



HM Courts &
Tribunals Service

We Are Digital

Network Training Pack 5.0



Contents

[Points of contact](#)

[Digital Support Project](#)

[WAD – Who we are](#)

[Digital support – The Services](#)

[The users](#)

[Delivery process](#)

[Acronyms](#)

[Document history](#)



This training pack is a guide for you to understand and take part in our Digital Support project. We Are Digital (WAD) are working in partnership with HM Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS) to provide digital support for HMCTS's online services.

The guide will cover:

- What digital support is and how it applies in this project
- Who you will support and how you will support them
- Training materials
- How you should record what you're learning through the project
- Service level agreements and expectations

For clarity, we refer to people who need and use the service as 'users' throughout the guide.

Contact details

For any enquires relating to this project, or from users of the service, please email centres@we-are-digital.co.uk, or call us on 03333 444019 selecting option 5 for the Training Network team

General queries, bookings & troubleshooting

If you are experiencing technical difficulties with our processes, have a general query, or are unsure of who best to contact, email the centres@we-are-digital.co.uk inbox. It is suggested that you test your systems before any bookings to prevent possible delays during a session.

Updating Centre / Trainer details

You will receive full access to our Athena system to update any details about your centre or organisation. This can include anything relating to the information we hold about your centre.

- Physical address
- Booking availability
- Booking email address/es
- Contact phone number/s
- Support staff
- Main contact person
- Unavailable dates etc.

Training Webinars

These are available via the following link <http://info.we-are-digital.co.uk/hmcts-network-training>. Here you will find the latest version of this delivery guide, supporting documents, and a webinar relating to each live HMCTS service.

- Introduction to Digital Support project
- Introduction to HMCTS online services
- How to use the Athena system
- Introduction to the services, e.g. SSCS, Divorce, PIP
- Help with invoicing
- And more

External Complaint Process

We Are Digital is committed to providing a high-quality service to everyone we deal with. To do this we need you to provide us with feedback about the service you receive. We need you to tell us if we get things wrong so that we can put them right, and help us continue to develop and improve our services.

If you have a complaint you can contact us in the following ways:

- Email: info@we-are-digital.co.uk - please add 'Complaint@' as the title of the email
- Telephone: 03333 444019
- By Post: We Are Digital, 2nd Floor, Friars House, Manor House Drive, Coventry, CV1 2TE.
- We treat all complaints seriously and you will be treated with courtesy and fairness at all times. Your complaint will be handled sensitively and promptly.

If you are contacting us, please help us by providing as much information as possible regarding your complaint. Please include any relevant dates and times, details of the concern, copies of any correspondence, and your contact details.

External Complaint Process

We will acknowledge receipt of a written complaint within 5 working days, and we will send you a full reply within 20 working days of receiving your complaint. If we cannot send a full reply within 20 working days, we will tell you the reason why and will let you know when we will be able to reply in full. Your complaint will be dealt with by the relevant Manager, or Head of Department.

In the event that we are unable to resolve your complaint to your satisfaction, you may request a review by a We Are Digital Director, and it will be subject to the same timescales as the original complaint.

Anonymous Complaints – please be aware that complaints received anonymously will be recorded and considered, but action may be limited if further information is required to ensure a full and fair investigation.

We will not pass your personal details to any third party without your explicit consent and your complaint will remain confidential to We Are Digital. We are committed to protecting your personal information and take seriously our obligations with regard to the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

About HMCTS

Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service (HMCTS) is an agency of The Ministry of Justice (MOJ), at the heart of the justice system. They work to protect and advance the principles of justice. Their vision is to deliver a world-class justice system that works for everyone in society.

About the project

HMCTS believes it is important to offer users an informed choice about how they choose to engage with the justice system and that by reminding users of the benefits of engaging online, users can make an informed choice to benefit from a faster, more accurate and responsive service. Some users, on understanding the benefits of engaging with HMCTS services online, may choose this option but might need support to do this effectively. These users are referenced as those that choose Digital with Assistance (DwA).

Background

- HMCTS is undergoing a £1bn reform programme and is redesigning the way courts and tribunals services are provided. The programme aims to bring new technology and modern ways of working to the way justice is administrated.
- A large part of the programme is moving services online. Whilst offline paper routes will remain, the intention is that as many people as possible will take up these digital services. However, the HMCTS user base is a varied one, and there is a need to support a potentially significant number of Digitally Excluded (DE) unrepresented citizen users who cannot or choose not to go online by themselves.

This project:

- The Digital Support project provides a service aimed at resolving the barriers that prevent people from accessing HMCTS online, enabling them to receive an experience equivalent to those who do not encounter these barriers.
- The key role of the Service is to provide users of HMCTS services who may face barriers to accessing digital platforms with the bespoke support required to successfully access justice services digitally. The reason someone may require support may differ from person to person, and they may have multiple causes of Digital Exclusion that require addressing or support or other users may have limited ability or confidence to engage online and may choose Digital with Assistance
- The project will start on the **31st January 2022** and will end on **10th October 2024** with an option to extend for 2 further periods of 12 months (36 + 12 +12 months)

We Are Digital – Who we are?

We Are Digital is a social impact company - a business for good

We Are Digital helps the whole of society by empowering people with access, training and vocational skills in all things digital and online. We Are Digital takes responsibility for being a learner-first business. Everything the company does is focused on the service user, or learner, and not the people paying to help deliver the service (the customer).

Every first thought of a We Are Digital team member is the user, first and foremost.

WAD and HMCTS

We Are Digital (WAD) are working in partnership with HMCTS to further our offering and provide Digital Support (DS) to users who are facing barriers to accessing digital platforms to fill out online forms for HMCTS's justice services. WAD will focus on assisting individuals who do not have the digital skills to fill out forms online independently.

This mobilisation plan covers the first 6 months, in this period, all processes and systems critical for service delivery will be established. Delivery through the mobilisation period will be conducted in phases to optimise understanding at each point, enabling review and supporting continuous improvement. Decision points will be utilised to review the detail and ensure WAD are ready to increase service provision to the next stage.

Digital Support – The Services

Service	Description
Appeal a benefit decision (Social Security and child support)	Digital service for people to submit and track their appeal decisions from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) through the Courts and Tribunals Service.
Submit a plea (Single Justice Service (SJS))	Digital service for handling summary-only, non-imprisonable and victimless offences (such as speeding, fare evasion, or not having a TV licence (TVL)).
Make a money claim	Digital service for people to resolve civil money claims online.
Apply for a divorce	Digital service for individuals to make an application to legally end a marriage or civil partnership and resolve associated financial issues.
Apply for probate	Digital service for users to apply for probate of an estate for a deceased individual in England and Wales.
Get help paying court and tribunal fees	Digital service for users to apply for help with Court and Tribunal fees.

Further information on these services can be found at the following addresses:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmcts-reform-programme-fact-sheets>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-hmcts-reform-programme>

Appeal a benefit decision: Service Overview

Users Goal: Appeal a decision regarding their benefit from DWP

Users journey so far: The user has applied to DWP for a benefit and in most cases will have requested a mandatory reconsideration which asks DWP to consider the application again. They still disagree so are now looking to appeal their benefit.

The service: Users can choose to submit their appeal using the new digital service. This is the SSCS1 form. Once they have done this they are also able to manage their appeal and upload evidence. The following benefits can be appealed using this online service:

- Personal Independence Payment (PIP)
- Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Universal Credit (UC)
- Attendance Allowance
- Bereavement Benefit
- Bereavement Support Payment Scheme
- Carers Allowance
- Disability Living Allowance
- Income Support
- Industrial Death benefit
- Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit
- Job Seekers Allowance
- Maternity allowance
- Pension Credit
- Retirement Pension
- Social Fund

Eligibility: The user needs to have made an application for the benefit and received a decision from the DWP. In most cases, they will need to have received a Mandatory Reconsideration Notice from DWP. There are two exceptions to this, see slide X for detail.

Things you need/Documentation: A user will need their MRN (unless an exception applies) in order to complete the form and their NI number.

Useful links:

[Appeal a benefit decision – GOV.UK](#)

[SSCS Tribunals – GOV.UK](#)

The service currently covers making online appeals for multiple welfare benefits including, Universal Credit, Personal Independent Payments and Employment Support Allowance decisions that the appellant disagrees with and has challenged.

- To enable users to start, progress and, where appropriate, have their case decided online without the need to attend a tribunal hearing in person.
- Manage Your Appeal (MYA), the aim of Manage Your Appeal is to allow the appellant to upload further evidence to their appeal, track its progress, receive text and email updates, and be able to make supporting statements about the grounds of their appeal which are also automatically uploaded to CCD (Core Case Data). MYA was released in February 2020 and has attracted several thousand users.
- Submit Your Appeal (SYA), Submit Your Appeal aims to make appealing a benefits decision quicker, clearer and more accessible by allowing appellants to appeal online. Key features include a digital appeal form that can be submitted online as well as functionality to upload supporting evidence.

Useful links:

[Appeal a benefits decision – GOV.UK](#)

[SSCS Tribunals – GOV.UK](#)

Appeal a benefit decision (Social Security and Child Support)

Benefits that can be appealed via SSCS1 online:

- Attendance Allowance
- Carers Allowance
- Disability Living Allowance
- Income Support
- Job Seekers Allowance
- Industrial Death benefit
- Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit
- Maternity allowance
- Social Fund
- Pension Credit
- Retirement Pension
- Bereavement Benefit
- Bereavement Support Payment Scheme
- Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Personal Independence Payment (PIP)
- Universal Credit (UC)

Legacy appeals (tax credits, child support, vaccine damage) are only available through paper applications.

Make a plea for an offence: Service Overview

Users Goal: To make a plea for the summary-only, non-imprisonable and victimless offences.

Users journey so far: A user will have received a Single Justice Procedure Notice in the post. This will include the notice with information about the SJPN, instructions on how to plea online and a paper form which they can plea on.

The service: There are two services at present. “[Make a plea for an offence](#)” and “[Make a plea for a traffic offence](#)”. The SJPN will make clear which service they need. Offences that are included within this service are things like; speeding, driving without insurance, failing to show a valid train ticket or using a television without a license.

Eligibility: To plea online a user must have received an SJPN. A user has 21 days to respond to an SJPN.

Things you need/Documentation: The user needs their SJPN which includes their URN which is needed to access the service. They will also need NI number, details of income, benefits and outgoings, employer details and if pleading not guilty details of witnesses and dates you can not attend court.

Useful links:

[Single Justice Service – GOV.UK](#)

[Single Justice Procedure Notices – GOV.UK](#)

Submit a plea (Single Justice Service)

The Single Justice Procedure allows some low level, non-imprisonable offences (DVLA, TFL traffic offences, TV licenses) to be dealt with by a single Magistrate (hence Single Justice Procedure) based on the paperwork without parties having to attend a hearing. Help with online services for handling summary-only, non-imprisonable and victimless offences.

The Single Justice Service (SJS) team provides telephone and admin support for the Single Justice Procedure (SJP).

If users self-refer to network partners, they will need to check the user's URN on gov.uk to see if this is still accepting the URN (on or past the 21-day deadline to respond). If it is, then you can still offer assistance if the user is eligible for this. However, if the URN is not recognised, then network organisations are advised to signpost the user to CTSC (SJS) at 0300 303 0656

Useful links:

[Single Justice Service – GOV.UK](#)

[Single Justice Procedure Notices – GOV.UK](#)

OCMC can be used by claimants who are claiming for less than £10,000, living in the United Kingdom and claiming against a limited company or other organisation, a sole trader or a person with an address in England or Wales.

Claims can be made online for those who believe they are owed money, but a person or organisation refuses to pay. Support can be given for filling out the right documentation online to submit a civil money claim if a person is not confident using digital devices. Support can also be provided for those who have received a money claim against them and need help responding online.

A defendant can respond online only if the initial claim was made online using the defend the claim <https://www.gov.uk/respond-to-court-claim-for-money/defend-the-claim>

Eligibility:

- This service allows people to settle claims without the need for any third-party involvement.
- Parties can make and accept offers online
- It can only be used when the sum of money claimed is specified. It cannot be used for example, if the sum to be awarded needs to be assessed by the court and has not been specified in the claim form.
- It cannot be used for injury claims.
- It does not have a facility to deal with fee remissions or claims by those with legal aid.

Once an online claim is created and the fee is paid, the online portal serves it upon Defendant immediately via email (if after 4 pm it will be the next working day). A copy of the claim is also posted to the Defendant, where 5 days is allowed for the postal claim to arrive at the Defendants address as provided by the Claimant.

The Defendant has 19 days (5 days in the postal system + 14 days to complete the form) to respond to the claim. They can request more time to fill this out, a maximum of 14 days.

Once the Claimant has completed their online claim, the Defendant can take any one of 6 different paths:

1. Defendant admits in full (Full admission)
2. Defendant admits part of the claim (Part admission)
3. Defendant defends the claim (Defence)
4. Defendant defends as already paid in full (Defence states paid)
5. Defendant defends claim and counterclaims (Counterclaim)
6. No response from the Defendant (No response)

Useful links:

[Make a Money Claim Online – GOV.UK](#) (to check if the user has tried to resolve the issue by discussion or mediation before making an online claim, as this is a requirement for using OCMC)

[Respond to a Money Claim – GOV.UK](#)

The divorce service has recently been modernised, and representatives for divorcing couples will be using MyHMCTS to submit their applications.

When looking to apply for divorce this can now be done online. Help and support may be provided for somebody who needs to apply online but does not have the skills to do so. Support can also be provided for those who are responding to divorce online.

AoS = Acknowledgement of Service

DN = Decree Nisi (court order allowing divorce)

DA = Decree Absolute (once this is issued, parties are legally divorced)

Useful links:

[The Divorce, Dissolution and Separation Act presentation](#)

[Apply for Divorce – GOV.UK](#)

[Online Divorce and Financial Remedy – GOV.UK](#)

[Get a divorce – GOV.UK](#)

<https://www.gov.uk/apply-for-divorce>

In England and Wales, Probate is the general term used to describe the legal document that is issued to allow an executor or administrator to deal with the assets of a person who has died.

When somebody has passed away, you can apply for probate of an estate. Help will be provided to fill out the online applications required to apply for probate online. Probate can be applied online or by post.

Benefits of using online services are:

- Online payment or telephone card payment for paper applications
- A 'save and return' function allows to save and revisit an application
- Acceptance of electronic signatures
- Confirmation of application once submitted
- Acknowledgement of documents received

Documents needed to submit an online application:

- The original Will
- The Death Certificate
- The associated Inheritance Tax forms
- If there's Inheritance tax to pay, you must wait 20 working days after sending the tax forms to HM Revenue and Customs before applying
- Any other supporting documents relevant to the case (e.g. a Renunciation form)

To apply via post:

- One of the following two forms need to be submitted
- Form PA1P - If the deceased left a Will
- Form PA1A - If the deceased did not leave a Will

Useful links:

[Apply for Probate - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/applying-for-probate/apply-for-probate)

<https://www.gov.uk/applying-for-probate/apply-for-probate>

[Applying for probate guidance](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/applying-for-probate)

[Inheritance Tax forms - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/inheritance-tax-forms)

Help with Fees (HWF) is the system where caseworkers can process customer applications to check whether or not the customer is entitled to any reduction in their court fee(s). It is linked to the DWP (Department for Work and Pensions) database.

People may be eligible for help with court fees. Certain criteria should be met for eligibility such as savings, benefits, and earnings. Support is provided to fill out the online application to apply for help with fees (for Probate, Divorce or Online Civil Money Claims).

Useful links:

[Get help paying court and tribunal fees – GOV.UK](#)

[Help with Fees forms – GOV.UK](#)

Someone may not have to pay a fee or may have the fee reduced if they:

- Only have a small amount of savings
 - Need to have less than £3,000 in savings and investments if you're under 61)
 - You can have up to £16,000 in savings if your fee is between £1,000 and £10,000, or if your or your partner are 61 and over.
- Receive certain benefits
 - income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)
 - income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
 - Income Support
 - Universal Credit (and you earn less than £6,000 a year)
 - Pension Credit (Guarantee Credit)
- Are on a low income.
 - If you're not on any of those benefits, you usually need to earn £1,170 or less a month before tax if you're single. Or £1,345 or less a month if you have a partner.

- [Appeal a benefit decision](#)
- [Submit a plea](#)
- [Online Civil Money Claims](#)
- [Divorce](#)
- [Probate](#)
- [Help with Fees](#)

How to support users to appeal a benefit decision

These slides explain how to support users to start and manage an appeal about a benefit decision that they think is unfair. An appeal is when a panel of experts who do not work for the DWP will look at the benefit claim and all available evidence to see if the right decision was made by DWP.

We Are Digital are able to offer support to users to start and manage an appeal over the telephone (even if the user does not have access to a device), or face-to-face either at a network partner centre or in the user's home.

There are some differences in how to best support users to complete the section called 'your reasons for appealing', depending on which benefit they wish to appeal. At this point, we will deal with each benefit in turn.

How to complete the other sections is broadly the same.

Eligibility and Mandatory Reconsideration Notices

In order to appeal a benefit decision, the user needs to have made an application for the benefit and received a decision from the DWP.

In most cases, they also need to have requested a mandatory reconsideration (which is when the DWP look at the case again to see if the right decision was made) and received a decision from the DWP about that mandatory reconsideration. This is called a Mandatory Reconsideration Notice.

However, there are two situations when a mandatory reconsideration is not needed. These are:

- If they applied for Employment Support Allowance (ESA) *and* they were given no award, *and* it was either the first time they had claimed, or when they last claimed ESA they received an award, they can go straight to appeal.
- If, after they had lodged an appeal, the DWP recognised a mistake was made and made a new award of benefit this will have ended the original appeal. If the user thinks the new award is still incorrect, they are able to start a new appeal straight away, without a mandatory reconsideration first.

In both of these circumstances, the decision letter should confirm that no mandatory reconsideration is needed.

What to bring to the appointment and how to prepare

If supporting a user face to face they should be asked to bring:

- A copy of the Mandatory Reconsideration Notice (if they needed to ask for a mandatory reconsideration – see exceptions on previous slide. If they do not need to have a mandatory reconsideration, the decision letter will say so)
- The decision letter from the DWP (if they have it – not important if they have the Mandatory Reconsideration Notice)
- Their National Insurance number (this will be on any correspondence from the DWP)
- Any evidence that they already have that they want to use to support their appeal. They do not need to include any evidence that they have already given the DWP (the DWP will pass that on to the tribunal). They can also provide evidence at a later stage.

Users might also like to prepare for the appointment by reading the relevant sections of these free guides below

For [PIP appeals](#)

For [ESA appeals](#)

For [Universal Credit based on limited capability for work](#)

For [Attendance Allowance appeals](#)

For [DLA appeals](#)

They can all be found at advicenow.org.uk/benefits

The online service

Users ask for an appeal via [Appeal a benefit decision](#) on GOV.UK

- Asking for an appeal online is slightly faster than the offline journey, and it enables the user to have a record of what they have already told the appeal panel.
- Users can also register to get text alerts at key points like when they need to send evidence or when a date has been set for the hearing.
- If they have an email address, users can also sign up to the Manage Your Appeal service which enables them to upload evidence and a statement at a late date.

Time limits

- Users are supposed to ask for an appeal within 1 month of the date on the Mandatory Reconsideration Notice (or decision notice if you do not need to ask for a mandatory reconsideration).
- **However, if one month has already passed users should still ask for an appeal. They just have to explain why the appeal is late. For example, if they needed help to appeal and that help was not available until now, or because of difficulties caused by a disability or their circumstances. A judge will then decide whether to allow the appeal even if it is late.**
- The appeal will usually be accepted up to 13 months after the mandatory reconsideration decision.

Appeal a Benefit Decision

Using the online appeal system

First type the name or abbreviated name of the benefit into the box.

Abbreviations also work.

It's worth looking at any letters they have brought with them – people sometimes get benefits confused or refer to the new benefit by the name of the one it replaced.

Next the user is asked whether they would like communications about the appeal to be in English or English and Welsh.

Then you are asked to enter the user's postcode.

Which benefit is your appeal about?

Continue

What language do you want us to use when we contact you?

We'll send you emails and documents as we progress your appeal. Choose which language you'd like these in.

☒ English only

☐ English and Welsh

Enter your postcode

This online service is only available in England, Scotland and Wales.

Continue

Saving your progress

In order for a user to save their progress and return to making their appeal later, you need to create an account now. To do this, the user will need to have an email address.

You will also have to help them to set a password. Encourage them to pick a password that they will remember.

They will also only be able to submit evidence or a statement online later using the Manage Your Appeal service if they have an address.

If the user does not have an email address, explain the above and ask if they would like your help to set up an email address.

Do you want to be able to save this appeal later?

You need to create an account now if you want to save your appeal application later. For example, if you need to take a break or gather information.

- ☐ I want to be able to save this appeal later
- ☐ I do not want to be able to save this appeal later

If you decide not to create an account now, and leave an appeal part-way through, you will have to start over when you decide to complete an appeal. If you think you will want to save part-way through, then select I want to be able to save this appeal later.

[Continue](#)

► [Contact us for help](#)

Do they have a Mandatory Reconsideration Notice

Next, confirm if the user has a mandatory reconsideration notice.

There are some circumstances when the user may not have the mandatory reconsideration notice. If, for example, they were given one and have since lost it. Or if they fall inside the two exceptions discussed on [Eligibility and Mandatory Reconsideration Notices](#).

If they don't, select the option 'No, I do not have a Mandatory Reconsideration Notice'.

Have you got a Mandatory Reconsideration Notice (MRN)?

This is the letter DWP sent you when you asked them to reconsider their decision about the PIP benefit.

- ☒ Yes, I have a Mandatory Reconsideration Notice (MRN)
- ☐ No, I don't have a Mandatory Reconsideration Notice (MRN)

Continue

If they do not have a Mandatory Reconsideration Notice

They will next be asked if they have contacted the DWP about the decision. If the user has either

- Had a Mandatory Reconsideration Notice but has since misplaced it, or
- Is in one of the two groups that do not need to ask for a mandatory reconsideration first

you should select 'Yes'. You will then be asked to enter an explanation.

