



HM Courts &
Tribunals Service

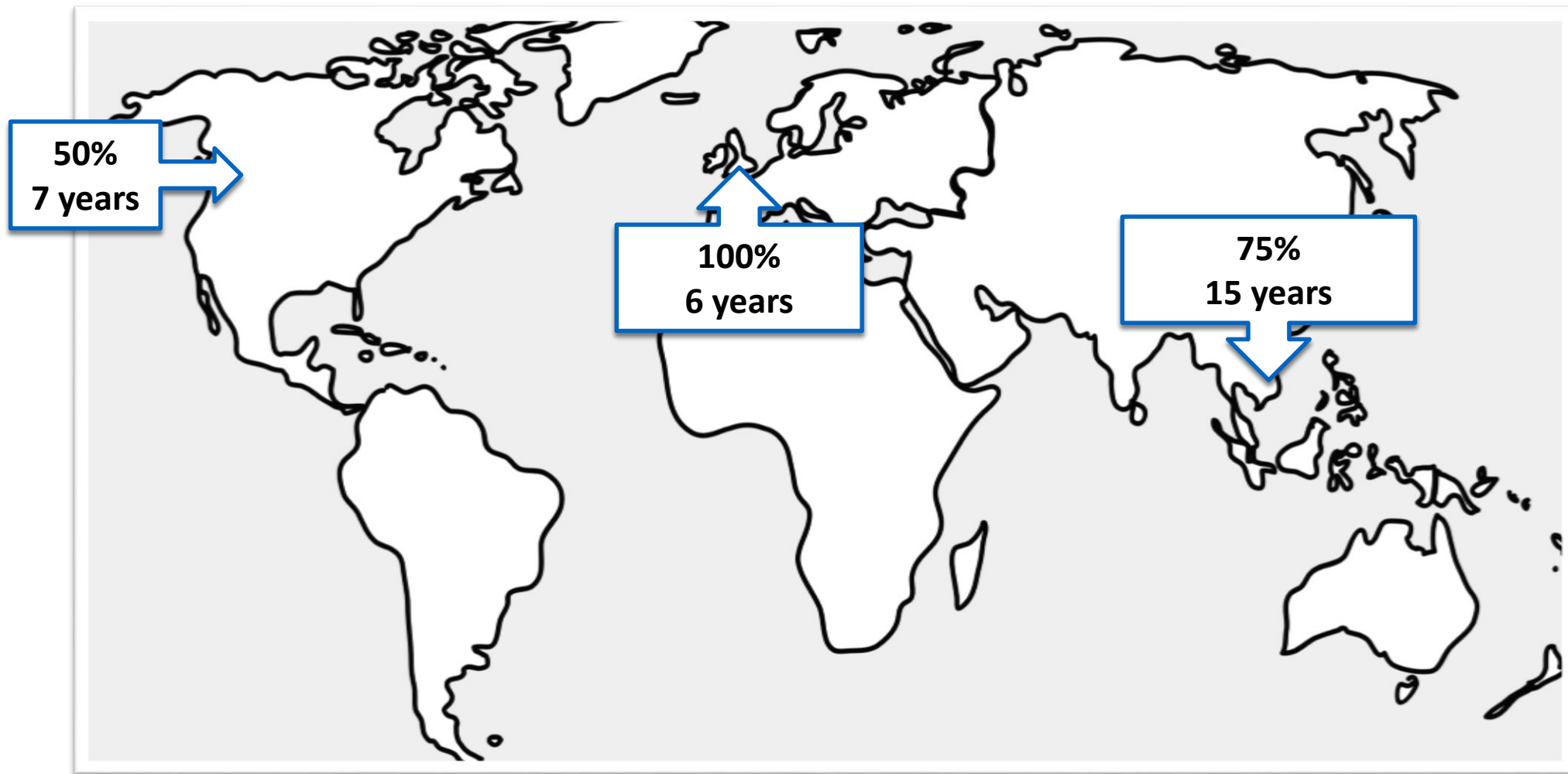
The present

Our progress to date

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An ambitious change programme



Just, accessible, proportionate



Just – decisions and outcomes are fair, the process is free of bias, like cases are treated alike, no types of users are disadvantaged, all litigants are able to state and defend their cases, and the workings of courts and tribunals are transparent.



Accessible – the system is intelligible and available for use by all, convenient for those who cannot easily attend in person, and supportive of those not comfortable with the law or technology.



Proportionate – the cost, speed, complexity, and degree of combativeness make sense and are appropriate to the nature and value of the dispute at issue.

HMCTS reform is based on three ideas



Get things out of the court room that don't need to be there – the divorce application that could be made and managed online, the minor traffic offence.

