

Courts to work at full capacity for second year to deliver swifter justice for victims

- no limit on the number of days the Crown Court can sit for new financial year
- nearly 17,000 more days were sat in the Crown Court last year after cap was lifted
- part of a raft of measure to cut backlogs in the courts

The investment means more trials can take place, delivering swifter justice for victims and reducing the backlog of cases which rose significantly due to the pandemic.

The same decision last year meant that nearly 17,000 more days were sat in the Crown Court than the year prior to the pandemic.

The impact of these measures alongside other government action and the collective work of judges, court staff and the legal profession is already being seen. We were among the first in the world to resume jury trials, and the number of outstanding cases in the Crown Court has fallen by around 2,500 since its peak in June 2021.

Despite COVID-19 restrictions and social distancing measures meaning some courtrooms had to temporarily close, over 98,500 days were sat in 2021/22 after the Ministry of Justice lifted the cap, compared to around 82,000 in 2019/20.

Deputy Prime Minister, Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice, Dominic Raab said:

Getting the courts backlog down is a key priority for this Government so that we can ensure victims get the swift access to justice they deserve.

Alongside the extension of Nightingale Courts, digital hearings and investing significantly in criminal legal aid, we are removing the limit on sitting days for a second year to boost capacity and help drive down the Crown Court backlog of cases.

The Ministry of Justice has spent £250 million so far on dealing with the impact of the pandemic and is investing nearly half a billion pounds (£477 million) in the criminal justice system over the next three years which will help to tackle backlogs in courts and tribunals.

Over 60 Crown courtrooms previously unavailable due to the pandemic have been

reopened in the last year and 30 Nightingale courtrooms, originally commissioned to provide extra capacity for socially-distanced trials, will stay open until March 2023. This means around 500 Crown courtrooms are now available for hearings and trials.

Today's announcement builds on a raft of measures already introduced to speed up justice for victims and improve the justice system since the start of the pandemic, including:

- Increasing spending on criminal legal aid by £135 million a year, including a fee increase which will see a typical criminal barrister earning nearly £7,000 extra per year.
- Rolling out video technology to over 70 percent of all courtrooms and opening 3,265 virtual court rooms across all jurisdictions. These currently hold around 13,600 hearings per week, compared to just a handful before the pandemic.
- Legislating to double the sentencing powers available to magistrates from 6 months to a year to free up an estimated 1,700 extra sitting days of Crown Court time each year.
- Investing almost £450 million over the next 3 years into victim and support services.
- Creating 2 'super courtrooms' which can accommodate up to 12 defendants simultaneously; increasing capacity for large, complex trials.
- Raising the statutory mandatory retirement age from 70 to 75 for judicial office holders, estimated to retain an extra 400 judges and tribunal members and 2,000 magistrates per year across all jurisdictions.

Earth Day 2022: Climate Change and Climate Action in The Bahamas pre and post COP26

Press release

UK Government's Regional Ambassador for Latin America and the Caribbean, Fiona Clouder visits to The Bahamas pre and post COP26.



The Climate Action Team at OPM

On Earth Day 2022, and as the Bahamian Government prepares to host the first ever English-speaking regional youth [conference](#) on climate change, we reflect on Ambassador Clouder's experience in The Bahamas pre and post COP26.

High Commissioner Sarah Dickson said:

Climate change is a global issue. The big policy issues are something we have to work on together internationally. No country can solve these problems by itself, but we can all play our role to achieve worldwide outcomes.

Ambassador Clouder visited The Bahamas in October 2021 to support the UK's COP26 objectives. She met representatives of government, private sector and environmental NGOs. One of the key messages that Ambassador Clouder discussed was that governments play a critical role in reducing carbon emissions as part of their medium term to long-term policy priorities.

Ambassador Clouder accompanied by High Commissioner Dickson during a visit to Grand Bahama saw first-hand how extreme weather and other environmental challenges can impact The Bahamas – The damage caused by hurricane Dorian is being slowly addressed by organisations such as the [Bahamas National Trust](#) and [Coral Vita](#).

