

# News story: Improving wifi in our criminal courts

Good and reliable wifi is important in our courts and tribunals to ensure court visitors and legal professionals can work effectively in our buildings. We currently see over 46,000 active users a week using our wifi networks, 30,000 in criminal courts and 16,000 in civil and family courts and tribunals, exchanging 66TB of data, equivalent to over 29 million typewritten pages, over 106,000 CDs or over 14,000 DVDs. That is why we have started work to put the infrastructure in place to deliver better wifi in our criminal courts.

Our new full-building GovWifi allows more people to use the enhanced wifi network from a single logon – meaning easier access to online systems, less paper and improved ways of working for people who need to work out of multiple courts.

Wifi is already available in all courts and tribunals. All civil and family courts and tribunals have already got enhanced full-building wifi coverage. We are currently six months into a three-year programme to deliver faster wifi in all criminal courts by 2021. This new full-building wifi network will be in addition to the existing PCU wifi network already available in courts and tribunals.

Feedback has been positive and the earlier than previously planned roll-out of GovWifi to all courts, even where wifi has not yet been upgraded to full-building coverage, has already benefited local authority advocates, youth offender teams, presenting officers, UK visas and immigration in the Home Office, CAFCASS, and legal professionals visiting our court and tribunal buildings. We recognise that where wifi has not yet been upgraded, the bandwidth is not yet sufficient for downloading large case files and video clips but this will be improved as the infrastructure programme is delivered.

The following list shows where we now have full building coverage, improved bandwidth, and a resilient design in 31 criminal courts. We have prioritised Crown and Combined courts:

- Birmingham Crown Court
- Bradford Law Courts – Crown
- Bristol Crown Court
- Cardiff Crown Court
- Chelmsford Crown Court
- Coventry Combined Court
- Croydon Crown Court
- Derby Combined Court
- Inner London Sessions House Crown Court
- Isleworth Crown Court
- Kingston upon Thames Crown Court
- Leeds Combined Court

- Leicester Crown Court
- Lewes Combined Court
- Liverpool Crown Court
- Luton Crown Court
- Maidstone Combined Court
- Manchester Crown Court – Crown Square
- Newcastle Combined Court
- Norwich Combined Court
- Portsmouth Combined Court
- Preston Combined Court
- Reading Crown Court
- Salisbury Combined Court
- Sheffield Crown Court
- Snaresbrook Crown Court
- Southwark Crown Court
- Teesside Combined Court
- Wood Green Crown Court
- Woolwich Crown Court
- Wolverhampton Combined Court

Court visitors and professional users can text “GO” to 07537 417417 to set up a GovWifi account. Once an account has been set up it can be used at any GovWifi-enabled location. If a location you are visiting is using GovWifi it will appear as an available network to connect to on your device, and if your device is set up to connect automatically it will do so.

Advice to legal professionals is to connect to the wifi ahead of going into court.

If you have problems setting up the GovWifi account or connecting to the network please contact the helpdesk on 0845 600 6909.

This upgrade is another important step in the ongoing modernisation of the courts and tribunals system as part of the reform programme, bringing new technology and modern ways of working to the justice system.

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## **News story: VMD web and telephone services will be unavailable from 01:00, 19 January to 08:00, 21 January**

The following online application services will be unavailable:

[Special Import Certificates](#)

[Special Treatment Certificates](#)

You should obtain an import certificate in advance if you think you will need to import/use an imported medicine during this period. In urgent cases you may purchase and use an imported veterinary medicine prior to obtaining a certificate from the VMD. This is a special dispensation which only applies to the VMD online system during this maintenance period. You should obtain an import certificate retrospectively as soon as possible.

[Research Import Certificates](#)

[Export Certificates](#)

[Microchip Adverse Event Reporting](#)

[Animal Adverse Reaction Reporting](#)

[Human Adverse Reaction Reporting](#)

The following online information service will be unavailable:

[Product Information Database](#)

Also, we will not be able to receive phone calls through the switchboard or via direct dial.

