HM Courts & Tribunals Service

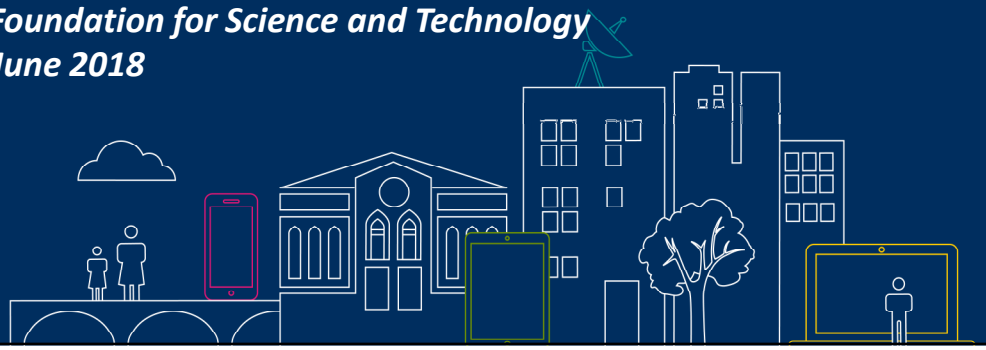
Reforming the Courts and Tribunals Service

Adopting new technology for a modern justice system

HMCTS Chief Executive, Susan Acland-Hood

The Foundation for Science and Technology

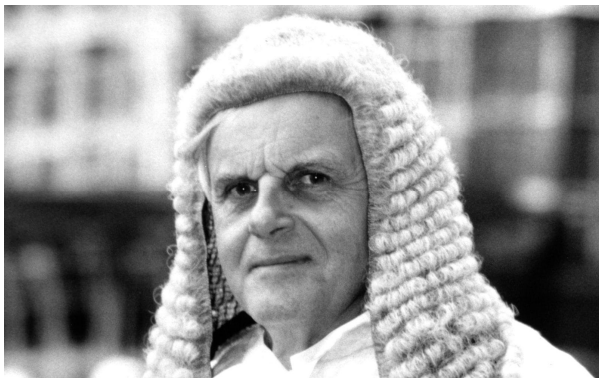
20th June 2018



How can the adoption of new technology improve the justice system?

Memorial debate in honour of
The Rt Hon Sir Brian Neill PC

1923 - 2017



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The system we are reforming

- Forbidding and hard to navigate – with high barriers to entry, few simple routes even for simple things, and many processes that feel designed round experts rather than users – which damages access
- Inefficient – with labour intensive, paper-based processes, resource and time allocation that don't match the work being done, and too much dependence on physical hearings even for things like case progression
- Overstretched and showing signs of strain – with buildings not fit for purpose, and an impression of disregard for the time and trouble of others

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The system we are reforming

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Our guiding principles

- Building in partnership
- Increasing transparency and accountability
- Increasing accessibility
- Securing financial sustainability
- Being proportionate and segmented
- Designing for 2050 – not 2018
- Strengthening our strong, independent and trusted justice heritage
- Putting people at the heart

6

What we are doing – an ambitious £1bn programme of change

- **Crime Programme** – built around a new 'service model' for criminal work; supported by the **Common Platform Programme** – bringing police, CPS and HMCTS onto one system for criminal work – with the ability to look from end to end
- **Civil, Family and Tribunals Programme** – including the development of better 'direct' services (like online applications for probate and divorce) but also the development of an 'online court' with shared, simple rules
- **Transforming Compliance and Enforcement Programme** – changing the way we enforce debt, using more effective and modern methods
- **Underpinning change** to support these new ways of doing things – including **fully video hearings**, improved **scheduling and listing**, more **wi-fi and screens,** and changes to the **number and standard of buildings** and **how we organise administration**
- **A data and management information project** – to make sure our new systems give us intelligent, connected, open, flexible data to drive future improvement

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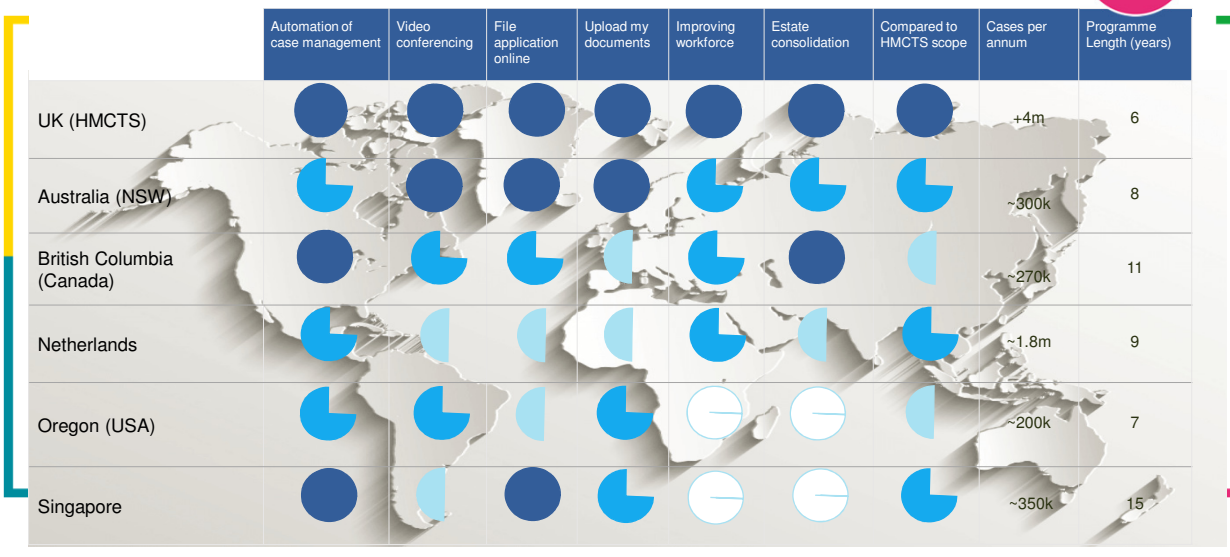
We are learning from others, but our programme is the most ambitious in the world



