

Highest ever courts funding deal agreed to deliver faster, fairer justice for victims

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Criminal Crown Courts in England and Wales will be funded to hear as many cases as possible next year to deliver faster and fairer justice for victims.

- Highest ever investment sees criminal courts funded to run at maximum capacity next year
- Part of unprecedented three-year agreement across all courts and tribunals
- Announcement comes as Deputy Prime Minister sets out vision for modernised justice system later today

Every single Criminal Crown Court in England and Wales will be funded to hear as many cases as possible next year to deliver faster and fairer justice for victims, the Deputy Prime Minister has announced today (Tuesday 24 February).

The landmark agreement guarantees there will be no limit on the number of days in which Crown Courts can hear cases the next financial year thanks to the highest ever investment for the courts – meaning if the system has the capacity to hear a case, it will go ahead.

This renewed commitment to fully free Judges to hear as many cases as the system can support will mean more victims see justice done – and more offenders face the full force of the law.

Alongside this, the magistrates' courts will be funded to its highest operational capacity. This reflects the Government's aim to run the criminal courts at maximum capacity and drive down the outstanding backlog.

A further £287 million will also be invested into the fabric of the court estate itself –delivering vital repairs and digital upgrades to court buildings up and down the country and bringing the court system into the 21st century.

For the first time, the Government and the Judiciary have also agreed firm funding commitments for the next three years simultaneously, giving the justice system the long-term stability it needs to plan ahead and implement the reforms necessary to safeguard the system now and for the future.

These reforms are needed because of fundamental changes to how the criminal justice system operates in the modern era and a failure to renew justice at the pace the modern world demands. The police are arresting and charging more people, and in the digital era cases have been increasingly complex with 90% of all crime having some form of digital evidence. Alongside this, technological advances have created new, and more complex, crimes to investigate and prosecute.

Deputy Prime Minister David Lammy said:

This Government inherited a justice system on the brink of collapse with victims facing unacceptable delays and we took immediate action to increase sitting days to deliver fairer and faster justice for victims.

But victims still face intolerable delays. That is why I have agreed with the judiciary to

fund unlimited sitting days in the Crown Court next year so they can sit at their maximum and so we can turn the tide on the backlog as quickly as possible.

Investment alone will not be enough to deliver timely justice - which is why it has to be combined with our pragmatic reforms and modernisation.

This investment will be vital in supporting the reforms proposed in response to the first part of Sir Brian Leveson's Independent Review of the Criminal Courts, including the introduction of new Judge-Only trials, to turn the tide on the backlog and deliver faster and fairer justice for victims. More sitting days have also been agreed for other parts of the justice system. The Immigration and Asylum Chamber will be funded to a maximum of 26,000 days, an increase of over 3,000 since last year, so it can hear as many cases as possible to tackle the growing asylum caseload. Civil courts will also see higher investment.

Today's news comes as the Deputy Prime Minister sets out his vision for the justice system at the Microsoft AI Tour in London later today. He is expected to announce increased digital modernisation across the courts, including greater use of AI, as part of the Government's Plan for Change.

Notes to editors:

- The Government and the judiciary have agreed a landmark £2.785 billion settlement for courts and tribunals for 2026/27, up from £2.538bn last year.
- This funding package includes £2.498bn in resource funding - and £287m in capital investment.
- For the first time, the settlement includes firm commitments through to 2028/29, providing long-term stability for the justice system.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/highest-ever-courts-funding-deal-agreed-to-deliver-faster-fairer-justice-for-victims>