

HMCTS hosts 3rd annual public user event

HM Courts & Tribunals Service today welcomed attendees to its headquarters for the third public user event, 'A future court and tribunal service built for users'. The 2019 event blended a combination of jurisdictional and thematic presentations, with the traditional project-led 'market stalls' that have been a feature of previous years.

In addition to covering the latest from the civil, family, tribunals and crime programmes, we acted upon user feedback to get to the heart of answering key questions such as how the programme supports users to access justice, how we will measure if Reform has succeeded, and what going to court will look like in the future.

Through our reform programme, we are redressing the imbalance in areas where members of the public can benefit most from new ways to access justice or redesigned services. A lot of this is done through work we do with a network of organisations – often from the third sector – who specialise in understanding the needs of particular groups of people or who support them when they come to court.

This annual event is an opportunity to showcase how this collaboration has shaped reformed services, and is another way that we are listening to and considering the many and varied needs of our public users.

HMCTS Customer Director Sidonie Kingsmill addressed attendees to open the event, whilst High Court judge Mr Justice Knowles brought proceedings to a close for another year, with his reflections on the day.

During her speech, Sidonie reflected:

Through the HMCTS reform programme we are constantly exploring ways in which we can make the system more accessible. An accessible system is one that is easy to use for everyone, and removes barriers of complexity and delay. We will provide multichannel services and users can choose the right channel for them at any given time.

While we know lots of people prefer online processes – they find them easier and more convenient – we also know there are people who are only able to, or prefer to start their process on paper. So we're improving paper forms alongside the online process, allowing a better all-round experience of the court or tribunal process for everybody.

Event reflections

During the day, there were several speeches and presentations given by senior leaders from across the Ministry of Justice and HMCTS, who gave their reflections on the event and why continuing to put people at the heart of the reform programme is so vital to its success.

[Sidonie Kingsmill and Mr Justice Knowles discuss the event](#)

Presentations

Attendees were given the opportunity to choose from a range of presentations to attend throughout the day, depending on what was most relevant to them. The slide decks from these presentations are below.

Factsheets

Project representatives from across the reform programme were on hand throughout the day to discuss the latest developments in their services with attendees, and listen to their feedback. The factsheets from each of these projects are available to read below (accurate as of 5 November 2019)

Crime

Civil

Family

Tribunals

Cross-Jurisdictional

[Ed Anderson reappointed as Chairman of the board of NS&I](#)

HM Treasury announce that Ed Anderson has been reappointed as the Chairman of the board of NS&I (National Savings and Investments), as of 1 January 2020. The reappointment will be for a term of three years.

Non-Executive members of NS&I's Board ensure a sound strategy is in place to meet the organisation's remit of raising cost-effective debt financing for the government. They also act as an external source of advice, have oversight of risk control and ensure NS&I's links with its outsourcing partner, Atos, remain open and transparent.

NS&I is one of the largest savings organisations in the UK, offering a range of savings and investments. All products offer 100% capital security because NS&I is backed by HM Treasury.

Ed was appointed as Chairman in January 2017, having originally joined NS&I's board as a Non-executive Director in February 2016. Ed has held a number of senior executive and non-executive roles. He was previously the Chairman of the Yorkshire Building Society from 2007 to 2015 and Managing Director of Leeds Bradford Airport for 10 years.

Further information

The reappointment was made in accordance with the Code of Practice published by the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

All appointments are made on merit and political activity plays no part in the selection process. However, in accordance with the original Nolan recommendations, there is a requirement for appointees' political activity (if any declared) to be made public. Ed Anderson has confirmed that he has not engaged in any political activity in the last five years.

[Blondell Cluff CBE reappointed to the Royal Mint Advisory Committee](#)



HM Treasury announce that Blondell Cluff CBE has been reappointed to the Royal Mint Advisory Committee, as of 1 April 2019. The reappointment will be for a term of five years.

The Royal Mint Advisory Committee on the Design of Coins, Medals, Seals and Decorations was established in 1922 with the personal approval of King George V. Its purpose is to advise the Chancellor of the Exchequer on new designs for United Kingdom coins and to advise other government departments on new designs for official medals and seals. It is classed as an Advisory Non-Departmental Public Body (Lower Tier).

