

RAAC hit court reopens in boost for London justice

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Victims across London will see justice delivered faster and fairer as Harrow Crown Court reopens in a major Government drive to cut court backlogs.

- £26m cash boost brings Harrow Crown Court back after three-year RAAC shutdown
- Eight courtrooms set to hear cases as Government looks to cut criminal backlogs
- Part of the Government's plan to deliver faster and fairer justice for victims across London

Thousands of victims across London will see justice delivered faster and fairer as the RAAC-hit Harrow Crown Court reopens in a major Government drive to cut court backlogs.

Eight courtrooms, with some newly refurbished, are back in action following a £26 million safety overhaul, after the building was forced to shut in August 2023 amid fears over crumbling concrete.

Before it was forced to shut, the court was handling hundreds of cases a year. Bringing it back at full strength will supercharge capacity for criminal trials, easing pressure on neighbouring courts and helping to get dangerous criminals locked up sooner.

This week the Courts Minister, Sarah Sackman, visited the newly reopened site — a modernised court building fitted with the latest technology and designed to deliver faster, fairer and more transparent justice.

The move comes against a stark backdrop, with the latest figures showing some London victims — particularly in rape cases — are waiting until 2030 for their day in court, while more than 19,000 cases are currently awaiting trial across the capital.

Minister for Courts and Legal Services Sarah Sackman KC said:

We inherited a justice system in crisis — backlogs at record levels, courts left to crumble, and victims waiting far too long for justice.

Reopening Harrow Crown Court is a major boost to London's overstretched court system, cutting delays and getting justice moving again for Londoners.

Built in 1991, the court was closed after RAAC was uncovered and the building deemed unsafe. Its reopening marks a key milestone in the Government's drive to modernise courts and bring cases to court faster in the capital.

Wheelchair accessible and equipped with the latest courtroom technology, the hearing rooms are greener, more efficient and flexible enough to handle a wide range of cases — maximising the number of hearings that can take place each day.

London Victims Commissioner Andrea Simon said:

Victims are waiting years for their day in court, and even when they get there are often faced with a difficult and trauma-inducing experience.

The re-opening of Harrow Crown Court not only brings some capacity back into the system, but the investment in modernising the court will I hope lead to a better and more supportive experience for victims.

The Government also invested £148.5 million in court maintenance funding last year, with a further £287 million this year to repair and modernise courts across England and Wales, alongside recruiting up to 1,000 new judges and tribunal members to speed up cases and deliver fairer, faster justice for victims.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/raac-hit-court-reopens-in-boost-for-london-justice>