If you select 'No' you will be taken to a message saying that you need to ask for a Mandatory Reconsideration before you can submit an appeal.

If the user does not have a Mandatory Reconsideration Notice, you can use the details given on the decision notice to explain what they disagree with and why they are appealing (later in this process). If they do not have that either, explain why they believe they are entitled at each point.

Have you contacted DWP and asked them to reconsider their decision?

You can still appeal if you have contacted DWP about their benefit decision but you don't have the MRN letter, for example, because you lost it or the DWP have said you do not need one.

- ☐ Yes, I've contacted DWP about the decision or DWP have said I don't need a Mandatory Reconsideration Notice
- ☐ No, I haven't contacted DWP about the decision

Continue

Explain why you don't have a Mandatory Reconsideration Notice (MRN)

Include the date that you contacted DWP about their decision, if you can remember, or confirm that the decision letter you received from the DWP told you that you did not need one.

Continue

► [Contact us for help](#)

Appeal a Benefit Decision

If they do have a Mandatory Reconsideration Notice

Next you are asked to select the DWP office dealing with the user's claim from a drop-down menu.

You find this in the top right corner the Mandatory Reconsideration Notice.

The address will also appear at the top of any other letter about this benefit. If they haven't brought any letter, you may have to support them to phone the DWP to find out.

Find DWP's address on the top right of your Mandatory Reconsideration Notice (MRN)



Select the Personal Independence Payment number from DWP's address

Personal Independence Payment

Continue

► [Contact us for help](#)

Appeal a Benefit Decision

Appointees

You are asked if the appeal is for the user themselves or if they are an appointee for somebody else – usually a family member. If the user is officially an appointee, letters about the benefit will be addressed to them.

If they just help a friend or family member with their benefits unofficially, select ‘No, I’m appealing for myself’. If they want to be kept updated about the appeal, they can enter their details as a representative later.

If they are an appointee the next few screens will ask for their name, date of birth, and contact details. They will then be asked about the details of the person who the appeal is about.

If they are appealing for themselves, the next few screens ask for their name, date of birth, and contact details.

Some users may be nervous about providing their phone number and email address. Reassure them that they will only be used by HMCTS to contact them about their appeal.

Are you an ‘appointee’?

You’re an appointee if you’ve been appointed by DWP to act on behalf of someone who is unable to deal with their benefit claim. For example, a parent who is claiming on behalf of a child.

☐

I’m appealing for myself

☐

I have been appointed by DWP to act on behalf of someone else

Continue

► [Contact us for help](#)

Appeal a Benefit Decision

Date of Mandatory Reconsideration Notice

You are asked to enter the date on the mandatory reconsideration notice that the user is appealing.

If it is more than a month ago, you will be asked to double check the date.

When is your Mandatory Reconsideration Notice (MRN) dated?



The screenshot shows a form titled "Your Mandatory Reconsideration Notice" from the Department for Work & Pensions. A red diagonal banner in the top left corner says "EXAMPLE". A date field is highlighted with a black circle, and a blue callout bubble points to it, displaying the date "27 March 2016". The callout also shows two phone numbers: "0345 850 3322" and "0345 601 6677".

For example, 31 3 2017

Day	Month	Year

[Continue](#)

► [Contact us for help](#)

Explanation for lateness

You will then be asked to explain why the appeal is late. Reassure the user they can still appeal. Support them to provide an explanation.

Add the explanation that the user needed your help to use the online service to appeal.

Ask the user if there are any other reasons for the delay. Other common reasons might be that

- their caring responsibilities, health issues, or personal circumstances prevented them from doing it sooner.
- they need help to deal with their post or their benefits and did not receive that help until recently.
- they were away or in hospital and so were not aware of the decision until recently.

Tell us why your appeal is late

Appeals should be made within one month of the Mandatory Reconsideration Notice being sent.

Your appeal may still go ahead if there's a reason why it's late.

Continue

► [Contact us for help](#)

Text message reminders

You will be asked if the user wants to receive text message reminders about their appeal. This is a new service and most people find it very useful to get these alerts.

On the next page they can choose if they want these alerts to go to their phone or to someone else's (this is very useful if a family member helps them to deal with their benefits).

Do you want to receive text message reminders?

You'll only get them when you need to do something important, like send evidence or go to the hearing.

[Sign up](#)

[No thanks](#)

Representatives

Next you are asked if the user wants to register a representative.

This might be a benefits adviser or family member who has agreed to help them with their appeal. Representatives get sent a copy of all the paperwork to do with the appeal, and are notified separately about the hearing. They can also submit evidence and speak for the person appealing the decision at the hearing.

If the user is not good at keeping on top of their post, or managing paperwork or deadlines, it is useful to register a representative.

It is important that the representative has agreed to help the user with their appeal. If they have not yet asked them, they can also register a representative after they have started the appeal.

If they do register a representative, they will be asked to provide their details on the next screen.

Do you want to register a representative?

Your representative can be anyone who's helping you with your appeal and you think should be kept updated. For example, a welfare rights adviser, family member or carer.

Registering them means they can:

- receive information about your appeal
- submit evidence (and see any that's submitted)
- talk to us on your behalf during your appeal

You can register them after you've submitted your appeal if you don't have their details to hand.

- ☐ Yes, I want to register a representative
- ☐ No, I don't want to register a representative

Continue

► [Contact us for help](#)

Reasons for appealing

On this screen, you have to support the user to explain why they are appealing the decision. This is their first chance to really make the case for why the decision is wrong.

How you can best support the user to do this will be different depending on which benefit they are appealing. This is because the user has to say why they should get the benefit based on what the criteria are as set out in the law.

The next few slides deal with how to support users with the most common kinds of benefit appeals.

Your reasons for appealing

DWP should have explained their decision about the claimant's entitlement to PIP in the Mandatory Reconsideration Notice (MRN).

Read the MRN and tell us what you disagree with and why. The reasons will be considered by an independent tribunal who are separate to DWP.

What you disagree with

Why you disagree with it

Add another reason

Appeal a Benefit Decision (PIP)

Reasons for appealing Personal Independence Payment (PIP)

Look at the Mandatory Reconsideration Notice or decision notice. It will say why the DWP think they are not entitled to the benefit, or why they are only entitled to the rate that the DWP awarded.

Compare this with the list of [PIP activities and descriptors](#) on Advicenow.

In 'What you disagree with' write what the DWP have said about the first activity the user doesn't think they have scored the right number of points for.

In 'Why you disagree with it' they need to enter an explanation of all the difficulties they have with that activity and what help they need (it doesn't matter if they don't actually get any help – it must still be included).

Repeat for each activity that they think they have not been given the right number of points for using the Add another reason button.

Your reasons for appealing

DWP should have explained their decision about the claimant's entitlement to PIP in the Mandatory Reconsideration Notice (MRN).

Read the MRN and tell us what you disagree with and why. The reasons will be considered by an independent tribunal who are separate to DWP.

What you disagree with

Why you disagree with it

Add another reason

Appeal a Benefit Decision (ESA)

Reasons for appealing Employment Support Allowance (ESA)

Look at the mandatory reconsideration notice or decision notice. It will say why the DWP think you are not entitled to the benefit, or why you are only entitled to the rate that they awarded. Compare this with the list of [ESA activities and descriptors and consideration of substantial risk](#) on Advicenow.

In 'What you disagree with' write what the DWP have said about the activity the user doesn't think they have scored the right number of points for.

In 'Why you disagree with it' explain all of the difficulties that the user has with that activity .

Repeat for each activity the user has not been given the right number of points for using the Add another reason button.

Cont'd on next slide

Your reasons for appealing

DWP should have explained their decision on your entitlement to Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) in the Mandatory Reconsideration Notice (MRN) or the decision letter they sent you.

Read your MRN or the decision letter and write what you disagree with and why. Your reasons will be considered by an independent tribunal who are separate from DWP.

What you disagree with

Why you disagree with it

You can write as much as you want

Add another reason

Reasons for appealing Employment Support Allowance (ESA) cont'd

Look at what the mandatory reconsideration notice or decision notice says about whether there is a 'substantial risk' to the user's safety and compare it with the explanation of substantial risk on [ESA activities and descriptors and consideration of substantial risk](#).

In 'What you disagree with' write what the DWP have said about substantial risk.

In 'Why you disagree with it' the user needs to explain all of the difficulties they have, what risks they might pose, and any times they (or others) have been hurt as a result of their disability or health issue.

It is important that any potential substantial risk is raised at this stage.

Your reasons for appealing

DWP should have explained their decision on your entitlement to Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) in the Mandatory Reconsideration Notice (MRN) or the decision letter they sent you.

Read your MRN or the decision letter and write what you disagree with and why. Your reasons will be considered by an independent tribunal who are separate from DWP.

What you disagree with

Why you disagree with it

You can write as much as you want

Add another reason

Appeal a Benefit Decision (UC)

Reasons for appealing Universal Credit (UC) on the basis of having limited capability to work

Look at the mandatory reconsideration notice or decision notice. It will say why the DWP think they are not entitled to the benefit, or why the DWP think they are only entitled to the rate that they were awarded. Compare this with the list of [Universal Credit - Activities and descriptors and consideration of substantial risk](#) on Advicenow.

In 'What you disagree with' write what the DWP have said about the activity the user doesn't think they have scored the right number of points for.

In 'Why you disagree with it' explain all of the difficulties that the user has with that activity and what help they need.

Repeat for each activity the user has not been given the right number of points for using the Add another reason button.

Cont'd on next slide

Your reasons for appealing

DWP should have explained their decision in the Mandatory Reconsideration Notice (MRN) or the decision letter. This will be in your Universal Credit online journal.

Read your MRN or the decision letter and write what you disagree with and why. Your reasons will be considered by an independent tribunal who are separate from DWP.

What you disagree with

Why you disagree with it

You can write as much as you want

Add another

Reasons for appealing Universal Credit (UC) on the basis of having limited capability to work cont'd

Look at what the mandatory reconsideration notice or decision notice says about whether there is a 'substantial risk' to the user's safety and compare it with the explanation of substantial risk on [Universal Credit - Activities and descriptors and consideration of substantial risk](#).

In 'What you disagree with' write what the DWP have said about substantial risk.

In 'Why you disagree with it' explain all of the difficulties that the user has and what risks they might pose. Users should include details of any times they (or others) have been hurt as a result of their disability or health issue.

It is important that any potential substantial risk is raised at this stage.

Your reasons for appealing

DWP should have explained their decision in the Mandatory Reconsideration Notice (MRN) or the decision letter. This will be in your Universal Credit online journal.

Read your MRN or the decision letter and write what you disagree with and why. Your reasons will be considered by an independent tribunal who are separate from DWP.

What you disagree with

Why you disagree with it

You can write as much as you want

Add another

Appeal a Benefit Decision (AA)

Reasons for appealing Attendance Allowance (AA)

Look at the mandatory reconsideration notice or decision notice. It will say why the DWP think they are not entitled, or why they think they are only entitled to the rate they were awarded. Compare this with the explanation of [how entitlement to Attendance Allowance is decided](#) on Advicenow.

In 'What you disagree with' write what the DWP have said about the number of times the user needs help, or the kind of help they need, that the user doesn't agree with.

In 'Why you disagree with it' explain

- all of the things they need help with during the day or during the night,
- how often they need that help a day (or night), and
- how long it takes each time.

If they need someone to help them stay safe, explain why and what has or might happen without this help.

Repeat for each activity that they think the DWP have not
45 understood correctly using the Add another reason button.

Your reasons for appealing

DWP should have explained their decision on your entitlement to Attendance Allowance in the Mandatory Reconsideration Notice (MRN) or the decision letter they sent you.

Read your MRN or the decision letter and write what you disagree with and why. Your reasons will be considered by an independent tribunal who are separate from DWP.

What you disagree with

Why you disagree with it

You can write as much as you want

Add another reason



Appeal a Benefit Decision (DLA)

Reasons for appealing Disability Living Allowance (DLA)

Look at the mandatory reconsideration notice. It will say why the DWP think they are not entitled, or why they are only entitled to the rate that the DWP awarded. Compare this with the list of [DLA care and mobility needs](#) on Advicenow.

In 'What you disagree with' write what the DWP have said about the first care or mobility need the user doesn't think the DWP have understood correctly.

In 'Why you disagree with it' enter all the difficulties their child has with that daily care activity or mobility need, and what help they need that another child of the same age would not.

Include if it takes them a long time, causes pain, or may put them (or somebody else) in danger, as the law sees this as needing help.

Repeat for each activity that they think the DWP have not understood correctly using the Add another reason button.

Your reasons for appealing

DWP should have explained their decision on your entitlement to Disability Living Allowance (DLA) in the Mandatory Reconsideration Notice (MRN) or the decision letter they sent you.

Read your MRN or the decision letter and write what you disagree with and why. Your reasons will be considered by an independent tribunal who are separate from DWP.

What you disagree with

Why you disagree with it

You can write as much as you want

Add another reason

Appeal a Benefit Decision (Other benefits)

Reasons for appealing all other state benefits

Look at the mandatory reconsideration notice. It will say why the DWP think they are not entitled to the benefit.

In 'What you disagree with' write what the DWP have said that you disagree with.

In 'Why you disagree with it' enter an explanation of what the DWP have got wrong and why.

You will need to check who qualifies for that benefit and make sure that you explain why the user meets the requirement that the DWP have said they don't. Read information on [Carers Allowance](#), [Income Support](#), [Job Seekers Allowance](#), [Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit](#), [Maternity Allowance](#), [Social Fund](#), [Pension Credit](#), [State Pension](#), [Bereavement Support Payment](#), or [Universal Credit](#).

If the user is appealing a sanction, see sections 6 and 7 of [A survival guide to benefit sanctions](#) for guidance.

Repeat for each thing the DWP have said about your claim that you think they have got wrong.

Your reasons for appealing

DWP should have explained their decision about the claimant's entitlement to PIP in the Mandatory Reconsideration Notice (MRN).

Read the MRN and tell us what you disagree with and why. The reasons will be considered by an independent tribunal who are separate to DWP.

What you disagree with

Why you disagree with it

Add another reason

Anything else you want to tell the tribunal

On this screen, support the user to tell the tribunal anything else they think is relevant. It will usually be helpful to explain that they had your help to submit their appeal.

If the appeal is about a disability benefit the user will often want to complain about the physical assessment and the assessor.

If they have nothing further to add, just press continue.

Anything else you want to tell the tribunal

You can tell the tribunal about anything you think may be relevant to your appeal, such as something you feel DWP didn't consider in their assessment.

You don't have to write anything, if you have nothing further to add.

I have received digital support from We Are Digital for this appeal. |

Continue

► [Contact us for help](#)

Getting and sending evidence

It is very important that the user takes in the information on this screen. It will usually help if you read it aloud.

If they have brought any evidence with them to the appointment you can upload it on the next screen.

If the user is appealing a PIP, ESA, Universal Credit on the basis of having limited capability for work, or a DLA decision, reassure the user that you can provide information about how to get useful evidence and how to write a statement at the end of the session.

Evidence to support your appeal

Evidence is any information that supports your appeal such as a letter, written statement or medical report. Useful evidence shows how your condition affects your life.

You can upload evidence now or after you have submitted your appeal. You can also post it in. You'll be sent the address after you've submitted your appeal.

Would you like to upload evidence now?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Save and continue

Uploading evidence

If the user has brought any evidence with them to the appointment you can upload it now. You may need to take a photograph or scan of the evidence to upload it.

They do not need to resend evidence that has already been sent to the DWP. The DWP will share this with the tribunal.

After you have requested your appeal you can upload other evidence, or sound files (MP3) or videos (MP4 files) using the Manage Your Appeal service. This may be useful if they want to use their phone to record videos of some of the difficulties they have (if you are appealing a disability benefit), or if you have video evidence of why you are entitled to the benefit.

Upload additional evidence

You can upload letters, documents or photos. For example, you could take a picture of a letter from your doctor using your phone. Place it on a flat surface and take the photo from above.

You can only add MP3 & MP4 files after we have received your application

Choose file

Uploaded files

No items added yet

Continue

► [Contact us for help](#)

Attending the hearing

When faced with this question almost everybody wants to choose not to go to the hearing because it seems less scary.

It is helpful to the appeal panel to see and speak to the person appealing, so that they can ask questions and see that they are being honest.

Reassure the user that it won't be nearly as frightening as they might think. It is more like a meeting than going to a court like they might have seen on TV.

Hearings are sometimes over the telephone or using video now, so they may not have to 'go' anywhere.

If they select that they want to attend, on the next slide they are asked to say which options are suitable for them. So, if they are only happy to join over the telephone, for example, they can do that.

The appeal hearing

Your appeal will be decided using the information you submit in this form and any additional evidence you send in. Information and evidence submitted by DWP will also be considered.

If you come to the hearing you can explain your reasons for appealing.

Support can be arranged for you such as an interpreter, hearing loop or disabled access.

Do you want to attend the hearing?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Continue

▶ [Contact us for help](#)

Suitable options for the hearing

The tribunal will decide what kind of hearing the user will have.

But this is the user's opportunity to say what types of hearing are suitable for them.

If the user would be able to manage any option, select them all as it may enable their hearing to be scheduled a little sooner.

Select the suitable options for you to attend the hearing.

The type of oral hearing will be at the discretion of the tribunal.

Please select all the suitable options for you to take part in the hearing.

- ☐ Telephone (you'll need somewhere quiet and private to speak). Please give us your preferred telephone number if different to the number already provided.
- ☐ Video (you'll need access to a computer or mobile device with a good internet speed and somewhere quiet and private to speak). Please give us your preferred email address if different to the email already provided.
- ☐ Face to face (you'll need to travel to the hearing in person).

Continue

► [Contact us for help](#)

Accessibility issues

If the user has selected to go to the hearing, ask the user if they have any accessibility needs. For example, if they are a wheelchair user or have mobility needs, they will need the hearing to be in an accessible building.

If they don't always understand the questions they are asked out loud in English, they may need an interpreter or sign language interpreter.

If they have a hearing aid, they will need a hearing loop.

If any of the above or similar apply, select yes.

Do you need any support for your hearing?

Support for your hearing can be arranged, such as an interpreter, hearing loop or disabled access. You **can't** bring your own interpreter to the hearing.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Continue

Support at the hearing

If the user will need support at the hearing, select what kind of support and add any further useful details – for example what language they need an interpreter in.

The user can request multiple types of support depending on their needs.

If they feel they could not access a video hearing without support (this type of support is not available from We Are Digital) then they should explain this in the box.

Support at the hearing

Click all the support you need at the hearing.

You **can't** bring your own interpreter to the hearing.

- ☐ Language interpreter
- ☐ Sign language interpreter
- ☐ Hearing loop
- ☐ Accessible hearing rooms
- ☒ Other support

Explain what other support you need at your appeal hearing

Continue

▶ [Contact us for help](#)

Availability

If the user has medical treatment, a hospital stay, or a holiday booked you can tell HMCTS about that now so that the hearing will not be organised for that time.

The hearing might be up to six months away, so being busy in the next few weeks is unlikely to be a problem.

When the time comes, if the hearing is set for a date the user cannot attend, they can contact the tribunal centre and ask for another date. If they do this straight away it won't usually be a problem. They may have to explain why they can't go and should have a very good reason, like a hospital appointment.

If you need to tell HMCTS about a date they cannot attend they can do so on the next page. You can add single days or a range of dates.

Your availability for a hearing

Do you have any dates when you can't attend a hearing? For example, because you're going on holiday or have an appointment which can't be moved.

- ☐ I need to tell you about dates when I can't attend a hearing
- ☐ I will come to a hearing whenever you schedule it

Continue

Check your appeal

This is the final page. Check over all the information you have entered with the user.

At the bottom of the form they need to confirm that everything they have said on the form is true, to the best of their knowledge.

Instead of signing, you just type their name as confirmation.

If the user has supplied an email address, a copy will also be sent to their email. If they have registered a representative, a copy will be emailed to them as well.

Sign and submit

The information I have provided in this appeal is accurate, to the best of my knowledge.

I give permission to correspond with my named representative about my appeal (if you entered details of a representative).

I agree to the [terms and conditions](#) of using the 'Appeal a benefit decision' service.

Enter your name

This should be the person who is named on the appeal

Submit your appeal

► [Contact us for help](#)

Next steps after submitting the appeal

After submitting the appeal the user needs to begin to gather evidence to support their appeal.

For users seen face to face, please print off pages of the PDF of the relevant guide below to take with them today. They need all sections from 'What to prepare before the hearing' to the end of the guide. This explains what evidence is useful, how to get it, how family members and others can help, how to write a statement, and what will happen at the hearing, and afterwards.

They may also find the 'How to find an adviser' section helpful.

For [PIP appeals](#) For [DLA appeals](#)

For [ESA appeals](#) or [Universal Credit based on limited capability for work](#)

Please signpost users supported remotely to the relevant guide above. They can all be found at advicenow.org.uk/benefits

Please also remind the user that they can submit a statement, and any further evidence (and explain why it is useful) online, via the Manage your Appeal service. If they haven't signed up today they can call 0300 123 1142 and they will be sent a link.

If they want to send any evidence or a statement by post, print off a cover sheet from Manage Your Appeal (if they have an email address) for them to send with it to ensure it gets added to the correct case.

They can request another appointment for digital support to use the Manage Your Appeal service by calling **03300 16 00 51** or emailing support@we-are-digital.co.uk. It would be good to give them those details to take with them as well.

How to support users to submit a plea through the Single Justice Service

Users may wish to respond online if they have received a Single Justice Procedure Notice (SJPN) informing them that they have been charged with an offence.

We Are Digital are able to offer support to submit a plea over the telephone (only if the user has a device), or face-to-face.

In order to respond online, they need to supply an email address. It should be their own email address as it will be added to their case record and, if they are accused of a traffic offence, they will receive a result about the outcome and how to pay via email. If using a friend/family member's email it should be someone who can help and update them regularly.

They can also respond on paper.

If they have been charged with Driving offences they will use [Make a plea for a traffic offence](#). If they have been charged with any other offence they will use [Make a plea for an offence](#). These services are not identical but are broadly the same so we haven't included images of both. Where there are differences you need to be aware of, we have explained that.