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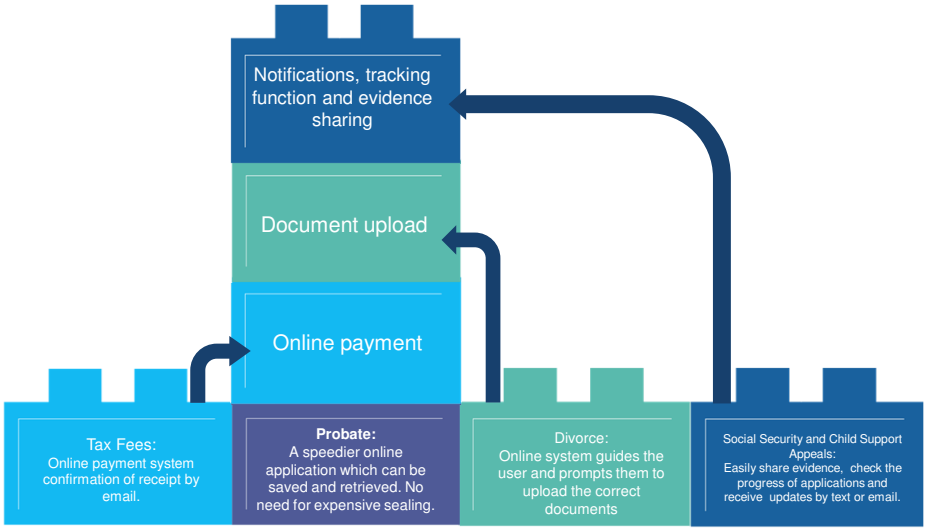
We are building components that fit together (not a single giant system) – which is more agile and reduces risk



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HM Courts & Tribunals Service

Crime

Crime Projects

Project Name	Description
Single Justice Service (SJS)	Expanding on the existing Single Justice Procedure. Cases involving summary, non-imprisonable offences with no mitigating circumstances can be pleaded to online and digitally passed to a magistrate for decision (or, subject to legislation, a statutory fixed fine could be accepted). The option for a hearing – which might be via video – will remain.
Video Remand Hearings	More remand hearings conducted directly from the police station/custody through video, with better underpinning systems and processes
Online Plea & Allocation	Plea and allocation to take place outside the court, removing the need for allocation hearings. Defendants (initially through their legal advisers) will be able to indicate a plea online.
Case Progression	Cases will be progressed outside court by judges and authorised staff under judicial supervision. Interlocutory hearings will happen online, or via video and telephone.
Court Hearings	Improving the way court hearings work, including through better digital and video support.
Youth	Defining a clear and distinct future operating model for youths in the criminal courts within the Crime Service Model.

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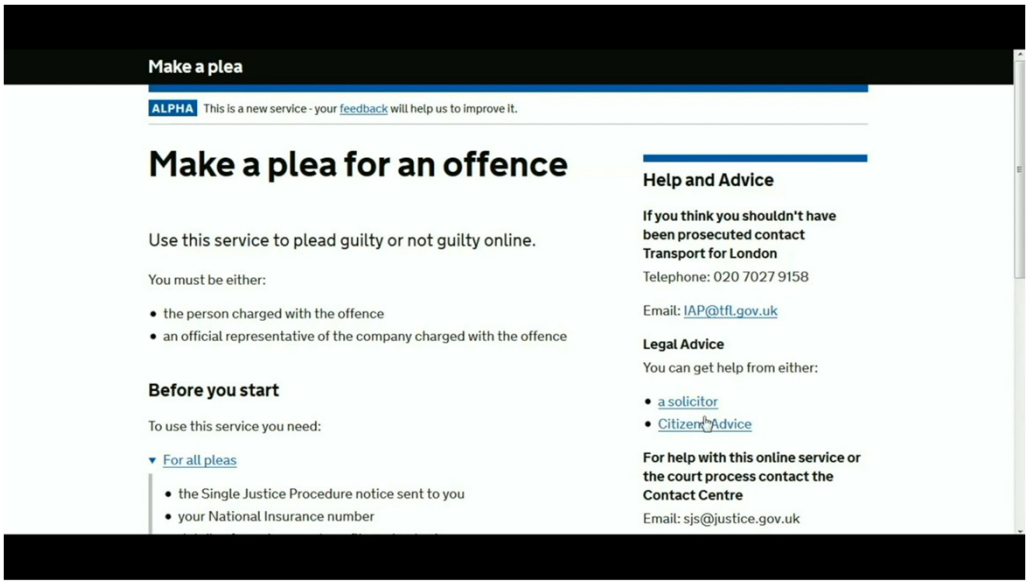
Make a Plea online



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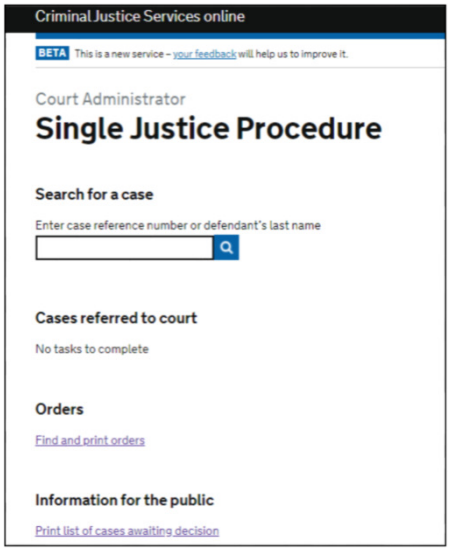
Single Justice Procedure & Automated Track Case Management



