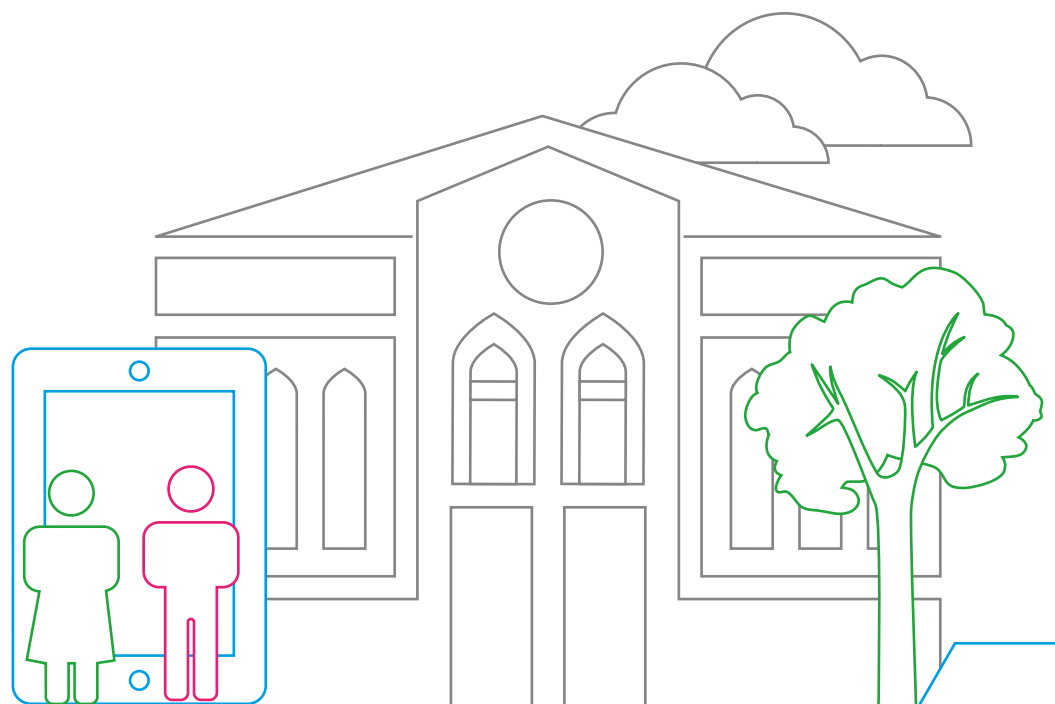




HM Courts &  
Tribunals Service

# HMCTS Business Plan 2019 - 2020



# Foreword



**Susan Acland-Hood**

Chief Executive

HM Courts & Tribunals Service

**Our justice system defends our fundamental rights and freedoms. It is a cornerstone of our modern society. Whatever else may be going on in people's lives, whatever uncertainty and difficulty they may face, people rightly rely and depend on our justice system to be there for them when they need it.**

This means that the role HMCTS plays in supporting access to justice for all and maintaining the rule of law could not be more important. The work that people across HMCTS and the wider justice system do every day is vital; and it is equally important that we do not stand still, and continue to reform and modernise the system to make it the best it can be.

At the heart of everything we do, and the way that we do it, are people – the victims of crime seeking justice, the people who feel that their rights have been taken away, the children at the heart of family law disputes, the witnesses on whom the delivery of justice depends, and the huge network of organisations and people there to support them and ensure that the system works. Our reform programme, which is now in its third year, aims to improve the experience for everyone who uses the courts and tribunals system. That is what drives the huge daily effort and strong sense of innovation of staff across HMCTS, and it is what motivates us to deliver our shared vision for a system that is just, proportionate and accessible, and which continues to lead and inspire the world.

