

Office for the Internal Market opens for business

- Governments across all 4 nations can now seek advice from the OIM on the operation of the UK internal market
- OIM calls on businesses to voice any concerns about trading between UK nations
- First State of the UK Internal Market report planned for Spring 2022

The Office for the Internal Market (OIM) is part of the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA). It has been tasked with supporting the effective operation of the UK internal market using its economic and technical expertise, following the UK's departure from the European Union. It will provide reports to the Scottish Government, the Welsh Government, the Northern Ireland Executive and UK Government.

To help fulfil its role, the OIM has created a [new digital reporting service](#), through which businesses can share their experience of how the UK internal market is working. For example, this could include issues relating to trading across all four nations, such as if producers from one part of the UK are paying more to meet the product standards in another part of the UK in order to sell there. It could also include difficulties in using certain professional qualifications awarded in one part of the UK in different parts of the UK.

The information provided will contribute to the first State of the UK Internal Market report, planned for Spring 2022, as well as providing intelligence for any discretionary reviews that the OIM decides to carry out.

From today, Governments can also seek advice or reports on the impact that rules and requirements are having – or may have – on the internal market. In addition, the OIM will look at changes to the operation of the internal market over time.

In order to deliver reports and advice which are useful and relevant, the OIM will bring together information and data gathered across the four nations to become a centre of expertise on the internal market.

Andrea Coscelli, Chief Executive at the CMA, said:

The Office for the Internal Market will shine a light on how effectively companies are able to sell their products and services to people across the four nations, post-Brexit. Strong competition relies on effective trading, and customers rely on competition to get the best choice of products and services.

The OIM will listen to concerns and report to all Governments on the barriers faced by businesses. Its reporting and advice rely on

hearing from those who are directly affected, which is why we need people to tell the OIM about any relevant trading issues that they encounter.

More information can be found on the [Office for the Internal Market homepage](#).

1. Following the OIM's consultation with businesses and stakeholders across the UK, it has published a [summary of responses](#) and [final version of its guidance](#) and [statement of policy on the enforcement of the OIM's information-gathering powers](#).
2. The OIM will provide independent, technical, non-binding expert advice to Governments across the UK on regulations or regulatory proposals that may impact the effective operation of the internal market. It will also monitor and report on the health of the UK internal market, including trends and developments across sectors and regions.
3. A provision (for example, legislation, regulation etc) that is necessary to implement the Northern Ireland Protocol will fall outside of the scope of the Act and the OIM will not be able to offer advice or produce reports on it.
4. BEIS has also [published information](#) to help businesses and enforcement authorities understand the UK internal market.

[New Nightingale court opens in Monument](#)

- Boost for justice across the capital as fifth Nightingale court opens its doors
- Monument site will begin hearing non-custodial criminal cases this week
- Part of government's plan to ensure justice system recovers from the pandemic

The Monument venue joins other temporary courts located in Southwark, Westminster, Barbican and Croydon – set up to increase capacity and tackle the impact of coronavirus on the criminal justice system. Together they have heard hundreds of cases during the pandemic, helping to minimise delays for victims, witnesses and defendants.

The new site – which usually hosts conferences for international businesses –

is a stone's throw from Monument tube station, making it easily accessible to court users. Its two courtrooms will hear non-custodial jury cases for crimes such as theft and low-level drug possession. In the event of a guilty verdict, the trial judge may decide to relist the case at a nearby Crown Court for sentencing.

The court comes equipped with the latest technology rolled out at speed by HM Courts & Tribunals Service (HMCTS) during the pandemic – meaning defendants can appear remotely by video to avoid any delays to proceedings. It comes after ministers recently confirmed some 32 Nightingale courtrooms hearing criminal trials up and down the country will have their leases extended to Spring 2022 – continuing to help alleviate pressures on nearby Crown Courts.

Justice Secretary, Dominic Raab, said:

We're continuing to pull on every lever to ensure the criminal justice system recovers as quickly as possible from the pandemic.

The new Nightingale court in Monument is the latest step in this fight, providing vital additional capacity to minimise delays for Londoners.

Major challenges remain which is why we are investing hundreds of millions to further increase capacity, deliver swifter justice and support victims.