ATCM

"Absolutely brilliant. It is so clear and easy to read and I love the screens. Built-in validation will be a huge time saver." (Legal Adviser)

"I have worked with system developers before and it has never been as good as this. I think it is good, it's clear, intuitive, easy to read and quick to move around the screens." (Magistrate)

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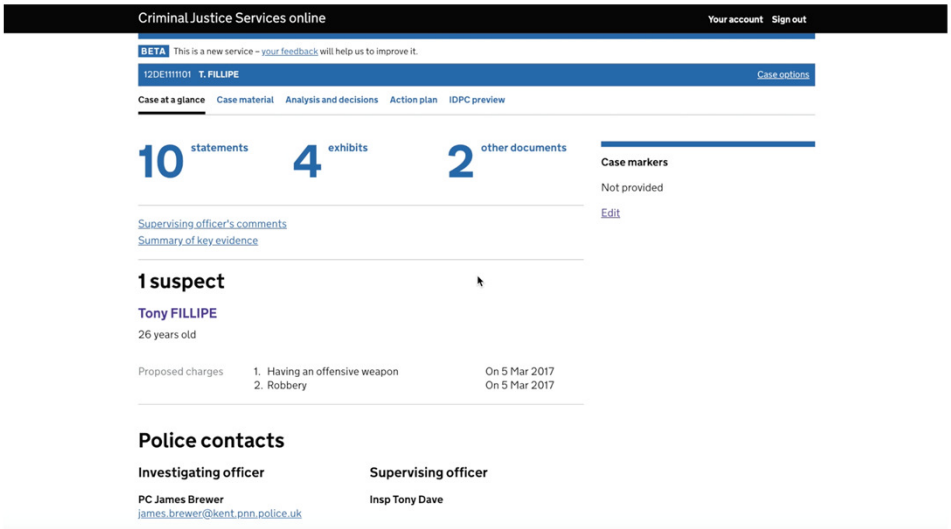
Common Platform

The process of whether to charge a suspect



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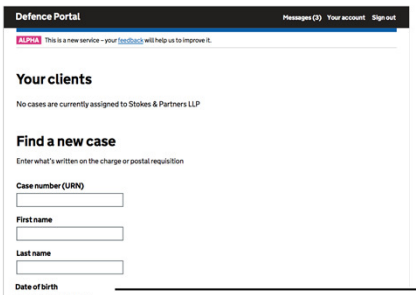
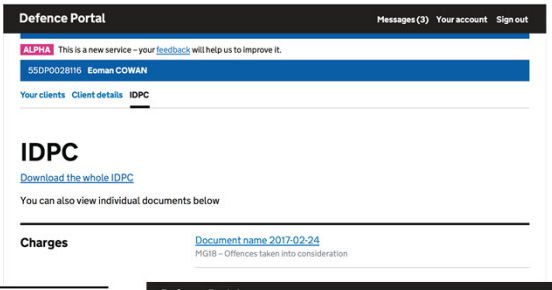
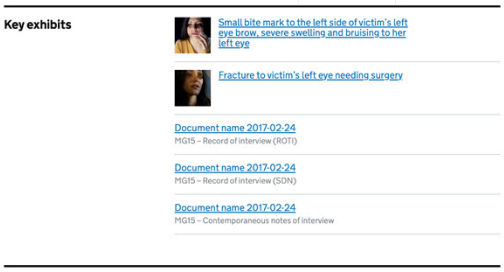
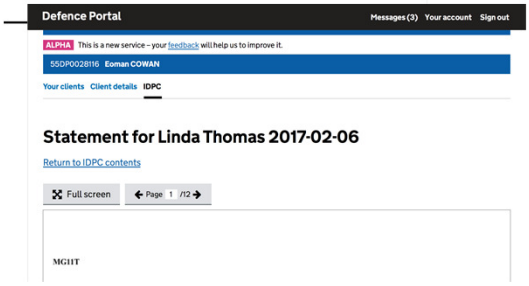
Common Platform
Defence accessing the IDPC

