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ENGLAND AND WALES

The Lord Chief  
Justice's Report  
2015

# The Lord Chief Justice's Report 2015

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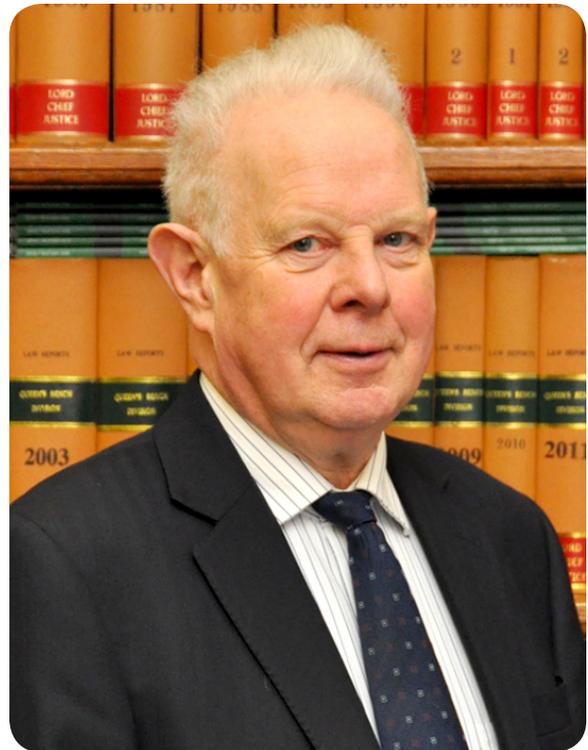
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## Introduction by the Lord Chief Justice

The key issue in 2015, the 800th anniversary year of Magna Carta, was whether investment would be obtained to modernise the courts and tribunals and to secure their position as leaders in the world. The judiciary was both delighted and extremely grateful that in the 2015 Autumn statement the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced the provision of £738m for this purpose.

In making the case for the investment, several issues were highlighted:

- The need to explain publicly the importance of the judicial system in maintaining a just and fair society, accountable and democratic government and a strong economy. The celebrations of the anniversary of Magna Carta provided opportunities to emphasise these matters.
- Our system of justice has become unaffordable to most. In consequence there has been a considerable increase of litigants in person for whom our current court system is not really designed.
- Although in common with many other European states the number of court buildings has been reduced through closure, the failure to invest has meant that many of the courtrooms have not been modernised and lack modern means of communication to provide for better access to justice.
- Outdated IT systems severely impede the delivery of justice. For example, the reforms to civil justice which were intended to implement the report of Lord Woolf were introduced in April 1999 only on the promise of modern IT; none was ever provided.
- No satisfactory means of funding the provision of our system of justice has yet been achieved.
- The structure of the courts and tribunals has not permitted sufficient flexibility for the efficient deployment of the judiciary; this has been exacerbated by the decision of the Court of Justice of the European Union in *O'Brien v Ministry of Justice*.



The delivery of the reform programme will require and enable us to tackle these and a number of other issues. Although the judiciary does not underestimate the substantial and difficult task ahead, we are encouraged by the successful piloting both of the digital case system in criminal cases in the Crown Court and of the e-judiciary programme for judges.

The judiciary has been fortunate in the wide range of assistance received from the Lord Chancellor, as well as the new leadership team of Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS), and the Ministry of Justice. In addition, creative and provocative ideas for reform have been generated by other bodies such as JUSTICE, the Institute for Government, university law departments and their specialist centres and institutes, think tanks, as well as a number of individuals.

Planning for and securing investment was a dominant feature of the past year (and delivery of the reform programme will be a dominant feature of the next four years). At the same time, judges across England and Wales continued to discharge their primary duty of ensuring cases are successfully managed and, if not resolved prior to a hearing, are decided economically, efficiently and justly and explained in a reasoned judgment. The judiciary also worked to strengthen diversity and make many other changes to improve the administration of justice.

I am particularly grateful to and wish to thank the judiciary of England and Wales, the staff of HMCTS and of the Judicial Office for their tireless work over the past year in ensuring that justice is delivered to the highest standards. The continuing reduction in available resources has made this task increasingly difficult and, until the reform programme is completed, ever more arduous.

# 1. Criminal Justice

Although crime continued to fall, driven largely by a drop in theft offences,<sup>1</sup> the courts were faced with a complex and difficult case mix, in addition to the considerable volume of work in the magistrates' courts. For example, sexual crimes increased to a rate that is the highest since the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard in 2002/3.<sup>2</sup> As it is likely that there will be a continuing increase in reported sexual offences, and there is an emerging trend of increase in cyber-crime and crimes related to terrorism, there is an urgent need for very significant improvement to forward projections for court business based on offences reported to the police, so that the utilisation of the continuing scarcity of resources in the courts can be better planned. Significant amounts of judicial leadership time are now taken in attempting to deliver timely justice.

The workload of the Court of Appeal Criminal Division remained heavy and demanding for judges, and staff in the Criminal Appeals Office. An increase in appeals lodged by applicants in person (which rose by 25.3%)<sup>3</sup> placed greater demand on the resources of the office. It is anticipated this trend will continue, meaning intensive case management and a call upon the resources of the office both in advice to applicants and support to the judiciary.<sup>4</sup>

## The Leveson Review of Efficiency in Criminal Proceedings

In January 2015 the President of the Queen's Bench Division published his review into the efficiency of criminal proceedings,<sup>5</sup> examining how efficiency and value for money in the criminal justice system could be improved. Importantly, views were sought and obtained from across the criminal justice system. This was integral to the testing of ideas and formulation of recommendations, which received support from all of those involved when published.

Fifty-six recommendations were made relating to matters as varied as the better use of IT (see section 7 below), the allocation of cases between the magistrates' courts and the Crown Court, and better case management and listing for trial. The recommendations in the report were accepted by the Lord Chancellor. Those already implemented include:

- Changes to court procedures by placing a duty of direct engagement between the prosecution and defence, ensuring effective and consistent management of cases by judges and extending the ways in which directions can be given by the court.

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1 The latest figures on incidents of crime show the lowest estimate since the Crime Survey of England and Wales began in 1991 (Crime Survey England and Wales for the Year Ending March 2015). See [www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/crime-stats/crime-statistics/year-ending-march-2015/stb-crime-march-2015.html](http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/crime-stats/crime-statistics/year-ending-march-2015/stb-crime-march-2015.html).

2 Crime Survey England and Wales for the Year Ending March 2015. See [www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/crime-stats/crime-statistics/year-ending-march-2015/stb-crime-march-2015.html](http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/crime-stats/crime-statistics/year-ending-march-2015/stb-crime-march-2015.html).