Making sure the coastline is strong with reefs and mangroves will make a difference for the future. Climate change mitigation, adaptation, and resilience begin with everyday choices that we make. People can reduce their carbon footprints and participate in protecting and restoring the environment through tree planting and other nature based solutions to climate change.

In her follow-up visit in March 2022, Ambassador Clouder heard progress reports from the Ministers for Environment and Natural Resources; Agriculture, Marine Resources and Family Island Affairs; and Economic Affairs. The Bahamian Government's climate policy priorities are: adaptation measures to protect communities and natural habitats from the effects of climate change, mobilising finance for green renewal, and accelerating collaboration between government and civil society (including youth) to deliver on Bahamian climate goals faster.

The Office of the Spouse of the Prime Minister

Meetings with Office of the Prime Minister

Bahamas National Park

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Lord Parkinson speech at Venice Biennale

Good evening everyone,

I am very pleased to be with you all this afternoon, representing Her Majesty's Government. It's great to be here in person at La Biennale di Venezia and to be celebrating the British Pavilion, and Sonia Boyce's wonderful art work.

I am very grateful to the British Council for inviting me to this auspicious event and to say a few words.

The Biennale is a much cherished opportunity to showcase some of the best artists in the UK, but also to see international artists and colleagues, reinforce connections, and to make the most of the face to face interaction which we have all been missing so much.

But of course we meet against the backdrop of the terrible situation unfolding in Ukraine. I know everyone here will want to extend our support and warmest wishes to our Ukrainian friends as they continue to suffer under the deplorable invasion by the Russian Federation.

I look forward to visiting the Ukrainian pavilion during my stay here in Venice, to demonstrate the UK's solidarity with Ukraine – and to admire the wonderful artwork of that culturally rich country.

It is clearer than ever that to survive the challenges of this troubled world we must work together, and it is here that Sonia Boyce's work has much to teach us. She is an artist who embodies the value of working together, of sharing a platform, whether she's working with local communities in Barking and Dagenham or exhibiting at the Tate – or indeed the British Pavilion here at the Biennale.

Sonia has had a 30 year career as a teacher as well as an artist. She has influenced many generations, sharing her expertise and experiences as an

artist and enriching those with whom she has come into contact.

We are very proud that she is representing Britain here in Venice.

She joins an august group of previous exhibitors, including Henry Moore, Barbara Hepworth, Anish Kapoor, Gilbert & George, and Jeremy Deller. The British pavilion has always been a showcase for the brightest and best of UK art, managed by the British Council, and I'm delighted to see this tradition continue this year.

On behalf of the HM Government I would like to thank the British Council for the brilliant job they have done managing the British Pavilion programme, which, together with their wider work around the globe, has promoted the best of the UK's arts and culture on the world stage.

And may I also express my gratitude to the many sponsors, supporters and patrons of the British Pavilion, whose kind and generous support is so vital to its continued success. Thank you very much.

The Central Exhibition will also feature the work of five further artists from the UK, supported by the British Council through the Biennale Foundation.

The 59th Venice Biennale is therefore set to be a great showcase for British arts, demonstrating that the UK is an international cultural powerhouse, not only in our heritage but in our amazing and thought-provoking contemporary art.

So I would like to conclude by wishing the greatest success for the British Pavilion, and the UK artists in this year's festival. And it's now my pleasure to hand over to Stevie Spring, Chairman of the British Council.

Thank you

[Home Secretary meeting with Masrour Barzani](#)

The Home Secretary, Priti Patel, this afternoon hosted Masrour Barzani, Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, for talks at the Home Office.

The meeting took place on the second day of Prime Minister Barzani's visit to the UK, during which he met Prime Minister Boris Johnson and other senior members of the government to discuss a variety of issues.

The Home Secretary began by welcoming the opportunity to finally meet Prime Minister Barzani in person. Both sides discussed the importance of working together on security and agreed that officials should meet to further

strengthen joint efforts to address migration challenges over the coming months.

The Home Secretary thanked Prime Minister Barzani and his officials for the productive cooperation between the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and the UK thus far.