The systems should be operational again from 8:00 Monday 21 January.

The VMD apologises for any inconvenience.

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## **Speech: Townhall meeting for British nationals – opening remarks**

Hello everyone. For those who haven't met me, my name is Iain Lindsay and I am the British Ambassador to Hungary. Thank you for coming this evening.

Grateful to Szabolcs Takács, State Secretary for European Union Affairs at the Prime Minister's Office, for representing the Hungarian Government.

Hungary is home to 5-10,000 Brits, therefore it is important for us to give you an opportunity to hear the latest information on EU Exit, both from the UK and the Hungarian Governments. And even more importantly, it's important that we listen to your thoughts and concerns.

Before I launch into the main part of my comments this evening, I want to flag up three things:

I'd like to encourage you to regularly check our embassy's website on [GOV.UK](#), including our [Living in Hungary guide](#) guide and follow our social media

channels, [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#), to have the most up-to-date information about our departure from the EU.

You will find little cards on your seats with all the relevant links, including a link to a [survey](#) where we would welcome your feedback on this event.

Many of those who cannot be here today have asked that we live stream this event so that information is shared as widely as possible. I am pleased to confirm that we are doing this, so please note that recording will take place throughout the event. We will also publish a summary of this event on our website, so that you can return to any of the questions we discuss today.

Finally, about the format of the event: following my comments I will ask State Secretary Takács to say a few words on behalf of the Hungarian Government. Then we will open the floor for questions.

I know that the EU referendum decision has caused considerable uncertainty, and in many cases disappointment, for you. These are difficult times but we have worked hard with our EU partners to reach agreement on the Withdrawal Agreement and a Political Declaration.

From the very beginning of this process, Prime Minister Theresa May has said that safeguarding the rights of UK nationals living in the EU and EU citizens living in the UK was her top priority.

This evening, I would like to give you an update on the agreement reached on citizens' rights. I will also speak about your situation should we not be able to reach an overall agreement with the EU, which I want to stress is neither our, nor the EU's, wish or intention.

## **Withdrawal Agreement**

The Withdrawal Agreement will ensure our smooth and orderly exit from the UK, including securing the rights of the 1 million+ UK nationals in the EU and 3 million+ EU citizens in the UK. The European Council endorsed this Agreement in November. Our Parliament was due to vote on the agreement in December, but the PM decided to postpone that vote until January. That vote is now due on 15 January.

I know this is a period of uncertainty and I appreciate it's very difficult for you – it is for us all. As a responsible government we are preparing for all potential scenarios. I will speak about this later.

If Parliament votes in favour of the Withdrawal Agreement, it will be implemented by the end of March and the result will be:

- a time-limited implementation period, lasting from when we exit the EU until 31 December 2020. During the implementation period, EU law will continue to apply to the UK. As such, during that period UK nationals will continue to be able to travel, work and live freely in any member state, as is currently the case

UK nationals already living legally in Hungary will be able to remain on broadly the same basis after the UK leaves the EU. That means if a UK national is legally residing in Hungary by 31 December 2020, they will be able to continue doing so afterwards. And not only to reside, but to continue working, studying, being retired, or whatever they were doing before. This means:

- you will have the right to “family reunification” – that is bringing your family members to Hungary, which I know is really important to many of you. So if you are resident in Hungary, you will be able to bring your family members to Hungary even after our exit from the EU. This applies to children, including those born after exit day, dependant parents and dependant grandparents. It also covers partners, including spouses, registered partners, and partners >in a proven long-term relationship, where the relationship existed before 31 December 2020

The UK and the EU will continue to aggregate social security contributions made both before and after the end of the implementation period. Those who have paid into a system – for example pensions – and may pay in in the future, will have their contributions protected.