3 Up from 308 to 381.

4 See <https://www.judiciary.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/coa-criminal-division-annual-report-2014-15.pdf>.

5 The Rt Hon Sir Brian Leveson – Review of Efficiency in Criminal Proceedings January 2015. See <https://www.judiciary.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/review-of-efficiency-in-criminal-proceedings-20151.pdf>.

- Introducing compliance courts to enable judges to call before them parties who have not complied with the Rules or directions by the court.
- The implementation of a Crown Court performance tool which presents data in a way that permits better assessment of performance, improved accountability and identification of best practice.

The judiciary led the Better Case Management programme to improve the way criminal cases are processed through the system through robust case management, a reduced number of hearings and maximum participation and engagement from all parties. This was used at some courts since October 2015 (Isleworth, Leicester, Merthyr Tydfil, Portsmouth, Reading, Woolwich, Liverpool and Leeds); early indications are encouraging. It will be implemented nationally from January 2016.

### Codification of Criminal Procedure

2015 was the tenth anniversary of the Criminal Procedure Rule Committee. The work of consolidating the Criminal Procedure Rules, Criminal Practice Directions and other materials for the criminal courts into one harmonised document is nearing completion.<sup>6</sup> This has included incorporating guidance and protocols that had been previously issued but were not accessible in the one place, and removing redundant and out-of-date guidance. Some progress has been made in changing the culture of the professions so that criminal practitioners become familiar with the Rules and appreciate their importance to the proper conduct of criminal trials. There is still some way to go. An examination will be made as to the practicability of using section 73 of the Courts Act 2003 to modernise and simplify other rules of procedure.

### Resources and disruption from the disputes over legal aid

The continuing reduction in resources to the courts had, and continues to have a serious impact. It is hoped that this will be ameliorated when the changes resulting from the investment made in criminal justice IT described in section 7 come on stream and the recommendations of the Leveson Review are implemented in full.

During the summer the criminal courts again had to contend with action taken in relation to criminal legal aid. Court staff and the judiciary worked hard to minimise disruption to all court users; they should be commended for their dedication and commitment in ensuring that court business carried on. A note of caution must be sounded about the effect of the delay in resolving the remaining issues in relation to legal aid.

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6 See <https://www.judiciary.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/crim-pd-2015.pdf>.

## Vulnerable witnesses

In 1989 the Pigot Committee recommended that the evidence of a child should be recorded as soon as possible and played at trial; that recommendation was only implemented in part, as although evidence in chief was pre-recorded, cross-examination took place only at trial. During the past year judges in Leeds, Kingston and Hull Crown Courts completed the pilot of the full implementation of section 28 of the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999 by pre-recording cross-examination of children and other vulnerable witnesses. Although the Ministry of Justice is unlikely to publish its review of the pilot before spring 2016, the judges unanimously commend it as greatly improving the administration of justice by reducing stress for the witnesses and encouraging early pleas of guilty. There is no doubt that national implementation will bring very significant benefits.

## Youth Justice

In December 2014 a High Court judge was appointed to chair a committee of judges on youth justice which would consider recommendations for change. The committee met on a quarterly basis. A strong focus in the first two meetings was the implementation of section 53 of the Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015 which gives the power to hold trials in the Youth Court (which is a more suitable venue), but then to commit cases for sentence in the Crown Court. The committee also contributed to the development of Sentencing Council guidelines.

## Courts Martial

A continuing reduction in the work of the Courts Martial had enabled the Judge Advocate General to deploy the specialist judges who sit in the Courts Martial to sit in the Crown Courts. A new legislative timetable following the general election affected proposals for change. Interest in the Courts Martial system has again been high, both at home and internationally; efforts continue to maintain and improve the operation of the system and strengthen its independence.

## 2. Civil Justice

The civil jurisdiction remained busy, with the courts and practitioners adjusting to a number of reforms while dealing with their day-to-day work.

### The Briggs Review of the Civil Court Structure

Lord Justice Briggs was asked to carry out a review of the structure of civil courts in England and Wales alongside the proposals for reform set out in section 7. The review will look at whether any structural changes are necessary to the civil courts, the boundaries between the civil courts, family courts and tribunals, as well as the relationship to private provision of civil dispute resolution services. The review is currently in an informal consultation stage with professional bodies, court users and advice agencies on matters including online dispute resolution, the use of case officers at various stages of litigation, and the current structure of the civil courts and the routes of appeals. An interim report was provided to the Lord Chief Justice and Master of the Rolls at the end of 2015. The review will move to a second phase in the early part of 2016, involving more formal consultation with the legal profession and users of the civil justice system.

### Control of litigation costs and court fees

Control over the costs of civil litigation continued to be of the greatest importance. The Jackson review reforms have now bedded down. It appears that there is an improvement in costs management by judges and in costs behaviour by parties. There was sustained emphasis on the need for proportionality between the costs of a case in relation to the value of the claim. However, costs issues continued to be the subject of dispute between parties, and to generate litigation in their own right.

The judiciary has constantly pressed for the widespread adoption of fixed recoverable costs. This was one of the core recommendations in the Jackson review's final report, but its application has thus far been restricted to a small number of areas of litigation (such as road traffic accidents). The judiciary strongly supports the application of fixed recoverable costs across the range of fast track cases, and in the lower reaches of the multi-track. This would help to ensure that litigation costs are reasonable, proportionate and that all parties can proceed with greater certainty. The judiciary hopes that the Government will give this proposal favourable consideration.

Court fees are another aspect of the cost of litigation. The judiciary made extensive submissions in relation to the succession of significant fee increases which have been proposed and largely implemented. Civil justice was the main focus for large increases in fees (particularly a fee based on 5% of the value of a claim, up to £10,000 at present, although the Government is consulting on a cap of fees of "at least" £20,000). The impact of these fee increases is still being assessed by the Ministry of Justice but the judiciary, whilst accepting the decisions by Parliament to increase fees, remains deeply concerned about the effect on access to justice.

## Litigants in person

The judiciary continued to innovate by improving its procedures and resources for the ever-increasing number of litigants in person. Many judges played an active role in developing such measures, working closely with the professional bodies and the advice and pro bono sectors. There are over 80 liaison judges across England and Wales engaged in this work under the leadership of a High Court judge.

The Chancery Litigant in Person Scheme, CLIPS, continued to be expanded this year, following on from the success of its expansion to the Chancery List at the county court at Central London, with the recruitment of more volunteers. A new pro bono scheme was also created to assist litigants appearing in the winding-up list.