Some people will want to plead guilty, pay the fine, and get the situation over with quickly.

Others may be confused about what they have been accused of or feel it is unfair. If they don't think they are guilty, or think that there was a good reason for their actions, they should try to get legal advice before the appointment.

Free legal advice on minor criminal offences like these is however very hard to find. If they can afford it and something other than money is at stake, like their ability to drive, they should consider paying for legal advice. See [Advicenow](#) for more information.

How to prepare – Deadline and case number

Deadline

It is vital to check the deadline by which the user has to respond. The deadline is 21 days from the date the Single Justice Procedure Notice (SJPN) was sent to the user (not when they received it). The date it was sent is usually on the front page of the notice.

For offences other than traffic offences the deadline is also confirmed on the front page of the Single Justice Procedure Notice.

The user must be supported to respond before that date.

The deadline to respond cannot be extended. If the user does not respond before the deadline, they are likely to be found guilty and they will have missed the chance to enter a not guilty plea, or explain any mitigating factors, receive a reduced fine, and may be asked to pay the fine in a lump sum they cannot afford.

If the deadline has already passed the service will alert you when you enter their case number on the system (see below).

Check the case number/unique reference number

If the user will attend an appointment at a later date, check first that they have a valid case number. Go to [Make a plea for a traffic offence](#) or the [Make a plea for an offence](#) and press 'Start now'. On the next page you will be asked to enter their unique reference number or case number.

If there are any difficulties identified, the user could contact the Courts and Tribunal Service Centre on 0300 303 0656 to get the correct number before the appointment.

How to prepare - What to bring to the appointment

The user must bring to the appointment

1. The Single Justice Procedure Notice which tells them what offence they are accused of and their Unique Reference Number (URN). They need the URN to access either online service.
2. Their National Insurance number.
3. If they are accused of a traffic offence, their driving license.
4. Details of their income and any benefits they receive
5. Rough details of how much their major outgoings are – for example, rent or mortgage payments, council tax, household bills, child maintenance, and childcare.
6. If they may wish to pay the fine by instalments deducted from their wage, details of their employer (if they have one).
7. If they are going to plead not guilty
 - any evidence they have that supports their case, and
 - the contact details of any witnesses to support their case.

At the appointment

The system is very straight forward until you get to the section where the user enters their plea – guilty or not guilty.

It is important that the user understands that they are accused of a criminal offence, and if they plead guilty they are saying they are guilty of a criminal offence.

A person is guilty if they committed the act they are accused of and have no ‘viable defense’. They are not guilty if either they did not do the thing they are accused of, or they did but they have a ‘viable defense’. If the user is accused of not having a TV license they can find information about what the law is from [Appeal](#). If they are accused of another offence, they may find [Advicenow’s information](#) helpful.

Reassure the user that only [recordable offences](#) will appear on a DBS check about them (potential employers and others can ask for a DBS check to discover if someone has a criminal record). Most cases using the Single Justice Service are not for recordable offences.

If they do not understand why they have been charged, or think that they should not have been, explain that they can contact the prosecuting authority and ask for more details, or for the charges to be dropped and explain why. They should do this as well as entering a plea because of the tight deadline. They could include on the online plea that they have done this.

The Courts and Tribunal Service Centre helpline is only able to explain the court process, and not why they have been charged or what they should do about it.

If they are pleading guilty

If they plead guilty they are asked if they want to attend court or not. In many cases attending won't be necessary, unless they want to explain themselves to the magistrate in person.

There is also the opportunity to enter information for the magistrate or something called 'mitigation'. If the offence was committed by mistake or was caused by something the magistrate should know about when considering the sentence/fine, the user should take this opportunity to explain.

They should also use this box to explain any difficult personal circumstances, including any health or disability issues they have or anyone they care for, and any financial difficulties they are already facing.

You can find [further guidance on Advicenow](#).

Your plea for this charge

☒ Guilty - I want the case to be dealt with in my absence

☐ Guilty - I want to attend court in person

☐ Not guilty - Pleading not guilty to this charge means we'll send details of a date for you to come to court for a trial.

Mitigation (optional)

Is there something you would like the court to consider?

Continue

If they are pleading not guilty

If they plead not guilty they will attend court.

In the box 'Why do you believe you are not guilty' they should enter all relevant details. Also include details of any difficult personal circumstances, including any health or disability issues they have or anyone they care for, and any financial difficulties they are already facing.

If the user is accused of not having a TV license they can find information about what the law is from [Appeal](#). If they are accused of another offence, [Advicenow's information](#) may be helpful.

They are also asked if they disagree with anything in the witness statement the user has been sent. If they do, the user needs to explain what it is they disagree with.

If they would like to bring a witness to support their case, they need to enter their details now. If their witness needs an interpreter they will need to arrange this but HMCTS will meet the expense of any interpreting in the court.

Your plea for this charge

☐ Guilty - I want the case to be dealt with in my absence

☐ Guilty - I want to attend court in person

☒ Not guilty - Pleading not guilty to this charge means we'll send details of a date for you to come to court for a trial.

Not guilty because?

Why do you believe you are not guilty?

Do you need an interpreter in court?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Evidence and witness information

Do you disagree with any evidence from a witness statement in the notice we sent to you?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Do you want to call a defence witness?

Someone who can give evidence in court supporting your case.

☐ Yes

☐ No

Financial details and employment details

Next the user has to supply information about their personal finances and employment details (if they are employed).

If their income is a mixture of weekly and monthly, support the user to work out what it is weekly and enter that. Remember that there are 4.3 weeks in a month, so divide any monthly income by 4.3 to get the weekly amount.

If they have a mixture of employment statuses, and one of them is employed they should select 'employed'. If not they should select 'other' and provide details.

From here on the two systems ([Make a plea for a traffic offence](#) and the [Make a plea for an offence](#)) differ more so we will deal with the next screen separately.

Your employment

For this type of offence you'll usually have to pay a fine:

- you must provide your income details
- the court will decide your fine based on your finances and the seriousness of the offence
- your details will be stored securely by the court

How often do you get paid from your employer?

☐ Weekly

☐ Fortnightly

☐ Monthly

What is your take home pay (after tax)?

£

[Continue](#)

Financial information cont'd - Make a plea for a traffic offence

If the user has indicated that they receive benefits, they will now be asked to enter the details.

The next screen calculates their total income.

They are then asked if paying a fine would cause them serious financial problems. Of course they don't know how much the fine might be at this stage, but if they are already struggling to make ends meet or are unlikely to be able to pay the fine in one go, select yes. In the next box 'Information for the magistrate' the user should explain their situation, and any current difficulties they have making ends meet.

If they know what amount they could afford to pay of the fine each month it would be useful to write that here.

Your income

Totals
Your fine will be based on what the court considers to be your weekly income, calculated from the information you've provided.

Income source	Frequency	Amount (take home)	
Employment	Monthly	£230.00	Edit
Benefits	Weekly	£120.00	Edit
Total weekly income		£173.08	

Would paying a fine cause you financial problems?

☒ Yes

☐ No

Note:
For the courts to consider allowing you to pay your fine in instalments, you must provide information about your expenses.

Information for the magistrate

How would paying a fine cause you financial problems?
Why you think the court should allow you to pay your fine in instalments:

Continue



Paying in installments – Make a plea for an offence

How would they like to pay the fine if they are given one?

They can choose to pay it in one lump sum, but it is often too high for most people to do that.

They can also ask that it be deducted in installments from their wage (if they have one). This will mean their employer knows about the charge. If they wish to do this, they will have to enter the employer's details.

Their next option is to have it deducted in installments from any benefits they receive.

Even if the user says no to both options, the court can choose to deduct it from either wages or benefits. If the user has failed to pay a fine before, the court is very likely to do this.

If the user cannot pay it in the way instructed on the fine notice (and did not ask for deductions from their wage or benefit), they can contact the fines unit to discuss a payment plan.

Deductions from earnings

If you need to pay a penalty, would you like us to deduct it from your earnings?

The court may deduct a penalty from your earnings if:

- you've failed to pay in the past
- you're ordered to pay compensation, as part of your penalty

☐ Yes ☐ No

[Continue](#)

[Back](#)

Expenses and Outgoings

Both services offer the opportunity to tell the court about your expenses or outgoings. On Make a plea for a traffic offence you have to provide details. On Make a plea for an offence, the user doesn't have to tell the court about their outgoings, but it is a good idea as it enables the court to see what sort of installments the user can afford.

Estimates are fine. The amounts just have to be to the very best of the user's knowledge. (It is a criminal offence to give incorrect information). If they pay for anything weekly, remember there are 4.3 weeks in a month.

On Make a plea for a traffic offence you also confirm if someone else helps to meet these bills – a partner, or grown up child for example.

Both systems offer the opportunity to add details of other large expenses. Support the user to include other large costs in the outgoings that they have to pay – this may include childcare so that they can work, school meals, payment of other fines or loans (if not supplied separately), and their basic grocery shop.

If the user is already struggling to meet their basic needs they should tell the court in the 'Any other significant expenses?' box.

Check everything and submit plea

On the last slide the user has to check all the information they have provided is correct.

If they need to change something they can do so by just clicking the 'change' link next to the correct section.

This is a legal document so they have to confirm that everything is true to the best of their knowledge.

When you press the button at the bottom of the page they will submit their plea and you will arrive at a confirmation screen. This screen will provide a reference number and contact details that they will need if they wish to contact the court again about their case.

After the appointment

If they want to change anything about their plea (including change a guilty plea to a not guilty plea, or the other way round) they can do so, but cannot do it via the online service. They will have to do it via post or email, quoting their reference number in the subject heading.

They should do so as soon as possible.

How to support users to apply for Help with fees

Users may want to apply for help paying their court fee using the online [Help with fees](#) service.

If they are using the Make a money claim online service, they must use the online system for applying for help with fees.

If they are applying for help paying the fee to apply for a divorce using the online service, they can apply online for help with fees at the same time.

If the user wants to apply for help with fees connected to an online probate application they need to first make the application for probate and then apply for help with fees to reimburse them. If they cannot pay upfront for the application, they will need to use the paper service to apply for help with fees.

Be aware - Users can also use the Help with fees system to apply for a refund for courts fees paid in the last three months. If applying for a refund, you should answer all questions about the user's circumstances at the time they paid the fee.

Entitlement

Users might be able to pay a lower fee or no fee at all if they have little or no savings, and have a low income or receive income-related benefits like:

- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Income Support
- Universal Credit (and you earn less than £6,000 a year)
- Pension Credit (Guarantee Credit)

If the user is under 61 they need to have less than £3000 in savings or investments to be eligible if the court fee is less than £1000. If they are over 61 they can have up to £16,000 and be eligible.

You can work out if the user is likely to be eligible by using the online Fee Remissions Contribution Calculator (EX 160C). You can find this at the bottom of the [Help with court fees page](#) on GOV.UK.

How to prepare for the appointment

They should bring with them

- details of their income,
- details of their savings and investments if they have any,
- if they have a partner, details of their income, savings and investments,
- the court or tribunal form number – to make a money claim it is N1, to apply for divorce/dissolution it is D8, to apply for probate it is PA1P if the deceased had a will, and PA1A if the deceased does not have a will. If they are applying for help with a hearing fee they enter 'hearing fee' and short explanation such as 'hearing fee small claim'.
- their National Insurance number or Home Office reference number – they may have a Home Office reference number if they are subject to immigration control. (If they don't have either a NI number or Home Office number they must apply by post).
- If they have only started receiving one of the benefits on the previous slide recently, they may need a letter from the DWP or Jobcentre confirming that they receive the benefit.

They do not need evidence of their income and savings at this stage, but they must give correct details as they may be asked for evidence as the application is processed.

Be aware - Users have to complete a separate application for each court fee you want reduced or cancelled. This may mean they have to apply more than once during their case.

Applying for Help with fees

The Help with Fees online application is really easy to use if you have all the details about income and savings that you need.

Where an explanation is needed it is available on the screen. There is only one question that might confuse people.

You are asked 'Do you have a case, claim, appeal or 'notice to pay' number?' The user will only have a claim number, case number, etc if they have already made the application they want Help with Fees for. If they haven't applied yet they will respond no.

When they get to the end of the process they check over their answers, declare that everything is true to the best of their knowledge, and press Submit application and continue. They then arrive at a confirmation screen, that confirms the application has been made and gives them the all important reference number. Support them to make a record of it.

If the user has supplied an email address the reference number for the Help with Fees application will get emailed to them as well.

If the user is making a money claim, or applying for a divorce or dissolution, they can now continue with that application but the claim cannot be issued (officially started) until the application for Help with Fees has been processed. At that point the user will be told what fees are covered and what they still have to pay. They can then pay the remainder and start the case at any time in the next 95 days.

How to support users to make or respond to a money claim

Users may want to start a small claim against another individual or organization online using [Money Claims](#).

Others may have had someone start a small claim against them and want to respond online. If you are supporting a user to respond to a claim, jump to [How to prepare for the appointment - the defendant](#).

At the moment, you can only use this service if the total amount you are claiming for is £10,000 or less, you are claiming on behalf of one person or organisation, and you are claiming against one person or organisation. You must also:

- be over 18, and have an address in the UK
- be claiming against a person or organisation with a postal address in England and Wales, and

You cannot use the service to

- bring a claim against a government department/agency,
- get your tenancy deposit back from your landlord,
- bring a personal injury claim,
- make a claim in Welsh, or
- bring a claim against someone without mental capacity or under 18.

How to prepare for the appointment - the claimant

The claimant will need to pay a court fee to start a claim. The court fee is based on the amount they are claiming, including any interest. See [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) for more details.

If the user is on a low income or on income related benefits (for example Universal Credit or Pension Credit) they may only have to pay a reduced court fee, or no fee at all. Support them to see if they are entitled to [Help with fees](#) and apply online (see [separate training](#)). They can then continue to make a money claim, but the claim will not be issued until the Help with fees application has been decided and they have paid any remaining amount of the court fee.

They may find Advicenow's [How to take a claim in the civil court](#) series helpful to read. The series will help them understand if it will be worth their while to make the claim, help them to value their claim, explain what they need to do before starting a claim, and will help them ensure they start it correctly.

They should bring with them

- details of their claim,
- details of any evidence they have,
- details of any loss of earnings they wish to claim for,
- any receipts they have for additional expenses they wish to claim for.

To use this service they will need

- a debit or credit card to pay the court fees (unless they are entitled to [Help with fees](#) that pays their entire fee and they applied for Help with fees online), and
- an email address. If the user does not have an email address, explain the above and ask if they would like your help to set up an email address.

Resolving the issue before court

Legally, before you can start a legal case you have to have tried to resolve it informally first. Explain to the user that that they need to have tried talking to the individual or organisation to sort out the problem first.

If they are making a claim against an organisation, they should also have tried using the complaints procedure.

They also need to have considered using mediation to resolve the issue. If they make a claim and the person they are claiming against disagrees with their version of events, they will be offered free mediation anyway.

Make a money claim

1. Consider other options

Resolving this dispute	INCOMPLETE
--	------------

2. Prepare your claim

Completing your claim	INCOMPLETE
Your details	INCOMPLETE
Their details	INCOMPLETE
Claim amount	INCOMPLETE
Claim details	INCOMPLETE

3. Submit

Check and submit your claim



Making a claim online

The first few questions just check that the user can use the online service. If their claim can't be lodged online, they are signposted to the paper N1 form.

Next the user needs to create an account. Encourage them to pick a password that they will remember or help them record it somewhere.

Then they get to the overview screen – this shows all the different steps they need to complete before they can issue their claim and start proceedings.

Go to 'Resolving this dispute' and read it aloud to the user. They need to confirm that they have read this.

Do the same with 'Completing your claim'.

Make a money claim

1. Consider other options

Resolving this dispute	INCOMPLETE
--	------------

2. Prepare your claim

Completing your claim	INCOMPLETE
Your details	INCOMPLETE
Their details	INCOMPLETE
Claim amount	INCOMPLETE
Claim details	INCOMPLETE

3. Submit

Check and submit your claim



Make a money claim overview

Next you enter the user’s details. You have the opportunity to get the post about the case to be sent to a different address, for example, if you are working away from home.

After that you enter the details of the person or organisation they are claiming against. It is vital that they have the name and address exactly correct. See the Advicenow guide [Who to sue?](#) for more details and tips.

If you have an email address for them, it is useful to include it. They will then get emailed details of the case you have started immediately you submit your claim.

Be aware - The user can change and edit anything about the claim until they press ‘submit and continue to payment’ and pay, which officially starts the case. After that they will have to pay to make any significant changes. It is therefore really important to ensure these details are correct.

Make a money claim

1. Consider other options

Resolving this dispute	INCOMPLETE
--	------------

2. Prepare your claim

Completing your claim	INCOMPLETE
Your details	INCOMPLETE
Their details	INCOMPLETE
Claim amount	INCOMPLETE
Claim details	INCOMPLETE

3. Submit

Check and submit your claim



Make a money claim

Claim amount

Next you explain the amount you are claiming. Break down your costs to make it easy to see how you arrived at the figure.

The service will automatically add on interest and the fee you will pay to start the case for you.

What you can claim for depends on the kind of case that you are taking:

- For debt cases you can only claim for the amount of the debt (plus the interest and court fee).
- For breach of contract cases you can only claim for the amount of money to put you in the financial position you would have been in if the contract had been carried out properly (plus the interest and court fee).

Claim amount

Your claim could be for a single amount or made up of multiple items.

Don't include:

- interest - we'll ask you about this next
- your claim fee - we'll add this for you

What you're claiming for

Briefly explain each item - for example, "broken tiles", "roof damage"

	Amount
	£
	£
	£
	£

Add another row

£0

Save and continue



Claim amount cont'd

- For a case about something lost or damaged because of an action by the person you are claiming against, you can claim the amount to put you in the position you would have been in if the incident hadn't happened (plus the interest and court fee). Don't forget to include additional expenses caused by the loss or damage (for example, the bus fare each day they waited for the new bike to arrive) – they will need receipts.

For more help to value the claim see the Advicenow guide [Should I sue someone?](#)

Claim amount

Your claim could be for a single amount or made up of multiple items.

Don't include:

- interest - we'll ask you about this next
- your claim fee - we'll add this for you

What you're claiming for

Briefly explain each item - for example, "broken tiles", "roof damage"

	Amount
	£
	£
	£
	£

Add another row

£0

Save and continue

Make a money claim

Interest

Next the user is asked if they would like to claim interest on the amount.

In most cases claimants are entitled to claim interest at a rate of 8% per year from the time the incident or problem began until the case is resolved.

However if the user had a contract that expressly said interest would be paid at another rate, either for a certain period or for the whole time, you can enter that. The user will need to explain why that rate applies.

Alternatively the user can ask for interest from the date they start the claim.

You are also asked when you would like to stop claiming interest. This will usually be when the case is settled or a judgement is made – this helps encourage the other side not to purposefully go slow.

Do you want to claim interest?

You can claim interest on the money you say you're owed. The court will decide if you're entitled to it.

☒ Yes ☐ No

[Help with interest rates](#)

How do you want to claim interest?

☐ Same rate for the whole period
☐ Break down interest for different time periods or items

What annual rate of interest do you want to claim?

You can claim 8% per year unless you know that a different rate applies.

☐ 8%
☐ A different rate

[Help with interest rates](#)

Save and continue

Make a money claim

Total amount

Next you arrive at a screen that confirms the total amount you are claiming.

This screen also provides two important bits of information that it is important that you read to the user.

- 1) If the user settles out of court (which is expected if it is possible) the user won't get their fee for starting the case back, but that they should ask the defendant to pay it back to them as part of the amount they agree to pay to settle the case.
- 2) If the case is not settled and has to go to a hearing, the user will have to pay the hearing fee. How much the hearing fee is, is based on the amount claimed in the case. It is possible that there may be other fees as well - for example, if the claimant needs to change anything about the case like the exact name of the defendant.

If the user is on a low income or income-related benefits, they can apply for Help with fees again (but have to do this using the offline process). You have to apply for each fee you want help with.

Total amount you're claiming

Claim amount	£727
Interest to date	£11
Claim fee	£70
Total claim amount	£811

[How interest to date is calculated](#)

If you settle out of court

We won't refund your claim fee. You can ask the defendant to pay back your claim fee as part of the settlement.

Other fees

Hearing fee	£115
-------------	------

You don't have to pay a hearing fee unless the claim goes to a hearing.

There may be additional fees as your case progresses. [Find out more about court fees \(opens in a new tab\)](#)

Save and continue

Make a money claim

Details of the claim

Here you need to write a concise statement of the facts of your claim - what happened, and what you want from the defendant.

Use short sentences and avoid any emotive language.

You can see an example in [How to start a civil claim](#).

Briefly explain your claim

Tell us why you believe Mary Richards owes you money.

Don't give us a detailed timeline - we'll ask for that separately.

You'll have to pay an extra fee if you want to change the details of the claim later.



Save and continue

Make a money claim

Timeline of events

Here you need to explain what happened on what date.

If you don't know the exact date, you can just say the month and year.

Press 'Add new' to add further dates to the timeline. Include anything relevant like when quotes were given, when the work was agreed, when work started, and any payments made.

Timeline of events

If you do not know the exact date, tell us the month and year.

Example timeline

- 12 January 2021 - John Smith gave me a quote to replace the roof.
- 14 February 2021 - We agreed and signed a contract for the work.
- 21 March 2021 - I noticed a leak on the landing and told Mr Smith about this.

Date

For example, March 2021

What happened

For example, you might have signed a contract

Add new

Save and continue

Make a money claim

List any evidence

Next you are asked to confirm what evidence you have to support your claim. You don't submit the evidence at this stage, you just confirm what you have.

This might be

- copies of a quote and confirmation that you accepted it,
- a statement of account which shows when payment was requested and received,
- photos of the accident or damage,
- the damaged item itself,
- text messages or emails sent or received,
- a record of calls made from your phone,
- receipts for anything you are claiming for,
- witness statements, or
- anything else that helps prove what you said happened, happened.

See [Evidence needed to sue someone for more guidance](#) on evidence you will need and what you should do with it.

List any evidence (optional)

Tell us about any evidence you wish to provide. You do not need to send us any evidence now. If your case goes to a court hearing, and is not settled, you will need to provide evidence.