In addition, we will continue to pay an uprated UK State Pension to individuals resident in EU Member States, and, in accordance with EU rules, provide associated healthcare cover in the EU.

The UK and EU will also protect the right to export relevant benefits (e.g. child benefit and disability benefits) to both EU Member States and the UK, as under the current EU rules.

Current healthcare arrangements will continue for those citizens who are legally resident in Hungary by 31 December 2020, including the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC), planned treatments and health care reimbursement arrangements for pensioners (the S1 route).

You will also retain your right to run or establish a business in Hungary.

All of these provisions will apply equally to Hungarian citizens in the UK.

So what is not included in the Withdrawal Agreement? There are some issues we haven't yet been able to agree on with the EU, which we hope to discuss in the next round. For example, I know that the right to continue to have the ability to move freely around all 27 remaining EU27 countries is important to many of you. We will seek to discuss this in the context of our future partnership.

## **No deal**

Up to now we have been talking about the situation in the event that the British Parliament approves the deal we have negotiated. I am however conscious that many of you will be aware that Parliament may not approve the deal, and that it is possible that the UK may leave the EU without a deal.

Delivering the deal negotiated with the EU remains the Government's top priority. This has not changed. However, the Government must prepare for every eventuality, including a no deal scenario. With less than three months until our exit from the EU, we have reached the point where we need to accelerate and intensify these preparations.

The Government has now published 106 pieces of advice on different subjects to help businesses, citizens and consumers to prepare for 29 March in the event of a no-deal scenario. These are available on the government website. They are called "technical notices". Those dealing with passports and driving licences might be of particular interest to people here.

Our objective in a no-deal scenario is to minimise disruption by taking unilateral action to prioritise continuity and stability. Stability in a no-deal scenario partly depends on the EU taking a similar, non-disruptive approach to planning.

You may be aware that on 21 September, the Prime Minister confirmed that in the event of no-deal, all EU citizens resident in the UK before 29 March 2019 would be able to stay. And we are asking Member States to respond to the guarantees we have given to EU citizens and confirm that UK nationals can stay, even in a 'no deal' scenario too. I am very pleased to say Hungary has already done that, about which I am sure State Secretary Takács will wish to say more.

I appreciate this is a period of uncertainty and many of you want more information and advice. We want to help you prepare for all scenarios and are committed to ensuring relevant information is available in a timely, transparent and accessible way. Further information will continue to be made available on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) over the coming weeks.

If you only take one thing away with you today, it should be to have your affairs in order. If you haven't already done so, register with the Hungarian authorities. Any deal will only apply to those who are lawfully resident in Hungary, which means you have to be registered if you have been residing in Hungary for 3 months. This is a long-standing requirement.

In order to register, you have to submit your application to the relevant regional directorate of the Hungarian Immigration and Asylum Office by presenting a valid travel document or personal identification document alongside with the documents that prove you have the right to residence, e.g. in case of employment the relevant documentary evidence provided by your employer. The application fee is HUF 1,000. You will find further information in English on the website of the [Immigration and Asylum Office](#).

I'd also like to encourage you again to follow our embassy Facebook and Twitter pages. Both accounts are called 'UK in Hungary', and should be easy to find. But details of all of these are on the cards on your seats.

We're constantly working to improve these events. Therefore, we would really appreciate your feedback. We will share the link to the online feedback form on our social media channels.

Finally, we understand that this is a difficult time for many people, but we continue to work together with the Hungarian Government to ensure that you are able to continue to live your lives as you have done to date, and that you have the best information possible.

Thank you very much for your attention, let me now give the floor to State Secretary Takács.