## Court of Appeal Civil Division

The increase in work and pressure on the Court of Appeal Civil Division was a marked feature of the past year. It has been part of a relentless trend. Applications for Permission to Appeal increased by 50% in the past five years. The number of court hearings also rose. Judicial resources have not changed in this period, and increasing administrative and leadership demands have been placed on the senior judges of the Court of Appeal. In July 2015 the Master of the Rolls issued a revised practice note, the effect of which was to acknowledge the delays in appeal hearings arising from the increased workload. The judiciary is considering a number of proposals to reduce waiting times and improve efficiency, such as changing the routes of appeal from some lower courts to the High Court, seeking legislative change to rationalise the tests for permission to appeal and improving processes and reforming the administration.

## Business litigation

In October 2015, the judiciary established the Financial List, with the support of the Lord Chancellor, the Bank of England, financial institutions and the professions, for the better resolution of high-value complex financial cases by docketing them to a single expert judge.<sup>7</sup> An important feature was the provision of a test case procedure. The judiciary is very grateful to the Financial Markets Law Committee for the considerable assistance it provided.

At the same time, the Shorter and More Flexible Trial Procedure pilot was introduced to find practical solutions for reducing the estimated length of a trial in order to reduce cost, achieve an earlier trial date and judgment. It responds to court users' requests for greater choice and flexibility with regards to procedure when issuing cases. These reforms are being supported by an IT system that permits online filing and electronic document management on any day and time throughout the year, from anywhere in the world. In addition the Chancery Division implemented fixed end trial procedures so that trials must be completed by a given date.

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7 See <https://www.judiciary.gov.uk/you-and-the-judiciary/going-to-court/high-court/financial-list/>.

### The right level of judge

In both the Chancery Division and Queen's Bench Division there has been an increase in the amount of work which must be done by High Court judges (together with the increase in appeal work likely from the alternation of routes of appeal). Steps were taken to address this by listing cases before a High Court judge only where this was essential. The judiciary is pursuing a policy (highlighted in the Chancery Modernisation Review) that cases be heard by the right level of judge, that appropriate work be passed to the county court at Central London or for trial by Circuit Judges sitting as Deputy Judges of the High Court, that the jurisdiction of Chancery Masters be widened so that they hear more cases and that the listing procedure and support staff of the Queen's Bench Masters are improved. Another key part of these reforms was the success of the Intellectual Property Enterprise Court (which hears cases up to a value of £500,000), which continued to increase its workload; between 1 April 2014 and 31 March 2015, more than 240 cases were issued in the multi-track alone.

### Monitoring performance

The review of performance data on a monthly and quarterly basis across the small, fast and multi-track cases has become more sophisticated. From December 2015, a "toolkit" was issued quarterly containing reported best practice methods for improving performance. Performance is also measured on volume and timeliness of hearings, settlement rates and enforcement statistics.

## 3. Administrative Justice

### The work of the tribunals

The work of the tribunals largely comprises the resolution of disputes between the State and its citizens. This work is summarised in the annual report of the Senior President of Tribunals.<sup>8</sup>

### The Administrative Court

The Administrative Court was able to continue to focus on its core business, since the overwhelming burden of judicial reviews in asylum and immigration cases was passed to the more appropriate forum of the Upper Tribunal's Immigration and Asylum Chamber. The high volume of work in this area remains, but the Upper Tribunal manages it with ever-increasing efficiency and effectiveness. Outstanding cases in the Administrative Court continued to be between 2600 to 2800, with around 500 to 600 new cases received each month. In October 2014 there were 3,500 outstanding cases compared with 2,825 in October 2015. Six hundred and four cases were completed in October 2015. This reduction has had a positive impact on timeliness with, by way of example, an average waiting time of just under 30 weeks from lodgement to substantive decision recorded at the end of October 2015. One area of work that saw a significant increase, apart from extradition, was challenges to the validity of search warrants, partly because the very complex legislation relating to search warrants and the procedures relating to them. Rationalisation and simplification of the legislation is needed.

### The Planning Court

The establishment of the Planning Court, as reported last year, resulted in new procedures which greatly increased the speed in which planning cases were dealt with. At the end of October 2015 the time from lodging to substantive hearing had reduced to 27.3 weeks, down from 46.9 weeks in February 2014. The number of live planning cases (both "significant" and non-"significant") at the end of October 2015 stood at 222. This represents a significant reduction in the number of live cases, which, at the end of 2013, stood at 314. Additionally, the Criminal Courts and Justice Act 2015 introduced a permission stage in applications for statutory review and the Civil Procedure Rules have been amended to set out the procedure for statutory challenges, largely reflecting the procedure for judicial review. The main purpose of this reform was to remove unmeritorious statutory challenges to planning decisions as early as possible, and thus to avoid the delays and the pressure on the resources of the Planning Court entailed in such proceedings.

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8 See [https://www.judiciary.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/senior\\_president\\_of\\_tribunals\\_annual\\_report\\_2015\\_final.pdf](https://www.judiciary.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/senior_president_of_tribunals_annual_report_2015_final.pdf).

### Extradition

Extradition appeals are heard in the Administrative Court for historic reasons. Recent changes to legislation and the very considerable increase in the volume of extradition cases led to the need for a significant amount of judicial time to be allocated to these cases both in the Administrative Court and in the Westminster Magistrates' Court (which heard all extradition cases at first instance).

Over the years there has been a steady increase in the number of extradition requests; this rate increased after 1 April 2015 when the Schengen Information System started to come into effect, making it easier on entry into or departure from the UK to identify those for whom warrants were outstanding. The introduction of a permission stage for extradition cases through Rules made under the Extradition Act 2003 was important in managing the workload.

### Chief Coroner

In the absence of a national coroner system, the Chief Coroner remained the central national focus for reform. It is his role to continue to establish national standards in what remains an essentially locally-based system, as set out in his annual report.<sup>9</sup> Over the past year, the Chief Coroner continued to progress his reforms which are designed to create a more modern, open, consistent and just coroner system, and to reduce unnecessary delays, with bereaved families at the heart of the process. Further details of work will be set out in the Chief Coroner's next annual report, but key aspects of progress include:

- In addition to the normal package of training for new and existing coroners and the new training for Coroners' Officers (see section 6), the Chief Coroner devised and delivered a programme of events for coroners and others, such as local authorities and the police including a one-day event on Deaths in Custody held in May 2015.
- The Chief Coroner continued to issue guidance on important areas of coroner law and practice, including on Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards, a significant area of extra work for coroners. He also completed a major piece of work on conclusions of inquests.
- The Chief Coroner now requires senior coroners to produce an annual return of all cases outstanding after 12 months; there was a substantial reduction in such cases, in the order of 45%.

