

Statement to Parliament: Courts update **by Lucy Fraser QC MP**

Today, I am laying before Parliament legislation reducing court fees for certain proceedings in the civil courts and the Court of Protection in England and Wales. As a result, claimants bringing these proceedings will pay less to access the courts.

The reduction to these fees follows a thorough and detailed review undertaken by officials in the Ministry of Justice into the cost of these proceedings. Our review has identified a number of cases where the fees charged were above full cost recovery levels. We are therefore taking action to reduce those fees. We will also be establishing a refund scheme to reimburse people the amounts they have been over-charged. We are also taking action to refund those who have been overcharged fees to commence certain low value personal injury claims, known as “stage 3” claims. Officials are working on the detailed arrangements and full details of the scheme, including the types of case affected, and how to apply, will be announced in due course.

These changes affect the fees charged for certain proceedings in the Court of Protection; a number of civil proceedings in the magistrates’ courts; fees for general applications in insolvency proceedings; and the fees charged for High Court judges sitting as arbitrators. The intention when these fees were prescribed was that they should be set at, or below, full cost recovery levels and it was on that basis that they were approved by Parliament.

As part of our ongoing improvements we are making to the justice system, including the Government’s £1bn investment in Court Reform, we will continue our review of court fees, including the methodology for setting those fees, to minimise the risk of this issue re-occurring in future. The vision of the reform is to modernise and upgrade the court and tribunal system so that it works even better for everyone, from the victims of crime, witnesses and litigants to judges and legal professionals.

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[News story: HM Coastguard adopts ‘RYA SafeTrx’ as new safety ID scheme](#)

RYA SafeTrx: designed to improve safety at sea

The world-leading RYA SafeTrx app is designed to improve safety at sea and potentially cut vital minutes off the time taken to pinpoint a casualty’s location. It monitors your boat journeys and alerts designated emergency contacts should you fail to arrive on time.

Using iPhone and Android smartphone technology, this free tracking and alerting system is easily accessible and ideal for everyone who enjoys being on the water – from kitesurfers and kayakers to dinghy sailors and powerboat users.

Notify the Coastguard at the touch of a button

The free RYA SafeTrx mobile app and website, now supersedes the HM Coastguard CG66 scheme. It combines a more technologically cutting-edge version of the CG66 database function with additional lifesaving technologies so that you can make a 999 call to the Coastguard at the touch of a button.

The app can be used free of charge in UK territorial waters. Maritime search

and rescue agencies in Ireland, the Netherlands, Germany, Spain, Finland, Norway, Cyprus, South Africa and Australia have already adopted the app.

Freely available to any UK resident

The RYA SafeTrx app is available to any UK resident who wants to be safer afloat and already has over 13,000 users. It provides all recreational boat users with an accessible and simple-to-use way of automatically informing HM Coastguard of their voyage plans, vessel and crew information, incident data, dynamic location and even a direct 999 connection in the event of distress. 'When we receive an emergency call we need a huge amount of information fast. This app helps us access all your details, so that you can get a swifter response with the right resources,' says the MCA's Director of Maritime Operations & HM Coastguard, Richard Parkes.

'RYA SafeTrx uses real-time advanced technology. CG66 was just a database, but the new app allows users to do so much more, including summoning the Coastguard – which could save lives. The precise geolocation feature for example, allows the Coastguard to know where the caller is, an important consideration when the person in distress is unsure of where they are, disoriented, injured or unfamiliar with the area.

'We have already contacted CG66 users to tell them about the switchover to RYA SafeTrx. The handover is well underway and from Wednesday 11 July people will be redirected from GOV.UK's CG66 page to the RYA SafeTrx website. Information on CG66 will still be accessible to the Coastguard, but we will no longer be accepting new information.

'I'd like to take this opportunity to remind all boaters that you must continue to use emergency alerting equipment appropriate to your sport. RYA SafeTrx complements this equipment but is not designed to be used instead of it.'

RYA Cruising Manager, Stuart Carruthers, added: 'With the full support of the MCA, the RYA SafeTrx app promotes enjoyable boating, a safe mind set and good practice. The software consulting company behind the development of SafeTrx, 8 West Consulting, is striving to make this the default technology for keeping the ordinary seafarer safer at sea. With that goal in mind, it is vital that the product continues to adapt to new challenges and opportunities.'

