

Welcome courtwatchers!

Volunteer training slides

C **URTWATCH**
LONDON



Introductions



What we will cover today

- Introductions
- About CourtWatch London
- About the magistrates' courts
- The courtwatcher role
- BREAK
- Navigating the magistrates' court
- Q&A with guest speaker
- Volunteer wellbeing
- Communications
- Photo!
- Finish



linktr.ee/courtwatchlondon

NB Please complete the volunteer survey sent to you by email. Thank you!

About CourtWatch London





For a **fair,**
open, and
compassionate
justice system.

Transform Justice



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CourtWatch London - our aims

- Normalise community presence in London magistrates' courts
- Gather evidence on what's working and what's not working in our magistrates' courts
- Show policy makers what the public think of the justice served there
- Make our magistrates' courts fairer, more just and more accountable



The story so far



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What is a magistrates' court?



What is a magistrates' court?

- Lowest criminal court
- 95% of all criminal court cases end in the magistrates' court
- Over 1 million cases per year
- Most people plead guilty
- No juries



Types of cases in a magistrates' court

Summary only	Drink driving Theft from a shop Common assault Threatening words & behaviour Criminal damage
Triable either way	Burglary Supply drugs Affray Actual bodily harm Possession of a bladed article Assault emergency worker
Indictable only	Grievous bodily harm Rape Murder

The diagram illustrates a courtroom layout with the following participants and their positions:

- A:** A woman standing at a witness box on the left side of the court.
- B:** Three judges (two men and one woman) seated at the high bench at the front of the court.
- C:** A man seated at a desk in the center of the court, likely the clerk or a legal representative.
- D:** A man standing on the right side of the court, holding a document, possibly a lawyer or witness.
- E:** A woman standing at a witness box on the left side of the court, behind participant A.
- F:** A man seated at a desk in the foreground, facing away from the viewer, likely a legal representative or witness.
- G:** Two groups of people seated at desks on the left and right sides of the court, likely the jury or additional legal representatives.

Key: **A** Witness **B** Magistrates **C** Clerk of the court
D Lawyers for the prosecution and the defence
E Court usher **F** Defendant **G** Others

Types of hearings in a magistrates' court

- Plea entry
- Bail/remand
- Trial
- Sentencing
- First appearance
- Single justice procedure-related hearings
- Other
- Questions?

The courtwatching role

Form with checkboxes and handwritten text:

Other/uncle
M / F / NK :

Gypsy, Roma, Irish Traveller ☐

Mixed/ Mult ethnicities ☐

Other (please

Trial ☒ Plea entry ☐

Self represented

video link ☐

S ☐ Clerk ☐ Witness ☐ Oth

Unsure ☐ If yes, who? ☒

About the courtwatching role

As a courtwatcher you will -

- visit a London magistrates' court on any weekday or Saturday morning
- observe criminal hearings
- write down what happens
- send us your notes afterwards
- courtwatch for a minimum of two days

the defendant is remanded to custody

What ground(s) were given to justify remand? Concerns regarding...

Failure to surrender ☐

Commence offence while on ☐

Other (please specify):

Your reflections/reactions/further notes (use additional notes pages if needed)