List your evidence

Contracts and agreements

Describe this evidence in more detail (optional). For example, a signed contract.

-- Please make a selection --

-- Please make a selection --

-- Please make a selection --

Add more evidence

Save and continue



Make a money claim

Check your answers before submitting the claim

The last section enables you to check all the information you have given. Do check it carefully. If the user thinks they may have anything wrong, do not submit it until they have been able to check that they have got it right.

If they do make a mistake they won't be able to change it after they submit and pay without paying another fee.

At the bottom of the page they also need to confirm that everything they have said is true to the best of their knowledge.

They then need to pay and the claim is started. After they have paid you will arrive at a confirmation screen which tells the user their claim number and the deadline by which the defendant needs to respond. Help them make a record of both of these. Read out all the information on this screen as it explains their next steps.

If they have supplied an email address for the defendant, the defendant will be told that a legal claim has been started against them and they will receive a copy of the claim form straight away. A copy is also sent to them in the post.

A copy will also have been emailed to the user.

Claim submitted

Your claim number: 352MC733

[Download your claim form](#) (123KB, PDF)

What happens next

Mary Richards has until 4pm on 26 March 2022 to respond to your claim. They can ask for an extra 14 days if they need it. We'll email you when they respond.

You can request a County Court Judgment (CCJ) against them if they don't respond.

If the defendant pays you

You need to sign in to your account to tell us you've been paid.

[What did you think of this service? \(opens in new tab\).](#)

[Go to your account](#)

How to prepare for the appointment - the defendant

They may find Advicenow's [How to take a claim in the civil court](#) series helpful to read. The series will help them understand how the law works, and what evidence will help them defend the claim (as well as what evidence the claimant will need to make their case).

They should also bring with them

- The email or letter they received telling them about the claim
- Details of any evidence they have of their side of the story
- Any details they have about the date on which things (to do with the case) happened

If they agree they owe some money and don't want to pay the full amount immediately, they also need to bring:

- the balances of any bank accounts or saving accounts,
- if they are self-employed, their annual turnover,
- if they are paying money as a result of any other court orders, details of those court orders,
- details of any debts they are behind on, or loans or credit card balances, and
- details of regular expenses like rent/mortgage, council tax, bills etc.

Time limits for responding to a money claim

Support the defendant to respond by the deadline. The deadline is clearly stated on the email or letter they received about the claim.

Be aware - They can ask for 14 more days to respond but they need to log in to the service to do that.

If they do not respond they may get a County Court Judgement (CCJ) against them which will harm their credit rating for a long time. It is still possible to settle the claim out of court.

If they agree that they owe the money they should still respond. If they do so they can suggest a payment plan or another way of sorting out the situation (for example, if the claim is about unfinished building work, the defendant could offer to complete the building work). It is still possible to settle the claim out of court.

Logging in

The defendant will need to enter the claim number and security number from the email or letter they received telling them about the claim. They then arrive at a 'Claim details' screen that confirms who has made a claim against them and what the claimant has said about the case.

Next they are asked if they are already registered for civil or family court services. They will only have an account already if they have made or responded to a claim like this before, applied for or responded to an application for divorce online, or applied for probate online. Most people will therefore need to create an account now.

In order to set up an account they will need to have access to an email account.

Beginning your response

Once they have set up an account or logged in, you will arrive at a screen like this.

The deadline by which they have to respond is confirmed on the right.

First they need to confirm their details. If they would like letters about the case sent to another address instead they can. (Note this is instead, not as well).

And next they need to confirm if they would like more time to respond. If they select that they would like more time to respond an extra 14 days is automatically added to the deadline. They do not need to have a reason.

Respond to a money claim

1. Prepare your response

Confirm your details	INCOMPLETE
Decide if you need more time to respond	INCOMPLETE

Response deadline:
26 March 2022 before 4pm
(19 days remaining)
Claim reference:
352MC733
Total claim amount:
£1,500
[View claim](#)

2. Respond to claim

Choose a response	INCOMPLETE
-----------------------------------	------------

3. Submit

Check and submit your response



Choose a response

When they press 'Choose a response' you are given the choice of

- agreeing that you owe all the money claimed
- agreeing you owe some of the money claimed but not all of it, or
- saying you don't think you owe any of the money claimed.

How do you respond to the claim?

[Find out what each response means](#)

- ☐ **I admit all of the claim**
You agree you owe the full amount claimed
- ☐ **I admit part of the claim**
You agree you owe some money but not the full amount claimed
- ☐ **I reject all of the claim**
You've either paid what you believe you owe or you reject the claim

Save and continue

Respond to a money claim

Agreeing you owe all of the money claimed

If the user accepts that they owe all the money owed you move straight on to how they will pay.

If they don't pay the full amount within 5 days the claimant can ask for a County Court Judgement (CCJ) to be made against you. Having a CCJ hurts your credit rating and will make it harder to get loans, a mobile phone contract, or a mortgage.

It is therefore best to pay immediately.

You can however ask if the claimant will accept payment by a set date or allow the user to pay in installments.

If they request either, they will have to supply details of their finances and explain why they are unable to pay immediately. These are sent to the claimant. If the claimant thinks the defendant could make the repayments sooner, they can reject the offer and a judge will make a decision about how fast the user should pay it back.

The claimant doesn't have to accept any offer, so it is worth reminding the user that they should be as nice as possible to the claimant and stick to any agreement made.

When do you want to pay?

- ☐ Immediately
- ☐ By a set date
- ☐ I'll suggest a repayment plan

Save and continue

Severely disabled

When providing their financial details the defendant is asked if they are severely disabled. They should answer yes if they are entitled to the [Severe Disability Premium](#), or would be if someone didn't get Carer's Allowance for looking after them.

Agreeing you owe some of the money claimed but not all of it

If the user admits that they owe some of the money claimed but not all of it, they are asked how much they admit they owe and if they have paid it to the claimant yet.

Depending on that answer, you are then asked either

- how much you have paid (and are asked for details of when and how), or
- how much you admit you owe and, a little later, when you will pay it.

Just as on the slide before they are asked how they would like to pay it. They can ask if the claimant will accept payment by a set date or allow them to pay in installments, but the claimant does not have to accept it - and can ask for a CCJ if they haven't received the full amount the defendant agrees they owe within 5 days.

How much money do you admit you owe?

The total amount claimed is £1,500. This includes the claim fee and any interest.

£	
---	----------------------

Save and continue

Agreeing you owe some of the money claimed but not all of it – cont'd

Next you are asked why you disagree with the amount the claimant has asked for. Here you need to write a concise statement of the facts as the user sees them. What happened, what they disagree with in the defendant's statement, and why.

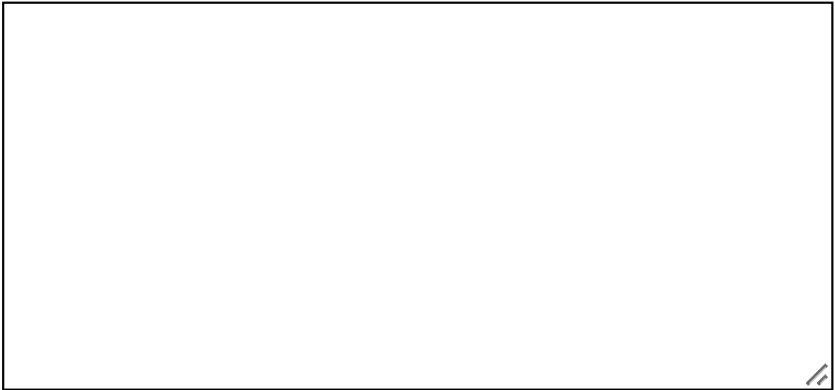
Use short sentences and avoid any emotive language.

The user then has the opportunity to add their own timeline – what happened on what date. They are also offered the opportunity to comment on the timeline the claimant has provided.

On the next screen, they need to give details of any evidence they have that supports their version of events. Like the claimant, they don't submit the evidence at this stage, they just confirm what they have and how it helps.

Why do you disagree with the claim amount?

The total amount claimed is £1,500. This includes the claim fee.



Save and continue

Saying you don't owe any of the money claimed

If the user rejects the idea that they owe any of the money claimed, they are given three options.

- I've paid what I believe I owe
- I dispute all of the claim which means I disagree that I owe them money, or
- I dispute all of the claim and want to make a counterclaim, which means I disagree that I owe them money and want to take them to court about money they owe me.

If the user makes a counterclaim they will have to pay a fee. The online service doesn't yet cover this so if they select this option they will then have to follow the guidance to complete a paper form and send it off.

Why do you believe you don't owe Jan Clark any money?

- ☐ I've paid what I believe I owe
- ☐ I dispute all of the claim
- ☐ I dispute the claim and want to make a counterclaim

Save and continue

Saying you don't owe any of the money claimed – cont'd

If the user disagrees with the claim they are then asked why they disagree or which bits they disagree with and why.

If there are parts they do not disagree with, they should say so.

Just as on [Agreeing you owe some of the money claimed but not all of it](#), be as clear and to the point as possible, and explain what the defendant thinks happened.

They will then add their own timeline and say what evidence they have, and anything they disagree with in the claimant's timeline and evidence.

Why do you disagree with the claim?

Their reasons for making the claim

Mary Richards and I signed a contract for building works on our roof. The work on the roof was completed but there was a problem with one section. I asked Mary Richards to get the problem fixed, but hadn't had a reply.

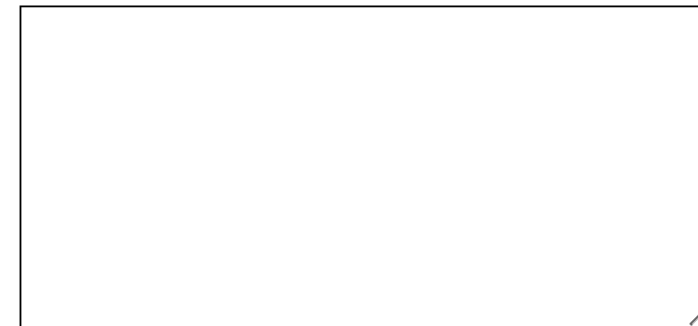
[Show more](#)

Briefly explain why you disagree with the claim

If you fail to dispute any part of the claim the court may assume you admit it.

You should also say if you accept any parts of the claim.

Don't give us a detailed timeline - we'll ask for that separately.



Your response will be sent to Jan Clark.

Save and continue

Respond to a money claim

Free telephone mediation

No matter how they respond to the claim they are offered free telephone mediation to settle the matter. Read everything on this screen out.

Make sure the user understands what mediation is. In this kind of mediation, a trained mediator speaks to both sides separately over the phone and helps them to come to a legally binding agreement.

If it is successful it means the dispute is sorted out more quickly and nobody has to pay a hearing fee.

At the bottom of the page, if you press continue, the claimant will be asked if they also agree to try mediation. The user will also need to confirm the best telephone number to use.

If the user is not willing to try mediation, you can select I do not agree to free mediation under the save button.

Free telephone mediation

We have automatically registered you for free telephone mediation from HM Courts and Tribunals Service.

How free mediation works

A trained, neutral mediator from HM Courts and Tribunals Service will listen to your views and help you to negotiate a settlement of your dispute.

Mediation can be quicker, cheaper and less stressful than going to court.

Mediation is confidential, and nothing said in the mediation can be used in court proceedings if the dispute cannot be settled. The mediator speaks to each party separately, this is not a conference call.

The claimant must agree to mediation. We'll contact you within 28 days after the claimant's confirmation, to arrange a free appointment.

Your mediation appointment will last for no more than an hour.

Find out more about [free telephone mediation \(opens in new tab\)](#).

Reaching a settlement

If mediation is successful, you'll make a verbal agreement over the phone. This is legally binding which means that you must comply with it. You will be given the terms of the agreement in a document – this is called a settlement agreement.

If either party breaks the terms the other party can go to court to ask for a judgment or hearing.

If mediation fails and a court hearing is needed, what happened during the mediation appointment cannot be mentioned in court.

You will not have to wait longer for a court hearing if you choose mediation.

Continue

[I do not agree to free mediation](#)

Respond to a money claim

Hearing requirements

If all or any part of the claim is disputed, the user will also need to answer questions about their requirements for the hearing.

This will be about

- any accessibility needs they may have,
- which court they would like the case to be heard in, and
- if they believe the case requires the evidence of an expert.

Most small claims (except those for personal injury) don't need an expert. If you want to use an expert, you will have to explain why the case needs it and ask the court's permission. Having an expert is not always a good idea – see [Witness statements and expert reports](#) for more information (scroll down for free version).

They are also asked if they would like to give evidence or want anybody else to – and what dates in the next 9 months they know they could not do.

Check and submit

Lastly they need to check everything carefully and submit their response. If they need to change anything important, they will have to pay an additional fee so do check everything is correct.

How to support users to apply for Help with fees

Users may want to apply for help paying their court fee using the online [Help with fees](#) service.

If they are using the Make a money claim online service, they must use the online system for applying for help with fees.

If they are applying for help paying the fee to apply for a divorce using the online service, they can apply online for help with fees at the same time.

If the user wants to apply for help with fees connected to an online probate application they need to first make the application for probate and then apply for help with fees to reimburse them. If they cannot pay upfront for the application, they will need to use the paper service to apply for help with fees.

Be aware - Users can also use the Help with fees system to apply for a refund for courts fees paid in the last three months. If applying for a refund, you should answer all questions about the user's circumstances at the time they paid the fee.

Entitlement

Users might be able to pay a lower fee or no fee at all if they have little or no savings, and have a low income or receive income-related benefits like:

- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Income Support
- Universal Credit (and you earn less than £6,000 a year)
- Pension Credit (Guarantee Credit)

If the user is under 61 they need to have less than £3000 in savings or investments to be eligible if the court fee is less than £1000. If they are over 61 they can have up to £16,000 and be eligible.

You can work out if the user is likely to be eligible by using the online Fee Remissions Contribution Calculator (EX 160C). You can find this at the bottom of the [Help with court fees page](#) on GOV.UK.

How to prepare for the appointment

They should bring with them

- details of their income,
- details of their savings and investments if they have any,
- if they have a partner, details of their income, savings and investments,
- the court or tribunal form number – to make a money claim it is N1, to apply for divorce/dissolution it is D8, to apply for probate it is PA1P if the deceased had a will, and PA1A if the deceased does not have a will. If they are applying for help with a hearing fee they enter 'hearing fee' and short explanation such as 'hearing fee small claim'.
- their National Insurance number or Home Office reference number – they may have a Home Office reference number if they are subject to immigration control. (If they don't have either a NI number or Home Office number they must apply by post).
- If they have only started receiving one of the benefits on the previous slide recently, they may need a letter from the DWP or Jobcentre confirming that they receive the benefit.

They do not need evidence of their income and savings at this stage, but they must give correct details as they may be asked for evidence as the application is processed.

Be aware - Users have to complete a separate application for each court fee you want reduced or cancelled. This may mean they have to apply more than once during their case.

Applying for Help with fees

The Help with Fees online application is really easy to use if you have all the details about income and savings that you need.

Where an explanation is needed it is available on the screen. There is only one question that might confuse people.

You are asked 'Do you have a case, claim, appeal or 'notice to pay' number?' The user will only have a claim number, case number, etc if they have already made the application they want Help with Fees for. If they haven't applied yet they will respond no.

When they get to the end of the process they check over their answers, declare that everything is true to the best of their knowledge, and press Submit application and continue. They then arrive at a confirmation screen, that confirms the application has been made and gives them the all important reference number. Support them to make a record of it.

If the user has supplied an email address the reference number for the Help with Fees application will get emailed to them as well.

If the user is making a money claim, or applying for a divorce or dissolution, they can now continue with that application but the claim cannot be issued (officially started) until the application for Help with Fees has been processed. At that point the user will be told what fees are covered and what they still have to pay. They can then pay the remainder and start the case at any time in the next 95 days.

Divorce or dissolution of a civil partnership

How to apply for a divorce (or dissolution of a civil partnership) or respond to an application

Users may want to apply for a divorce using [Apply for a divorce](#) or apply for a dissolution of a civil partnership using End a civil partnership. These people are called the ‘applicant’ or, if the separated couple have agreed to apply together, they are called ‘joint applicants’. Users wanting to end their civil partnership can be reassured that the pages look the same as the divorce pages with just some variation in the terms used.

These slides start by focussing on the journey for the applicant or joint applicants, from application to final divorce or dissolution order.

Later on, we explain how to help support people who are responding to an application for a divorce or dissolution made by their husband/wife or civil partner – they are called the ‘respondent’.

If you are supporting a user to respond to a divorce or dissolution application, jump to [How to prepare for the appointment – the respondent](#).

We Are Digital are able to offer support with making or responding to a divorce application over the telephone (only if the user has a device), or if the user doesn’t have a device, face-to-face, can be offered.

Key terms

- Applicant – the person who decides to apply for a divorce or dissolution
- Civil partner – partner who the user entered into a civil partnership with, and who is now separated from
- Conditional order – the first order made by the court if the court is satisfied that the legal requirements have been met for the separated couple to get a final divorce or dissolution order
- Final order – final divorce or dissolution order – this order legally ends the marriage or civil partnership
- Joint applicant (applicant 1 and applicant 2) – the separated couple who decide to apply together for a divorce or dissolution
- Respondent – the person who has to reply or ‘respond’ to the divorce application that has been made by their husband/wife or civil partner they are separated from
- Husband/wife – the person who the user is separated but not divorced from
- User – person who is accessing help from We Are Digital to use an online justice service

Applying for a divorce or dissolution online

Users can apply for a divorce using [Apply for a divorce](#) or a dissolution using End a civil partnership. This service can only be used:

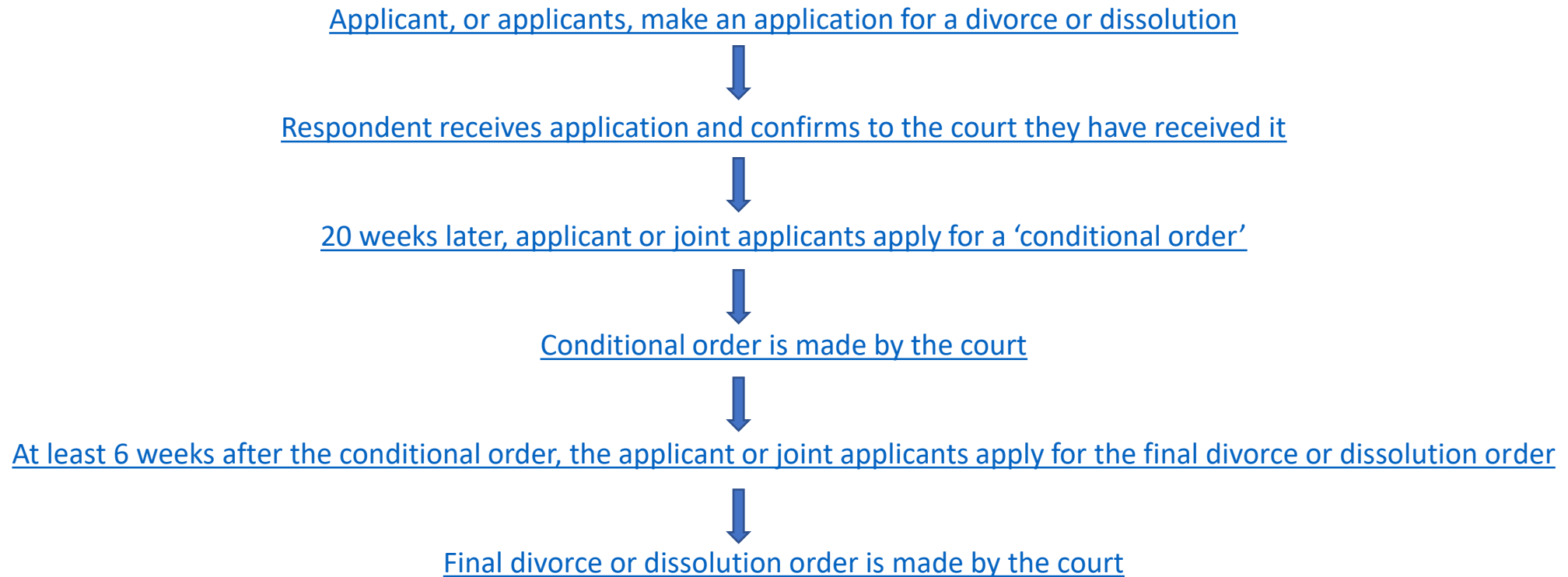
- for a divorce or dissolution taking place in England and Wales (not Scotland or Northern Ireland).
- to apply for a divorce or dissolution for themselves – not on behalf of someone else.
- if the court in England and Wales has the legal power or ‘jurisdiction’ to deal with the divorce – more on this shortly.
- if they have been married or in a civil partnership for at least one year.

Key benefits of using Apply for a divorce

- It has been designed for people applying for a divorce themselves, rather than for lawyers.
- The online service will be faster for the user than the paper one.
- At regular intervals, users can click on a link called ‘Contact us for more help’ which takes them to webchat and helpline details.
- The user can log on at any time to check the progress of their case and find related information via [GOV.UK pages](#).

Apply for a divorce or dissolution of a civil partnership

Divorce or dissolution – an overview of the process



How to prepare for the appointment – applicant/joint applicants

They need to decide if they want to apply alone so that their husband/wife or partner is the respondent or, if they can agree to make the application together, as joint applicants.

Before the appointment, suggest that the user read the relevant parts of these useful Advicenow guides on divorce and sorting out finances on divorce.

- [A survival guide to divorce or dissolution of a civil partnership](#)
- [How to get a divorce or end a civil partnership without a lawyer](#)
- [A survival guide to sorting out finances when you get divorced](#)
- [A survival guide to family mediation](#)

Mediation can be particularly helpful for working out finances or arrangements for children.