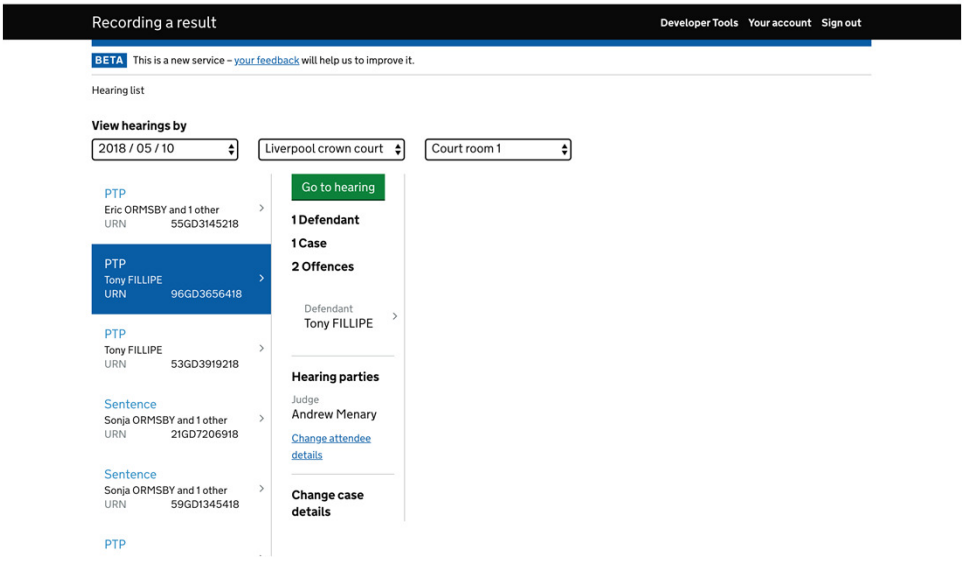






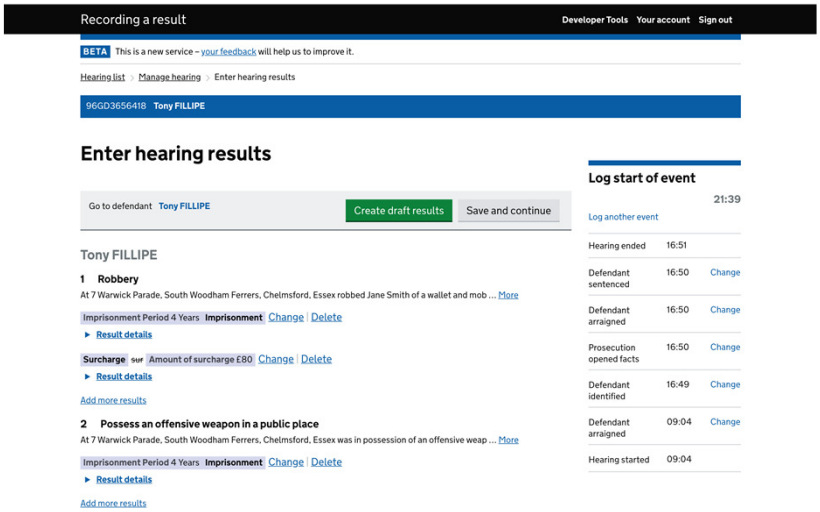


Common Platform
On the day of the hearing in the Crown Court



Common Platform

Recording the result, drafting order and sharing with agencies



Crime – what next?

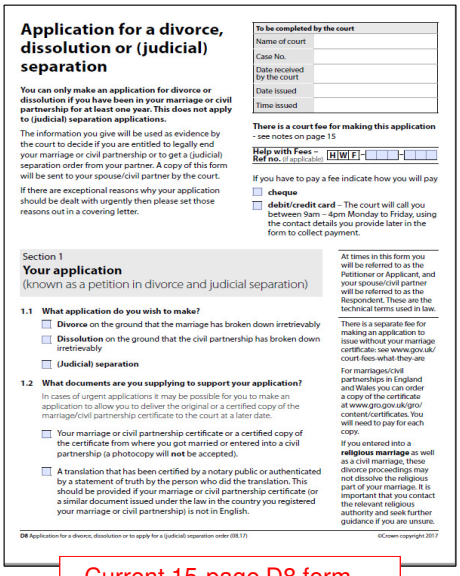
Over the next 18 months, we will….

- Build on the work to digitise the single justice process in Lavender Hill and online pleas for TfL fare evasion cases to include **TV Licensing** and **DVLA** cases enabling greater numbers of high-volume, low-level offences to be dealt with more efficiently.
- Extend the functionality of the **Common Platform** in Liverpool, including the type and number of cases passing through it. Legal professionals will have **early access to details of their clients' charges and initial case material online**. Work will also start to plan the extension of the system into other Crown Court centres and magistrates' courts.
- Further test the use of **video hearings** for remand hearings, and in support of case progression
- Introduce the ability for defendants to indicate their plea online and **more efficiently allocate cases** to the appropriate court (subject to legislation).
- Build further functionality for the Common Platform to support **more sophisticated case progression** across the criminal justice system to help ensure that when a case goes to court the hearing is effective.

HM Courts & Tribunals Service

Family

Online Divorce Application – what we're reforming…



Application for a divorce, dissolution or (judicial) separation

You can only make an application for divorce or dissolution if you have been in your marriage or civil partnership for at least one year. This does not apply to (judicial) separation applications.

The information you give will be used as evidence by the court to decide if you are entitled to legally end your marriage or civil partnership or to get a (judicial) separation order from your partner. A copy of this form will be sent to your spouse/civil partner by the court.

If there are exceptional reasons why your application should be dealt with urgently then please set those reasons out in a covering letter.

To be completed by the court	
Name of court	
Case No.	
Date received by the court	
Date issued	
Time issued	

There is a court fee for making this application - see notes on page 15

Help with Fees – Ref no. if applicable H W F -

If you have to pay a fee indicate how you will pay

- **cheque**
- **debit/credit card** – The court will call you between 9am – 4pm Monday to Friday, using the contact details you provide later in the form to collect payment.

Section 1
Your application
(known as a petition in divorce and judicial separation)

1.1 What application do you wish to make?

- **Divorce** on the ground that the marriage has broken down irretrievably
- **Dissolution** on the ground that the civil partnership has broken down irretrievably
- **(Judicial) separation**

1.2 What documents are you supplying to support your application?

In cases of urgent applications it may be possible for you to make an application to allow you to deliver the original or a certified copy of the marriage/civil partnership certificate to the court at a later date.

- Your marriage or civil partnership certificate or a certified copy of the certificate from where you got married or entered into a civil partnership (a photocopy will **not** be accepted).
- A translation that has been certified by a notary public or authenticated by a statement of truth by the person who did the translation. This should be provided if your marriage or civil partnership certificate (or a similar document issued under the law in the country you registered your marriage or civil partnership) is not in English.