## 4. Family Justice

### The Single Family Court

The new Family Court, established on 22 April 2014, has bedded down well over the last eighteen months. All levels of judiciary from High Court judges to lay magistrates now sit as part of the same court. Feedback suggests that the case allocation mechanism is working well across England and Wales and there is a greater degree of collegiality between different levels of judiciary than before. The new structure has removed the delay and costs previously associated with transfers of cases between the county court and the magistrates' courts, making significant savings and enabling a better use of judicial resources.

### Care proceedings involving the state

Following the introduction of the Public Law Outline and the 26 week time limit for public law cases in April 2014 the average length of care cases dropped from 55 weeks in the first quarter of 2011 to below 29 weeks in the second quarter of 2015.<sup>10</sup> 55.7% of cases are now dealt with in less than 26 weeks.<sup>11</sup> This substantial reduction in case duration was achieved by firm judicial leadership, at both national and local level, and effective joint working with Cafcass, the Ministry of Justice, the Department for Education and the Association of Directors of Children's Services. The 26 week time limit is expressed as being the timetable for the child; there are some cases, such as those dealt with by the Family Drug and Alcohol Court, where it is necessary, in the interests of the child and in the interests of justice, to depart from 26 weeks.

"Heatmap" methodology was used to monitor performance against the statutory time limits. Designated Family Judges used the data from the Case Monitoring System, inputted by judges, to monitor performance against the 26 week time limit. The data was also used by the Designated Family Judges to check that all cases departing from the 26 week timetable were doing so for appropriate reasons only.

### Adoption

The number of placement orders fell from 1,550 in the second quarter of 2013-14 to 850 in the last quarter of 2014-15, a decrease of 45%.<sup>12</sup> It is unclear from the current data whether this fall can be explained by a reduction in the number of applications for adoption made by local authorities, or a reduction in the number of cases where the Family Court allows adoption. The judiciary would welcome any reliable data that could cast light on this issue.

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10 Family Court Statistics Quarterly April to June 2105, Ministry of Justice, 24 September 2015.

11 Family Court Statistics Quarterly April to June 2105, Ministry of Justice, 24 September 2015.

12 Adoption Leadership Board headline measures & business intelligence, Quarter 4 2014 to 2015 update, August 2015.

### Radicalisation of youths

The President of the Family Division issued Guidance in October 2015 to deal with an entirely new type of case: public law applications arising from cases where there are concerns about the radicalisation of children and/or planned or attempted travel to reach those parts of Syria controlled by Daesh, the so-called Islamic State.<sup>13</sup> There was an increase in these cases, which present new problems for the Family Court, not least in the handling of closed material.

### Children and vulnerable witnesses

The Children and Vulnerable Witnesses Working Group published an interim report with initial recommendations in August 2014. The Group was established by the President to examine how Family Court involvement with child and vulnerable adult witnesses can be informed by best practice from the criminal courts. The interim report was subject to extensive consultation across the family justice system; consultation responses informed the final report of the Group which was published on 17 March 2015.<sup>14</sup>

The final report recommended new rules in relation to how a child can participate in proceedings and provision for the identification of vulnerable witnesses and the arrangements which will need to be put in place. The report included a set of draft model rules and asked the Family Procedure Rule Committee to consider them; it did so and issued its own consultation paper on draft rules in August 2015.<sup>15</sup> The consultation closed at the end of September 2015 and responses are currently being considered by officials.

### Divorce

The judiciary is fully supportive of the centralisation of the current paper-based divorce process into a number of circuit hubs introduced in Autumn 2015; this makes the administration of the divorce process more efficient and delivers significant savings. Moreover, it is an important step along the path towards the goal of modernising the process through which a divorce is granted.

### The Court of Protection

The judiciary welcomed the decision to establish a rule committee for the Court of Protection in 2014. That body put in a great deal of hard work to produce the first revised set of rules and practice directions; these came into force in July 2015.<sup>16</sup> The new rules streamlined procedures in order to reduce delay and hear more cases outside of London.

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13 Guidance on Radicalisation cases in the Family Courts issued 8 October 2014 by Sir James Munby.

14 See <https://www.judiciary.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/vwcwg-report-march-2015.pdf>.

15 Draft Amendments to Family Procedure Rules, New draft Part 3A of the Family Procedure Rules 2010. (Children and Vulnerable Persons: Participation in proceedings and giving evidence), August 2015.

16 See <https://www.judiciary.gov.uk/publications/court-of-protection-practice-directions/>.

The piloting of new provisions on transparency in the Court of Protection was announced by the President and Vice-President of the Court in November 2015.<sup>17</sup> With rare exceptions, such as serious medical cases, hearings in the Court of Protection were usually in private with only those directly involved in the case attending. The purpose of the pilot, to commence in January 2016, is to reverse this approach so that the Court will normally direct that its hearings will be in public and make an anonymity order to protect the people involved. The scheme will provide evidence to assess whether the Court should in future hold its hearings in private or in public and whether access should be given to the media but not the public.

### International family justice

The Judicial Office for International Family Justice dealt with increasing numbers of enquiries seeking advice on obtaining information from foreign authorities or liaising if the court considered another jurisdiction better placed, in the interests of the child, to hear the case. It is clear that increasing numbers of public, including adoption, and private law cases have a transnational element which reflects greater levels of migration and travel than were usual in the past. The Court of Appeal recently handed down a judgment which clarifies the law governing the adoption of non-UK nationals.<sup>18</sup>

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17 See <https://www.judiciary.gov.uk/announcements/court-of-protection-to-test-increased-access-for-public-and-media/>.

18 *In the matter of N (Children) (Adoption: Jurisdiction)* [2015] EWCA Civ 1112. See <https://www.judiciary.gov.uk/judgments/in-the-matter-of-n-children/>.

## 5. Appointments and Diversity

### The aims of the judiciary in relation to diversity

The Lord Chief Justice recently set out the steps being taken by the judiciary in relation to increasing judicial diversity (in conjunction with the Ministry of Justice and Judicial Appointments Commission).<sup>19</sup> The Lord Chief Justice, the Judicial Diversity Committee and the wider judiciary believe that it is imperative to improve diversity and that this can be achieved more quickly in England and Wales by the vigorous pursuit of a variety of steps. The Committee continued to focus its efforts by supporting, in particular, women, BAME candidates and social mobility by concentrating on the areas of appointment, mentoring and career progression.

