveries over recent weeks from across the area and our Fisheries Enforcement Officers are investigating.

Not only are they capable of catching and killing fish indiscriminately they are also capable of causing awful injury to sea birds and mammals.

Fisheries is very carefully managed to protect the future of the industry and ensure fish can get to their breeding grounds to spawn. I'd urge people to report information about illegal fishing activity to us so we can take action.

Actively patrolling

Fisheries Enforcement Officers are actively patrolling the North East rivers and coastline and responding to reports of illegal fishing.

Environment Agency officers are wearing the appropriate protective equipment and adhering to social distancing measures.

A licensed, strictly regulated and managed sea trout fishery operates off the coast of Northumberland, but the use of illegal nets have a serious impact on sea trout and salmon returning to rivers to spawn.

Those who operate unlicensed nets risk prosecution, with unlimited fines and possible prison sentences available to the courts, and Environment Agency officers can seize equipment and vehicles.

Information about illegal fishing can be reported to the Environment Agency's 24-hour incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60.

[Government to take control of unpaid](#)

work to strengthen community sentences

- HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) to deliver offenders' unpaid work and behavioural change programmes from June 2021
- more than £100 million a year available to charities and private sector for rehabilitation
- changes ensure probation system has flexibility to deal with disruption from coronavirus

The move will ensure innovative, new measures to strengthen community sentences can be delivered quicker and more effectively. The government has already ensured serious violent and sexual offenders spend longer in prison and robust community penalties will offer an appropriate level of punishment, while tackling the underlying drivers of offending.

With the transition to the new probation system set to take place over the next 12 months, the move will also provide greater control, flexibility and stability during the unprecedented challenges posed by the coronavirus pandemic. This approach will ensure that the HMPPS takes on responsibility for supervising all offenders in England from next June as planned.

The voluntary sector – so fundamental to reducing reoffending by improving the lives of offenders through rehabilitation – will play an enhanced role in the probation system. Charities and private sector organisations will be able to compete for more than £100 million pounds a year from today (11 June 2020) to run services such as education, employment, accommodation and addiction treatment. Cutting reoffending rates will mean fewer people becoming a victim of crime.

Announcing the changes, Lord Chancellor Robert Buckland QC MP said:

An effective probation service is essential to cutting crime, tackling reoffending, supporting victims and keeping the public safe. These plans support our move towards a justice system that is tough but smart.

That means combining the right sentences with new technology, like sobriety tags, and world-leading rehabilitation which turns offenders' lives around. This is how the Government will ensure fewer people become a victim of crime.

The private sector will continue to play a key role in rehabilitating offenders, from specialist support services and operating prisons through to tagging and the job offers they give to those leaving jail.

The government has long-ended the situation where short-term prisoners were not monitored after release, with an extra 40,000 offenders now supervised

every year.

The shake-up of probation will allow probation staff to work more closely with local authorities and the NHS to help offenders find a stable home and medical treatment so that they can hold down a job and leave the criminal lifestyle behind for good.

HMPPS will build on its record for protecting the public when it takes on an excellent group of around 2,000 talented people from the Community Rehabilitation Companies with experience in delivering unpaid work and behavioural change programmes.

Funding will be available via competition to charities, private companies and social enterprises which help address cross-cutting social issues that lead to criminal behaviour such as poor mental health, drug and alcohol addiction, homelessness, debt and poor education. The voluntary sector has some of the best experience, innovation and skill to tackle these issues, helping offenders turn their lives around and reducing reoffending.

From today, organisations will be able to pitch the services they can deliver, at what scale and in what region. Services can then be competitively commissioned for delivery at a local level, by prison governors, Probation Regional Directors, Police and Crime Commissioners and other authorities which require them.

The expertise of the private sector will continue to be used in the running of prisons, which run a number of high-performing prisons including HMPs Altcourse and Ashfield. The government is committed to a mixed market, with both the public and private sectors running prisons. The private sector will play an important role in the Government's ambitious prison reforms, including the investment of £2.5 billion to transform the prison estate and create an additional 10,000 prison places.

A competition to operate the new prison being built at Wellingborough is currently running and due to be followed by a further competition to operate another new prison at Glen Parva.

Honorary Queen's Counsel nominations: deadline Tuesday 11 August 2020

The Ministry of Justice (MOJ) is inviting nominations for the award of Queen's Counsel Honoris Causa. Nomination forms must be completed and returned to MOJ by 12pm on Tuesday 11 August 2020.