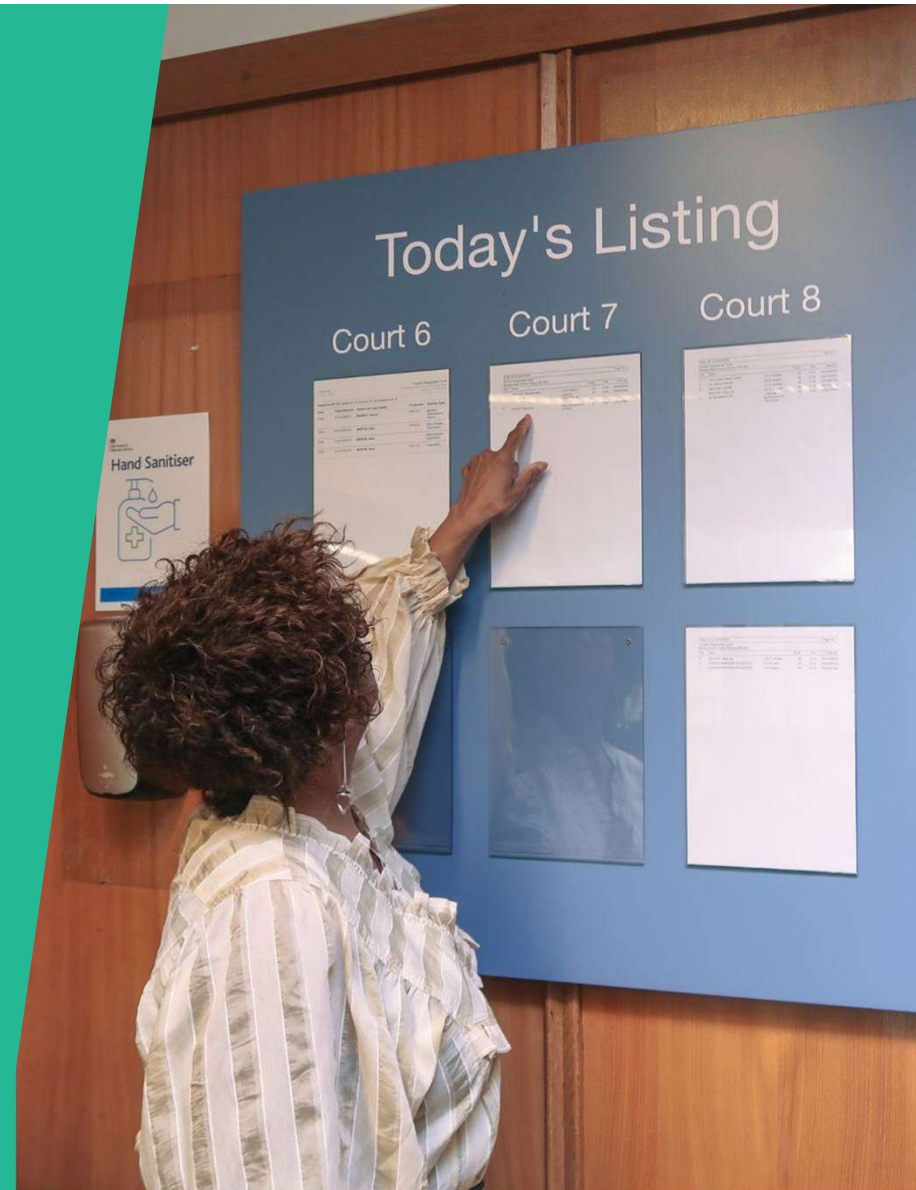
Really really long wait for defendant in custody to be brought. Why are they so late? What is the hold up? They are believed to be coming here Forest Gate. Not exactly Timbuktu is it? Then they say not expecting case until Defence lawyers not ready so they all went away again.

18-25, please complete additional 'young adult' form

Break



Navigating the courtroom





Courthouse security

Court lists





Court
helpdesk

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Public Information

Court & Tribunal rules

What you cannot bring into the hearing rooms



Mobile phones

You are **not allowed** to use mobile phones in the hearing rooms.



No photos or video

It is an **offence** to take unauthorised photos or record video anywhere in the building. Audio recordings are not allowed in hearings rooms.



Food and drink

You are **not allowed** to bring food or drink into the hearing rooms.

 HM Courts & Tribunals Service

Expect Inspect Respect
#SaferCourts

gov.uk/entering-court-or-tribunal-building

 HM Courts & Tribunals Service

Facilities in this building

These facilities are available in this building for all court and tribunal users. Please ask a member of staff if you need any help finding them.