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## **Press release: Change of Her Majesty's Ambassador to Serbia: Sian MacLeod**

2015 to present Vienna, Ambassador/Head of UK Delegation to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe 2014 to 2015 FC0, Additional Director, Eastern Europe and Central Asia Directorate 2013 to 2014 FC0, Director, British Council Triennial Review 2009 to 2013 Prague, Her Majesty's Ambassador 2007 to 2008 FC0, Head, Whitehall Liaison Department 2005 to 2007 Moscow, Minister and Deputy Head of Mission 2004 to 2005 Moscow, Head of Political Section 2002 to 2004 Cabinet Office, Deputy Chief of the Assessments Staff 2000 to 2001 FC0, Deputy Head, Counter-Terrorism Policy Department 1996 to 2000 The Hague, Head of Political Section 1995 to 1996 FC0, Grade Manager, Personnel Management Department 1993 to 1994 FC0, Head, Biological and Chemical Weapons Section, Arms Control and Disarmament/Non-Proliferation Department 1992 FC0, Head, Russia Section, Joint Assistance Unit 1992 Vilnius, Deputy Head of Mission 1988 to 1992 Moscow, Second Secretary, Chancery 1987 to 1988 Full-time Russian language training 1986 to 1987 FC0, Desk Officer, South African Department 1985 to 1986 British Council, Programme Officer

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## **Press release: Coarse fishing river close season – Public consultation**

The decision to consult the angling community and others on the close season follows a preliminary survey of 20,000 anglers conducted last year.

As part of the consultation, the Environment Agency has [published a paper](#) setting out the results of its close season evidence review and options for future regulation. The options comprise retaining the current statutory close season; retaining a close season, but starting on 15 April and ending on 30 June; and removing it altogether.

**Kevin Austin, Deputy Director of Fisheries at the Environment Agency said:**

We want to hear the views of anybody with an interest in coarse fisheries, their preferred way forward and the reasons and evidence to support that. This will help us decide whether there is a case for change.

Our priority is to find the right balance between angling and protecting the fish stocks on which angling relies.

**Martin Salter from the Angling Trust said:**

Whilst the Angling Trust will not take any formal position for or against any changes in the river close season we welcome the detailed examination of the available evidence and strongly believe that the views of all anglers should be taken into account before any decision is made.

We are pleased that this important issue is now going out to full consultation. It will doubtless arouse some strong feelings on all sides but as an angling community we shouldn't be frightened to debate, scrutinise and consider the evidence for the laws that affect and govern our sport.

**Steve Axford from the Institute of Fisheries Management (IFM) said:**

The Institute of Fisheries Management is pleased to see that there will be wider public consultation on the closed season for coarse fish in rivers. We wish to help with assessment of the arguments and any further evidence that may come from the consultation and in the development of any proposed changes to byelaws that may result.

The consultation will be managed by the Environment Agency.

The current coarse fishing close season runs from 15 March to 15 June and aims to reduce risks to spawning fish caused by angling. The close season period covers most spawning by most coarse fish species. The close season on most still waters was removed in 1995 and on most canals in 2000.

The results of the [preliminary survey of anglers](#) are available online.

**Notes to editors**

- The report that accompanies the consultation includes a summary of the evidence around the close season and of the strengths and weaknesses of each option. We would encourage anyone participating in the consultation to read this. The complete evidence documents can be accessed from the consultation webpage.



- In our latest (2018) poll, 43% of anglers want retain the close season; 17% want to retain a close season, but change to start/finish dates; and 33% support removing it (the remainder were undecided).
- Depending on the outcome of the consultation, we may develop proposals for a change in the close season byelaw. Any proposed change must be advertised, to give everyone the opportunity to object (or support). We will respond to these objections, before applying to government for confirmation. The final decision rests with Government.
- The reasons we have chosen the 15 April and 30 June start and end dates for the “change option” are that a) delaying the start of the close season will most likely only affect three early spawning species and b) changing to 30 June provides additional protection to later or repeat spawning fish, in particular while they recover from spawning, which may increase in importance to mitigate for the effects of climate change.
- Any future change to the close season byelaw will involve a Habitats Regulation Assessment of the risks to designated species, specifically salmon, lamprey and shad.