At times in this form you will be referred to as the Petitioner or Applicant, and your spouse/civil partner will be referred to as the Respondent. These are the technical terms used in law.

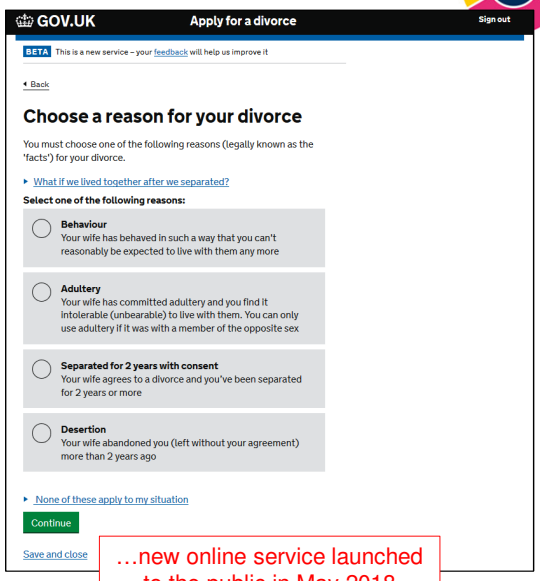
There is a separate fee for making an application to issue without your marriage certificate: see www.gov.uk/court-fees-what-they-are

For marriages/civil partnerships in England and Wales you can order a copy of the certificate at www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates. You will need to pay for each copy.

If you entered into a **religious marriage** as well as a civil marriage, these divorce proceedings may not dissolve the religious part of your marriage. It is important that you contact the relevant religious authority and seek further guidance if you are unsure.

D8 Application for a divorce, dissolution or to apply for a (judicial) separation order (08.17) ©Crown copyright 2017

Current 15-page D8 form…



GOV.UK **Apply for a divorce** Sign out

BETA This is a new service – your feedback will help us improve it

Back

Choose a reason for your divorce

You must choose one of the following reasons (legally known as the 'facts') for your divorce.

▸ What if we lived together after we separated?

Select one of the following reasons:

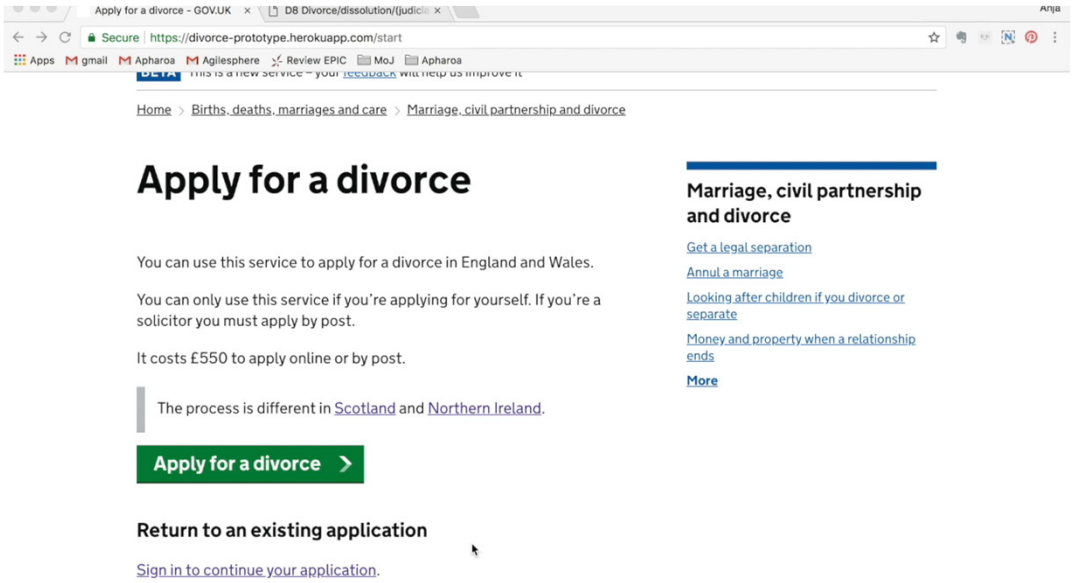
- **Behaviour** – Your wife has behaved in such a way that you can't reasonably be expected to live with them any more
- **Adultery** – Your wife has committed adultery and you find it intolerable (unbearable) to live with them. You can only use adultery if it was with a member of the opposite sex
- **Separated for 2 years with consent** – Your wife agrees to a divorce and you've been separated for 2 years or more
- **Desertion** – Your wife abandoned you (left without your agreement) more than 2 years ago

▸ None of these apply to my situation

Continue

Save and close

…new online service launched to the public in May 2018



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Online Divorce Application – user feedback

"Thank you ever so much for making this process so much less painful than it could have been, especially as a disabled person. The service was a lot easier because I use a wheelchair and didn't have to go out, and I also found it very easy as an autistic person to get support from the team when I had questions."

Rebecca

"It was marvellous, pain free and less stressful than the paper form which I tried several years ago to complete but got fed up of it being rejected."

Elaine

"It's a very accessible and easy-to-use system; well done to all involved in its design."