### The position in April 2015

The most recently published figures show the position as at 1 April 2015, and demonstrate a steady improvement.<sup>20</sup> It is encouraging that the numbers of female judges in the High Court and the Court of Appeal now standing at twenty-three and eight respectively are at their highest levels ever; that there has been an increase in the number of women on the Circuit Bench from 20% to 23% cent since 2014; and that more than half of all judges under 40 years of age are women. There is also now a greater proportion of women in post at all levels of the District Bench than ever before.

On the other hand, it remains very disappointing that the percentage of BAME judges across courts and tribunals is unchanged at 7%. However, the percentage of BAME judges under 50 years of age (12%) provides some encouragement for the future. The percentage of BAME District Judges in the county court has gradually increased from 4.3% in 2010 to 8% this year; and there are now more BAME Deputy District Judges (Magistrates' Courts) (11%) than there were in 2010 (5.9%). Within the magistracy, half of magistrates are women and just under 10% are from an ethnic minority background, a slight increase on last year.

### Steps being taken

The number of Diversity and Community Relations Judges (DCRJ) in courts and tribunal across England and Wales increased from 79 to 112. They sought to engage with community groups to increase their trust in the justice system and encourage judicial diversity. This was done by taking part in numerous outreach events at schools, colleges and local communities as well as hosting marshalling and work shadowing placements in their courts and tribunal centres. In 2014/15, DCRJs engaged with over 2500 university law students and over 500 legal professionals. Over 130 DCRJs and other judicial office holders participated in the national mock trials run by the Citizenship Foundation and supported visits organised at the Royal Courts of Justice by the National Centre for Citizenship and the Law.

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19 See <https://www.judiciary.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/temple-womens-event-leeds-oct-2015.pdf>.

20 See <https://www.judiciary.gov.uk/about-the-judiciary/who-are-the-judiciary/diversity/judicial-diversity-statistics-2015/>.

DCRJ's and other judges carried out a work shadowing scheme which gave eligible lawyers the opportunity to see judicial life at close quarters. In addition, a positive action mentoring scheme was launched in February 2015. The scheme sought to support women, BAME lawyers and lawyers from non-traditional backgrounds to apply for their first judicial appointment and judges to progress to higher office.

- Over 90 salaried and fee-paid judges from courts and tribunals volunteered as Judicial Role Models to support outreach events as speakers or networking judges and/or act as mentors.
- The judiciary supported networking events in Portsmouth, Manchester, Birmingham and London targeted at legal academics, women, Government and Crown Prosecution Service lawyers, and BAME lawyers. These provided potential candidates with an opportunity to learn from the experiences of judges from similar backgrounds, ask questions and receive advice on the appointments process.

### Flexibility in work and career development

The provisions of the Crime and Courts Act 2013 provide greater opportunities for judges to be cross-deployed between courts and tribunals. Steps are being taken to test how these highly complex provisions can be best utilised to increase the efficiency of judicial deployment when workloads change, but also to provide opportunities for career development. A pilot exercise for salaried Employment Judges to sit in the county courts on civil matters is currently underway.

### New route to the High Court

The amendments made in 2013 to section 9(4) of the Senior Courts Act 1981 enabled Deputy High Court judges to be appointed without prior judicial experience as a Recorder or Deputy Judge of the Upper Tribunal. This year it was decided to use the amended legislation for the first time to appoint Deputy High Court judges through an open competition.

## 6. Morale, Welfare, Training and Discipline

### Morale

Morale in the judiciary is a vitally important issue. The first Judicial Attitude Survey (conducted in September 2014 and which provided an 89% response rate) identified clear concerns.<sup>21</sup> Judges, in common with many other people, feel that the burdens of work imposed on them have increased. For example, they are having to handle an ever-increasing quantity of challenging and emotionally-charged cases in family and crime, as well as an increase in litigants in person. Although judges recognise that they are well-paid in comparison to most people, static pay (in real terms, reduced pay) and adverse alterations to pension arrangements (particularly for more recently appointed judges) have had a significant impact. In addition, there has, overall, been a widespread feeling of not being valued or appreciated for their work.

The issues which have been raised are being addressed by the Lord Chief Justice and the Judicial Executive Board, in conjunction with leadership judges. There was, for example, a programme of meetings with judiciary and staff at a number of court centres. Leadership judges are also being provided with more protected time and more support and assistance; progress is being made towards establishing local leadership groups, representative of judiciary and staff, to address and co-ordinate issues relating to governance within those centres or areas and to provide a strong element of local governance. Nevertheless, much remains to be achieved in order to improve morale and to ensure that the inevitable changes which will occur during the reform programme are sympathetically addressed.

### Leadership support

The survey identified that 77% of judges with leadership responsibilities felt that their work had increased significantly in the past three years, and that leadership judges were having to deal with an increasing number of complex matters, in addition to their daily court sittings. Much has been done to strengthen and support members of the judiciary in leadership roles across the jurisdictions, including significant steps to improve the management information made available to them. The Judicial Executive Board also commissioned a support package for leadership judiciary at a local level. This included:

- The appointment of Human Resources Advisers by the end of 2015, who will provide advice and additional support to leadership judges on human resources matters, and assist with particular problems.
- Protected time for leadership responsibilities; this will be provided to leadership judges to carry out this important work away from their heavy court sitting schedule.

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21 See <https://www.judiciary.gov.uk/announcements/judicial-attitude-survey/>.

## Welfare

During the year, as part of the responsibilities of the Lord Chief Justice and Senior President of Tribunals, a new policy and procedure was launched to assist judges who are unwell, whilst safeguarding the interests of their colleagues who have to carry out their duties in their absence. The sick absence rate for the judiciary is very low, but for those who are suffering serious or long term illness an occupational health provider is used to ensure appropriate support is provided.

All salaried judges are able to access a 24-hour helpline and seek immediate and further counselling support. The health and safety of the judiciary and the court users is of paramount importance and appropriate security measures are put in place in all court and tribunal buildings. To encourage diversity and well-being, many judicial posts are available on a part-time basis.

## Appraisal

A pilot for Recorders was run in 2004 on the Northern Circuit but it was not taken forward as there were no available funds. The senior judiciary has for some time wanted to re-introduce an appraisal scheme. A new scheme was devised with a requirement for significantly less funding, and was piloted. It is now being implemented in London and elsewhere on the South East Circuit as funds allow.

## Training

The Judicial College continued its intensive programme of training for the judiciary, delivering 446 courses to 18,643 judges in 2014–15. This was supplemented with e-learning, including 24 e-letters published in the past year and support materials housed in an e-library. The College produced this year an extensive cross jurisdictional interactive e-learning called *Becoming a Judge* which all new judges will be invited to undertake when appointed. The College has also continued its academic lectures for the judiciary on the theme “Judges and Society”.<sup>22</sup> In 2014–15, the College published 20 distance learning/training packs and four bench book updates. Other publications included the 12th edition of the Judicial College Guidelines for the Assessment of General Damages in Personal Injury Cases, the Equal Treatment Bench Book and Tribunals Journal.

The quality of training was evaluated through a standard feedback form or electronically through the Learning Management System, which enabled consistent analysis across all the training the College provides.<sup>23</sup> Response rates were good, having increased across events from around 25% per course from initial launch to 75% (the average across leading UK business schools is around 42%).

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22 Judges and the Media (Leeds University, 18 February 2015), Should judges make law (University of Law in London, 5 March 2015) and Judicial diversity (Bristol University, 29 October 2015).

23 Each year the College publishes its Review of Activities report which includes tables on evaluation. See <https://www.judiciary.gov.uk/publications/review-of-activities/>.

### Judicial leadership and management training

The Judicial College resumed training in leadership and management with a programme launched in March 2014 for judges who have leadership responsibilities, based on four priority areas reflecting the judicial competences against which leadership judges were appointed. These programmes were very well received and supplemented this year by master classes in selected topics for senior judiciary.

### Magistrates', legal advisers' and coroners' training

Whilst some courses were delivered directly by the Judicial College, in most cases the College prepared training materials for delivery locally by justices' clerks and legal advisers.<sup>24</sup> The College provided core training materials for cascade delivery to magistrates and legal advisers by accredited legal adviser trainers throughout England and Wales. In March 2015 the College added training in investigative skills for coroners' officers. Though they are not judicial office-holders the Chief Coroner encouraged this provision so as to improve support for coroners and assistant coroners.

### Judicial discipline

The Judicial Conduct Investigations Office (JCIO) is an independent office which supports the Lord Chancellor and Lord Chief Justice in their joint responsibility for judicial discipline. The JCIO continued its programme of looking critically at its internal procedures this year; this brought further efficiencies in the way it processes complaints and handles investigations. The JCIO reports separately to Parliament.<sup>25</sup> The Judicial Appointments and Conduct Ombudsman considers any complaints about the JCIO process.<sup>26</sup>

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24 Each year, HMCTS, as the employer of justices' clerks and legal advisers, must provide the Lord Chief Justice with a report on the training provided to magistrates and their legal advisers. Magistrates' Area Training Committees (MATCs) are governed by rules 42-47 of the Justices of the Peace (Training and Development Committee) Rules 2007 (the Rules), enacted under the provisions of s19 of the Courts Act 2003. Rule 47(3) requires MATCs to provide an Annual Report, by 30 June each year, to the Lord Chief Justice, detailing the training provided for magistrates in their MATC Area during the preceding year.

25 See <http://judicialconduct.judiciary.gov.uk>.

26 See <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/judicial-appointments-and-conduct-ombudsman>.

## 7. Reform to Courts and Tribunals Administration

### The investment of £738m

The judges of the courts and tribunals in England and Wales deliver justice to the highest standards. They are generally considered to be world leaders. London also continues to be the centre for international dispute resolution despite growing competition from abroad. However, it was clear that, after many years of underinvestment in IT and the court and tribunal estate, investment was essential.

In the 2015 Autumn statement the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced that an investment of £738 million would be made in a reform programme. The judiciary has expressed its thanks to the Lord Chancellor for his support, to HM Treasury for its confidence in the case for reform and to the excellent work of Natalie Ceeney, Chief Executive of HMCTS, and her colleagues. The reform programme, to which the judiciary is strongly committed, will implement a radical vision of the way in which justice is delivered to the citizens more effectively and at lower cost. It will be delivered by HMCTS (which accounts jointly to the Lord Chancellor and Lord Chief Justice) through strengthened governance arrangements. The programme has three elements: IT, buildings and court procedures.

### IT in the criminal courts

IT is the central element. Prior to the 2015 Autumn statement, financing had only been provided for the criminal work of the courts; development had, with two exceptions, been confined to criminal justice.

During the year, Wi-Fi was provided in the criminal courts. Significantly, some of the equipment for better presentation of evidence was provided. This was essential as the police have started to record evidence on body worn video cameras; when played in court, this is highly effective. More significantly, there was also the development and piloting of a digital case system in the Crown Court. This provided the judiciary with access to electronic copies of all the case documents and enabled them to manage and try cases more effectively. This pilot is underway in the Crown Court at Leeds and Southwark with an expectation that the digital system will be deployed to all other Crown Court centres in 2016. Work continues in the development of the Common Platform.

For the magistrates' courts, work also significantly advanced with the development of the Rota system, replacing a multitude of manual processes with a simple, easy-to-use national system for managing magistrates' sitting days. The system is currently being piloted with implementation across all magistrates' courts due in 2016.

### IT for the judiciary, for the civil and family courts and for tribunals

The IT for the judiciary currently uses an operating system which is so outdated that support is no longer available. Agreement was finally reached during 2015, after many years of discussions, under which HMCTS will upgrade the judiciary to a modern system known as “e-judiciary” which provides modern software and cloud-based secured storage. It was successfully piloted and is presently being rolled out to all judges. This has been the result of persistent hard work and creative thinking by a dedicated group of judges.

However, with the exception of the system being introduced for the Rolls Building referred to in section 2 of this report, the IT in use in the civil and family courts and tribunals is based on programmes that were designed in the 1980s or 1990s and which are precariously supported by outdated operating systems. Plans are now in hand to design and then introduce electronic filing, electronic forms, electronic case files and case management and on-line dispute resolution.

### Court buildings and locations

In July 2015, the Minister for Courts and Legal Aid announced a consultation proposing the closure of 91 sites, with the integration of a further 31 courts with others in close proximity. Access to local justice continues to be a key priority of the Lord Chief Justice, who made clear that the judiciary's support for any further closures was dependent on the provision of the investment, and must go hand in hand with the implementation of a coherent strategy. It remains essential as part of that strategy to explore the opportunity to hold court and tribunal sessions in buildings which are not dedicated for that purpose. Many civic buildings, such as town halls, could provide the facilities to conduct proceedings locally, where the demand does not require a full time designated court building.

### Modernisation of procedure

Court and tribunal procedures have been developed to support the existing approach to delivering justice. The transformation of the infrastructure and administration of the justice system will go hand in hand with the continued redesign of procedure in each jurisdiction. An example of this will be the proposals made by Lord Justice Briggs referred to in section 2.