RYA SafeTrx is free to download from [Apple app store](#) or [Google Play](#). Once downloaded, boaters can run unlimited free trips using the app. In addition to the Sail Plan mode, the app has a tracking option called Track Only mode, which enables boaters to analyse their speed and performance on the water while racing or cruising. For customers who do not wish to use the mobile app, there is an option to register their details online at

<https://safetrx.rya.org.uk/login.html>

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Press release: Worldclass fraud and cybercrime court approved for london's fleetbank house site

- A new flagship 18 courtroom legal centre providing world-class legal services in the heart of London given go-ahead
- To be built on the site of Fleetbank House, the court will reinforce the UK's position as a global legal hub

Developed in partnership with the City of London Corporation and the judiciary, the cutting edge, purpose-built court, which will also deal with business and property work as well as civil cases, will hold 18 modern courtrooms and replace the ageing civil court, Mayor's and City of London County Court, and City of London Magistrates' Court. Also included in the court will be a new City of London police station.

A feasibility study to look at whether a court might be built was announced last October, and now the plan has been given the go-ahead. Speaking to members of the senior judiciary at the Mansion House this evening [4 July], the Lord Chancellor, alongside the Lord Mayor, Charles Bowman, and Lord Chief Justice, will reveal that the court will be built on the site of Fleetbank House in the heart of the City.

English law is currently used in 40% of all global corporate arbitrations, and more than 200 foreign law firms currently have offices in the UK. Revenue generated by legal activities in the UK was worth £31.5bn in 2016, and the top 100 UK law firms generated over £22bn in 2016/17. Built next to some of

the world's leading legal, business and technology firms in the heart of legal London, this court will be a sign to the world that the UK remains the global centre for law and finance.

Lord Chancellor David Gauke said:

The flag of English law is flown in countries across the globe, and London already leads the way as the best place to do business and resolve disputes.

This state-of-the-art court is a further message to the world that Britain both prizes business and stands ready to deal with the changing nature of 21st century crime.

The City of London is the world's financial centre, hosting an unparalleled cluster of financial, professional, and business services. The City's legal services offer, clustered around the Temples in the West of the Square Mile, which plays host to more than 17,000 solicitors, is a vibrant centre for international law firms serving their clients across the world.

Commenting on the announcement Policy Chairman of the City of London Corporation Catherine McGuinness said:

This is a hugely significant step in this project that will give the Square Mile its second iconic courthouse after the Old Bailey.

Our rule of law is one of the many reasons why London is the world's most innovative, dynamic, and international financial centre, and this new court will add to our many existing strengths.

I'm particularly pleased that this court will have a focus on the legal issues of the future, such as fraud, economic crime, and cyber-crime.

Fleet Street may historically be known for hosting newspapers, but I believe with this iconic project it will be seen as a world leading centre for legal services and justice for decades to come.

The Government is investing £1 billion in reforming and modernising courts and tribunals, which has already delivered:

- A fully paperless system in conjunction with Transport for London – which means thousands of cases involving fare evasion are dealt with

more swiftly and effectively.

- An online system which enables court staff to prepare case files and access them digitally in a courtroom during a hearing – saving 68 million pages of paper.
- The ability for those convicted of minor motoring offences to make their initial plea online. Some 1500 pleas are dealt with online every week. Court staff and the police automatically receive the completed online plea form as soon as the defendant has submitted it, reducing delays.

In the civil courts people can now:

- Make a small money claim online – with over 3,000 claims issued in the first month, cases moving through more quickly, and user satisfaction over 80% during the pre-launch pilot.
- Apply for a divorce online – which has cut errors in application forms from 40% to less than 1%, saving people time and trouble during a traumatic time.
- Apply for probate online – which has also cut errors, sped up the process, and has a satisfaction rate of more than 90%.

Notes to editors:

- The timeline for building the new court is subject to finalising funding arrangements and securing planning permission. It is expected to be completed in 2025.
- The proposal for a new court was announced last October by the City of London Corporation, and work on feasibility has now concluded and a location for the court has been set. Funding will be provided by the City of London Corporation and HMCTS.
- The court will replace the civil court, Mayor's and City of London County Court, and City of London Magistrates' Court, which are owned by the City Corporation and which HMCTS operate. |* The Employment Appeal Tribunal that is currently at Fleetbank House will move to the Rolls Building.
- The [City of London Corporation](#) is the governing body of the Square Mile dedicated to a vibrant and thriving City, supporting a diverse and sustainable London within a globally-successful UK.