If the user tells you there are children who will be affected by the separation and divorce or dissolution you can suggest they read:

- [A survival guide to sorting out child arrangements](#)

Apply for a divorce or dissolution of a civil partnership

What to bring with them

- Original or certified copy of the marriage certificate (if they don't have either of these they can [order a copy](#) from the General Register Office). They need information from this document to do the application and they need to upload it or send it to the court.
- Their husband/wife or civil partner's full name and full address and ideally an email address – if they have one.
- Proof of their change of name – if they changed it after they married, for example from their maiden name to their husband/wife or civil partner's name. This proof might be the marriage certificate or a deed poll.
- An email account in their own name – so they can engage in this online service and the court can send updates and important information quickly and easily by email.
- Debit or credit card for the court fee (£593). If the user is on a low income or on income related benefits (for example Universal Credit or Pension Credit) they may only have to pay a reduced court fee, or no fee at all. Support them to see if they are entitled to [Help with fees](#) and apply online (see [separate training](#) for details of what they will need to bring to the appointment).

The appointment

It is possible that the applicant, or joint applicants, will come to you for help at any point in the online divorce process. However, for ease, we are going to assume that they will come to you at the start. We will flag up the key steps in the process so that you can easily find other points at which users may have reached when they need help. If they have not already done so, they will need to create an online account to access Apply for a divorce.

The divorce application

This is the first and main application the applicant or joint applicants need to make to the court. To start, the user has to fill in some key details, and most importantly, confirm that the marriage has irretrievably broken down – that is to say it cannot be saved.

The user needs to have decided if they are applying by themselves or with their husband/wife or civil partner. Joint applications are encouraged as this can reduce conflict, but they will only work smoothly if the separated couple are able to communicate and cooperate.

How do you want to apply for the divorce?

You can apply for the divorce on your own (as a 'sole applicant') or with your husband or wife (in a 'joint application').

Applying as a sole applicant

If you apply as a sole applicant, your husband or wife responds to your divorce application after you have submitted it. You will be applying on your own.

Applying jointly, with your husband or wife

If you apply jointly, your husband or wife joins and reviews this online application before it's submitted. You will be applying together.

How you divide your money and property is dealt with separately. It should not affect your decision on whether to do a sole or a joint application.

- ☐ I want to apply on my own, as a sole applicant
- ☐ I want to apply jointly, with my husband or wife

The divorce application – cont'd

You can reassure the user that this decision has no impact on whether the court will make a divorce order or on how issues around finances and the family home are dealt with.

If the user has decided to apply by themselves they will be the 'applicant'. If they are applying together the user who fills out the answers first will be called 'applicant 1' and the other person will be 'applicant 2'. The process for the applicant or applicant 1 is the same except where we explain it is different.

Next, the user (the applicant or applicant 1 in a joint application) needs to answer a few questions so the court can work out if it has the legal power or 'jurisdiction' to make orders in relation to the marriage. If the separated couple's lives are both based in England and Wales – for example, they live here, own property and have the children at school here, this section is not complicated. If this is not the case, more questions will come up for the user to answer. If the user is not clear on their connection to England and Wales, they may need legal advice before they continue.

Where your lives are based

The court needs to know whether you and your husband's or wife's lives are based in England or Wales. This may include working, owning property, having children in school, or your main family life taking place in England or Wales.

Is your life mainly based in England or Wales?

☒ Yes ☐ No

Is your husband's or wife's life mainly based in England or Wales?

☐ Yes ☐ No

[Continue](#)

[Save and sign out](#)

[▶ Contact us for help](#)

The divorce application – cont'd

It may be that a court in another country should deal with the divorce. If there is a possibility of a disagreement over which country should deal with the divorce, Advicenow's guide [Getting an international divorce](#) is a good place to start for more information.

Contact details for the respondent

For the application to progress the user must provide a postal address for the respondent (for applicant 2 they just need to give an email address). It is also helpful to provide a personal email address for them too so that the court can send updates quickly by email. This is important – without it everything will take longer. If the user does not have the respondent's address then they may have to apply to be allowed to give or 'serve' the application on the respondent in a different way. This is a separate application with another fee so it is usually better if the user can find another way to get the address, from family or friends etc. If the user cannot provide a postal address, they will get directed to a page on how to apply to send the application in a different way.

You need to get their address

Save your application and try to find their address. It can be their postal address or their solicitor's address. It can be UK or international. If you use their work address, you need to ask their permission.

To find their address you could try contacting their:

- relatives
- friends
- last-known employer
- trade union or professional organisation

If you cannot get their address

If you know you cannot get their address then you can apply to have the divorce papers 'served' (delivered) to them another way. For example by email, text message or social media. This is a separate application which will be decided by a judge and cost an additional £50.

☐ I want to apply to have the papers 'served' (sent to them) another way

Continue

The divorce application – cont'd

Finances on divorce

When the user gets to this page read it aloud to the user to flag up the content and make sure they understand that they need to be start thinking about how to reach an agreement on the division of any property, other capital like savings, pensions, and debts and income/maintenance, now. Explain that this is not an automatic part of the divorce process – they need to do it alongside the divorce process.

It may feel too soon at this point but the process is a slow one and it takes time to get together all the necessary documentation so that they can have productive conversations between themselves, or via mediation or solicitors.

If they can afford it, getting early legal advice is invaluable. A useful starting place to signpost users to is Advicenow's [A survival guide to sorting out finances when you get divorced](#).

Dividing your money and property

It's usually more straightforward and less expensive if you agree with your on how to divide your savings, property, pensions and other assets. There are mediation services available to help you come to an agreement. You'll be given links to more information after you have submitted this application.

If you agree about dividing money and property

You can ask the court to make your agreement legally binding. This is known as applying for a 'financial order by consent'. There is an additional fee of £50. You can get legal advice or ask a solicitor to draft a consent order for you. You will be given links to further guidance after you have submitted this application.

If you disagree about dividing money and property

You can ask the court to decide for you. This is known as asking the court to make a 'contested financial order'. This means the court will decide how assets will be split. You can also apply for a financial order for your children, if appropriate. The court can also order maintenance payments to be made.

► [Read more about child maintenance and financial orders](#)

Applying to the court to make a 'contested financial order' is done separately, using another form. It costs an additional £255.

Continue

The divorce application – cont'd

Finances on divorce

The user needs to decide if they are going to apply for a financial order or not.

They may not know yet if this will be necessary. Even if they are unclear on this, it is wise to click yes. This is because doing so does not commit them to applying for a financial order, but it means that they can apply at a later date so long as the other person is still alive. If they choose no at this point, and re-marry or form another civil partnership before starting an application they will not be able to ask the court for a financial order (other than certain pension orders).

The application for a financial order, whether agreed on by the separated couple or ordered by the judge, must be made using a separate form – called Form A. Users get more information on this at the end of the divorce application if they click yes.

Applying for a financial order

You'll need to apply for a financial order if you:

- agree on dividing your money and property and want to make your agreement legally binding (this is known as a financial order by consent)
- disagree on dividing your money and property and want the court to decide (this is known as a contested financial order)
- have nothing to split but want to make your financial separation final

Applying to the court for a 'financial order by consent' costs an additional £50. Asking the court to decide for you and make a 'contested financial order' costs an additional £255. The court needs to know now if you want to apply for either.

If you select yes:

- you do not have to proceed with the application for a financial order.
- you can proceed with the application for a financial order at any time, so long as your husband or wife is still alive.

If you select no:

- you'll only be able to apply until you remarry or form a new civil partnership (this does not apply to pension sharing or pension compensation orders,

The divorce application – continued

Documents and statement of truth

Next, the user needs to upload their documents. They can scan these or take a photo. You can help them to do this by following the instructions or you can re-assure them that they can post them to the court if needs be.

After uploading their documents, the user is asked to carefully check their answers – explain to the user how important it is to make sure everything recorded is correct. If anything needs changing at a later date it will cause delay.

The user must confirm what they are applying for and then ‘sign’ a statement of truth. The user will need to have physical access to the device (either on their own or at the centre with a trainer) to sign this. Highlight to the user that this is serious – if they are found to have knowingly stated something is true when it is not, they can be found in contempt of court. This is punishable by a fine, or a prison sentence of up to two years, or both.

Confirm before continuing



I confirm that I'm applying to the court to:

- dissolve my marriage (get a divorce)
- decide how our money and property will be split (known as a financial order)

This confirms what you are asking the court to do. It's known as 'the prayer'.



I believe that the facts stated in this application are true

This confirms that the information you are submitting is true and accurate, to the best of your knowledge. It's known as your 'statement of truth'.



Proceedings for contempt of court may be brought against anyone who makes, or causes to be made, a false statement verified by a statement of truth without an honest belief in its truth.

The divorce application – continued

To submit their application the user must pay a fee. They need a debit or credit card. Or they can ask for help with fees. This takes the user to a different page with a short application. If successful, they get a help with fees code. They then need to log back into the divorce application and submit the code with the application. We have another short training pack on help with fees.

The user will need to have physical access to the device (either on their own or at the centre with a trainer) to input their card details.

Once they have paid (or put in a help with fees code) and clicked the submit button, the application is checked by the court and sent to their husband/wife or civil partner for them to respond.

If the user is applying jointly there is an extra step involved.

Joint applicants must both see and agree on the contents of the application. When applicant 1 checks their answers they then have to click on the button which sends the application to applicant 2, to review. Applicant 1 then gets an email to tell them to check it over once more before paying the court fee and submitting the application. Also to apply for help with fees in an joint application, both people must be entitled to this financial help, not just applicant 1.

Your answers have been sent to your husband to review

Your answers have been sent to your husband at the following email address:
xxx

They should review them and provide some further information by:
15 December 2021.

You will receive an email notification to confirm when they have reviewed. If they do not review then you will be told what you can do to progress the application.

[Save and sign out](#)

▶ [Contact us for help](#)

After the divorce or dissolution application has been submitted

If the application is being made by just one applicant then the other person in the separated couple, known as the 'respondent', must respond to the application so the court knows they are aware of what is happening. We explain in more detail what the respondent needs to do later in these slides.

The applicant or applicant 1 must wait 20 weeks before taking the next step in the divorce process. During this time, the separated couple need to be encouraged to sort out their finances and arrangements for their children if they have any.

Sorting out finances takes time so it is important to get started as soon as possible. Signpost users to Advicenow's [A survival guide to sorting out finances when you get divorced](#).

Users with very little in the way of things of value, or 'assets', need to understand that it is still important to consider getting an agreement not to make claims against each other in the future. To be legally binding it must be approved by the court and made into an order – known as a 'consent order'.

What happens next

Your joint application will be checked by court staff. You and your husband will receive an email notification by 3 December 2021 confirming whether it has been accepted.

If it's accepted, then the next step is for you to confirm that you want the application to continue by applying for a 'conditional order'. You have to wait 20 weeks until you can apply.

You can use the time between now and then to decide how the money and property is divided. You can also make arrangements for children, if you have them. Dividing money and property is dealt with separately to the divorce process.

After the divorce or dissolution application has been submitted - continued

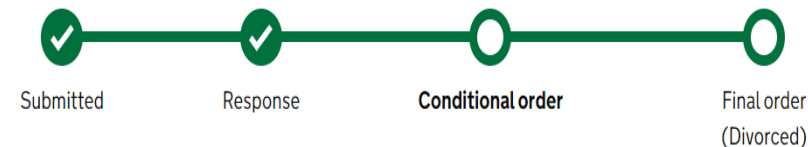
Only a court order makes a separated couple's agreement legally binding on them both. For more information signpost the user to [Money and property when you divorce or separate: If you agree - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/money-and-property-when-you-divorce-or-separate-if-you-agree)

It is important to flag to the user that a final divorce or dissolution order does not, by itself, legally end the separated couple's financial ties. They need an order which records their agreement not to make claims against each other in the future to achieve financial finality.

As long as the respondent has received the application and responded to it the applicant, or applicant 1, can apply for what is known as the 'conditional order', 20 weeks after making their first application.

If there are problems with the respondent finding out about the application and telling the court they are aware of it, (this is called 'service') the applicant may have to wait a little longer. The respondent must have at least two weeks' notice of the divorce application before the applicant can apply for the conditional order.

If the respondent fails to tell the court they have received the application, the online service notifies the user and suggests different applications that



What you need to do

You can now apply for a 'conditional order'. A conditional order is a document that says the court does not see any reason why you cannot get a divorce.

▶ [Read more about the next steps](#)

Apply for conditional order

can be made to progress the case.

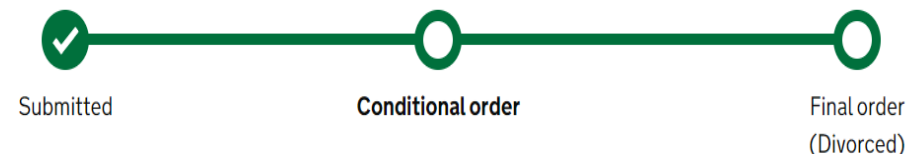
Application for a conditional order

The conditional order is the first order made by the court in the process. To apply, the applicant needs to check over the details provided by their husband/wife or civil partner, confirm all their information is up to date, confirm they still want to go ahead with their application, and complete another statement of truth.

When the user has submitted this application they then get an update to explain what happens next.

They need to wait for the conditional order to be made by the court – they will be notified by the court when this happens. Six weeks after the date of the conditional order they can apply for the final divorce or final dissolution order.

Joint applicants must both apply for this order – applicant 1 goes first and then applicant 2 receives an email to tell them they need to apply as well.



Latest update

You have applied for a conditional order. Your husband or wife also needs to apply because this is a joint application for divorce.

They have been sent an email to remind them.

Application for a final divorce or final dissolution order

If the separated couple are still trying to sort out finances there are good reasons to do that before applying for the final order. This is because the final divorce or dissolution order affects their legal rights, for example:

1. Rights in relation to the family home
2. Rights in relation to pensions
3. The right to bring a claim for a financial order in relation to the marriage if the other person dies after the final order is made, but before finances are agreed and approved by the court.

If the user is unsure about how this could affect them, suggest they try and get legal advice before making this decision. If the user decides to delay their application to finalise the finances, make sure you explain that the respondent is allowed to apply for the final order themselves, three months after the first date the user can apply. Also, if there is a long delay in applying, they will need to explain to the court the reasons for this.

The application for the final order is very simple – with only one box to tick.

Joint applicants must both apply for the final order. Applicant 1 goes first and then applicant 2 gets an email telling they need to apply as well. If applicant 2 doesn't apply then applicant 1 must make a sole application. They will get a notification on how to do this. This will slow things down a bit as applicant 1 has to let applicant 2 know they are doing this 2 weeks before they do it. This is called giving '2 weeks' notice'.

As long as there are no issues to resolve, the court will grant the final divorce or dissolution order in a matter of days.

The end of the applicant's/joint applicants' journey

- If the user comes to you for help at this stage without having sorted out their finances, signpost them to Advicenow's [A survival guide to sorting out your finances when you get divorced](#) or [How to apply for a financial order without a lawyer](#) depending on if they are still trying to agree or if they can't reach an agreement and need to apply to court.
- If the user hasn't already updated their Will since their separation, inform them that divorce or dissolution affects a Will, so that it is as though their ex-husband/wife or ex-civil partner died on the date the final order is made. They can find more details on this in Advicenow's [How to get a divorce or dissolution of a civil partnership without a lawyer](#).

How to prepare for the appointment – the respondent

If the user who comes to you for help has been contacted by the court to inform them that their husband/wife or civil partner has applied for a divorce or dissolution of their civil partnership, they become the respondent to the application.

The user has less to do if they are the respondent. For an appointment they may need:

- Proof of their change of name – if they changed it after they married, for example from their maiden name to their husband/wife or civil partner's name. This proof might be the marriage certificate or a deed poll.
- (Ideally) an email account in their own name – so the court can send updates and important information quickly and easily by email.

Before the appointment suggest that the user read the relevant parts of Advicenow's guides on divorce and sorting out finances on divorce.

- [A survival guide to divorce or dissolution of a civil partnership](#)
- [How to get a divorce or end a civil partnership without a lawyer](#)
- [A survival guide to sorting out finances when you get divorced](#)

- [A survival guide to mediation](#)

If the user tells you there are children who will be affected by the separation and divorce or dissolution you can suggest they read:

- [A survival guide to sorting out child arrangements](#)

The appointment

It is possible that the respondent will come to you for help at any point in the online divorce process. However, for ease, we are going to assume that they will come to you at the start.

Responding to the divorce application

The user will get an email (or letter in the post if an email address is not provided) to tell them that they need to reply or 'respond' to the application for a divorce that their husband/wife or civil partner has made.

They are asked to check over the information the applicant has given to the court and confirm they have read it.

Then they must say if they will accept the divorce or try to dispute it. You need to make clear to the user that it is now extremely difficult to dispute a divorce. The fact that they may not want it to happen is not a reason. If they say they want to dispute the divorce, they should get legal advice first.

Next they need to confirm that they think the court has the legal power or 'jurisdiction' to deal with the divorce. Often the court will have jurisdiction because the users' lives are based in England and Wales.

How do you want to respond to the application?

You can only dispute the application if: (one or more of the following)

- you do not think the courts of England and Wales have the legal power (jurisdiction) to grant the application
- you do not believe your marriage is legally valid. For example, if one of you was already married or in a civil partnership when you got married
- this marriage has already been legally ended

- ☐ Continue without disputing the divorce
- ☒ I want to dispute the divorce

Continue

Responding to the divorce application – continued

The next important part to flag up to the user is the page where they check over all the information provided and then 'sign' a statement of truth.

Highlight to the user that this is serious – if they are found to have knowingly stated something is true when it is not, they can be found in contempt of court. This is punishable by a fine, or a prison sentence of up to two years, or both.

When they have submitted their response they simply have to wait for the applicant to apply for a conditional order when 20 weeks have passed.

Confirm before submitting



I confirm that:

- I am the person named as the respondent in the application for divorce
- I believe that the facts stated in this response are true

The first statement is confirming that you're the person who should be responding to this application for divorce. The second is your statement of truth.



Proceedings for contempt of court may be brought against anyone who makes, or causes to be made, a false statement verified by a statement of truth without an honest belief in its truth.

Submit

Finances on divorce

During the 20 weeks between the application for a divorce and the time when the applicant can apply for a conditional order, the separated couple need to be encouraged to sort out their finances and arrangements for their children if they have any.

Sorting out finances takes time so it is important to get started as soon as possible. Signpost users to Advicenow's [A survival guide to sorting out finances when you get divorced](#) for more help and support.

Users with very little in the way of things of value, or 'assets', need to understand that it is still important to consider getting an agreement not to make claims against each other in the future. To be legally binding it must be approved by the court and made into an order – known as a 'consent order'.

Only a court order makes a separated couple's agreement legally binding on them both. For more information on this signpost the user to [Money and property when you divorce or separate: If you agree - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

It is important to flag to the user that a final divorce or dissolution order does not, by itself, legally end the separated couple's financial ties. They need an order which records their agreement not to make claims against each other in the future to achieve financial finality.

Application for a conditional order

The user does not need to do anything in relation to this – it is a job for the applicant. When the court has made the conditional order the user will be notified.

Application for a final divorce or dissolution order

The applicant must wait 6 weeks from the date of the conditional order before they can apply for the final order. The respondent has nothing to do at this point. If the applicant takes longer to apply, the respondent is allowed to apply 3 months after the date the applicant could first apply. They don't have to do this – it is optional. And usually the delay is only because the separated couple are trying to work out finances which need sorting out.

If the separated couple are still trying to sort out finances there are good reasons to do that before applying for the final order after the 3 months has passed. This because the final divorce or dissolution order affects their legal rights, for example:

1. Rights in relation to the family home
2. Rights in relation to pensions
3. The right to bring a claim for a financial order in relation to the marriage if their ex-husband/wife or ex-partner dies after the final order is made but before finances are agreed and approved by the court.

If the user you are helping is unsure about how this could affect them you need to suggest they try and get legal advice before making this decision. Once the final order is made it cannot be un-made!

As long as there are no issues to resolve, the court will grant the final divorce or dissolution order in a matter of days.

The end of the respondent's journey

- If the user comes to you for help at this stage without having sorted out their finances, signpost them to Advicenow's [A survival guide to sorting out your finances when you get divorced](#) or [How to apply for a financial order without a lawyer](#) depending on if they are still trying to agree or if they can't reach an agreement and need to apply to court.
- If the user hasn't already updated their Will since their separation, inform them that divorce or dissolution affects a Will, so that it is as though their husband/wife or civil partner died on the date the final order is made- when they become their ex-husband/wife or ex- civil partner. They can find more details on this in Advicenow's [How to get a divorce or dissolution of a civil partnership without a lawyer](#).

How to support users to apply for Help with fees

Users may want to apply for help paying their court fee using the online [Help with fees](#) service.

If they are using the Make a money claim online service, they must use the online system for applying for help with fees.

If they are applying for help paying the fee to apply for a divorce using the online service, they can apply online for help with fees at the same time.

If the user wants to apply for help with fees connected to an online probate application they need to first make the application for probate and then apply for help with fees to reimburse them. If they cannot pay upfront for the application, they will need to use the paper service to apply for help with fees.

Be aware - Users can also use the Help with fees system to apply for a refund for courts fees paid in the last three months. If applying for a refund, you should answer all questions about the user's circumstances at the time they paid the fee.

Entitlement

Users might be able to pay a lower fee or no fee at all if they have little or no savings, and have a low income or receive income-related benefits like:

- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Income Support
- Universal Credit (and you earn less than £6,000 a year)
- Pension Credit (Guarantee Credit)

If the user is under 61 they need to have less than £3000 in savings or investments to be eligible if the court fee is less than £1000. If they are over 61 they can have up to £16,000 and be eligible.

You can work out if the user is likely to be eligible by using the online Fee Remissions Contribution Calculator (EX 160C). You can find this at the bottom of the [Help with court fees page](#) on GOV.UK.

How to prepare for the appointment

They should bring with them

- details of their income,
- details of their savings and investments if they have any,
- if they have a partner, details of their income, savings and investments,
- the court or tribunal form number – to make a money claim it is N1, to apply for divorce/dissolution it is D8, to apply for probate it is PA1P if the deceased had a will, and PA1A if the deceased does not have a will. If they are applying for help with a hearing fee they enter 'hearing fee' and short explanation such as 'hearing fee small claim'.
- their National Insurance number or Home Office reference number – they may have a Home Office reference number if they are subject to immigration control. (If they don't have either a NI number or Home Office number they must apply by post).
- If they have only started receiving one of the benefits on the previous slide recently, they may need a letter from the DWP or Jobcentre confirming that they receive the benefit.

