

**Westminster Legal Policy Forum keynote seminar:
Efficiency and tackling backlogs in the courts system in England and Wales**

Timing: Morning, Monday, 28th April 2025

Taking place online

Draft agenda subject to change



**WESTMINSTER
LEGAL POLICY
FORUM**

- 8.30 Registration
- 9.00 **Chair's opening remarks**
Senior Parliamentarian
- 9.05 **Priorities for addressing key challenges for the court system in England and Wales**
Daniel Flury, Operations Director, HM Courts and Tribunal Service
Questions and comments from the floor
- 9.30 **Reducing the backlog in Crown Court - key findings and considerations for policy and practice**
Lee Summerfield, Director, Responsive Audit and Investigations, National Audit Office
- 9.40 **The way forward for tackling court backlogs in England and Wales in the short-term**
priorities for the Independent Review of the Criminal Courts | addressing key challenges resulting in operational pressures | challenges for legal aid solicitors | impact of Crown Court backlogs on victims, defendants and courtroom staff | key issues discussed in the Justice Committee's inquiry on the Work of the County Court | effect of increased caseloads on duty solicitors | current custody procedures for handling vulnerable defendants, witnesses and victims and possible options for reform | addressing concerns over legal aid fees in specific sectors such as housing and immigration | allocation of resources
Penelope Gibbs, Director, Transform Justice
Katy Hanson, Managing Director, Welch & Co; and Vice-Chair, Criminal Law Solicitors' Association
Jeremy Bloom, Consultant Solicitor, Duncan Lewis; and Director, Jeremy Bloom Legal Services
Senior representative, technology
Senior representative, victims
- 10.05 Questions and comments from the floor
- 10.25 **The Independent Review - progress so far**
Shaun McNally CBE, Expert Advisor, Independent Review of the Criminal Courts
- 10.35 **Priorities for improving court proceedings and operations**
Senior representative, judiciary
Questions and comments from the floor
- 10.55 **Chair's closing remarks**
Senior Parliamentarian
- 11.00 Break
- 11.10 **Chair's opening remarks**
Lord Carlile of Berriew CBE KC
- 11.15 **Next steps for the recruitment, retention and training of court operational staff**
increasing trained duty solicitors and courtroom staff | operational procedures of custody and trial administration | assessing the recruitment process in courts | addressing concerns around burnout due to increased caseloads | key challenges resulting in reduced sitting days | implementation of Operation Early Dawn and impact of pressures on custody and limited prison spaces | utilising technology in training
Mary Prior KC, Barrister and Head of Crime, 36 Group; and Chair, Criminal Bar Association
Neil McCallum, Team Leader, Eunoia
Senior representative, police
Questions and comments from the floor
- 11.45 **Key considerations for the Independent Review of the Criminal Courts**
Richard Atkinson, President, The Law Society
- 11.55 **Wider implementation of reform to improve the court system**
potential impact of a new intermediate court and other proposed reforms from the Independent Review so far | implementation and efficacy of the HMCTS Court Reform Programme | the future for court interpreting services | legal aid and advice deserts | scale and scope of magistrates' expansion of powers | assessing strategies to improve the time taken from making a claim to court hearings | options for technological advancements to improve court operations | implementation of ADR and required mediation as an integrated step in litigation procedures
Tom Franklin, Chief Executive, Magistrates' Association
Kelly Stricklin-Coutinho, Barrister, 39 Essex Chambers; and Chair, Civil Mediation Council
Dia Thanki, Founder and CEO, Alchemy Machines
Senior representative, victims
Senior representative, advice
- 12.15 Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.35 **Policy moving forward for the court system**
Senior representative, policy
Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.55 **Chair's and Westminster Legal Policy Forum closing remarks**
Lord Carlile of Berriew CBE KC
Sean Cudmore, Westminster Legal Policy Forum