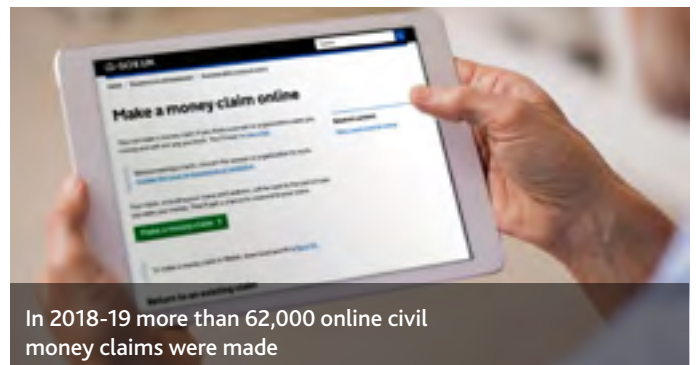
In December, HMCTS jointly hosted an international conference on court reform, which brought together more than 200 legal professionals, court reform experts and academics from 26 different countries around the world to share their thoughts, experiences and expertise. Listening to the various discussions and insights reinforced the fact that we are part of what is a global shift to bring modern technology and ways of working to the courts – which will enable us to maintain and strengthen our place as a world-leading justice system.



Susan opening the first International Conference on Court Reform



This year we opened our first two Courts and Tribunal Service Centres in Stoke and Birmingham



In 2018-19 more than 62,000 online civil money claims were made

But what is equally true is that not everything should – or can – wait for reform, and this year’s business plan sets out the things that we must improve sooner alongside the progress that we will make through reform over the coming twelve months.

What is also clear is the scale of the challenges that we will face. As the things that we do, and the way that we do them, continue to change, I do not underestimate either the extent of the impact on our staff, or the importance of preserving the best spirit of HMCTS. Because just as our system needs to be built around the people who use it, so must it continue to reflect the defining values of the hard-working staff across HMCTS who for years have delivered outstanding service despite, rather than because of, the tools at their disposal – the clarity of purpose, the openness to new ideas, the strong sense of togetherness, and the abiding humanity and care that drives everything that we do.

**In delivering new services for the future, we must build on what already makes us the envy of the world – working together with the judiciary to create a world-leading justice system fit for the digital age.**

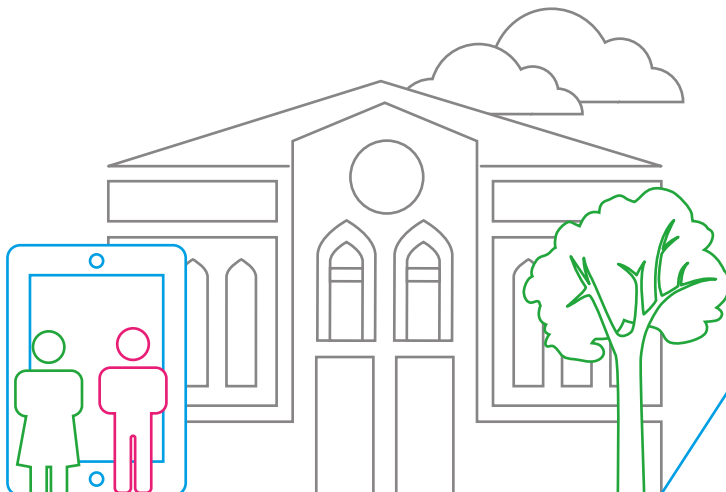
A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'S Acland-Hood'.

Susan Acland-Hood

# Our role

Courts and tribunals are a bedrock of our society. They maintain the rule of law, and provide access to justice. They provide stability, security and safety for individuals and businesses; and support the cohesion necessary for the proper functioning of our national economy and wider society.





**HM Courts and Tribunals Service is responsible for the management and administration of the justice system. Our courts, across the criminal, civil and family jurisdictions, run throughout England and Wales. Our tribunals are based throughout the United Kingdom, and include the non-devolved jurisdictions in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.**

We operate on the basis of a partnership between the Lord Chancellor, the Lord Chief Justice and the Senior President of Tribunals, each of whom have specific leadership responsibilities entrenched in statute. As an Agency established underneath that partnership, our aim is to run an efficient and effective courts and tribunals system, enabling the rule of law to be upheld, and providing access to justice for all.