Blondell Cluff is a solicitor by training, has worked as a jewellery designer

and is the current Chief Executive of the West India Committee. She was awarded a C.B.E in 2017 for services to Numismatic Design and the Caribbean Community in the UK and Abroad. The reappointment was made in accordance with the Code of Practice published by the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

Further information

All appointments are made on merit and political activity plays no part in the selection process. However, in accordance with the original Nolan recommendations, there is a requirement for appointees' political activity (if any declared) to be made public. Mrs Cluff has confirmed she has not engaged in any political activity in the last five years.

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34th Universal Periodic Review: UK statement on the Gambia



The Universal Periodic Review takes place in Geneva.

The United Kingdom welcomes The Gambia's engagement with the UPR and notes that this is a pivotal time in the country.

We commend the progress made to address past violations through the Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission and the drafting of a new Constitution that will, we expect, embed human rights in the future of a democratic and stable Gambia.

However, we are concerned that: violence against women remains a serious problem; laws continue to repress freedom of expression, including for journalists; and women and minority groups continue to face discrimination. Corruption is also seriously concerning, causing many human rights issues and undermining democracy.

We also urge the Government to respect the right to peaceful assembly and association.

We recommend that The Gambia:

1. Protect the right to freedom of expression by repealing the Seditious Act and Official Secrets Act;
2. Set out publically, steps the Government will take to ensure women's full participation and leadership in public life;
3. Ensure effective implementation of anti-trafficking legislation, including the timely and just prosecution of perpetrators of human trafficking.

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[£2.8bn armoured vehicle contract secured for British Army](#)

The Defence Secretary has announced that the army will receive more than 500 Boxer 8x8 high mobility, network-enabled armoured vehicles to transport troops onto the frontline.

Defence Secretary, Ben Wallace, said:

Our men and women of the Armed Forces deserve to have the best equipment to do their job.

The Boxer vehicle is a leader in its field and I look forward to it arriving in units from 2023.

The vehicles will form part of the Army's Strike brigades, new units set up to deploy rapidly over long distances across varied terrains.

Boxer is modular by design to meet these requirements – the same vehicle base can be rapidly reconfigured to fill different roles on the battlefield, from carrying troops across deserts to treating severely injured service personnel on the journey to hospital.

Initially the Army will buy a mixture of the troop-carrying variant, ambulances, command vehicles, and specialist designs to carry military equipment.

Sir Simon Bollom, Chief Executive of Defence, Equipment and Support (DE&S), said:

This is excellent news for the Army and I'm delighted that we can now move forward with a contract for the Mechanised Infantry Vehicle.

We are looking forward to continuing to work closely with the Army and our partners across industry to deliver the best equipment and support for our troops.

The UK announced in 2018 that it would re-join the Boxer programme within the Organisation for Joint Armament Cooperation (OCCAR) and explore options to modernise its vehicle fleet and meet the Army's Mechanised Infantry Vehicle requirement.

The UK played a central role in the original design, development and testing of the Boxer. In re-joining the programme last year, the UK reassumed the rights it had as a project partner.

Major General Simon Hamilton, Mechanised Infantry Vehicle Programme lead for the British Army, said:

I am delighted that we have committed to delivering the Mechanised Infantry capability through the purchase of around 500 battle-winning Boxer vehicles for the British Army. Boxer completes the suite of platforms to equip our new state-of-the-art STRIKE brigade where, alongside Ajax, Boxer's low logistic need, extended reach, high-mobility, and advanced digitisation will ensure STRIKE is ready for any global scenario.

This contract was signed ahead of the pre-election period due to the strong value-for-money agreement reached with industry and other OCCAR nations, which expires on December 31st 2019, and announced today due to expected market implications. It would be possible for a new Government to take a different position.

The MOD Permanent Secretary, as the Accounting Officer, considered the value for money implications and, on this basis, determined the most appropriate course of action is to proceed with the contract award ahead of the election.