They do not need evidence of their income and savings at this stage, but they must give correct details as they may be asked for evidence as the application is processed.

Be aware - Users have to complete a separate application for each court fee you want reduced or cancelled. This may mean they have to apply more than once during their case.

Applying for Help with fees

The Help with Fees online application is really easy to use if you have all the details about income and savings that you need.

Where an explanation is needed it is available on the screen. There is only one question that might confuse people.

You are asked 'Do you have a case, claim, appeal or 'notice to pay' number?' The user will only have a claim number, case number, etc if they have already made the application they want Help with Fees for. If they haven't applied yet they will respond no.

When they get to the end of the process they check over their answers, declare that everything is true to the best of their knowledge, and press Submit application and continue. They then arrive at a confirmation screen, that confirms the application has been made and gives them the all important reference number. Support them to make a record of it.

If the user has supplied an email address the reference number for the Help with Fees application will get emailed to them as well.

If the user is making a money claim, or applying for a divorce or dissolution, they can now continue with that application but the claim cannot be issued (officially started) until the application for Help with Fees has been processed. At that point the user will be told what fees are covered and what they still have to pay. They can then pay the remainder and start the case at any time in the next 95 days.

How to support users to apply for probate

Users may want to apply for probate online. Before you can deal with someone's property, money and possessions after they have died, you must have been granted probate.

We Are Digital are able to offer support with applying for probate over the telephone (only if the user has a device), or face-to-face.

The first thing to do is to check if the user

- needs probate to deal with the person's estate, and
- is eligible to apply for probate.

You can find more details about both at [Apply for probate](#) on GOV.UK

If they are an executor of the deceased's will, check also that they have discussed who will apply for probate with any other executors (an executor is someone who has been appointed to deal with someone's estate after they die in a will). Only one person can make the application for probate but up to four executors can be named on the application/grant of probate.

If the deceased did not leave a will, check if they are the spouse, civil partner or adult child of the deceased. If they are not they cannot use the online service to apply for probate. If there is more than one adult child, they will need to decide who will apply as only one person can make the application using the online service.

Check if they are ready to apply

Before the user can apply for probate, they need to have completed many tasks. Check if they have:

- identified what assets (savings, property, things of value) and debts (such as credit cards, loans or mortgages) the deceased person had (including having any property valued),
- used the above to estimate the total value of the deceased person's estate,
- found out if they will need to pay inheritance tax (the easiest way is to use the [Inheritance tax checker tool](#) on GOV.UK), and
- reported the estate's value and, if required, sent forms IHT400 and IHT421 to HMRC (full info on when it is required is on [GOV.UK](#)).

If the user needs digital assistance with the above forms, or information about inheritance tax and what they need to do in another format or language, they can get it [from HMRC](#).

If there is Inheritance Tax to pay, the user must also wait 20 working days from the date they sent the tax forms to HMRC.

If any of these things have not been done yet, direct the user to the information on applying for probate on [GOV.UK](#) if they have access to the internet.

We Are Digital can only assist with the actual application for probate.

What to bring to the appointment

1. A death certificate or interim death certificate (this needs to be in English or they must have a translated copy).
2. The original copy of the will (if there was a will). If the original copy cannot be found, they will need to apply by post.
3. A debit or credit card to pay the application fee.
4. If they completed any inheritance tax forms (IHT400 or IHT421 if they have to pay inheritance tax, or IHT207 if they do not because the estate is exempted), copies of those forms OR details of the values of the estate for Inheritance Tax, gross value of the estate, and net value of the estate.
5. Full names, email addresses, phone numbers and postal addresses of any other executors.

Application fee and help with fees

The fee to apply for probate is £267 if the estate is worth more than £5,000. If the estate is worth less than £5000, there is no fee.

If the user is on a low income or on income related benefits (for example Universal Credit or Pension Credit) they may be able to claim back some or all of the application fee through [Help with fees](#) (see [separate training](#)) after the probate application has been made. If they cannot afford to pay the fee to apply and claim it back, they should apply for help with fees (either online or on paper) and for probate using the paper system.

Make the application

[Apply for probate](#) via GOV.UK. The service is easy to use and most things are explained on the screen.

The only really tricky thing is that if you realise you have given a wrong answer, you cannot go back a screen to change it. You can change it later in the process (in step 3 – Check your answers) but if you select a wrong answer, it maybe that you cannot answer subsequent questions. It is therefore worth reading each question carefully. If you do make a mistake, it might be easiest to start a new application from within the same account.

The first few screens check that the user is ready to apply for probate and can apply online.

The user will need an email address. If they do not have one, explain the above and ask if they would like your help to set one up.

Next the user creates an account. They will only have an account already if they have made or responded to a money claim, a divorce application, or help with fees online.

Then you arrive at a screen like this, which shows the different tasks to complete.

Apply for probate

Complete these steps to get the legal right to deal with the property and belongings of someone who has died.

You can save your application and return to it later if you need to.

At the end of each section you will be required to check your answers. If any are incorrect you will have the opportunity to change them before proceeding to the next section. Once you have made your legal declaration at section 3 any amendments will have to be made in writing to the Registry.

1.	Tell us about the person who has died	
	Start >	
2.	Give details about the executors	CAN'T START YET
3.	Check your answers and make your legal declaration	CAN'T START YET
4.	Order extra copies of the grant of probate	CAN'T START YET
5.	Pay and submit your application	CAN'T START YET
6.	Send documents	CAN'T START YET



About the person who has died

You don't need to get to the end of each task to save your progress. Press save and close at any point to stop and come back to it later.

If the user has done all of the things on the previous screens, it will be easy to provide details of the person who has died.

One question that does sometimes trip people up is 'Did you complete IHT forms to report the estate's value?' Be aware that this means did you complete forms IHT400 or 421, or IHT247, and not did you use the [Inheritance Tax checker](#).

If you did not have to complete a form because the estate was of a low value, select no and use the figures from the Inheritance Tax checker to complete the questions on the following page, 'What are the values of the estate for Inheritance Tax?'

After that you get to 'What are the values of the estate for probate?' This is a little tricky as you need to work these out yourselves but the explanation of how to do that is on the screen. Read it aloud to the user and support them to calculate the right answers.

What are the values of the estate for probate?

Gross value in £

This is the total value of the deceased's assets in their sole name. To work this out, subtract the values of any joint assets passing to the other joint owner, foreign assets, all [gifts](#) and assets held in trust from the gross value of IHT.

£	
---	----------------------

Net value in £

To work this out, take the gross value for probate and deduct the total value of the deceased's debts including funeral expenses and any other debts they owe at the time of their death in their sole name.

£	
---	----------------------

Save and continue

[Save and close](#)

About the executors

Give details about the executors is simple. It asks for the user’s name and address and those of the other executors.

If your name has changed since the will was written, you will need to give details of why.

If any of the other named executors have died, you need to say who, and whether they died before the person whose estate you are dealing with or later.

You are asked if any of the other executors will be dealing with the estate. If you are not sure, it is best to say yes as that leaves the option open.

You need to supply contact details of the other executors. They then get contacted and asked to agree the details of your application.

Next you are asked to answer some equality and diversity questions – these are optional and are not connected with your application. It is to help HMCTS when developing these services.

Apply for probate

Complete these steps to get the legal right to deal with the property and belongings of someone who has died.

You can save your application and return to it later if you need to.

At the end of each section you will be required to check your answers. If any are incorrect you will have the opportunity to change them before proceeding to the next section. Once you have made your legal declaration at section 3 any amendments will have to be made in writing to the Registry.

1.	Tell us about the person who has died	COMPLETED
	Check and change your answers	
2.	Give details about the executors	
	Start >	
3.	Check your answers and make your legal declaration	CAN'T START YET
4.	Order extra copies of the grant of probate	CAN'T START YET
5.	Pay and submit your application	CAN'T START YET
6.	Send documents	CAN'T START YET



Next you arrive at a check your answers screen. Do support the user to check everything carefully as it cannot be changed once everyone has made their declaration.

If a mistake is spotted after the declaration, you will have to make another application for probate.

Check your answers

Check the information below carefully. This will form a record of your application for probate. It will also be stored as a public record, and will be able to be viewed online.

About the person who died

Do you require a bilingual grant in English and Welsh?	No	Change
First name and any middle names	Steve James	Change
Last name	Sampson	Change
Did Steve James Sampson have assets in another name?	No	Change
Did Steve James Sampson get married or enter into a civil partnership after the will was signed?	No	Change
What was their date of birth?	13 May 1972	Change
What was the date that they died?	12 December 2021	Change
What was the permanent address at the time of their death?	63 Stroud Green Road London N4 3EG United Kingdom	Change
Did Steve James Sampson die in England or Wales?	Yes	Change
Do you have a death certificate or an interim death certificate?	Death certificate	Change

Condition of the will

Does the will have any visible damages or marks?	Yes	Change
Describe the damage	Staple or punch holes	Change

Apply for probate

After that, you arrive at the screen where they need to check the legal statement and make their declaration.

Read all of the information on this screen out to them.

Check the legal statement and make your declaration

This statement is based on the information Maria Sandra Sampson has given in their application. It will be stored as a public record.

In the High Court of Justice
Family Division
(Probate)

Legal statement

We, Maria Sandra Sampson of Flat 3 2 Goda Road Littlehampton BN17 6AS United Kingdom and Jacob Nick Jones of 5 Goda Road Littlehampton BN17 6AS United Kingdom, make the following statement:

The person who died

Steve James Sampson was born on 13 May 1972 and died on 12 December 2021, domiciled in England and Wales.

The estate of the person who died

The gross value for the estate amounts to £230000.00 and the net value for the estate amounts to £200000.00.

To the best of our knowledge, information and belief, there was no land vested in Steve James Sampson which was settled previously to the death (and not by the will) of Steve James Sampson and which remained settled land notwithstanding such death.

Executors applying for probate

Maria Sandra Sampson, an executor named in the will, is applying for probate.

Maria Sandra Sampson will send to the probate registry what we have seen and believe to be the true and original last will and testament of Steve James Sampson.

Jacob Nick Jones, an executor named in the will, is applying for probate.

Executors not applying for probate

Susan Jane Sampson, an executor named in the will, is not making this application because they died before Steve James Sampson died.

Declaration

We confirm that we will administer the estate of Steve James Sampson, according to law. We will:

- collect the whole estate
- keep full details (an inventory) of the estate
- keep a full account of how the estate has been administered

If the probate registry (court) asks us to do so, we will:

- provide the full details of the estate and how it has been administered
- return the grant of probate to the court

We understand that:

- our application will be rejected if we do not answer any questions about the information we have given
- proceedings for contempt of court may be brought against the undersigned if it is found that the evidence provided is deliberately untruthful or dishonest, as well as revocation of the grant

Save this page

 [Legal declaration \(30kb PDF\)](#)

Once they have made their declaration, they are asked to press a button on the next screen which notifies the other executors named on the application.

Once they have done that, the other executors have to confirm that everything the user has said in the application for probate is correct.

If they don't think it is, they and the user need to agree what changes need to be made outside of the Apply for probate process.

Notify the other executors who are applying for probate

Once you've notified the other executors who are applying, they'll be sent an email telling them the legal statement is ready to agree.

A grant of probate can't be issued until all the executors who are applying agree that the legal statement is correct.

If the other executors who are applying don't agree

Anyone who doesn't agree with the legal statement will be asked to contact you to discuss what needs changing.

You can continue to make changes to your application until everyone has agreed the legal statement.

If you change the information on your application

If you make any changes, you'll need to contact the other applying executors to let them know the legal statement has been updated and is ready for them to agree.

They can always see the most up to date version of the legal statement using the link we email them.

The applying executors' contact details

Jacob Nick Jones jacobjones@gm ail.com 07900345672 [Change](#)

Notify the other executors who are applying

[Save and close](#)

☐ I confirm that I will administer the estate of the person who died according to law, and that my application is truthful.

137

Next the user is offered the opportunity to order extra copies of the grant of probate. They don't have to, but it can be very useful as it enables them to send them to different organisations (for example the bank, the pension provider, and the insurer) at once, rather than waiting for the one copy to be sent back each time, before they can contact the next organisation.

If the deceased had assets outside of the UK, you may need extra certified copies of the grant of probate to access them.

Next, they will be asked to pay if you need to (if the estate is over £5,000). And then submit your application.

Be aware that the Thank you page is not the end of the process. The next page confirms what documents you need to send to the probate registry, your reference number (so that you can be sure the document will be filed with your application), and the address to send them to.

If you have access to a printer, you can also download a coversheet for the user to send with their documents.

Send your documents

1. Prepare to send your documents

You must send the probate registry:

- either your completed [application coversheet](#) or write your reference number 1646-3148-4406-5782 on a sheet of paper
- the original will (by law, we must keep your original will as it becomes a public document)
- send us the IHT 207 form

We cannot give you a grant of probate without the required documents.

2. Send your documents to the probate registry

Send your documents using a signed postal service to:

Principal Registry of the Family Division (PRFD)
HMCTS Probate
PO Box 12625
Harlow
CM20 9QE

Continue

How to support users to apply for Help with fees

Users may want to apply for help paying their court fee using the online [Help with fees](#) service.

If they are using the Make a money claim online service, they must use the online system for applying for help with fees.

If they are applying for help paying the fee to apply for a divorce using the online service, they can apply online for help with fees at the same time.

If the user wants to apply for help with fees connected to an online probate application they need to first make the application for probate and then apply for help with fees to reimburse them. If they cannot pay upfront for the application, they will need to use the paper service to apply for help with fees.

Be aware - Users can also use the Help with fees system to apply for a refund for courts fees paid in the last three months. If applying for a refund, you should answer all questions about the user's circumstances at the time they paid the fee.

Entitlement

Users might be able to pay a lower fee or no fee at all if they have little or no savings, and have a low income or receive income-related benefits like:

- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Income Support
- Universal Credit (and you earn less than £6,000 a year)
- Pension Credit (Guarantee Credit)

If the user is under 61 they need to have less than £3000 in savings or investments to be eligible if the court fee is less than £1000. If they are over 61 they can have up to £16,000 and be eligible.

You can work out if the user is likely to be eligible by using the online Fee Remissions Contribution Calculator (EX 160C). You can find this at the bottom of the [Help with court fees page](#) on GOV.UK.

How to prepare for the appointment

They should bring with them

- details of their income,
- details of their savings and investments if they have any,
- if they have a partner, details of their income, savings and investments,
- the court or tribunal form number – to make a money claim it is N1, to apply for divorce/dissolution it is D8, to apply for probate it is PA1P if the deceased had a will, and PA1A if the deceased does not have a will. If they are applying for help with a hearing fee they enter 'hearing fee' and short explanation such as 'hearing fee small claim'.
- their National Insurance number or Home Office reference number – they may have a Home Office reference number if they are subject to immigration control. (If they don't have either a NI number or Home Office number they must apply by post).
- If they have only started receiving one of the benefits on the previous slide recently, they may need a letter from the DWP or Jobcentre confirming that they receive the benefit.

They do not need evidence of their income and savings at this stage, but they must give correct details as they may be asked for evidence as the application is processed.

Be aware - Users have to complete a separate application for each court fee you want reduced or cancelled. This may mean they have to apply more than once during their case.

Applying for Help with fees

The Help with Fees online application is really easy to use if you have all the details about income and savings that you need.

Where an explanation is needed it is available on the screen. There is only one question that might confuse people.

You are asked 'Do you have a case, claim, appeal or 'notice to pay' number?' The user will only have a claim number, case number, etc if they have already made the application they want Help with Fees for. If they haven't applied yet they will respond no.

When they get to the end of the process they check over their answers, declare that everything is true to the best of their knowledge, and press Submit application and continue. They then arrive at a confirmation screen, that confirms the application has been made and gives them the all important reference number. Support them to make a record of it.

If the user has supplied an email address the reference number for the Help with Fees application will get emailed to them as well.

If the user is making a money claim, or applying for a divorce or dissolution, they can now continue with that application but the claim cannot be issued (officially started) until the application for Help with Fees has been processed. At that point the user will be told what fees are covered and what they still have to pay. They can then pay the remainder and start the case at any time in the next 95 days.

The Users – 12 Access-to-Justice Barriers

The access to justice barriers is based on several key pieces of research undertaken by the User Research team in 2020 that shed light on how users of HMCTS experience our services. The User Research team conducted an analysis of internal research across all services, as well as analysing academic research in the justice space. Key patterns started emerging which led to the emergence of the HMCTS Barriers Framework.

An individual may face multiple barriers at once, which means that they need inclusive support to use the service.

A number of the barriers have clear links to digital exclusion and the WAD call centre triage can get users experiencing these barriers the right support. For example barriers to accessing the technology needed to complete a service, not having digital skills and confidence to engage online, or even the financial barrier that some users face (e.g. not having money to buy data). A digital barrier might also exacerbate another barrier, for example, low digital confidence or skills might prevent a user from successfully providing the right evidence or documentation if they are asked to do this online.

It is important to understand what these barriers are and be aware that they intersect, to support users appropriately.

The Users – 12 Access-to-Justice Barriers



Access to Technology

If the user does not have access to devices, software or a strong and reliable internet connection.



Physical access

If users need, but cannot gain, physical access to buildings and appropriate facilities within them.



Appropriate space & facilities

If users do not have access to appropriate to participate e.g.: if a user doesn't have a fixed address.



Communicating effectively

Someone struggles to communicate when upset or needs visual cues.



Digital Skills and Confidence

Unfamiliarity with digital technology and the language of the internet (e.g. 'URL') can be a barrier.



Emotional and mental resources

Factors, such as anxiety, exhaustion, or trauma, impact someone's mental state or capabilities in the moment



Finance

To access technology, or afford additional costs such as childcare, travel, or even money to buy data



Trust in the system

A lack of trust could mean that someone won't start a process or lose faith midway and drop out.



Providing Evidence and documentation

Not having a valid form of ID or having out of date documents.



Support

Digital, emotional, procedural and or legal support. To complete a task, or navigate the legal system.



Time

If a user can't complete a task in one sitting and a form times out. Or finding the time to gather evidence



Understanding what is happening

Understanding spoken or written information, legal processes, or having awareness of support.

The Users – Kinds of Support (DE and DwA)

To be eligible for Digital Support, users must be assessed as either:

Digitally Excluded (DE) - This is where someone cannot, or chooses not to, engage digitally at all.

Someone who either does not have access or the ability to use a digital device or who chooses not to engage online at all (preferring paper and so on).

1. The user has experience and ability in using a digital device but doesn't have access to a suitable device.
2. The user has an additional barrier that prevents them from engaging online.
3. The user has no experience or ability in using a digital device.

Digital with Assistance (DwA) - This is where someone can engage but may need help to do so.

Someone who can engage (either since they have access, some ability or some confidence) but needs more confidence and support to engage with our online services.

1. The user only wants to check the procedure. WAD will resolve these queries over the phone, appointments will not be required.
2. The user is not confident in engaging with HMCTS services online and WAD have been unable to resolve the query over the phone.

The following slides illustrate how the kind of support required is assessed.

The users – personas and mindsets

HMCTS know that their users often prefer to engage with paper forms rather than the equivalent online service. Digital exclusion is one reason for this, but there may be many other factors.

Behaviours and attitudes towards digital services can be impacted by users' emotional, as well as practical, needs and wants. Sometimes a user's digital skills and capability are not the main factors in their decision making about whether they choose a digital or paper form.

To understand our users and to ensure we offer them the correct support, we've provided some personas on the next few slides, based on user research. The personas show a variety of user 'mindsets' and reflect the diversity of our users. The examples highlight where there may be opportunities to encourage users to consider the digital option.



"There is something for me around losing changes, keeping record. I am clearly an admin person"

Bio: Retired banker, lives with wife, digitally confident but takes time to get used to new services and becomes frustrated when doesn't achieve what he sets out to do.

Barriers: Digital skills and confidence in submitting the online form when always used paper before; Understanding what is happening and likes to have everything out in front of him so he can see the whole journey; Having trust in the system and worried that he will not be able to go back and change answers online like he would be able to do in the paper.

User needs: "I need to have confidence that the service will work how I expect it to, I want to get this right the first time."

"I don't understand what the questions on the form want me to say, I don't have anyone to ask?"

Bio: Mini-cab driver, English is a second language, lives alone, uses a smartphone to stay in touch with family abroad but doesn't feel confident in his understanding of what questions he needs to answer.

Barriers: Digital skills and confidence in using smartphone for engaging in a lengthy online application; Understanding what is happening and worried that he will misunderstand the questions and make a mistake which could lead to losing access to resources; Having trust in the system and Communicating effectively.

User needs: "My English is not good, I think I will lose my benefit if I don't receive help."

Angela – Anxious and nervous online



"I thought it would be easier - but it just kept kicking me out"

Bio: Retired and asks husband when needs support, part-time carer for nephew, able to complete basic tasks online like banking and shopping, with the relative amount of confidence.

Barriers: Emotional and mental resource feeling easily overwhelmed by the task at hand; Having trust in the system is unsure about trusting online applications; Support needs and prefers to speak to people to ask questions and resolve the concern.

User needs: "I want to be able to read the forms and come back to them and wasn't sure if this was possible with online applications so prefer paper."

Isabel – Isolated and shielding at home

"I don't have a computer and am too old to learn how to use these things."

Bio: Widow living alone and shielding with long term health problems, has a carer who doesn't speak English and no access to a digital device or ability to engage with online services.

Barriers: Support needs and prefers to speak to people to ask questions and resolve concerns; Access to technology and digital skills and resources given the absence of access and ability to use these; little Understanding of what is happening.

User needs: "I would be fine with a paper form, that's the way I've always done it."

Nick – No money and emotionally anxious

*"I feel like it's gone
from bad to worse and
I don't know how to
make it stop getting
worse."*

Bio: Recently unemployed with no money for internet access, struggling to make ends meet financially and find it hard to ask for help, can become upset when challenged.