The Home Secretary highlighted the necessity of this cooperation to prevent further loss of life and reiterated her heartfelt condolences to those Kurdish families who lost loved ones in the tragedy in the English Channel last November.

The Home Secretary was also able to brief Prime Minister Barzani on the government's recently signed Migration and Economic Development Partnership with Rwanda and how it will help break the business model of the people smugglers behind the small boat crossings in the Channel.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

I was pleased to host Prime Minister Barzani at the Home Office today.

The global nature of the migration crisis dictates that we must work with international allies both to tackle the drivers of irregular migration and to disrupt and bring to justice the evil people smuggling gangs. There is also much for us to do together in the security sphere to keep our peoples safe.

I look forward to further cooperation with Prime Minister Barzani and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq in the months and years ahead.

Masrour Barzani, Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, added:

The relationship between the Kurdistan Region and the UK makes the world a safer place for us and our partners. We combat terrorism and organised crime, and disrupt the political weaponisation of vulnerable families.

I also welcome our recent cooperation in disrupting international people smuggling networks. In that spirit, we agree on the importance of upholding international law.

In today's meeting, I also encouraged Home Secretary Patel to help us tackle the root causes of migration by exploring business initiatives and creating more job opportunities at home.

Planes running on batteries and hydrogen to become a reality under new group of aviation experts

- new Zero Emission Flight Delivery Group launched to focus on catapulting latest innovations in aviation decarbonisation technology
- new chair, Rachel Gardner-Poole to lead the forum
- builds on UK's ambition to be world-leaders on aerospace R&D with an additional £685 million to be provided for Aerospace Technology Institute programme over the next 3 years

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps and Business Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng have today (20 April 2022) set out a new group of aviation experts across industry and government who will work together to make zero emission flight a reality.

As world leaders in aviation decarbonisation, the new Zero Emission Flight (ZEF) Delivery Group, will further Britain's role in the global effort to end flight emissions.

Launched at the fifth meeting of the [Jet Zero Council](#), the new steering group will help position the UK at the forefront of the global shift to green aviation by supporting the development of zero emission aircraft and airport infrastructure. It will also look at how the law needs to adapt so that sustainable flying can truly become a reality.

The new group will sit under the Jet Zero Council – an advisory forum with experts from across the industry – and will focus specifically on the technology, infrastructure and regulation needed to make zero emission flight a reality.

Speaking at the fifth Jet Zero Council meeting today, the Transport Secretary, Grant Shapps said:

From the first jet engine created here in the UK, Britain is truly a world-leader in flying. Now we are determined to revolutionise flying and we want to see everyone have the opportunity to travel guilt-free.

We are determined to bring forward the flight technology of the future, and through our new Zero Emission Flight Delivery Group, we will help create thousands of jobs around the country and take another step toward zero emission flights.

The new group will be led by aviation expert Rachel Gardner-Poole, who joins with over 20 years of experience in military and commercial aviation, both in the public and private sector. Currently the Chief Operating Officer for the

Connected Places Catapult, Rachel has previously worked at the Civil Aviation Authority, the UK Space Agency and IBM.

Under Rachel's leadership, the ZEF Delivery Group will build on the progress made through the Aerospace Technology Institute's (ATI) [FlyZero](#) project and the Department for Transport's [Zero Emission Flight Infrastructure](#) project.

Zero Emission Flight Delivery Group Chair, Rachel Gardner-Poole:

It is a great privilege to be asked to be the Chair of the ZEF Delivery Group and I am committed to the critical work ahead to make zero emission aviation a reality.

I am passionate about using innovation and technology to create a positive impact on our planet and look forward to collectively addressing the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead of us.

The government is investing in aerospace R&D through the ATI Programme and £685 million will be provided over the next 3 years, which was announced in March by the Business Secretary.

In addition, government is providing £125 million (matched by £175 million from industry) of support for Innovate UK's [Future Flight Challenge](#). The challenge will shortly announce projects successful in its third funding competition including those advancing electric flight technologies that will support the operation of sub-regional aircraft and the UK in reaching its net zero target.