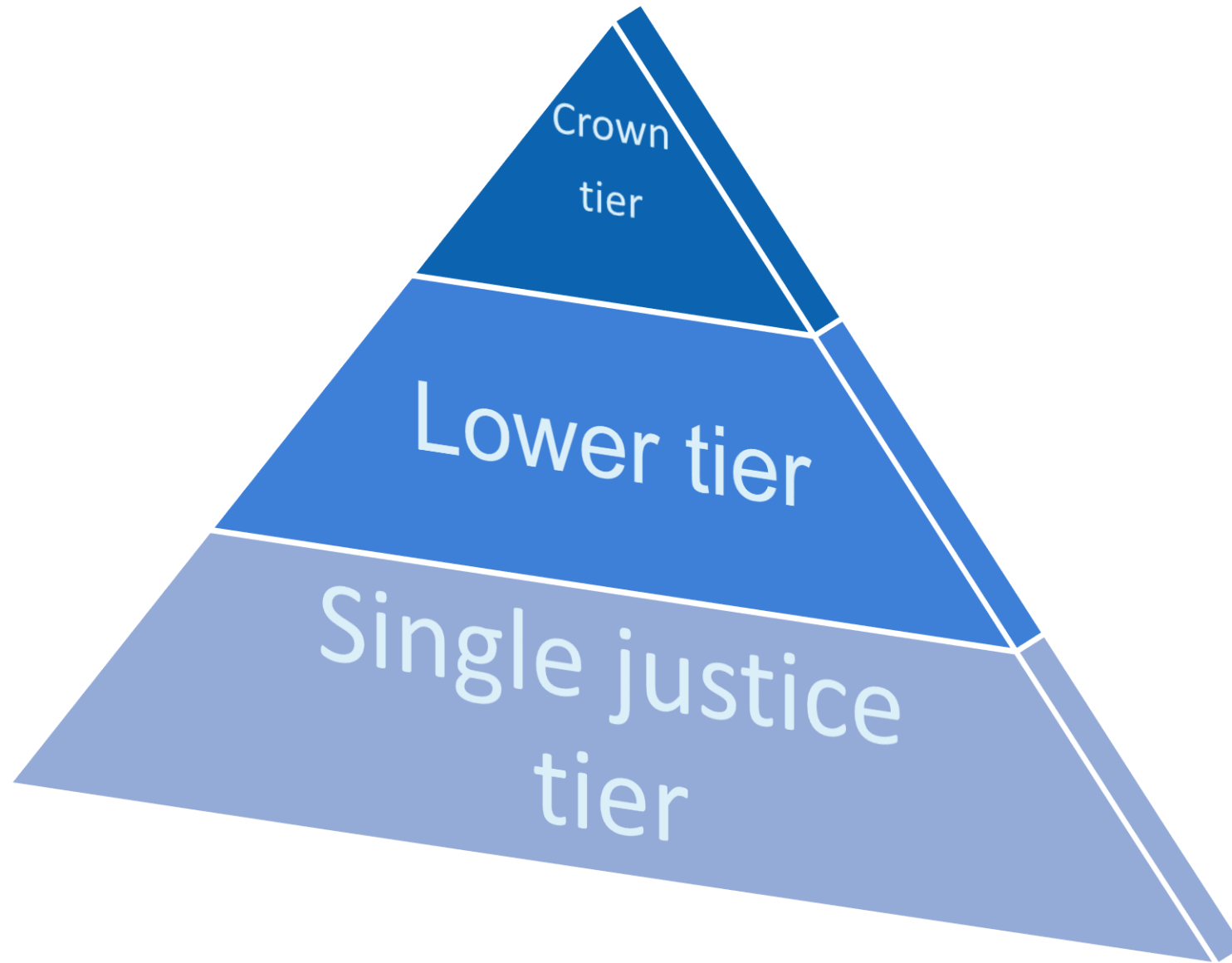


Only apply the full force of judge and courtroom for very complex and sensitive issues – not preliminary hearings to agree process, or minor crimes.



Strip away unnecessary hearings, paper forms and duplication – largely by moving to digital working but also new working practices.

What this means in the criminal courts



Make a plea for a traffic offence

Use this service to plead guilty or not guilty to a traffic offence.

You must be either:

- the person charged with the offence
- an official representative of the company charged with the offence

This page is also available [in Welsh \(Cymraeg\)](#).

Start now >

Before you start

Elsewhere on the web

[Legal help and advice](#) 

Other developments in the criminal courts



Digital working



Wi-fi for professional court users



iPads for magistrates with access to vital resources



New online rota service for magistrates



Digital case system reducing paper in the Crown Courts

The Common Platform

You can find out more about the objectives of this programme here:

<https://cjs-common-platform-programme.wistia.com/medias/t1sej7nlpp>

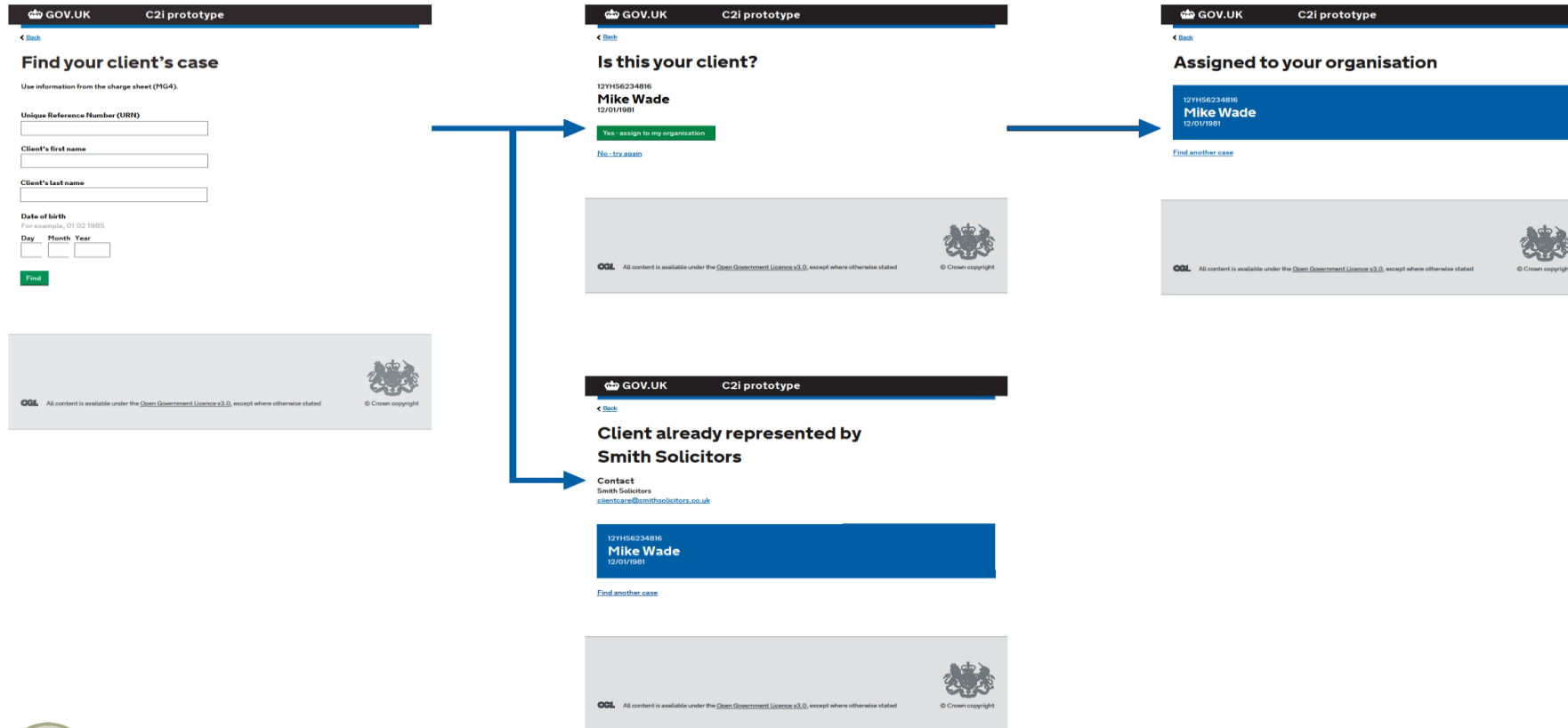
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZGyOw9HqGDc&feature=em-share video user](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZGyOw9HqGDc&feature=em-share_video_user)

Defence Vision

- Defence organisations will need to register for a Common Platform account.
- Cases can be found using four key pieces of information:-
 - **URN** which is on the defendant's charge sheet
 - Defendant's forename, surname and date of birth
- Cases will be locked to the organisation that confirms they have been instructed.
- Once the case is locked, the Initial Details of the Prosecution Case can be downloaded, pleas can be indicated on line and case management started.

Defence Screens

How you will gain access to your client's case file. Our work so far.



Some of the benefits?