Hearing rooms fitted with a hearing loop and portable hearing loop



Private interview room



Lifts



Accessible toilets



Drinking water



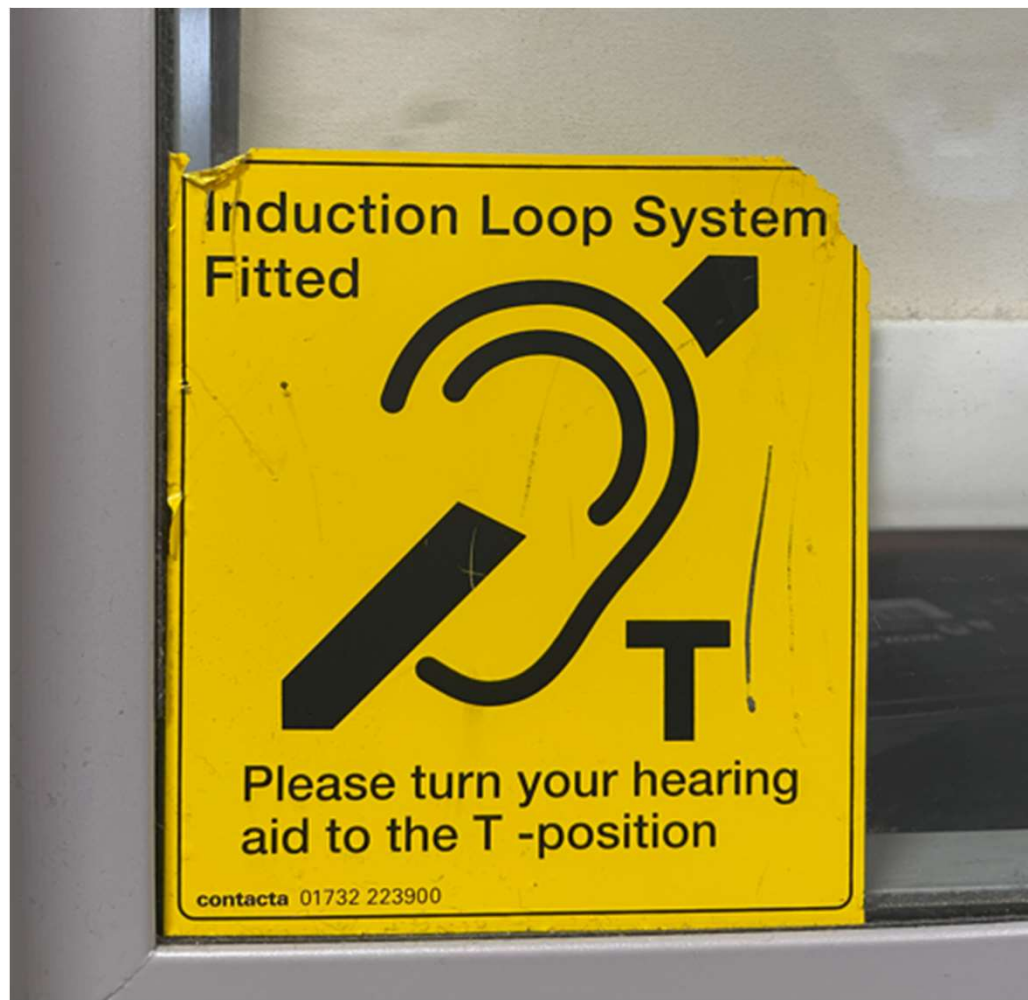
A multi-faith / quiet room is available.

For more information about facilities in this building, please visit:
courtribunalfinder.service.gov.uk

Justice matters

HMCTS, 01 December 2018

Rules for the public gallery



**Audibility
problems**

Navigating the magistrates' court - continued

- Court timings
- Reporting restrictions
- Engaging with other people in the court

**What are your
concerns or
questions?**

Q&A with guest speaker

Volunteer wellbeing

- Taking care of yourself
- Fortnightly (optional) online check-ins open to all volunteers
- