



Transparency and Open Justice Board

Stakeholder Committee Forum Q&A

22nd July 2025

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Single Justice Procedure (SPJ), Magistrates' Court and Listings

Question	Submitted by	Response
<p>What can be done about difficulties accessing Single Justice Procedure (SJP) outcomes via the Libra system?</p>	<p>Penelope Gibbs</p>	<p>SJP accounts for a significant volume of Magistrates' Court cases. SJP will be fully within scope of the new Key Objectives' criminal-jurisdiction review. As part of that review, each criminal jurisdiction (including SJP) will undergo a compliance assessment to identify resource shortfalls or legislative obstacles, and the Board will work collaboratively with the courts to remedy any gaps. While efficiency is important, it must not come at the cost of open justice.</p>
<p>Could the Board consider a pilot in Magistrates' Courts to make prosecution documents (e.g. IDPC, sentencing notes) routinely available to the public, given the increasing reliance on written submissions?</p>	<p>Tristan Kirk</p>	<p>Skeleton arguments and witness statements are "essential to any meaningful content of open justice"—the forthcoming access to core documents pilots in the Court of Appeal (Civil Division) and the Commercial Court, will be important. This is covered in the Key Objectives. Sensitive materials (notably pre-sentence reports) are likely to remain confidential due to privacy concerns; others non-confidential documents which are relied upon in open court, should be made available to support transparency and public understanding of the proceedings.</p>
<p>Where can we find a weekly list of upcoming civil appeals?</p>	<p>Louise Shorter</p>	<p>The Court of Appeal's YouTube page links to the judiciary website. There, users can find listings of upcoming civil appeals and access</p>

		documents such as skeleton arguments for cases included in the Court of Appeal (Civil Division) pilot.
Given that my repeated requests for redacted disclosure of skeleton arguments were ignored, is this refusal an institutional failing in how court listings offices and clerks operate? And would the best remedy be to provide targeted training and clearer guidance to court staff on open-justice disclosure obligations?"	Parvez Anwar	The Board cannot deal with points regarding individual cases.

Judicial Openness and Reporting

Question	Submitted by	Response
What lessons can be learned from the recent super injunction case, which kept significant information from the public for nearly two years?	Paul Foster	The judiciary cannot comment on the specific cases; however, super injunctions are recognised to be among the most serious interferences with open justice and are wholly exceptional orders justified by strict necessity: see Practice Guidance (Interim Non-Disclosure Orders) [2012] 1 WLR 1003 [15]. The eventual publication of all judgments in the case demonstrates the judiciary's commitment to transparency and the effectiveness of checks and balances in the legal system.

<p>Has the Board provided input to the recent Criminal Appeals consultation (e.g. on responsible disclosure to journalists or CCRC decision publication)?</p>	<p>Josh Edwards</p>	<p>No. The Board was not approached for input.</p>
<p>Will the Stakeholder Committee gather evidence on how Open Justice is operating in courts and tribunals—drawing on projects like the Court of Protection Open Justice review, Transform Justice Courtwatch, Tristan Kirk’s blog and open-justice.co.uk—to identify what practical as well as principled changes are needed to make Open Justice the norm?</p>	<p>Peter Bell</p>	<p>In 2021, the Justice Select Committee conducted a thorough inquiry into open justice to assess how digital technology has affected media and public access to, and reporting on, our courts. Following that, in 2024 the MoJ launched a Call for Evidence on open justice to gather views on how we might strengthen the openness of court and tribunal services.</p> <p>The Board has reviewed and incorporated all relevant findings from both exercises into its Key Objectives for Open Justice. Accordingly, at this stage there are no plans for any additional evidence-gathering, as the existing consultations provide a robust evidential foundation for guiding our next steps.</p> <p>Open justice: court reporting in the digital age - Committees - UK Parliament</p> <p>Call for Evidence document: Open Justice, the way forward - GOV.UK</p>

Open Justice Champions

Question	Submitted by	Response
Will regional Open Justice Champions cover both criminal and civil appeals, and how will we know when they've been appointed and how to contact them?	Louise Shorter	HMCTS is appointing Champions regionally across all jurisdictions. Contact details are expected to be published in the autumn once the roles are finalised.
Can members of the Stakeholder Committee support or contribute to the Open Justice conference being planned?	Paul Foster	The conference is being organised by HMCTS, not the Board, so the Board does not control its organisation.

Key Objectives

Question	Submitted by	Response
Does 'accessibility' in the Key Objectives explicitly cover reasonable adjustments for people with disabilities to ensure inclusive access to court documents and proceedings?	James Lee	<p>This is a complex area, and work is ongoing across the administration of justice. The primary responsibility for accessibility to buildings in which Courts and Tribunals sit lies with HMCTS.</p> <p>For further guidance on document accessibility please see the current HMCTS guidance.</p> <p>Accessible documents policy - HM Courts & Tribunals Service - GOV.UK</p>