Today's announcement forms part of the significant action taken since the start of the pandemic to ensure the courts can recover from the pandemic and tackle delays. This includes:

- opening a super courtroom in Manchester to tackle trials with up to 12 defendants on trial suspected of crimes including, but not limited to, gang-related crime such as county lines drug trafficking, murders, and money laundering
- modifying a further 71 courtrooms to host trials with three or more defendants
- setting up Nightingale courtrooms across the country to increase capacity and ensure more trials can be heard – with a commitment to extend 32 Crown courtrooms that deal with criminal trials until March 2022
- working to reopen an additional 60 existing Crown courtrooms following the lifting of most restrictions – including social distancing – in England and Wales
- ensuring there is no limit on the number of days that Crown Courts can sit for this year
- putting in place measures to make over 300 jury trial rooms available to safely run trials
- hosting more than 20,000 hearings using remote technology each week (across all jurisdictions) – a huge rise from a standing start in March 2020

The impact of these measures is already being seen. England and Wales was among the first major jurisdictions in the world to resume jury trials, the number of outstanding cases has dropped by tens of thousands in the magistrates' since last summer, while the Crown Courts are dealing with cases at around pre-COVID-19 levels – listing thousands each week.

Dominic James, Venues Director of etc venues who owns the site said:

Our relationship with HM Courts & Tribunals Service (HMCTS) goes back to the middle of 2020; working in partnership with HMCTS at our Prospero House venue in London, which was the first Nightingale court to mobilise in early August 2020. HMCTS then selected our Maple House venue in Birmingham as part of the second phase.

We are delighted to further support HMCTS in providing a third Nightingale court at Etc.Venues Monument in London. It is a great compliment to our Covid-secure operations and strong relationship with HMCTS that a third venue has been selected to further assist the Ministry of Justice to reduce the backlog of trials.

We welcome the opportunity to host cases from late September onwards whilst our core business of providing inspiring space for events, meetings and conferences recovers back to full strength.

Notes to editors:

1. Monument Nightingale court is an annex of the Central Criminal Court (CCC), and its cases will appear on the court list for the CCC. Like Aldersgate House (Barbican) Nightingale court it will hear cases from any Crown Court in London.
2. This marks the fifth Nightingale court in London – joining Prospero House, 102 Petty France, Jurys Inn Croydon, and Barbican.
3. [Plans for more courts to reopen to help recover from the pandemic](#) were announced in July.
4. The Lord Chancellor recently set out his [plan for court recovery](#) in a speech delivered to the Law Society.

Britain's 'gigaboom' brings next-generation broadband to 1 in 2 premises

- Half of UK premises now able to access gigabit-capable broadband, up from 6% in 2019
- Ministers and broadband operators mark significant milestone during

London Tech Week

- Stourbridge, West Dunbartonshire and Solihull see the greatest jumps in gigabit coverage
- Comes shortly after Virgin Media O2 expands gigabit network to cover over 10 million homes

On the second day of London Tech Week, ministers and the telecoms industry welcomed this significant milestone in bringing next-generation internet speeds to every corner of the UK.

Passing 50 per cent national coverage means more than 15 million properties can access a broadband connection capable of download speeds of 1,000 megabits or one gigabit per second.

This is a huge leap in gigabit broadband availability, which stood at just 6 per cent in January 2019.

Since then the government has embarked on [Project Gigabit](#), the biggest broadband rollout in British history, with an unprecedented £5 billion of funding to connect hard-to-reach areas.

The telecoms industry has also vastly expanded its investment in and rollout of gigabit-capable networks. Earlier this month Virgin Media O2 connected a further 1.7 million homes to gigabit services, expanding its gigabit network to cover more than 10 million homes across the country, with plans to upgrade its entire footprint of 15.5 million homes before the end of 2021.

Digital Secretary Nadine Dorries said:

We've passed the halfway point in our national mission to level up the UK with lightning-fast gigabit broadband.

Millions of people can now access the fastest, most reliable internet connections, allowing them full advantage of new technologies over the next forty years.

Thanks to the work of industry and our record £5 billion investment, we are making phenomenal progress in the Prime Minister's infrastructure revolution.