***Our purpose could not be more important.***

We handle about **4.4 million cases, claims and appeals a year**; and operate from **338 courts and hearing centres**. We currently have **over 16,000 members of staff**, most of whom work in frontline, operational roles and play a vital role in supporting the independent judiciary in the administration of justice.

Together, we are responsible for:

- providing the supporting administration for a fair, efficient and accessible courts and tribunal system
- supporting the independent judiciary in the administration of justice
- driving continuous improvement across all aspects of the administration of courts and tribunals
- collaborating effectively with other justice organisations and agencies, including the legal professions, to improve access to justice
- working with government departments and agencies to improve the quality and timeliness of their decision-making, which will reduce the number of cases coming before courts and tribunals



# Delivering a world-class justice system

HMCTS is in the third year of our ambitious programme to reform the courts and tribunals system. Together, we are changing how we work to ensure that our justice system continues to lead and inspire the world.

Our reform programme is focused on designing and delivering innovative ways of working to ensure the justice system is accessible for those that need to use it, more considerate of people's time and convenience, and more efficient for those who are charged with administering the service.

Working closely with a range of colleagues, partners and users, from the judiciary to legal professionals; and from witnesses and litigants to vulnerable people, last year was one of significant progress for us as an organisation, as well as for our staff. Among many other things, we:

## *Among many other things, we:*

- ✓ Delivered the first tranche of online Civil, Family and Tribunal services to the public with over 130,000 users accessing them.
- ✓ Completed testing of video hearings with live cases in a pilot conducted in the Tax Tribunal, and published the independent evaluation.
- ✓ Opened two new Courts and Tribunals Service Centres (CTSCs) in Stoke-on-Trent and Birmingham to provide consistent, national support to public and professionals users.
- ✓ Delivered workload and performance management improvements over the course of the last financial year, including:
  - 13% reduction in Crown Court outstanding caseload;
  - 32% reduction in first instance immigration and asylum caseload;
  - improvement in magistrates' courts 1 day resulting by 6%.
- ✓ Supported the launch of the digital divorce service into public beta and the opening of divorce services in the CTSCs.
- ✓ Launched the Shared Storage Solution pilot and online C110a application pilot for the Family Public Law service in four designated family judge's areas.
- ✓ Dealt with more than 62,000 claims in our Civil Money Claims Service since it first launched in March 2018, with the fastest claim being lodged and paid under two hours. Almost 90% of users say they are satisfied or very satisfied with the new service.
- ✓ Piloted interventions to increase the take-up of alternative dispute resolution in private family law cases.
- ✓ Launched our Online Probate Service, with more than 19,000 personal applications made since July 2018.
- ✓ Delivered a public consultation on reducing conflict in divorce.
- ✓ Processed more than 41,000 applications in our new online Divorce Service since it launched in April 2018. The online form takes half as long to complete as the paper form, and has reduced the error rate.
- ✓ Designed and rolled out iTransform, a leadership development programme for 4,500 leaders, now adopted by MoJ.
- ✓ Launched the human voice of justice - introducing a more human and responsive tone to how we communicate with our users.
- ✓ Held a series of online and face-to-face events to engage and listen to legal professionals and public users on reform.
- ✓ Introduced the legal apprenticeship scheme.
- ✓ Launched and nationally rolled out OPTIC, the new complaints and feedback system which records Opinions, Praise, Treatment, Incidents and Complaints.

- ✔ Put in place a 'Centre for operational contract management excellence' that provides the tools to further support our staff in the efficient and effective management of our suppliers and their services.
- ✔ Laid to timetable and without qualification, our 2017-18 Trust Statement and 2017-18 HMCTS Annual Report and Accounts.
- ✔ Designed and implemented new and integrated Finance Business Partnering Function.
- ✔ Delivered a People Promise to enhance the HMCTS offer to those who work here.
- ✔ Made significant improvements with colleagues from SSCL to reduce the recruitment 'Time To Hire'.
- ✔ Announced two pilots of flexible operating hours to take place in Manchester Civil Justice Centre and the County Court at Brentford in 2019.
- ✔ Developed rigorous scenario analysis about likely impact of EU Exit Deal/No Deal, carrying out a series of 'deep dives' to develop credible action plans and support proportionate contingency action despite significant ongoing ambiguity.
- ✔ Agreed a detailed two-year forward plan for judicial recruitment, including to ensure all 'backlog' selection exercises are launched by September 2020; and secured approval to run a campaign for non-legal members of the employment tribunals.
- ✔ Launched a magistrate's recruitment campaign to maximise performance.
- ✔ Co-hosted the inaugural International Forum on Online Courts with the Society for Computers and Law in London in December 2018.

