

# **Transforming Summary Justice: a Criminal Justice System-wide initiative to improve how cases are dealt with in the magistrates' courts**

---

## **Introduction**

If unnecessary delays occur when cases are heard in magistrates' courts, this can cause additional distress for victims and witnesses.

The Criminal Justice System is working towards reducing delays in the magistrates' courts, holding fewer hearings per case and increasing the number of trials that go ahead the first time that they are listed. This programme is called Transforming Summary Justice (TSJ).

The TSJ programme (which includes recommendations made in the judicially-led Magistrates' Disclosure Review) is being introduced to ensure that all parties in the criminal justice system play their part more effectively.

The TSJ programme has been agreed between all the parties involved in the process, namely:

- The Crown Prosecution Service
- Police Forces
- Her Majesty's Court Service
- The Justices' Clerks' Society
- The Senior Presiding Judge and the Judiciary
- The Chief Magistrate and the Magistrates' Association
- The National Probation Service
- The Law Society

These agencies are working together to implement the TSJ principles across magistrates' courts in England and Wales from May 2015.

## **TSJ characteristics**

The TSJ programme contains ten characteristics which, taken together, will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the magistrates' courts.

The ten characteristics are:

1. Quality assured police files;
2. Anticipated plea hearings;
3. Brigading cases;
4. Optimum bailing patterns;
5. Early receipt of IDPC (initial details of the prosecution case);
6. The right personnel at the hearing;
7. Streamlined disclosure;
8. Clear expectations of effectiveness;
9. Police support for anticipated not guilty hearings; and
10. Connectivity (WiFi) for each agency at court.

## **Streamlined disclosure**

In accordance with the seventh characteristic of TSJ, a new, more effective disclosure process is being made available to defence practitioners for first hearing. This was a key recommendation of the Magistrates' Court Disclosure Review. The introduction of a new Streamlined Disclosure Certificate (SDC) follows revisions to the [Crime and Procedure Act \(CPIA\) 1996 Code of Practice](#), which will change the procedure for the disclosure of unused material in summary and either way cases.

## **Contact**

For further information on the TSJ programme, practitioners should contact their local Criminal Justice Board in the first instance.

**May 2015**