### Delivery through joint working; local leadership groups

At national level, engagement groups have been established for each of the jurisdictions to ensure that the design and implementation of each stage of the reform programme is coordinated. At local level, after a report by Stanton Marris, local leadership groups were established in late 2015 to provide leadership and close working between the judiciary and administration in the delivery of justice and the reform programme. The membership and geographical spread of the local leadership groups, each chaired by a local senior judge, have taken a variety of forms best suited to meet local need. The aim has been to achieve a broad judicial representation from across all jurisdictions and ranks of the judiciary.

## 8. The Legal Professions and Justice Out of London

### The legal professions

The judiciary has continued to maintain its strong relationships with the Bar Council, the Law Society and CILEx, as well as the Young Bar and the Junior Lawyers' Division of the Law Society; discussing a range of matters, including the difficult issues that arise in relation to publicly-funded work, quality assurance and the disputes in relation to legal aid. The judiciary has strengthened its relationship with the regulators and the Legal Services Board (not least in order to make up for the absence of judicial representation on the boards of the regulators).

### Justice out of London

In 2015, the Court of Appeal Criminal Division sat in Birmingham, Newcastle, Preston, Exeter, Lewes, Leeds, Cardiff and Liverpool. The Court of Appeal Civil Division continues to sit twice a year in Cardiff, and consideration is currently being given to sittings in regional centres in England. Sittings of the Divisional Court took place in Leeds, Cardiff and Manchester.

In the major Chancery centres outside London much more work is being retained with the consequent promotion of Chancery work out of London. The Administrative Court continued to sit outside of London at Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff, Leeds and Manchester. Typically, more than 20% of the Court's work in any one month is heard in these centres. In addition, there was a drive to distribute the work of the Court of Protection so more cases were heard outside London and nearer to where court users live; hubs are located in Birmingham, Leeds, Newcastle, Manchester, Reading, Bristol and Cardiff.

## 9. Wales

### The effect on the courts and tribunals of primary legislation passed by the National Assembly

Since 2011, the National Assembly has been able to enact primary legislation within the fields of devolved competence. The effect was noted in Lord Chief Justice's Report for 2014. The recent enactment of legislation relating to the law of landlord and tenant means that the jurisdiction of England and Wales will have strikingly different laws relating to that law as applicable to properties in England and properties in Wales respectively.

As disputes in relation to the law of landlord and tenant are a core part of the work of the civil courts, this development highlighted the need for proper arrangements to be made for implementation, revision to procedural rules and training. The judiciary took some steps to address these issues by establishing a Welsh sub-committee of the Civil Procedural Rules Committee, putting in place training arrangements and establishing arrangements to ensure that those appointed to posts in Wales are familiar with (or are prepared to learn) the different law now applicable in Wales.

Regular meetings and dialogue took place between the Lord Chief Justice, the First Minister, the Minister for Public Services, Counsel General and Permanent Secretary to the Welsh Government as well as the Secretary of State for Wales on a range of matters relating to the justice system. There is now in place an agreed process with the Welsh Government through which the judiciary is notified of legislation which will affect the justice system. Although this process is still in its early stage of development, earlier engagement will enable the judiciary to make timely and informed assessments of the likely impact of new legislation. However, what is still needed is a dedicated justice function, whether provided by the Ministry of Justice or as a devolved function, with its focus on the necessary underpinning mechanisms to enable legislation to operate effectively. This should be taken forward as a priority.

The judiciary is grateful to the Wales Governance Centre for its most helpful assistance in arranging a seminar to discuss issues affecting the judiciary and its work with the Welsh Government. These discussions helped to build understanding of the role of the judiciary, and identify the benefits of a constructive relationship between the judiciary and Welsh Government.

### Training

The Wales Training Committee continued to identify any judicial training requirements for the judiciary of Wales, and for those who sit from time to time in Wales or may be adjudicating upon Welsh issues, arising from any legislation passed by the National Assembly for Wales. This includes training requirements and obligations under the Welsh Language Act 1993. Based on the results of a questionnaire issued in 2014, a training event specifically to improve use of the Welsh language in court (conversational and legal terms) was held in November 2014.

## 10. Working with Parliament, Government and Other Judiciaries of the UK

### Parliament

As is now customary, the Lord Chief Justice gave oral evidence to the House of Commons Justice Select Committee in January 2015 following the publication of his 2014 Annual Report.<sup>27</sup> The Lord Chief Justice did not appear before House of Lords Constitution Committee this year due to the prorogation and dissolution of Parliament prior to the general election.

More generally, the senior judiciary continued to submit evidence to Parliamentary Committees where appropriate. Whilst appearances by serving judges before Parliamentary Committees should still be regarded as exceptional, a strong working relationship between Judicial Office staff and Committee clerks ensures that any such appearances are effective, and remain within the boundaries set by the constitution. In addition, it is sometimes appropriate for the judiciary to respond to Parliamentary inquiries in writing; for example, the Judicial Executive Board submitted written evidence to the Justice Committee's inquiry into Courts and Tribunals Fees and Charges.<sup>28</sup>

In addition, the Lord Chief Justice met with the new Chair of the Justice Select Committee, the new Clerk of the Commons and other senior Parliamentary officials. A new programme was launched in conjunction with the Industry and Parliament Trust, through which parliamentarians could visit courts and tribunals, to learn about the role and function of the judiciary and the justice system, with a focus on commercial and business disputes.

Separately, the Lord Speaker, the President of the Supreme Court and the Lord Chief Justice agreed a series of meetings to discuss areas of common interest and to improve understanding of and respect for the role and function of each institution. This ensures that relationships between the House of Lords and the judiciary continue to be maintained following the removal of the House of Lords' judicial function by the Constitutional Reform Act 2005.

### Government

The Lord Chief Justice, the Senior President of Tribunals, the Heads of Division and the Senior Presiding Judge continued to meet regularly with the Lord Chancellor and other Ministers and Permanent Secretaries. The relationship between the judiciary and the principal ministries with which it is involved (the Ministry of Justice, the Home Office and the Attorney-General's Office) is constructive.

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27 See <http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/justice-committee/one-off-sessions/parliament-2010/lord-chief-justice-report-2014/>.

28 See <http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/justice-committee/court-fees-and-charges/written/22881.html>.

As a result of discussion at seminars given under the auspices of the Institute for Government,<sup>29</sup> guidance is to be published in relation to the judiciary's engagement with the executive on technical and procedural aspects of policy and legislation. This complements the Guidance to Judges on Appearances before Select Committee,<sup>30</sup> and aims to enable members of the judiciary and those working in the other two branches of State to engage effectively and within constitutional boundaries.