In summary, we are continuing to administer the courts and tribunals across the country, with a firm focus on improving operational performance and service delivery. In parallel, the first stage of our reform programme has seen us successfully lay the foundations for the significant changes to the system that are to follow.

As the reform programme progresses, we are clear-sighted about how much there is still to do and the challenges we will face. We are now shifting gear from the first stage of reforms to focus on full scale delivery, informed by what we have learned over the last two and a half years. We will be scaling up our new services and processes increasing national standardised ways of working that give the public more responsive and consistent service.

Through our reforms, we are providing the infrastructure required to underpin the improved system and a workforce with the skills and capabilities needed to support it. The programme supported by the judiciary and the Government is ambitious. There are more than 50 distinct areas of work across all jurisdictions and more than £1bn is being invested to support it.

The programme is already making a difference, our new online application service for a divorce is a good illustration of this. We are thoroughly testing and improving the way we are working to deliver reform itself; and the programme is subject to full and independent assurance from HM Treasury, the Infrastructure and Projects Authority and the Cabinet Office.

# Our strategy

In 2016 we embarked on a major reform programme to bring new technology and modern ways of working to the justice system. The programme is designed to improve the accessibility and efficiency of our courts and tribunals service by shaping it around the needs of those who use it. At the heart of what we do is the needs of the people we serve.





Our programme of change is ambitious and wide-ranging. As we deliver it, we must also continue to focus on improving our service for everyone who uses it today. The further we go in reforming the system, the more our reform work and our day-to-day work will merge into one and so it makes sense to set a strategy that brings both together.

We have built our strategy, which is now well embedded, around five characteristics which hold significant importance in the eyes of the people who use and rely on the services we provide and administer:

<b>Fair</b>	<b>Humane and Responsive</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<b>Swift &amp; Efficient</b>	<b>Seamless</b>
"It was fair – and it felt fair"	"You understood; you treated me properly; you listened"	"I could get justice and it wasn't complicated"	"You didn't waste my time; your systems worked"	"The different bits of the system fitted together well for me"
<b>Just</b>	<b>Accessible</b>		<b>Proportionate</b>	
<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Humanity</b>	<b>Openness</b>	<b>Together</b>	

These values reflect the shared vision of the Lord Chancellor, Lord Chief Justice, and the Senior President of Tribunals for HMCTS to promote the rule of law and provide a fair justice system. The four values which guide us, inspire us and help us deliver quality public service for everyone. **Purpose** Justice matters. We're proud to make a difference for the public we serve. **Humanity** We treat others as we would like to be treated. We value everyone, supporting and encouraging them to be the best they can be. **Openness** We innovate, share, and learn. We're courageous and curious; relentlessly pursuing ideas to improve the services we deliver. **Together** We listen, collaborate and contribute, acting together for our common purpose.

Both in our reform programme and in the work we do every day, we have three areas of activity that help us do our work – our people, our systems and processes, and our estate. We want:

1. **The right number of better-trained people in whom we invest properly, and whose outstanding commitment we value and build on**
2. **Modern systems and processes, underpinned with great technology**
3. **Fewer, better buildings and settings that suit our new ways of working**

Our strategy can be expressed by mapping our three areas of focus (people, systems and processes, and buildings) against those things that we know people want and need when they touch the system.

We can also distinguish between things that you would expect to see in any well-functioning system, and those that give us wholly new capabilities – the 'fundamentals' as opposed to the 'cutting edge'. Both are important: the former are essential for us to meet if we are genuinely to provide the service people rightly expect from us; while the latter are targets our users can legitimately expect us to strive for.