Judge Clarke

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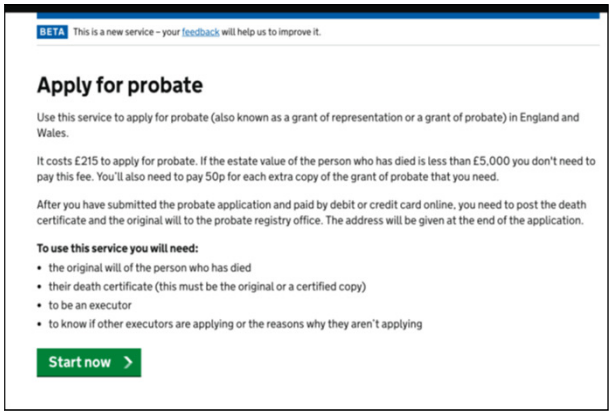
Online Probate Application



"Really easy to complete… one of the most user-friendly websites around"

"Brilliant idea and a much better way to process this sort of information. Thank you."

"I found the online option extremely useful and for someone like me in their later 60's very easy to follow."

"For straightforward matters I found this to be a significant forward stride in relation to the hard copy PA1 and attendant office visits."

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Family – what next?

Over the next 18 months….

- We will extend our systems for **divorce and probate**, adding more features and making the probate system available to everyone. The divorce system will be extended to cover **financial remedy** and there will be dedicated versions for solicitors allowing them to manage multiple cases.
- Like divorce and probate, the **family public law** project will introduce an online application. In addition, the project will start to introduce seamless digital working to and through court, so that evidence can be submitted and shared electronically and cases can be managed much more securely and effectively. This will help us to test and develop a core document management system for the family courts that can then be extended, and enable in-court digital presentation of evidence.
- Within the scope of the public law project, we will also start to **digitise the adoption process** for both public and private law cases, again developing systems to manage these cases more securely and effectively. Once all the parts are complete, they will fit together so that cases can move seamlessly from one process to another.
- Start developing systems and processes to enable **private family law** litigants to initiate and manage their cases online.

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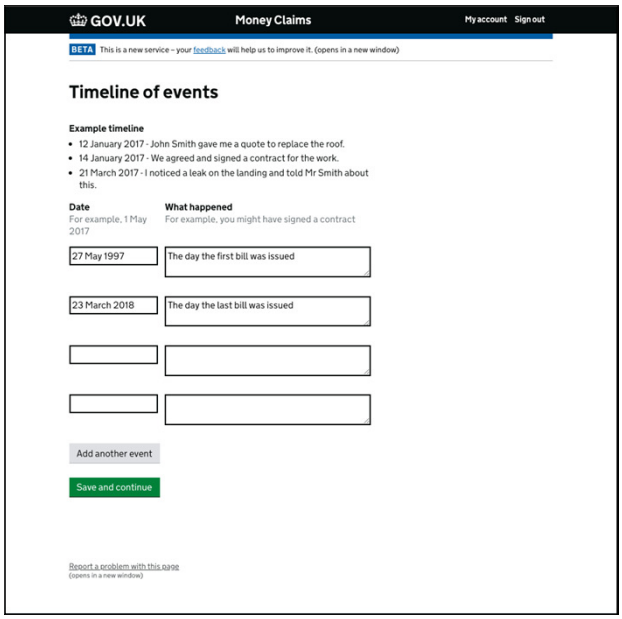
Civil

Civil Money Claims



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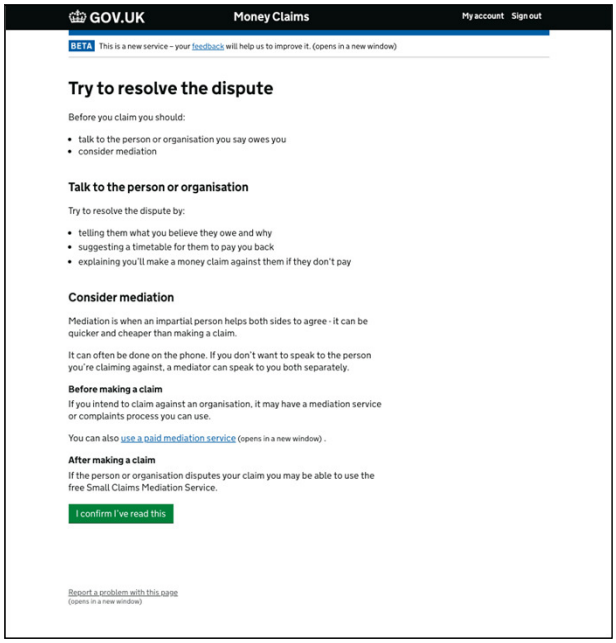
Civil Money Claims – signposting



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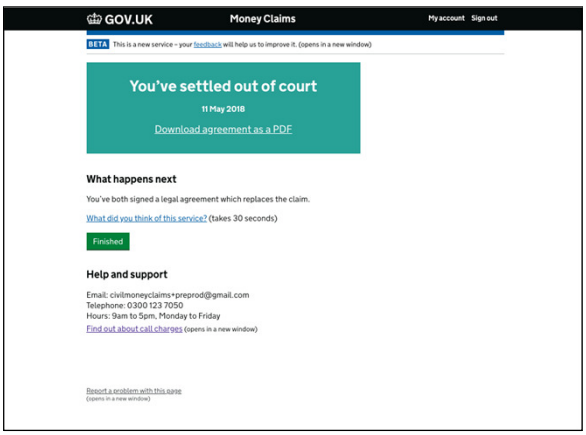
Civil Money Claims – notification



Claimants:
"Very easy site to use, clear and straightforward."

"if I had known how easy it would be I would have made the claim ages ago. I do believe the whole court process is antiquated and needs to be updated and all services should be like this."

"Excellent and easy to use service - great initiative to support small claimants"

"Rather than waiting 4 weeks to get an acknowledgment that its been issued, I got it in seconds"

Defendants:
"Simple and direct. Excellent"

"Very straight forward easy to follow"

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Civil – what next?