### The judiciaries of Northern Ireland and Scotland and the United Kingdom Supreme Court

The Lord Chief Justice and other senior judges have a strong working relationship with their counterparts in Northern Ireland and Scotland. The Lord Chief Justice met and spoke regularly with the Lord President of Scotland and the Lord Chief Justice of Northern Ireland throughout 2015. A seminar of the heads of the judiciary of the Isles was held in Jersey in May 2015. The Lord Chief Justice also had regular meetings with the President of the United Kingdom Supreme Court.

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29 See the Lord Chief Justice's speech at the Institute for Government in December 2014: <https://www.judiciary.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/institute-for-government.pdf>.

30 See [https://www.judiciary.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/JCO/Documents/Guidance/select\\_committee\\_guidance.pdf](https://www.judiciary.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/JCO/Documents/Guidance/select_committee_guidance.pdf).

## 11. Communicating with Judges, the Professions, and the Public

The Judicial Office provides specialist communications support and advice to the judiciary. It uses a variety of communication channels including websites and social media to raise awareness and increase public understanding of the work of judges in and out of court directly and through the media, and internally to inform and connect the work of the different sections of the judiciary including magistrates. In addition, there is a panel of media judges available to be interviewed at short notice on topics of current interest.

The Lord Chief Justice again invited questions from journalists on all issues at his annual press conference in November.<sup>31</sup> Earlier in the year, he recorded a live interview and podcast at the London School of Economics on his career in the law, and he has spoken widely in England and Wales over the last twelve months. This included speeches at the opening of the Global Law Summit on the value of the rule of law,<sup>32</sup> to audiences in Leeds and London on the importance of a diverse judiciary,<sup>33</sup> at the Legal Wales conference,<sup>34</sup> and to the University College London Constitution Unit on judicial independence.<sup>35</sup> Other senior judges spoke on a range of topics.<sup>36</sup>

### Publication of judgments

Judgments and sentencing remarks in complex or contentious cases were communicated to the media and directly to the public by email, via the website and through the Judiciary Twitter account (which has 34,000 followers).

### TV broadcasting

Broadcasting continued from the Court of Appeal. Cases were filmed most days, and were used from time to time by the main broadcasters on news bulletins. The recordings were made more widely publicly available when the Law Society Gazette introduced a section of its website carrying many filmed reports from cases provided by the broadcasters. Since October 2013, 240 cases were recorded in London, Nottingham, Canterbury, Cardiff and Manchester. The broadcasters are SKY, ITN, BBC and the Press Association.

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31 See <https://www.judiciary.gov.uk/publications/lord-chief-justice-press-conference-full-video/>.

32 See <https://www.judiciary.gov.uk/announcements/speech-by-lord-chief-justice-global-law-summit-2015/>.

33 See <https://www.judiciary.gov.uk/announcements/speech-by-lord-chief-justice-to-the-temple-womens-forum-and-the-association-of-women-barristers/> and <https://www.judiciary.gov.uk/announcements/speech-by-the-lord-chief-justice-temple-womens-forum/>.

34 See <https://www.judiciary.gov.uk/announcements/speech-by-the-lord-chief-justice-the-law-of-wales-looking-forward/>.

35 See <https://www.judiciary.gov.uk/announcements/speech-by-lord-chief-justice-judicial-leadership/>.

36 Published speeches can be found at <https://www.judiciary.gov.uk/announcements/>.

### Judicial website and intranet

The judicial website was reviewed and updated during the course of the year. As part of this work a significant area of new content representing the Chancery and Queen's Bench Divisions of the High Court and the Rolls Building was launched in July 2015. A section covering Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) and including video interviews with ODR experts was also added in February 2015, following publication of the Civil Justice Council's ODR Advisory Group report.

The judicial intranet continued to be developed as a means of providing judges and magistrates with access to essential judicial news and guidance. The intranet site supported the senior judiciary by facilitating internal communications with judges and magistrates on wide a range of subject areas, including HMCTS reform. A new email alerting system implemented in April 2015 provided timely updates for the judiciary and public subscribers alike.

## 12. International Work

Unsurprisingly, the year of the 800th Anniversary of Magna Carta saw considerable activity in international judicial work in all of the four branches into which it was organised. One of these, International Family Justice, is covered in section 4.

### International judicial relations

The second of those branches is international judicial relations which, in conjunction with Scotland and Northern Ireland, promotes dialogue between judiciaries. International law, comparative law, European Union law and human rights are increasingly important to the judicial caseload, and international work enhances judicial knowhow and widens the perspective of judges. Through international judicial relations the judiciary helps other judiciaries who are looking for expertise in particular areas, helps to promote the rule of law internationally and raises the profile of English law. The focus has been on building relationships with the leading judiciaries in Europe and with the judiciaries in developing countries and in China.

The judiciary also received a considerable number of visits from overseas judiciaries; officials arranged visits for 52 international visitors from 24 countries during 2014/15, including from Australia, Brunei, China, France, Italy, Japan, Kenya, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, New Zealand, Nigeria, the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Poland, Portugal, Turkey, Serbia, the USA.

### Europe

The third branch is Europe where the European Sub-Committee of the Judges' Council pursued its objectives of judicial participation in European issues, including influencing the technical aspects of the development of European law and legislation, improving justice systems in the EU and in Candidate States, and enhancing understanding of EU law, institutions and legislation amongst our judiciary. To that end, the judiciary participated in European and EU associations of judges, further developed relationships with the European Commission, the European Parliament and other EU institutions and had numerous bilateral contacts with the European Court of Human Rights at Strasbourg, the Court of Justice of the European Union at Luxembourg and with European judges. In October 2014 a bilateral meeting with judges from the Luxembourg Court took place in London; and in July 2014 a bilateral meeting with the Strasbourg Court took place in Strasbourg. In 2014/2015, a judge from England and Wales became President of the European Network of Councils for the Judiciary. The UK judges continue to participate actively in the European Association of Judges.

### Judicial College

The fourth branch is the work of the Judicial College which continued to be a leader internationally. During 2014/15, the College delivered training to 26 countries, including to Albania, the Czech Republic, Jamaica, Kenya, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Romania, and Tunisia. It also received visitors from a wide range of countries including Chile, Sri Lanka, Japan, Bahrain, Vietnam, Kenya and Croatia. The Judicial College is now extremely well placed to meet the increasing international demand for judicial training. It is also an active member of the European Judicial Training Network, having had representation on the its Steering Committee, its Technologies working group, various steering groups involved with EU funded projects and its THEMIS programme and has had representation at its annual General Assembly, attended by all of its members. The College is also involved in the “Exchange” and “Catalogue” Programmes.