Barriers: Emotional and mental resource feeling easily overwhelmed by the task at hand; Having trust in the system is unsure about trusting online applications; Support needs and prefers to speak to people to ask questions and resolve the concern, Access to technology and Finance are also barriers.

User needs: "I can't do this anymore, I don't know where to start and how to get out of the situation I am in, I feel trapped."

Fiona – Feels responsible and wants to do the right thing



"I like to have it all there in front of me. I can see what I'm doing and so can everyone else"

Bio: Civil Servant and mother of 3, **confident in using online forms** but wants to be clear about procedures and “do things the right way”, is helping her mother with HMCTS applications.

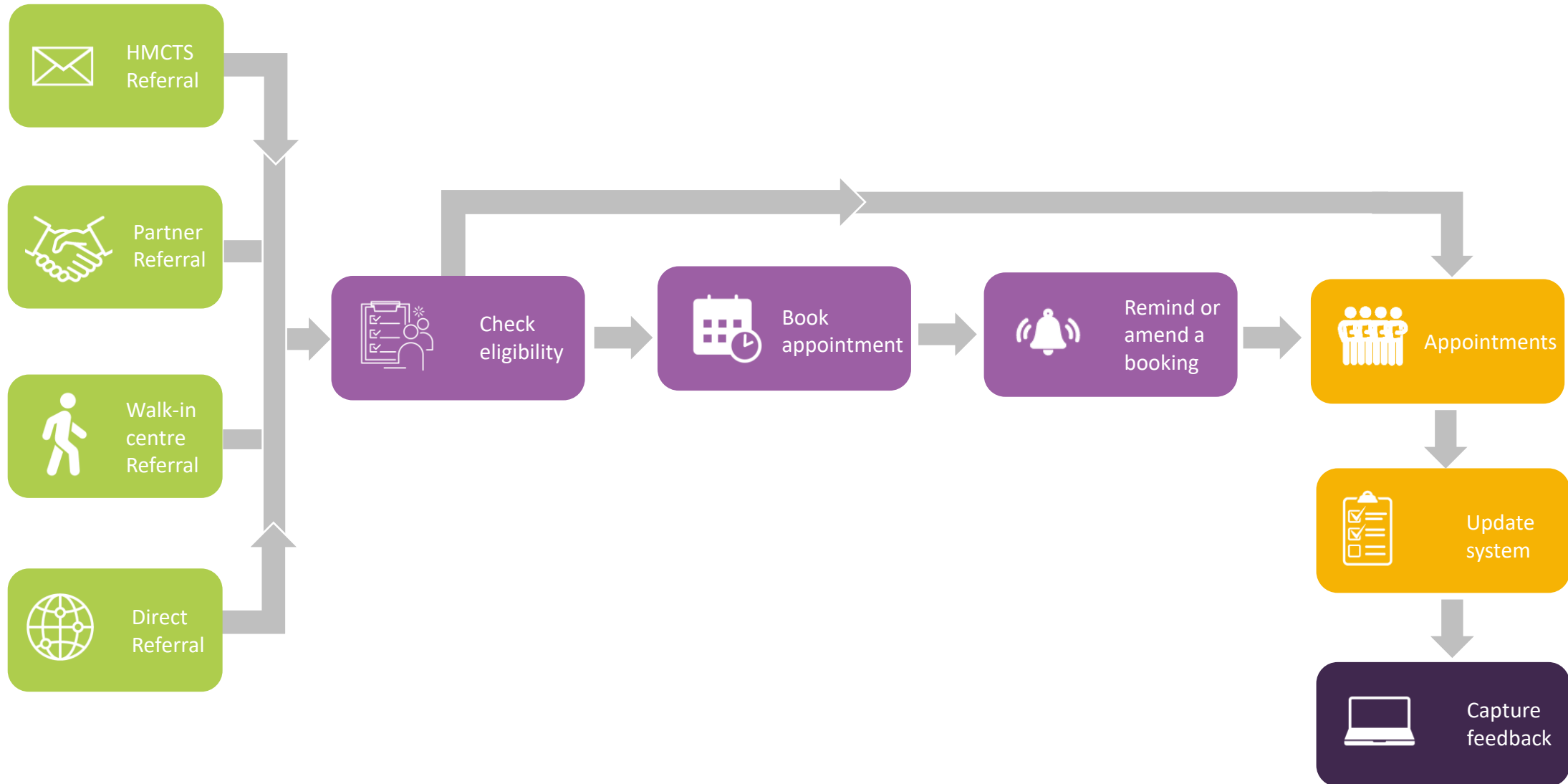
Barriers: Emotional and mental resource feeling overwhelmed by several questions on the application and responsible for getting this right; Time is a limited resource given her other roles; Support needs and prefers to engage other family members to help with decisions on the form.

User needs: “I didn’t quite appreciate the complexities of it all and in hindsight, we should have sought legal advice.”

Understanding the persona eligibility

Persona / Mindset	User Needs					
	Ability to use a device?	Access to a device?	Confidence using our service?	Needs procedural support?	Additional barriers?	Digitally Excluded or with Assistance?
Leslie	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	DwA
Lucas	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes - Language	DwA
Angela	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes - Anxious	DwA
Isabel	No	No	No	Yes	Yes – Long term health issues	DE
Nick	Yes	No	No	Yes	Multiple barriers	DE
Fiona	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Neither

Delivery process



Making contact - Options

- User contacts CTSC and has a preliminary triage and then is transferred onto WAD to book in their appointment
- User walks into their nearby centre and is passed through to WAD as a user of one of the justice services. This would also cover a user calling or emailing their local centre.
- User contacts WAD directly (e.g., after viewing advertising) via:
 - National telephone line: 03300 16 00 51
 - Dedicated email address: support@we-are-digital.co.uk

WAD check the user's eligibility and assess the type of support required:

- Access to a computer, smartphone or laptop
- Internet access (Wi-Fi, broadband)
- Email use, or ability to find something online
- Confidence in using HMCTS online services
- Friends or family members at home who can help with any additional support needs
- Any barriers that prevent the user from engaging with HMCTS online services
- User calls with a tech issue with the website – they would need to be referred to CTSC

If eligible for in-depth Digital Support, the user is booked in for face-to-face or remote support through the network.

Booking confirmation received - User

- Email confirmation
- SMS confirmation, and a reminder before their appointment
- Or letter confirmation (if they don't have an email address or a mobile phone)

Booking confirmation received - Network

- Booking confirmation including details and timings
- Guidance relating to the specific service being supported will be provided.
- Links to the area on the .gov website for their guidance notes
- Links to the surveys to be completed

Arranging the appointment

We are Digital will refer users to you via your selected email address which you provided during the onboarding phase. The initial booking will be made within the timeframes you have provided for availability. The user's name and contact number will be provided within the booking email, alongside their unique ID and the type of support required.

All emails will be sent from support@we-are-digital.co.uk

Pre-appointment – Courtesy Call

Each user with a confirmed booking must receive a courtesy call within 1 working day before the planned appointment. All of the following topics are detailed in the booking confirmation email:

- Who they will be meeting with
- Where they will be meeting
- Date and Time of the meeting
- What will be covered in the session
- How long the session will last
- What to do if they are no longer able to attend

The work we do for HMCTS will often touch on very sensitive issues, with raw emotions attached. It is therefore very important that all users are treated with respect and dignity, whilst representatives of the Digital Support service maintain a non-judgemental approach.

Some key points:

- Introduce yourself and confirm the purpose of the session
- Check the user's preferred language or communication method
- Ensure you are using an appropriate tone, to demonstrate that you are listening and that you understand what the user is saying.
- Be respectful and allow the user to tell their story
- Remain calm and show empathy
- Ask only relevant questions that add value to the Digital Support being provided
- Remain impartial
- Signposting; if the end-users raise something outside of the scope of the session, acknowledge the point and signpost them to a relevant service.

- **Local Centre support:** The user travels to their local centre who are trained in how to deliver Digital Support and have the systems ready to provide support.
- **Over the phone support:** Our in-house agents, can provide support and they can transfer over to partners
- **In Home support (face to face):** For users who require a home visit, WAD will arrange this via its network of dedicated trainers. If there is no trainer close to the user's location, WAD will approach the closest delivery partner to the customer's home address and request support to meet the customer's need.
- **Remote Delivery support:** Available for a user who requires support, but cannot travel to a partner centre, or does not want a home visit. WAD will arrange for remote delivery via the most appropriate platform, such as Google Meet, Microsoft Teams, or Zoom.

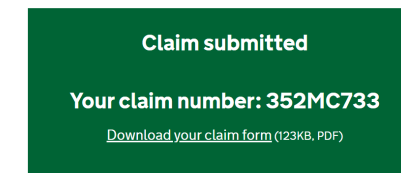
Successful application

- Once support has been delivered via any of our channels, the user will be required to fill out a short “outcome” survey. The survey acts as evidence of service delivery (and proof of the duration of the support session) and it provides valuable feedback on the service experience, social impact and outcome.
- Network will be required to complete a survey stating the user’s reference number.
- An outcome is defined as complete when a HMCTS online form has been submitted, and a Partner survey form has been submitted to We Are Digital including the HMCTS Claim reference number. At this point the outcome can be submitted for payment.
- Partners should also assist the claimant to complete a user’s survey, however if the user refuses, this will not impact the case or the payment for the outcome.
- SSCS service the user will have to submit their national insurance number

Unsuccessful application

- Complete outcome survey
- User will have to call WAD and arrange further appointments

User claim number example below



What happens next

Mary Richards has until 4pm on 26 March 2022 to respond to your claim. They can ask for an extra 14 days if they need it. We'll email you when they respond.

You can request a County Court Judgment (CCJ) against them if they don't respond.

If the defendant pays you

You need to sign in to your account to tell us you've been paid.

[What did you think of this service? \(opens in new tab\)](#).

[Go to your account](#)

Network survey submission

Our end of session surveys (completed by every user/support worker) act as a verification that the appointment has taken place. Each user that is booked will be allocated a unique reference number in the system (sent to the user and delivery partner) and this will be replicated on the survey they complete at the end of the session.

This is how we know that the appointment has taken place and the outcome has been achieved. Surveys are handled through an online survey platform called TypeForm, from which we pull all of the data using an API

If our API doesn't find a matching survey code for the booked session code, it assumes the session has been missed and reports it as such. Follow-up reports are produced automatically and this is discussed with partners at month-end to show their activity and is linked to payments and funding.

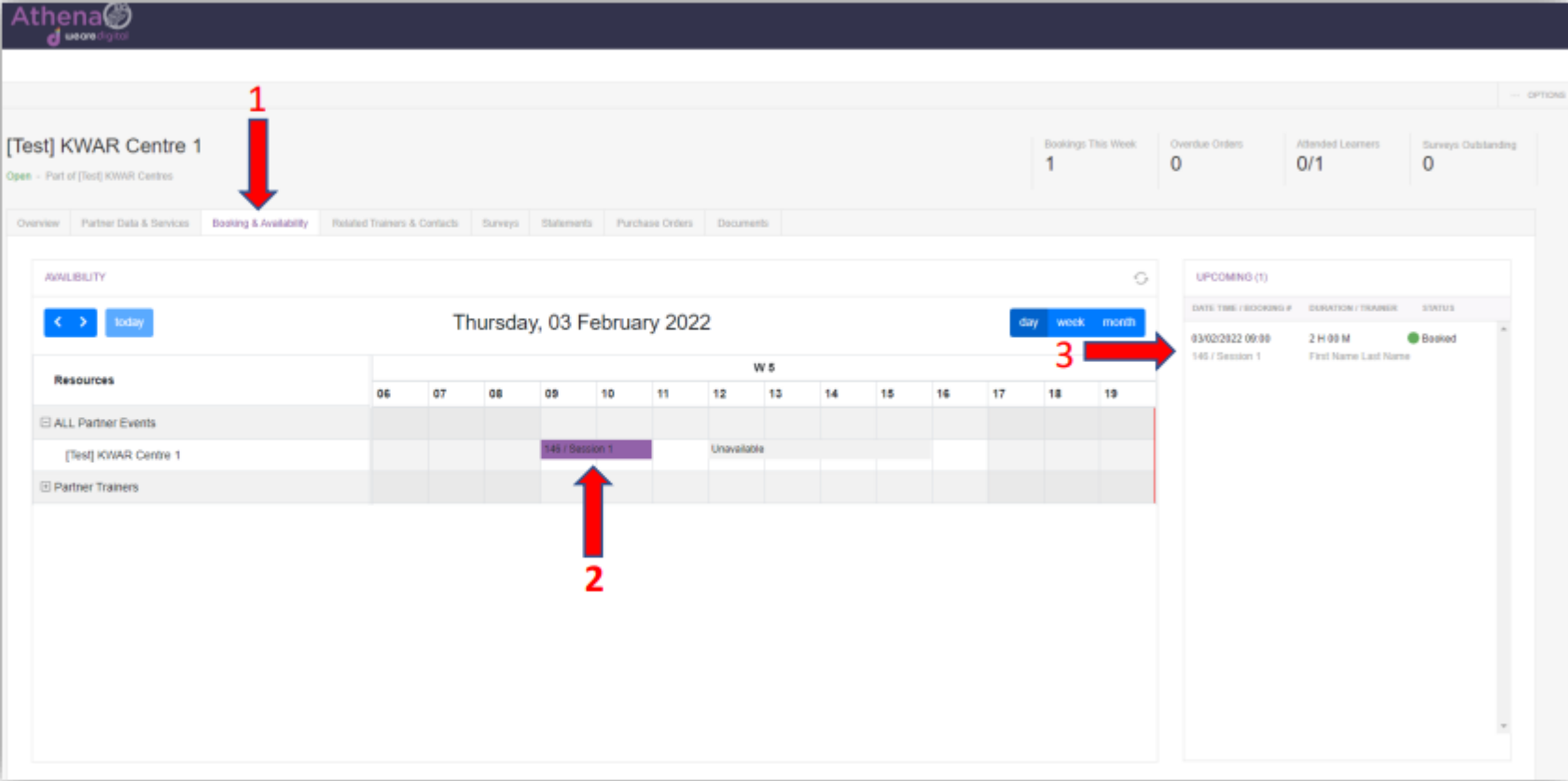
Athena

WAD system tracks the initial booking with a bespoke customer code, and an automated API then looks for the matching survey code post-session to see if it happened. If it doesn't find a match, it is noted as a "missed" session. This links to payments and reporting for HMCTS

Athena user guide is ready to be downloaded on the following [link](#)

Accessing and completing bookings

To access a booking, go to the “Booking & Availability” tab and click on either the calendar event or the upcoming booking record.

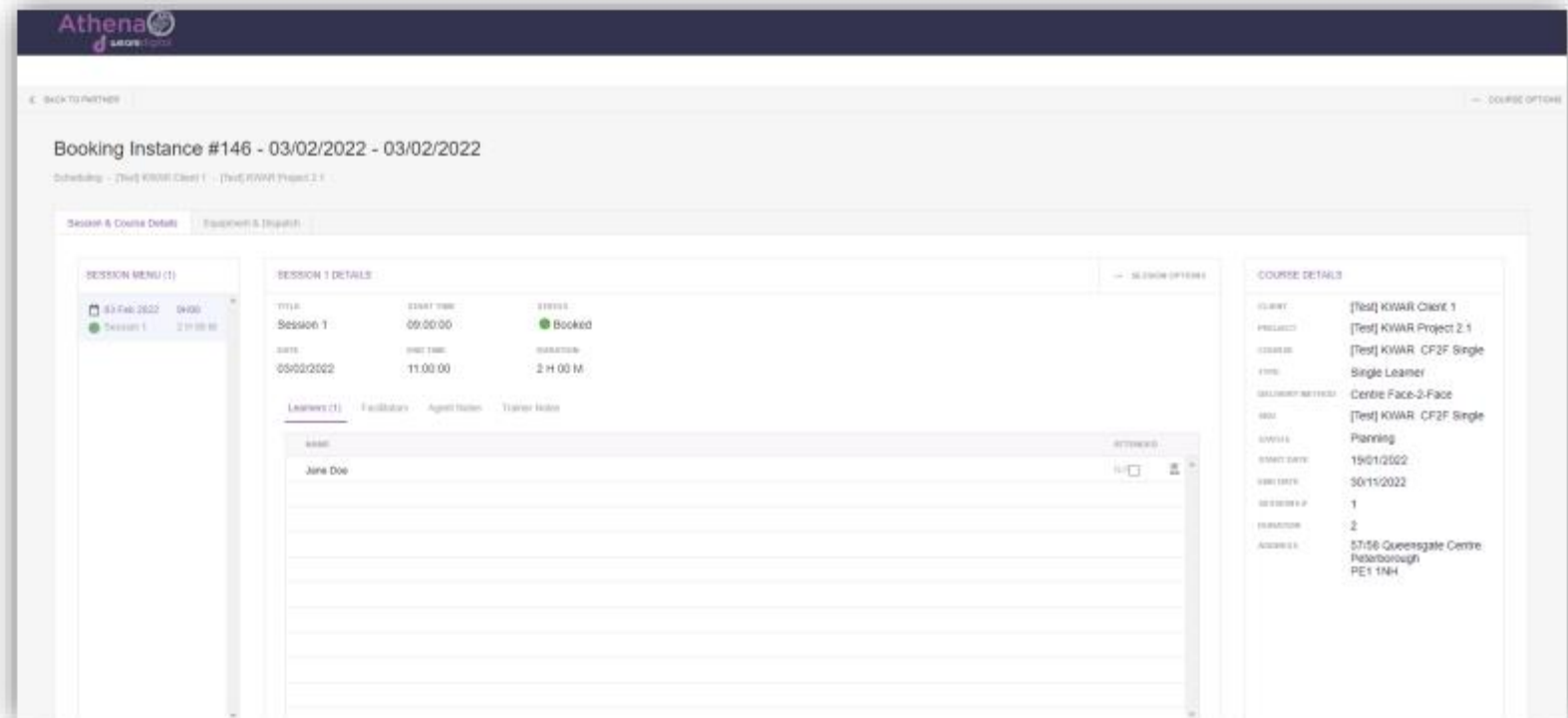


The screenshot displays the Athena system interface for the 'Booking & Availability' tab. The interface includes a header with the Athena logo and a navigation bar with tabs: Overview, Partner Data & Services, **Booking & Availability**, Related Trainers & Contacts, Surveys, Statements, Purchase Orders, and Documents. A red arrow labeled '1' points to the 'Booking & Availability' tab. Below the navigation bar, there is a section for '[Test] KWAR Centre 1' with a status of 'Open - Part of [Test] KWAR Centres'. To the right, there are summary statistics: Bookings This Week (1), Overdue Orders (0), Attended Learners (0/1), and Surveys Outstanding (0). The main content area is divided into two sections. The left section, titled 'AVAILABILITY', shows a calendar for Thursday, 03 February 2022. It includes a table with columns for dates (06 to 19) and rows for Resources (ALL Partner Events, [Test] KWAR Centre 1, and Partner Trainers). A red arrow labeled '2' points to the '145 / Session 1' event in the calendar. The right section, titled 'UPCOMING (1)', shows a table with columns for DATE TIME / BOOKING #, DURATION / TRAINER, and STATUS. A red arrow labeled '3' points to the '03/02/2022 09:00' booking record, which is marked as 'Booked'.

DATE TIME / BOOKING #	DURATION / TRAINER	STATUS
03/02/2022 09:00 145 / Session 1	2 H 00 M First Name Last Name	Booked

Accessing and completing bookings

In the booking record, you will see all the details regarding the booking instance.

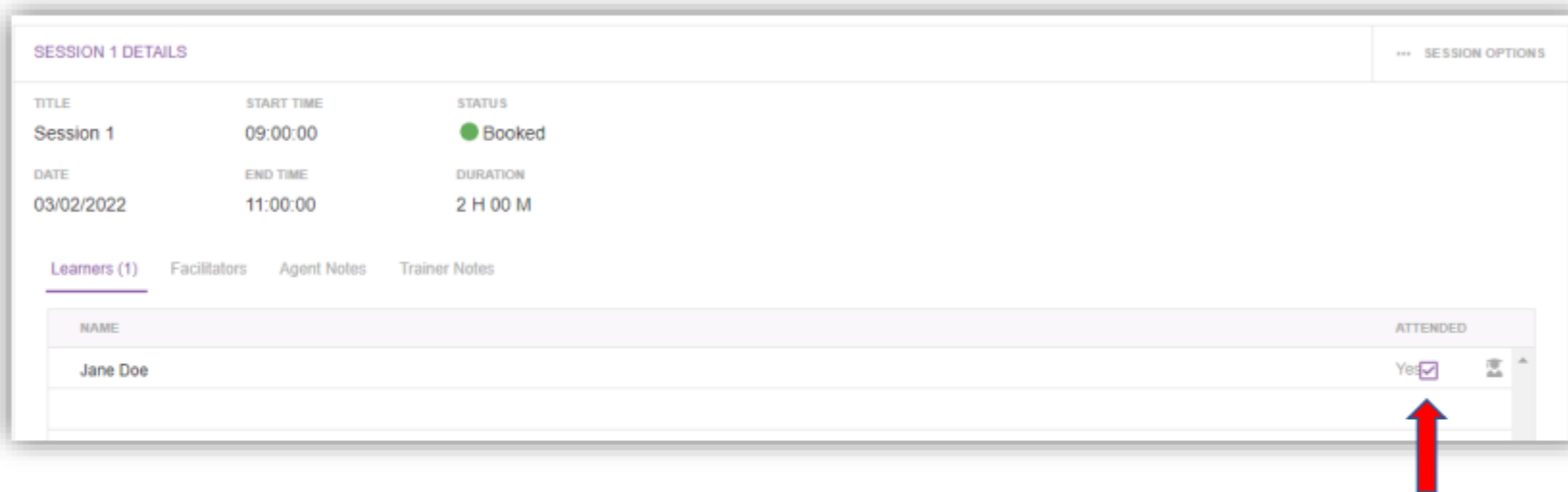


The screenshot displays the Athena booking system interface. At the top, the header shows "Athena" and "SAGE". Below the header, the main content area is titled "Booking Instance #146 - 03/02/2022 - 03/02/2022". The interface is divided into several sections:

- Session Menu (1):** A list of sessions, with "Session 1" selected, showing a date of "03 Feb 2022" and a time of "09:00".
- Session 1 Details:** A table showing session details. The table has columns for "TITLE", "START TIME", and "STATUS". The row for "Session 1" shows a start time of "09:00:00" and a status of "Booked". Below this, there are tabs for "Learners (1)", "Facilitators", "Agent Notes", and "Trainer Notes". The "Learners (1)" tab is active, showing a list of learners with the name "Jane Doe" visible.
- Course Details:** A table showing course information. The table has columns for "COURSE", "PROJECT", "COURSE ID", "TYPE", "DELIVERY METHOD", "MODE", "COURSE", "START DATE", "END DATE", "DURATION", and "ADDRESS". The row for "Session 1" shows a course of "[Test] KWAR CF2F Single", a project of "[Test] KWAR Project 2.1", a course ID of "Single Learner", a type of "Centre Face-2-Face", a mode of "[Test] KWAR CF2F Single", a course of "Planning", a start date of "19/01/2022", an end date of "30/11/2022", a duration of "1", and an address of "57:56 Queensgate Centre, Peterborough, PE1 1NH".