Over the next 18 months, we will….

- Expand our online **civil money claims service** – and the legal representatives' version of it - so it can be used by everyone. We will continue to add sections to the service, building it out so that in time it supports cases going to hearing as well as those settling beforehand (which will also allow us to operate paperless civil courts).
- Set out in more detail what we will do through the **civil enforcement** project and create and test new ways of working to improve the current service.
- Start a project on **possession** in October 2018. Early opportunities have been identified to **simplify** the process for Possession cases, improve **engagement** between parties and HMCTS and **digitise** the end to end service for all claims, providing support for users that need it.

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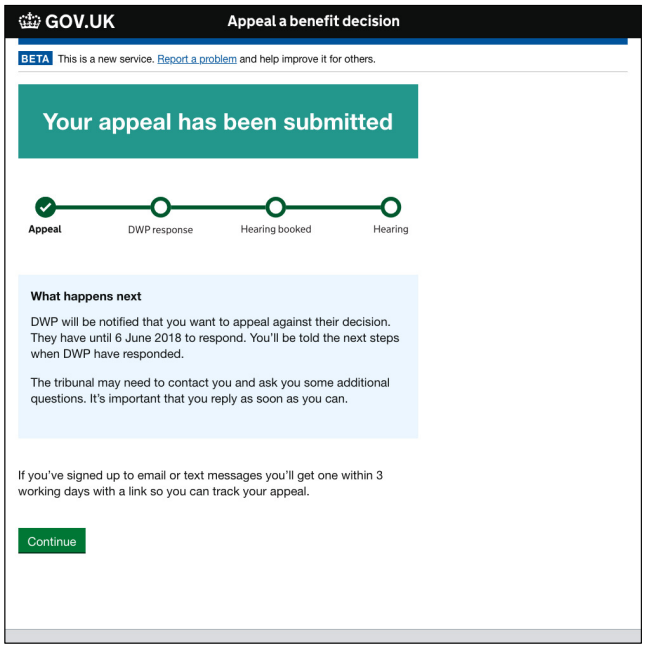
HM Courts & Tribunals Service

Tribunals

Social Security and Child Support – Submit Your Appeal



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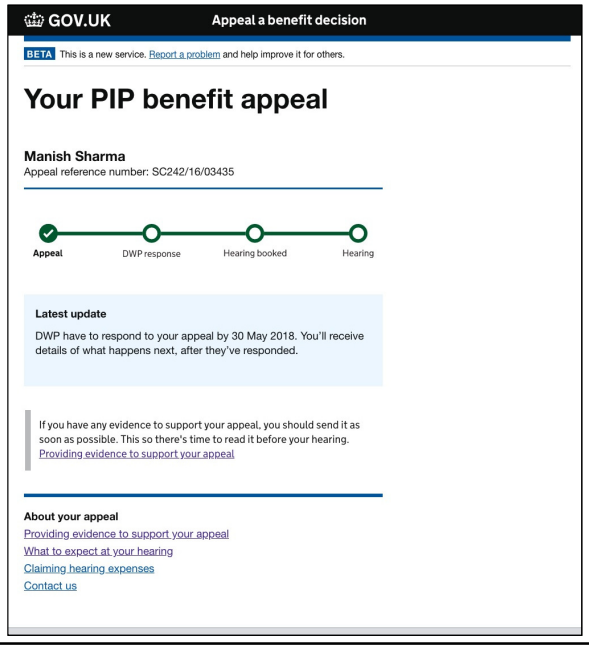
Social Security and Child Support – Track Your Appeal



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Social Security and Child Support – user feedback

"Courts, judges, decision all quite frightening. This calms you down."

"It's easier to track it this way rather than waiting on hold for half an hour waiting to get through to somebody."

"It's easy to keep track of what's happening. It's really good. It's got everything I need. I wouldn't even have to ask anyone because it's all there"

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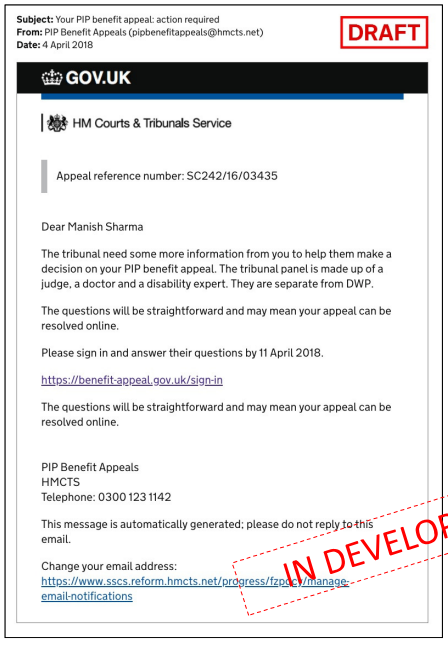
Social Security and Child Support – Continuous Resolution



Subject: Your PIP benefit appeal: action required
From: PIP Benefit Appeals (pipbenefitappeals@hmcts.net)
Date: 4 April 2018

DRAFT

GOV.UK

HM Courts & Tribunals Service

Appeal reference number: SC242/16/03435

Dear Manish Sharma

The tribunal need some more information from you to help them make a decision on your PIP benefit appeal. The tribunal panel is made up of a judge, a doctor and a disability expert. They are separate from DWP.

The questions will be straightforward and may mean your appeal can be resolved online.

Please sign in and answer their questions by 11 April 2018.

https://benefit-appeal.gov.uk/sign-in

The questions will be straightforward and may mean your appeal can be resolved online.

