

Updated media guidance will ensure easier access to court information

- Updated HMCTS guidance developed alongside media
- Gives staff all the information needed to support court reporters
- Launched by Chris Philp at Old Bailey event

The [advice](#) was developed by the HM Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS) media working group and incorporated the views of both media representatives and court staff. This followed a 12-month series of regional roadshows organised by HMCTS and the Society of Editors.

The [guidance](#) includes a revised protocol agreed between HMCTS, the News Media Association and the Society of Editors to govern the distribution of magistrates' courts lists, registers and documents to the media, and specific guidance to courts and tribunal staff on handling high-profile hearings.

Courts Minister Chris Philp, will officially launch this at the Old Bailey tonight (5 March 2020). The event will also include a roundtable, chaired by Joshua Rozenberg, to discuss the continued importance of court reporting in an increasingly digital justice system.

Courts Minister, Chris Philp said:

Open justice is essential to the rule of law and it is the local, regional and national media that the public rely on to tell them what is happening in courts up and down the country.

This guidance ensures our staff have all the information they need to support court reporters in carrying out this vital work.

This is part of a wider effort to build stronger working relationships between courts and the media and maintain the principle of open justice. It comes as the government increasingly digitises court services as part of a £1bn investment in court reform to increase the accessibility and efficiency of the justice system by shaping it around the needs of those who use it.

Santha Rasaiah, Legal, Policy and Regulatory Affairs Director of News Media Association said:

It is vital that open justice is maintained in principle and in practice, whatever changes are in train. The ability of the press to access court proceedings, to access court documentation and to report the courts fully, fairly and accurately must be promoted, not eroded. This must be embedded in the development of a digitised justice system.

The NMA therefore warmly welcomed the opportunity to work with HMCTS on the update of this guidance for all court and tribunal staff and on the revision of our long established, joint protocol on supply of court lists and court registers. We value our continuing work with HMCTS in support of court reporting and open justice.

Ian Murray, Executive Director of the Society of Editors said:

It is vitally important that the media and the courts work well together to ensure that the public has confidence in the justice system.

The best way that this can be achieved is for access to the courts and judicial information for journalists to be facilitated in the most open manner.

As well as an overall summary, the guidance has been split into detailed jurisdictional advice, so staff can find exactly what they are looking for in a more timely and straightforward manner, making it easier for journalists to cover court proceedings and access case listings.