Accessing and completing bookings

WE HIGHLY RECOMMEND COMPLETING THESE NEXT STEPS OF THE PROCESS IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE SESSION HAS BEEN COMPLETED AND WITH CLIENT STILL IN ATTENDANCE



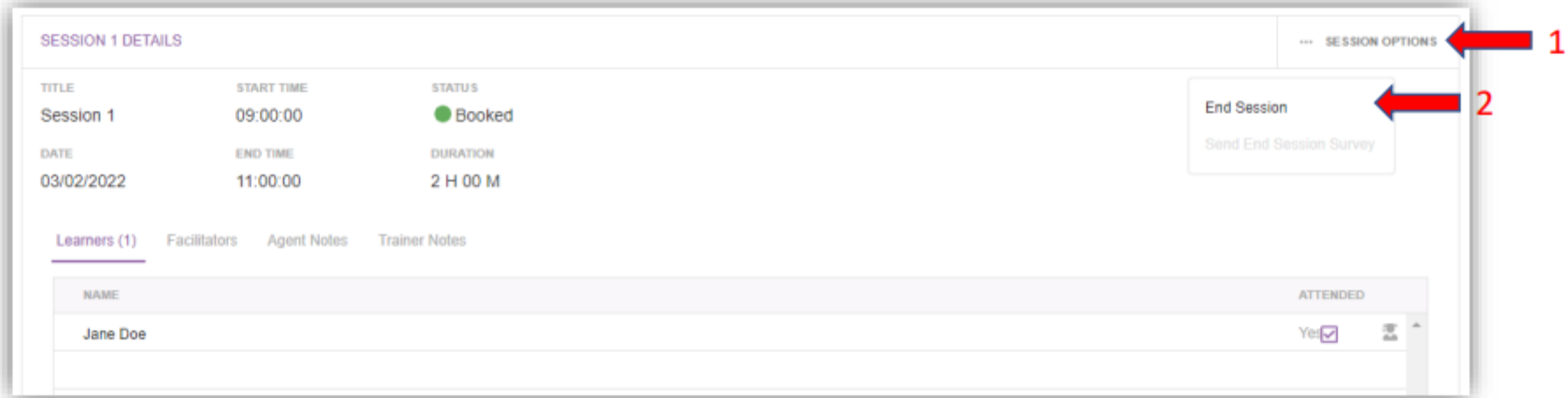
The screenshot shows a web interface for 'SESSION 1 DETAILS'. It includes fields for Title, Start Time, Status, Date, End Time, and Duration. Below these is a tabbed interface with 'Learners (1)' selected. A table lists learners with columns for Name and Attended. A red arrow points to the 'Yes' checkbox in the 'Attended' column for 'Jane Doe'.

SESSION 1 DETAILS			SESSION OPTIONS
TITLE	START TIME	STATUS	
Session 1	09:00:00	● Booked	
DATE	END TIME	DURATION	
03/02/2022	11:00:00	2 H 00 M	
Learners (1) Facilitators Agent Notes Trainer Notes			
NAME		ATTENDED	
Jane Doe		Yes ☒	

If the learner attended their session, click the checkbox located below the “Attended” column.

If the learner **did not** attend their session (no-show), **do not** tick the checkbox, go straight to the next step.

Accessing and completing bookings



The screenshot shows the 'SESSION 1 DETAILS' interface. At the top right, there is a button labeled '... SESSION OPTIONS' with a red arrow and the number '1' pointing to it. Below this button, a dropdown menu is open, showing two options: 'End Session' and 'Send End Session Survey'. A red arrow and the number '2' point to the 'End Session' option. The main content area displays session details in a table format:

TITLE	START TIME	STATUS
Session 1	09:00:00	● Booked

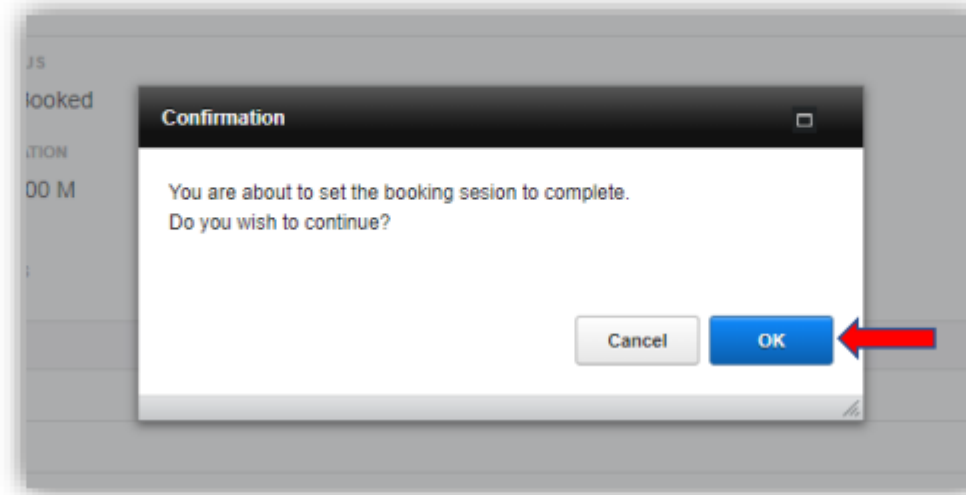
DATE	END TIME	DURATION
03/02/2022	11:00:00	2 H 00 M

Below the tables, there are tabs for 'Learners (1)', 'Facilitators', 'Agent Notes', and 'Trainer Notes'. The 'Learners (1)' tab is selected. It shows a table with the following data:

NAME	ATTENDED
Jane Doe	Yes ☒

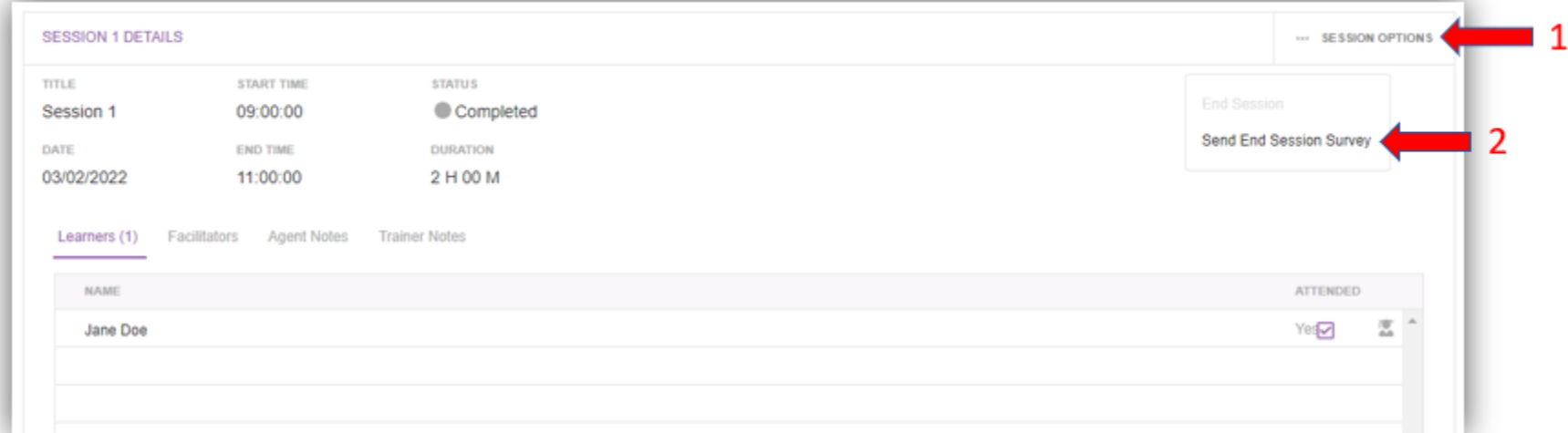
To complete the session, select “Session Options” at the top right of the session details and click “End Session”.

Accessing and completing bookings



A warning will appear asking you to confirm that you wish to complete the session. Click “OK” to confirm or “Cancel” to go back.

Accessing and completing bookings



SESSION 1 DETAILS

... SESSION OPTIONS

TITLE	START TIME	STATUS
Session 1	09:00:00	Completed
DATE	END TIME	DURATION
03/02/2022	11:00:00	2 H 00 M

Learners (1) Facilitators Agent Notes Trainer Notes

NAME	ATTENDED
Jane Doe	Yes ☒

End Session

Send End Session Survey

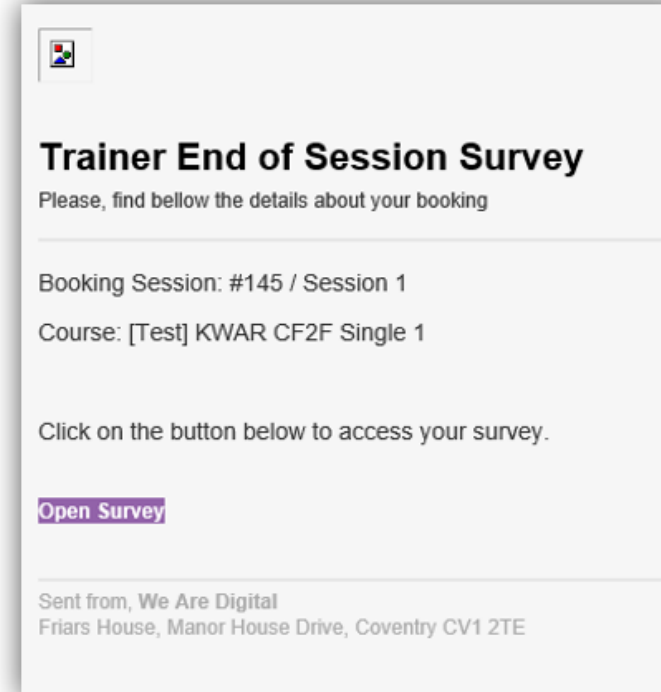
Once the session is completed, select the “Session Options” button in the top right and click “Send End Session Survey”.

This will send the required surveys to both the Learner and Delivery Partner.

Accessing and completing bookings

You will receive an email to your elected email address that appears similar to the example to the right.

Click the “Open Survey” link to be directed to the survey page.



YOU MUST COMPLETE THIS SURVEY AND SUBMIT A VALID REFERENCE IN ORDER TO QUALIFY FOR PAYMENT. REMIND THE CLIENT TO RETAIN THE REFERENCE NUMBER

6 → HMCTS

A set of questions specific to HMCTS project (National Digital Support Service).

Please click continue to proceed

Continue

press Enter ↵

Example run through

a. HMCTS Service *

What service did you support the user with?

You can choose 1 more

- ☒ A Appeal a benefit decision (Social Security and Child Support) ✓
- ☐ B Submit a plea for an offence (Single Justice Service)
- ☐ C Divorce
- ☐ D Probate
- ☐ E OCMC (Online Civil Money Claims)
- ☐ F Help with Fees

OK ✓

Select the service

b. Appeal type *

What type of appeal did you support the user with?

Choose as many as you like

☐ A AA - Attendance Allowance

☐ B DLA - Disability Living Allowance

☐ C ESA - Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)

☐ D JSA - Job Seekers Allowance

☐ E IIDB- Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit

☒ F PIP - Personal Independence Payment (PIP) ✓

☐ G UC - Universal Credit (UC)

☐ H Other (please specify)

OK ✓

c. Outcomes *

How many Outcomes have you delivered in this session?

0	1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---	---

OK ✓

Submitted application(s) reference number(s)

Please provide the reference number(s) for each application submitted as part of this support session with the user.

For SSCS, Divorce and Probate, when online applications are submitted, the reference is generated as soon as the application is created. The format is a 16 digit reference e.g. 1234-5678-1234-5678.

For SSCS and Divorce, there is a second reference that is generated later with no fixed time frame for this - SSCS format starts with SC followed by 10 digits e.g. SC123/20/01234 (this is issued with a letter from HMCTS to confirm receipt of the SSCS1 and that the appeal has been accepted) but for Divorce, this will vary.

For SJS, when a plea has been submitted online, no new reference number is generated – just the one already given that is generated when the case is initially sent to court (so can be case number, URN or account number – usually found at the top of the SJPN).

Continue

press Enter ↵

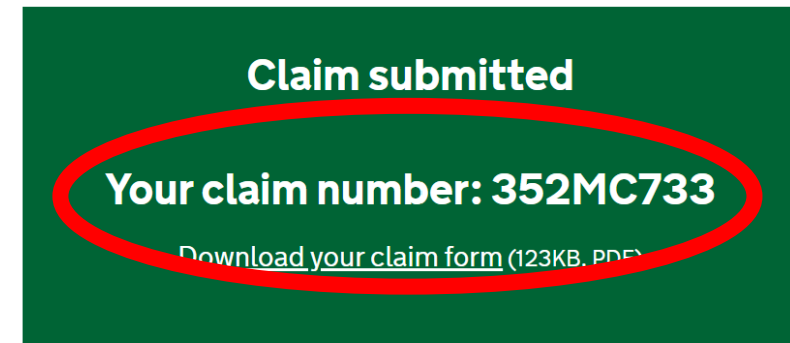
d. Outcome 1 reference number(s) *

What is the submitted application reference number(s)?

Type your answer here...



User claim number example below



What happens next

Mary Richards has until 4pm on 26 March 2022 to respond to your claim. They can ask for an extra 14 days if they need it. We'll email you when they respond.

You can request a County Court Judgment (CCJ) against them if they don't respond.

If the defendant pays you

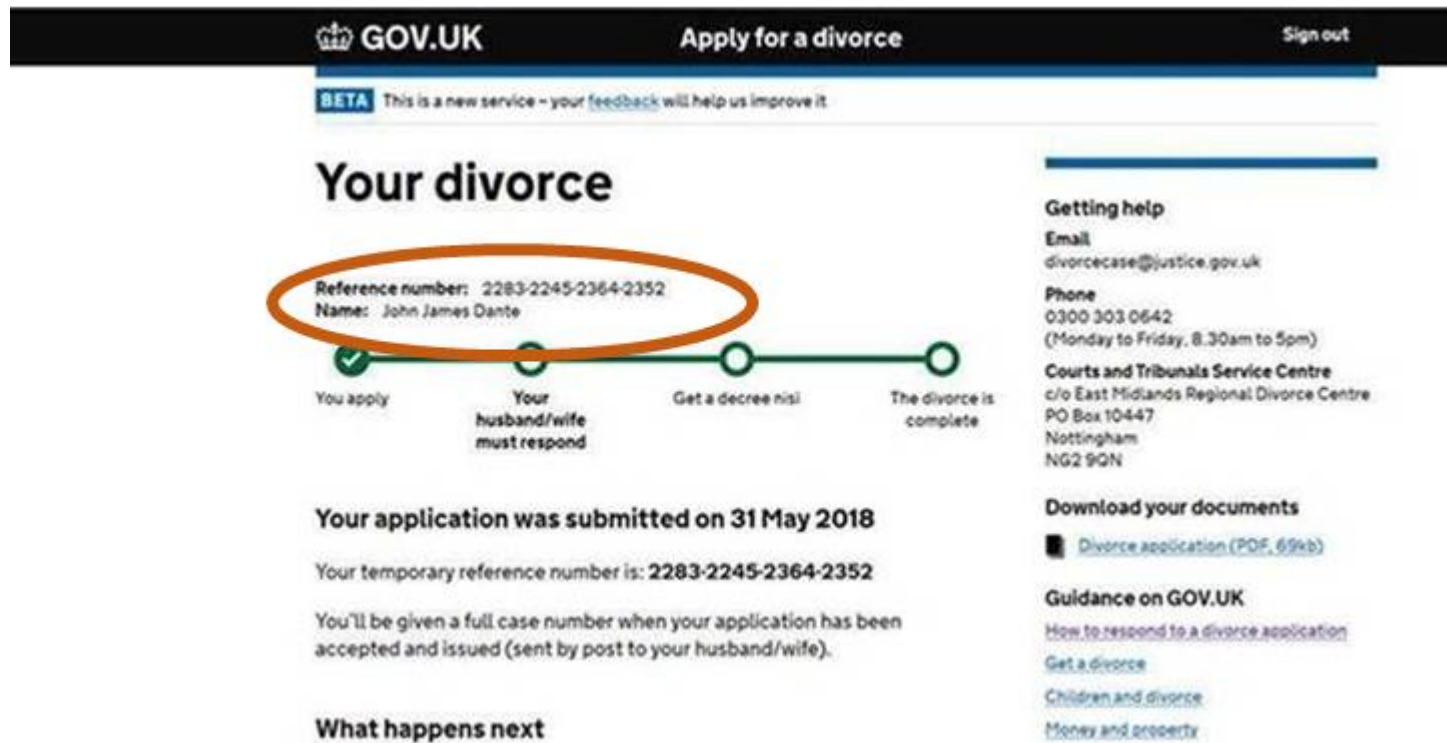
You need to sign in to your account to tell us you've been paid.

[What did you think of this service? \(opens in new tab\).](#)

[Go to your account](#)

Reference numbers for survey submission - examples

- For SSCS, Divorce and Probate, when online applications are submitted, the reference is generated as soon as the application is created. The format is a 16 digit reference e.g. 1234-5678-1234-5678



GOV.UK Apply for a divorce Sign out

BETA This is a new service – your feedback will help us improve it.

Your divorce

Reference number: 2283-2245-2364-2352
Name: John James Dante

✓ You apply → Your husband/wife must respond → Get a decree nisi → The divorce is complete

Your application was submitted on 31 May 2018

Your temporary reference number is: **2283-2245-2364-2352**

You'll be given a full case number when your application has been accepted and issued (sent by post to your husband/wife).

What happens next

Getting help
Email
divorcecase@justice.gov.uk
Phone
0300 303 0642
(Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5pm)
Courts and Tribunals Service Centre
c/o East Midlands Regional Divorce Centre
PO Box 10447
Nottingham
NG2 9QN

Download your documents
Divorce application (PDF, 69kb)

Guidance on GOV.UK
[How to respond to a divorce application](#)
[Get a divorce](#)
[Children and divorce](#)
[Money and property](#)

Reference numbers for survey submission

- For SSCS and Divorce, there is a **second reference** that is generated later with no fixed time frame for this - SSCS format starts with SC followed by 10 digits e.g SC123/20/01234 (this is issued with a letter from HMCTS to confirm receipt of the SSCS1 and that the appeal has been accepted) but for Divorce, this will vary.
- **If you do not receive this please include the users National insurance number**
- For SJS, when a plea has been submitted online, **no new reference number is generated** – just the one already given that is generated when the case is initially sent to court (so can be case number, URN or account number – usually found at the top of the SJPN).

Payment on a per outcome basis

- £35 for each outcome
- Updated 12th May 2022

Accessing regional/local support, postcode finder, local specialist centres

Our call centre is experienced in dealing with people who need more than the service they are calling about or have further situational issues.

As the leading digital and financial inclusion provider to social housing, we are acutely aware that many users who call us are leading difficult lives and it is very rarely about one standalone issue.

All staff are trained on safeguarding and prevention, updated annually.

All staff are required to do monthly training modules on data security and GDPR through our online training e-learning platform, Bob's Business. Our centre network is diverse and in many cases provide this type of support.

We have found through our work delivering a debt advice service in London, that a friendly tone and a sympathetic approach to solving users' problems can have a major impact on a person's mindset and responsiveness to the call.

We also have a formal safeguarding process, and all our staff are trained on what to do with safeguarding issues, onward organisations to signpost to, including in crisis, and we ensure staff have refresher training sessions (online and in-person)

If you identify a safeguarding concern, you should follow your safeguarding procedure.

- CMC – Civil Money Claims (over £10k)
- CTSC – Courts & Tribunals Service Centres
- GAPS2 – Generic Appeals Processing System
- HWF – Help With Fees
- OCMC – Online Civil Money Claims (under £10k)
- RA – Reasonable Adjustment
- RPC – Regional Processing Centre
- SSCS – Social Security and Child Support
- SJS – Single Justice Service
- SJP – Single Justice Procedure
- SJPN: Single Justice Procedure Notices
- WAD – We are Digital

Systems used:

- MYA – Manage Your Appeal (SSCS)
- SYA – Submit Your Appeal (SSCS)
- Common Platform – new online case management system for digital cases, used for crime and SJS.
- Libra – legacy case management system in Magistrates' Courts. It is being replaced by Common Platform.
- MyHMCTS – single place for law firms and other professional court users to issue, pay for and manage applications to the family and county court and to tribunals.

Document History

Version	Date	Author	Change Status
1.0	27 th January	Daniel McMahon	
1.1	28 th January	Daniel McMahon	National rollout dates updated (Divorce and OCMC)
1.2	11 th February	Daniel McMahon	SJS Training slides
1.3	22 nd March	Daniel McMahon	OCMC and Help with Fees service slides added and SSCS and SJS updated
1.4	11 th May	Daniel McMahon	Divorce and Probate services including with the submissions and payment sections
1.5	12 th May	Daniel McMahon	Payment model change – slide 168
1.6	12 th September	Daniel McMahon	Slide changes following client updates