In the remainder of this document, we set out the detail of our plans for the coming year. We are a large and complex organisation, within which there are necessarily several parallel strands of critical work ongoing to run our services, and reform our systems. This business plan needs both to capture the range of activities that are essential if we are to keep operating effectively and efficiently. We must also deliver our overall purpose, aims and objectives.

To identify the key priorities and deliverables on which our Board will focus, and against which the Lord Chancellor and senior judiciary will hold us to account.

Accordingly, in this document we set out:

1. Our principal areas of focus for the coming year as an Agency;
2. The key priorities for our operational teams and central directorates, mapped against our corporate strategy

# Our principal focus for 2019-20

We exist to run an efficient and effective courts and tribunals system. Our strategy will help us to achieve that and this plan is designed to deliver on our strategy. As we strive to meet our goals, it is critical that we evaluate performance and delivery along the way, understanding and continuously improving the impact on our users, as well as the efficiency and effectiveness of the system we are responsible for managing. Alongside the priorities listed below, we set out the framework against which delivery will be monitored and evaluated from [page 14].

**The right number of better-trained people in whom we invest properly, and whose outstanding commitment we value and build on**

## Key Priority

Strive to retain and deploy our talent so that we can run a critical service for our users and drive transformational change.

**Modern systems and processes, underpinned with great technology**

## Key Priority

Manage performance across all jurisdictions and respond quickly to address any performance dips.

Roll out and deliver reformed services and new ways of working in Civil, Family Tribunals, and in Crime.

Rapidly increase the capacity and capability of the courts and tribunals service centres, delivering an improved service for users.

**Fewer, better buildings and settings that suit our new ways of working**

## Key Priority

Having visible and tangible improvements in court buildings by improving the way we deliver day to day maintenance through our facilities management contracts.

# Our people and culture

Our long-term plans will transform our skills and the way people work in HMCTS; and there are some clear priorities now to make sure we support people well through change and help them be ready for the future:

		Fair	Humane & Responsive	Accessible	Swift & Efficient	Seamless
People and Culture	The Fundamentals	Effective support for judiciary; high quality work under delegated powers	Culture of humanity and responsiveness Great people service skills	Our people understand the system and can guide others through it	The right number of people trained well in the systems and processes they use, supported by strong leadership	The right relationships at local, regional and national levels, in order to work together as one
	Cutting Edge	New case officer roles as part of strong legal progression routes	Advanced skills in behavioural insight and use of feedback to improve performance, process and the user experience	User-first services which are accessible across a range of channels, including support for people who need help to access services online	Embed outstanding digital and commercial skills Self-improving as a whole organisation, continuously agile	

## Our long-term aims are to:

- Deliver excellent training for new systems and processes; and in people service skills, as well as digital and commercial skills
- Develop and strengthen our culture of humanity and responsiveness (and have more time to serve people well)
- Provide new roles and ways of working – including case officer roles with delegated powers – and strong legal progression career routes

## Our priorities now are to:

- Develop and implement a strategic workforce plan
- Continue to build capability of people working in all parts of the organisation
- Building capability in applying the human voice of justice across HMCTS
- Develop legal profession career routes

# Our systems, processes and technology

Our Reform programme will transform our systems and processes to deliver what users want and need and, working closely with the judiciary, there are also things we can and should do now to meet the same goals:

		Fair	Humane & Responsive	Accessible	Swift & Efficient	Seamless
Systems, Processes and Technology	The Fundamentals	Consistency The most serious failures (unlawful detention, release in error, dangerous sharing of details) 'designed out'		Simplification Clear, timely information & help through the most appropriate channels	Efficient, consistent administration Proportionate tools for the job	Things don't fall through cracks
	Cutting Edge	Clear, transparent and shareable data on justice outcomes	Systems that drive change from feedback	Wholly new routes to justice (including the online court)		Much greater end-to-end visibility (e.g. through the Common Platform) for the right people

## Our long-term aims are to:

- Have efficient, quick digital systems that allow us to 'design out' failure, simplify, join up, and generate data
- Provide new routes to justice, like the online court
- Have better data that we can use to improve what we do (and have the tools to use it easily)
- Provide clear, easy to use services with help on the phone, online/webchat or face-to-face if needed

## Our priorities now are to:

- Implement the transition strategy to support new national services, whilst improving support for those that are already live and ensuring that legacy plans are in place to support all areas of transition to reformed services.
- Bring together and integrate the Business Change community with the Transition Function.
- Roll out and deliver new ways of working across all jurisdictions.
- Use data to drive performance and efficient operational service delivery enhancements and a better user experience.

