

# News story: HMCTS engage parliamentarians on reform programme

Members of Parliament and lords gathered today to discuss improvements to the justice system that HMCTS aims to deliver as part of its [reform programme](#).

HMCTS hosted the event to raise awareness and understanding of the programme amongst parliamentarians. Project leads presented service developments across the civil, family, tribunal and crime jurisdictions.

The event provided the opportunity for attendees to interact with the new online processes, from applying for a divorce to paying for probate.

Attendees also heard from Justice Minister Lucy Frazer QC MP and Susan Acland-Hood, CEO of HMCTS, who addressed the audience on the significance of the reform programme in relation to the future of the justice system.

Lucy Frazer Justice Minister said:

We're delighted to have this opportunity to showcase progress with the £1bn reform programme, which is led by the judiciary and the government.

With easy to follow online forms, complete with comprehensive, user-friendly guidance, the reform programme can make the pursuit of justice, previously an intimidating minefield, truly accessible to all.

Susan Acland-Hood, HMCTS CEO added:

For me, the absolute core principle behind HMCTS reform is that it is about making our system better for the people who use it.

We've got to design everything we do, not just by imagining what we think a user might want, but by asking them directly, by showing them demonstrations, by testing them and then by learning – not just from what people tell us – but from what they do when they start to work the systems.

Attendees were particularly interested to hear about changes to the HMCTS estate and the new single case-management system called the common platform, which will be accessible by the police, Crown Prosecution Service, HMCTS and legal professionals.

[Lucy Frazer's speaking](#)

[Susan Acland-Hood speaking](#)

So far, the court reform programme in England and Wales has:

- piloted fully-video hearings in the tax tribunals
- implemented a new national in-court system to record instantly the result of cases digitally
- piloted a new digital system sharing case information in criminal cases to the police, Crown Prosecution Service, courts and legal professionals
- launched a Civil Money Claims service with more than 51,000 claims made 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
- launched an online Divorce Service, with more than 31,000 applications made since April 2018. The online form takes half as long to complete as the paper form, and has reduced the error rate
- launched an Online Probate Service with more than 12,000 personal applications made since July 2018
- opened two new Courts and Tribunals Service Centres in Stoke and Birmingham in January 2019, which are dealing with digital cases in the single justice service, divorce, social security and child support and some probate services
- provided support to help people use online services if they choose to

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## **Press release: Foreign Secretary appoints Special Representative on UK victims of Qadhafi-sponsored IRA terrorism**

William Shawcross will take on new role to bring greater focus to efforts to obtain redress from the Libyan government.

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## **Press release: Foreign Secretary appoints Special Representative on UK victims of Qadhafi-sponsored IRA**

# terrorism

The Foreign Secretary has announced the appointment of William Shawcross as his Special Representative on UK victims of Qadhafi-sponsored IRA terrorism. This follows discussions with UK Parliamentarians about how best the UK Government can support and facilitate the efforts of victims to obtain redress from the Libyan government.

William Shawcross was previously Chair of the Charity Commission and has a broad range of experience, including in human rights and a distinguished record in journalism stretching back more than 40 years.

Former Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi supplied weapons, including Semtex explosives, to the IRA during the Troubles. The UK Government takes this issue extremely seriously and is committed to supporting the victims of Libyan-sponsored IRA terrorism. UK Ministers and diplomats in Libya continue to press the Libyan authorities to engage constructively with victims and their representatives.

More broadly the UK is actively engaged in efforts to support the UN-led political process in Libya, the objective of which is to facilitate agreement with Libyans on a more inclusive political settlement, which would be the best way of stabilising the country.

Middle East Minister Alistair Burt said:

It is excellent that William Shawcross has agreed to take on this important new role, which will help move us closer to resolving this pressing issue.

I am confident that William's appointment will bring greater focus to our efforts to support the victims of these terrible acts of terrorism.

As the Foreign Secretary's Special Representative on UK victims of Qadhafi-sponsored IRA terrorism, Mr Shawcross's role will be to help inform the government's approach to this issue. The precise terms of reference are being finalised, but among the issues Mr Shawcross will advise on is the amount of compensation that should be sought.

William Shawcross said:

I am honoured to be asked to undertake this hugely important challenge. The victims of the IRA terrorism sponsored by Qadhafi deserve all support for their efforts to obtain redress from the Libyan government.

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## **Press release: Workless households fall by over a million since 2010**

Employment Minister Alok Sharma welcomes the fall of over a million workless households since 2010.

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## **Press release: Workless households fall by over a million since 2010**

New figures reveal a near record low number of children living in workless households. The number of lone parent households in employment is up 107,000 since 2010 – a 9.8% increase

The plummet in the number of households where no one works is transforming children's prospects, the Employment Minister said today as he welcomed latest figures placing parents at the heart of Britain's jobs boom.

[New figures](#) today (6 March 2019) from the Office for National Statistics revealed that since 2010 the number of workless households has fallen by over a million – to a record low – while the number of children in workless households is down by 665,000.

The data showed that over the last year the number of households where no one works has dropped by 144,000 with 9 in 10 children now living in a working household.

The number of lone parent households in employment is up 107,000 since 2010 – a rise of almost 10%.

These positive trends are welcome news, with research showing that children with one or more parents in work are more likely to do better in school and more likely to be in work when they are older.

Minister of State for Employment Alok Sharma said:

When people talk about employment, it's often in terms of jobs created and business investment.

Of course that is vital to provide a picture of employment levels across the whole country, but it does not always speak to the human

story of what is going on in individual homes across the country – with working adults being hugely important role models in children's lives.

Making sure we have a strong jobs market and supporting people into work means we can break cycles of worklessness and give children the best start in life.

Media enquiries for this press release – 020 3267 5144

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