Lutz Schüler, Chief Executive Officer of Virgin Media O2 said:

As the UK's largest gigabit provider, Virgin Media O2 is leading the charge to roll out next-generation services across our entire network at an unrivalled pace. Our continued investment has brought future-proof gigabit connectivity to more than 10 million homes and we're committed to finishing the job.

With a clear plan to connect our entire network to gigabit speeds by the end of the year, we're proud to be playing the leading role

in delivering most of the Government's broadband target ahead of schedule and boosting the UK up the global broadband league tables."

Andrew Ferguson, editor of ThinkBroadband said:

We are pleased to see the UK break through the 50 per cent mark for gigabit availability across the UK and if existing plans from providers come to fruition we are looking at 65 to 68 per cent gigabit coverage in early 2022.

The next few years are going to be transformative for the UK broadband market with the many full fibre networks being built and we look forward to mapping all of them and ensuring the public can easily see what their broadband options are.

Across the country, communities have seen massive increases in gigabit broadband coverage spurred by public and commercial investment. West Dunbartonshire in Scotland, for example, has seen gigabit broadband availability surge from just 1 per cent in July 2020 to 95% today.

In Blackpool, gigabit broadband coverage jumped from 2 per cent in January 2019 to nearly 85 per cent today. In Reading, it has rocketed from 5 per cent in January 2019 to 93 per cent.

Elsewhere, Stourbridge in Worcestershire has seen gigabit broadband availability jump from 0% in January 2020 to 96% today. While in Solihull in the West Midlands, it stood at 3% in Jan 2019 but has now hit 91.5% today.

Gigabit connectivity, which is predominantly delivered via full or hybrid fibre broadband cables running into homes and businesses, will be increasingly necessary in the coming years as more and more internet-connected 'smart' devices become available for the home. And it will provide the bandwidth needed for families to run and enjoy new developments in entertainment such as 8K TV and VR gaming on multiple devices at the same time.

As more people work remotely, gigabit broadband will also bring much faster and more reliable connectivity to rural and hard-to-reach communities, making them more attractive places for people to settle, raise families and start and grow businesses.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

- Today's new gigabit broadband availability figures have been compiled by [ThinkBroadband](#), the independent broadband checker website.

Reform Summit Held to Overcome Challenges

Health and Care sector leaders and experts were brought together on Monday 20 September by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Sajid Javid, to help shape healthcare reform.

The summit invited open discussion to help shape and drive reform, covering NHS elective recovery, wider social care system reform, preventing ill-health and closing health disparities, and achieving greater integration.

Attendees included NHS Chief Executive Amanda Pritchard as well as NHS senior leadership and local leaders, social care, public health leadership, medical colleges, membership organisations, think tanks, charities and local government.

Following the summit, Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid said:

We can't carry on with business as usual, that's why today I've brought together vital leaders and experts from across the health and social care world to hear their views on how we deliver necessary reforms to meet and overcome the challenges we face, and I thank all those who joined.

The pandemic changed everything and left us with large backlogs. It's a huge challenge, but the last eighteen months has shown what we are capable of achieving when we work together towards a common goal.

I'm confident we can tackle waiting lists and deliver the ambitious reforms needed to help our health and social care system recover and move forwards for the better from this wretched pandemic.

On 7 September the Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced plans to tackle the backlogs that have built up during the pandemic, reform adult social care, and bring the health and social care system closer together on a long term, sustainable footing, with a £36 billion investment in the health and care system over the next three years.

The government has also recently brought forward the new Health and Care Bill to help drive forward integration in health and social care.

Family Procedure Rule Committee: Annual open meeting 1 November 2021

News story

Are you interested in observing the rule making process?



The November 2021 meeting of the Family Procedure Rule Committee will be the annual open event where invited participants will be able to observe proceedings and put questions before the Committee.

The meeting will take place on Monday 1 November via MS Teams and is due to start at 10am. You will have the opportunity to put invited questions to the Committee but will not be able participate in the normal business of the Committee discussed on the day.

If you wish to attend the meeting please reply on the [invitation](#) (MS Word Document, 76.5KB) by Thursday 7 October 2021 at the very latest or direct to the FPRC Secretariat by email: FPRCSecretariat@justice.gov.uk

The Secretariat will contact you after the closing date to confirm further details.

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