# Our buildings and settings

In the longer term, we will have fewer, better buildings which allow us to work more effectively; and there's action we can take now to make our buildings better and more effective:

		Fair	Humane & Responsive	Accessible	Swift & Efficient	Seamless
Buildings	The Fundamentals	Buildings suitable for their purpose	Secure, pleasant, safe buildings	Can get there, get in and get around, at a time that's convenient	Really effective utilisation; not spending money on buildings we don't need	Sharing space in collaboration with the right partners
	Cutting Edge	Redesigned buildings to support wholly new routes to justice (and the open justice around these routes); as well as better administration (Courts and Tribunals Service Centres)				

## Our long-term aims are to:

- Use our buildings more effectively, and keep them in better condition, by ensuring we have the right number of buildings in the right places
- Have redesigned buildings that are fit for purpose to support wholly new routes for justice and the new ways that we work within them
- Share space with the right partners to make access to justice more seamless

## Our priorities now are to:

- Deliver visible and tangible improvements in court buildings enabled in part by the procurement of facilities management and manned guarding service contracts.
- Use the data from the building survey programme to develop a 5-year programme that will give us a true picture of the whole estate's condition and apply the principles for prioritising projects agreed with the HMCTS Board to the funding available.
- Continue to make sure that we are using buildings as effectively as possible, through work to optimise hearing capacity, and through closures and amalgamations of buildings which we no longer need. This will allow us to focus funding on those buildings we need for the future..
- Safeguard safety and security across our business, whilst also improving ease of access to our buildings as much as possible.
- Ensure infrastructure across our estate supports the delivery of our key services.