QC Honoris Causa, or Honorary QC, is an honorary award unique to the legal profession. It is a dedicated opportunity, made by royal prerogative, to

recognise those in the profession who have made a major contribution to, and impact on, the law of England and Wales and how it is advanced, outside the courtroom.

We are looking for nominations for the Honorary QC award to honour those who have made a significant, positive impact either on the shape of the law of England and Wales, or on the profession. More details on what we mean by 'significant, positive impact', and who is eligible, follow.

What is the award for?

Honorary QC is an opportunity to award individuals who have made a major contribution to the law of England and Wales outside practice in the courts.

This criterion can be interpreted broadly, either as a major contribution to the shape of the law (for example, by influencing case law), or to how it is advanced (for example, by positively impacting the shape of the profession). What is most important is that nominations clearly evidence the significant, positive impact an individual's efforts have had.

Examples of what these different contributions may look like are:

- Making an impact on the law by influencing legislation or case law (e.g. through academic research, particular personal impact through engagement or campaigning, or pro bono work).
- Making a considerable impact on the legal profession (e.g. through initiatives that have an impact on social mobility or diversity, innovation in legal education, or that promote UK legal services overseas and increase the competitiveness of the sector).
- Making an impact through a standout achievement or through innovation (e.g. by breaking through into new territory, such as making an impact through work on Lawtech).

It is not a long-service award – honours may be awarded for a significant impact over a long period of time, but they may equally be awarded for such an impact over a shorter period – it is the scale of impact that is important.

We are keen to recognise the diversity within the profession, with awards that reflect the range of different legal careers that make up the profession. You can see examples of previous successful nominees by viewing some [case studies of successful nominations](#) (PDF, 250KB, 2 pages).

Who is eligible?

To be eligible for the award, the individual must be a qualified lawyer or legal academic. The nomination must be for achievement outside practice in the courts. In other words, an award would be made for non-advocacy work.

Examples of those eligible may include (but are not limited to):

- solicitors without higher rights of audience

- legal executives
- in-house lawyers, including Counsel
- legal academics

Holding a fee-paid judicial office in addition to normal practice would not exclude lawyers who meet the eligibility criteria above.

The award is not a working rank, and is separate to substantive QC appointments administered by Queen's Counsel Appointments. Where someone is eligible to apply for silk in their role, we would not normally consider them for an Honorary QC award.

Where someone from outside the legal profession has made a significant impact on the law of England and Wales, or how it is advanced, they would not qualify for this award. We would welcome those nominations as part of the [main honours system](#).

There is no exact equivalent in Scotland or Northern Ireland. However, this does not mean that achievements of a similar nature cannot be recognised in those jurisdictions. If you would like to nominate someone for an honour whose work is in Scotland or Northern Ireland, you can contact the [Scottish Government](#) or the [Honours Secretariat for Northern Ireland](#).

Someone who has been honoured in the main honours system within the last two years, or who has been nominated for such an honour this year, would not be eligible to receive an Honorary QC award. Where someone was awarded an honour more than two years ago, the panel will consider the individual's contribution to and impact on the law since that honour was awarded.

Please note that anyone nominated may be subject to criminal record checks with ACRO Criminal Records Office.

How to make a nomination

We welcome nominations for Honorary QC from anyone, including from people outside the legal profession, who can explain the impact the nominee has made.

Please make sure nominations are made on the [Honorary QC nomination form](#) (MS Word Document, 106KB), as we will only accept nominations which are submitted on this form.

When completing the form, please explain the contribution that has been made, providing clear evidence of its impact. We would advise against simply providing a career history of the nominee, and suggest keeping your nomination to a limit of 500 words.

You may nominate as many people as you like, but please ensure that you keep their details on separate nomination forms.

You need to complete the nomination form and send it to us by 12pm on Tuesday 11 August 2020 by email: HonoraryQC@justice.gov.uk or alternatively post to:

Hon QC awards team
Legal Services Division
Ministry of Justice
Post Point 9.20
102 Petty France
London SW1H 9AJ

Timing

Please ensure that your nominations reach us no later than 12pm on Tuesday 11 August 2020. Nominations made after 12pm on this date cannot be accepted.

How are awards made?

The process is administered by MOJ, and nominations are considered against the criterion by a panel of representatives.

Contact us

If you would like additional information on Honorary QC awards or how to make a nomination, please feel free to contact us by email:

HonoraryQC@justice.gov.uk.