PIP Benefit Appeals
HMCTS
Telephone: 0300 123 1142

This message is automatically generated; please do not reply to this email.

Change your email address:
https://www.sscs.reform.hmcts.net/progress/fzpcy/manage-email-notifications

IN DEVELOPMENT

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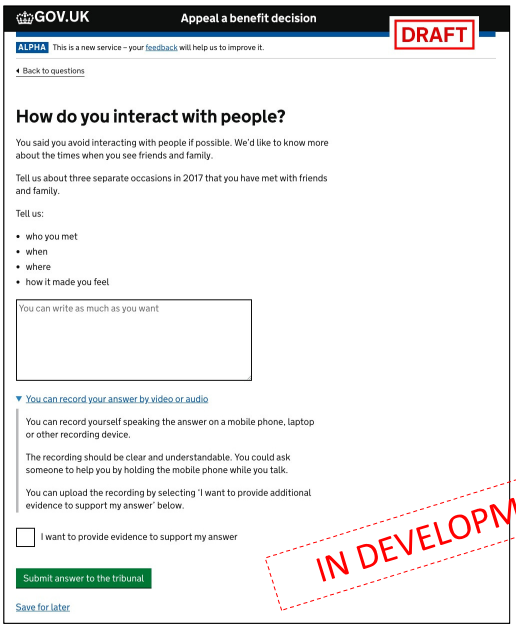
Social Security and Child Support – Judicial interface

IN DEVELOPMENT

Social Security and Child Support – User interface



IN DEVELOPMENT

Tribunals – what next?

Over the next 18 months, we will….

- Extend the ability to **appeal online** in the Social Security Chamber nationally.
- Introduce a similar ability to appeal online, and track appeals, for the **asylum and immigration tribunal**.
- Build an '**evidence share' function** between HMCTS and other Government Departments to allow for the efficient transmission of appeals and case bundles.
- Test and introduce a system for continuous online resolution in the Social Security and Child Support Tribunal to allow appellants to participate in **online hearings**.
- Test the use of **screens and laptops** in certain tribunals to allow hearings to be undertaken without papers.
- Expand the use of tribunal **case workers** across a number of jurisdictions.

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HM Courts & Tribunals Service

Cross-cutting

Video Hearings – testing the principles

An application is made to the courts and tribunals service

A hearing is required

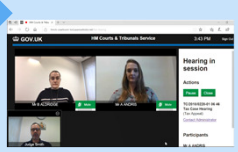
Hearing participants will be asked a series of questions to test their suitability for video

The judiciary will review the case, and the answers provided, and determine if video is appropriate or not

The hearing is then listed and participants are notified

Participants are then invited to create an account and complete some self-checks

Currently we conduct a pre-hearing call to check all participants are able access the video hearing system



Provided all participants pass these checks, the hearing will proceed

Video Hearings – feedback from Appellants

"I was really pleased to be able to take part in a video hearing as it meant I did not have to travel to London for a hearing."

"The video hearing was approached with the seriousness a hearing demands."

"It was impressive to see HMCTS moving towards something that is future looking."

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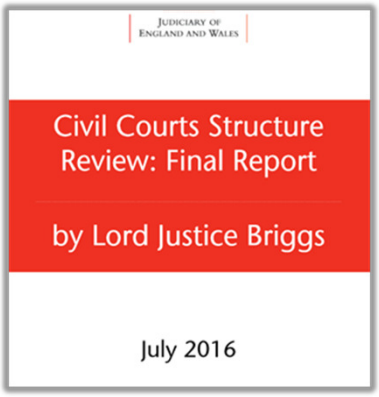
Putting the pieces together to create the online court



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HM Courts & Tribunals Service

Listening, learning and linking

Insight and evaluation

- We understand the importance of evaluating reform. Starting small, iterating, and building in response to user feedback helps make sure that real-time evaluation drives our development.
- We have also commissioned independent academic research in the first area to trial full video hearings, the Tax Tribunal. The evaluation will focus on the way the early pilots are implemented, and on the public, professional, and judicial experience.
- We also have a dedicated strand of work focused on MI and data as part of the reform programme – which will allow us to be far more evidence-driven in future (and we are building in ways to share anonymised data with the research community too)
- With the Ministry of Justice, we are currently developing plans for a programme-wide evaluation of courts and tribunals reform - we welcome input and suggestions

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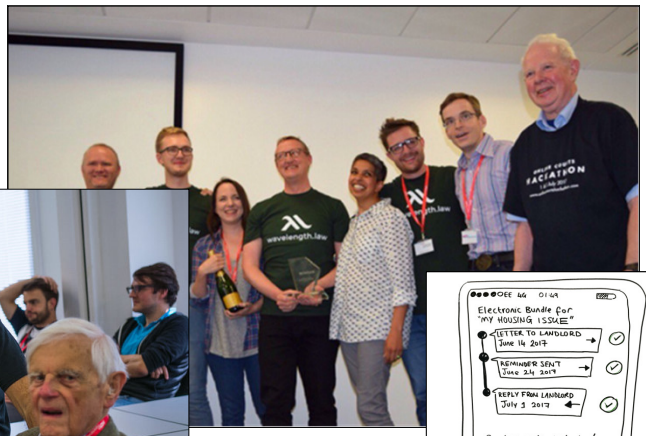
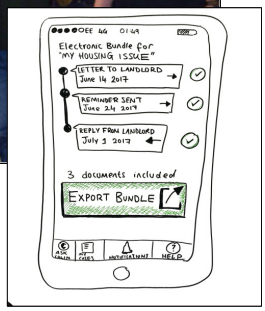
Creating an eco-system





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Continue to help to shape what we are doing

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