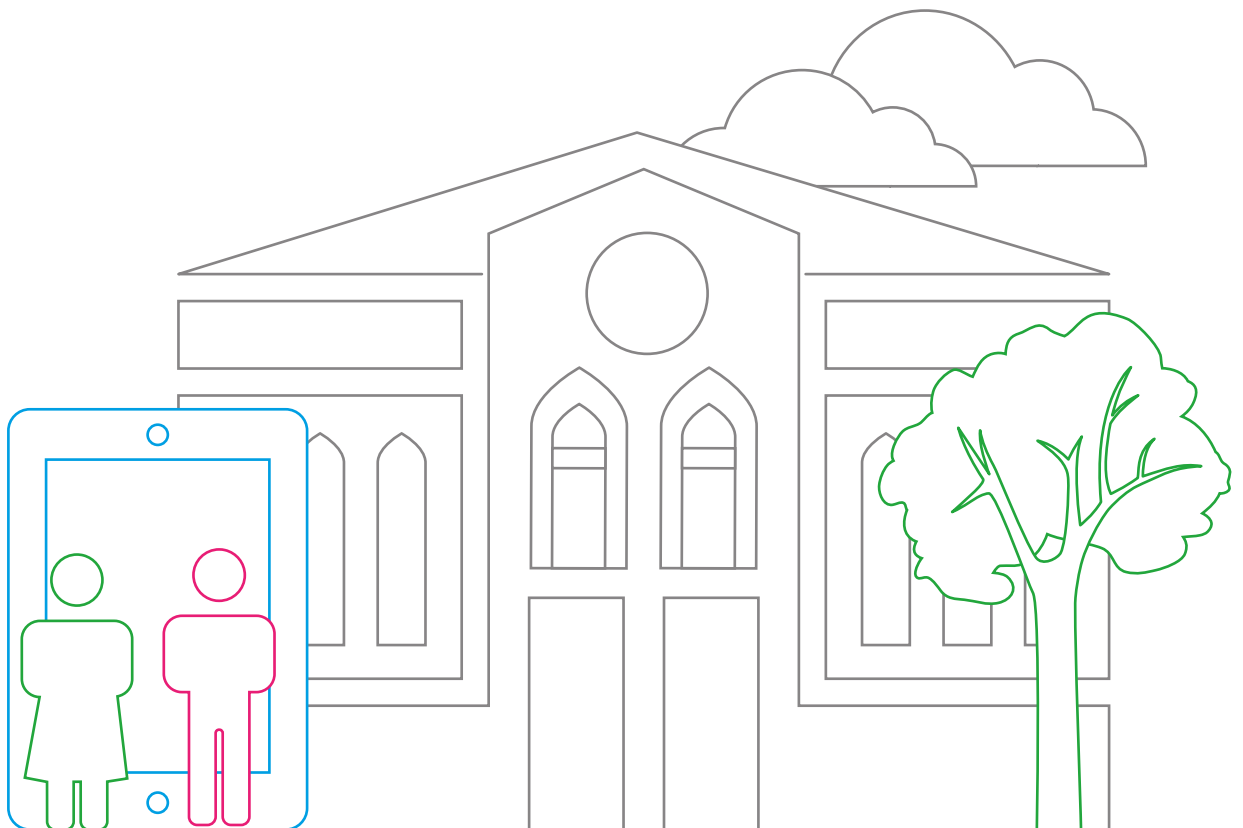


# Our Corporate Priorities

Alongside the work we do to deliver our frontline services today, and to reform those services for tomorrow, we need outstanding corporate services to enable us to do what we do.

Our priorities here are:

- To provide expert and intelligence-led advice and support to the wider business, so as to allow HMCTS to optimise the value it obtains from allocating and investing public funds, with 3rd party organisations.
- To ensure that HMCTS commercial activity is in accordance with best practice and comply with the appropriate procurement legislation
- To ensure compliance with statutory and corporate obligations
- To provide effective and engaging communications to allow users, colleagues, stakeholders and partners to increase their understanding of reform and HMCTS.
- To inform, engage with and listen to our key partners and stakeholders in the next phase of delivering the reform programme.



# Monitoring and evaluating performance

**Monitoring our delivery against this plan, and evaluating our performance, will be crucial as part of assuring our Board, the Framework Principals, and our users, that we are delivering our purpose.**

Last year, we started development of our Enterprise Performance Framework (EPF), which we will embed across three areas:

- **Effort** – how hard is it for people to use our services? How long did it take and how much did it cost?
- **Experience** – do we do what we say we will, and fix it effectively if we don't?
- **Perception** – what do people think and feel about our services?

This will improve the way we monitor performance, ensuring that we have a consistent approach across all HMCTS jurisdictions. It will provide data so that we can understand how we are delivering for the users of our services and deliver insight into how we can improve.

We are in the process of designing new measures and have started to support services in reform to implement these. In 2018/19 this work started with Divorce and Social Security & Child Support. As reform continues, the project will produce new measures and ways of viewing the data for other reformed services as well as delivering a strategic data platform to enable better analysis and reporting across HMCTS.

We will also measure performance through key performance measures. These are split across the various jurisdictions to ensure we take into account the differences in services required and delivered. Our performance measures are monitored against the following areas of the business:

- **Operations** – we will continue to monitor timeliness of cases progressing through the system, caseloads and utilisation of sitting days;
- **User Experience** – we use measures including monitoring complaints, call abandonment rates and answering official correspondence, and are beginning to include the EPF measures mentioned above;
- **Financial Stewardship** – we will monitor our expenditure, identifying savings and ensuring good stewardship of taxpayers' money;
- **People** – we have targets to improve the time taken to hire new staff, monitor staff turnover and working days lost through sickness.

Each quarter, updates on progress made against milestones listed in this Business Plan will be presented to the HMCTS Board. Underneath the plan, respective Directors will oversee progress against the Directorate Delivery Plans they agree; and Directors will be held to account by the Chief Executive for delivery.



# HM Courts & Tribunals Service

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