- CPS - Reduced administration as defence self serve their cases and evidence
- Defence - More time to take instructions from the defendant prior to the first hearing, as the evidence will be available as soon after charge as possible.
- HMCTS / CPS – Early engagement with defence in relation to pleas and next steps due to the evidence being available earlier
- Victims and witnesses – Earlier and greater level of assurance as to their involvement in the case as CJS organisations engage with each other earlier in the process, continuing the transformation started by Better Case Management.

How has defence engagement evolved?

October 2014

- Defence Practitioners involved in the National Digital Practitioners' Working Group
- Defence Practitioners I knew personally
- Word of mouth

September 2015

- LAA e-bulletin asking defence to get involved
- Defence Engagement Group – limited by email

June 2016

- HMCTS blog – Gov.uk - all research, events and messages

Who?

Liverpool

- 37 organisations – defence organisations and chambers

National

- Over 200 organisations / over 400 users

On-line

- Inside HMCTS blog - Over 3000 subscribers to the Crime blog
- CrimeLine - 14k followers on Twitter
- Solicitors, Barristers, Legal Executives, Police Station Representatives, Paralegals, Costing Clerks, Administrators, Practice Managers, IT Managers

How?

- Web-ex
- Eventbrite
- Trello
- Optimal Card Sort
- Surveys
- One to one
- Workshops
- Meetings
- Focus Groups
- Telephone interviews
- Show and tells

Research topics so far

- Logging on to the Common Platform
- Defence organisations gaining access to a case including pre-charge access to the **URN**
- Barristers gaining access to a case
- Contents and presentation of the Initial Details of the Prosecution Case
- Use and access to technology
- Service support
- Pleas
- Disclosure
- PSR requests
- Resulting of a Crown Court hearing

Where?

- London
- Croydon
- Peterlee
- Manchester
- Liverpool
- Birmingham
- Kent
- National engagement facilitated on-line

When?

- National Digital Practitioners' Working Group – last Thursday of every month 4pm – 6pm – London / On-line
- Security Practitioner Forum
- Liverpool Local Implementation Team Meeting
- Regular blog posts
- Afternoons, especially after 4pm
- Ad-hoc visits
- Engagement days (Liverpool only)
- Law Society Conferences / Criminal Law Committee
- Bar Council / LAA quarterly meeting
- HMCTS Professional Engagement Group

Communication Channels

- LAA e-bulletin
- LAA Contract Managers
- Email to Defence Engagement Group - Digital Defence update – now transferred to Inside HMCTS blog
- Inside HMCTS blog
- CrimeLine
- Criminal Bar Association Monday Message
- Criminal Law Solicitors Association
- Law Society
- Bar Council
- Defence practitioners informing their colleagues and peers

Cross-jurisdictional developments



Case officers



Virtual hearings



Estates and the 'court of the future'

Engagement

Wider Judiciary

- **Senior Judicial Steering Group**
- **Judicial Engagement Groups (JEGS)**
For Crime, Civil, Family, Tribunal and specialist groups looking at Case Officers and Virtual Hearings
- **Magistrates' Engagement Group (MEG)**
- **Local Leadership Groups (LLG)** For the Judiciary and HMCTS staff
- **Project Level Engagement –**
 - Judicial leads embedded within projects
- **Conferences**
Eg NBCF, Resident Judges Conference, Judicial Leadership Conference

Criminal Justice Partners

- **Criminal Justice Working Group**
CPS, Policing (incl: National Police Crime Commissioners, Association of Police Constables), Home Office (including Digital First Programme), NOMS (National Probation Service and Prison Reform), AGO and the Legal Aid Agency

Other Government Departments (OGD)

- Official meetings
- Project level engagement
- **OGD Engagement Group** (soon to be established)

User Groups

- **Litigants in Person Engagement Group** (membership includes: CAB, Corum, Advice UK)
- **Equalities Engagement Group** (currently being established) to represent most vulnerable users; will include: Age UK, Mind, Stonewall, Race Equality Foundation

Legal Professional Engagement

- 4 jurisdictionally split Professional Engagement Groups for Crime, Civil, Family and Tribunals meet quarterly (**leads for these groups to be made available on the Bar Council website shortly**)
- From these 'ProfEGs' sub-groups are being formed to assist with specific modernisation projects
- Regular meetings with Bar Council, Law Society, CILEx outside of groups and other key representative bodies
- Legal professionals are assisting with Professional User Research: e.g. Court of the Future and Online Civil Money Claims projects

Next Steps

- Keep communicating
- Work with our stakeholders to explore additional ways to engage with defence
- The real test will always be – do our research activities have enough participants, with the right skills, for the required amount of time to achieve the purpose of the research?
- If they don't, learn those lessons and adapt our ways of working.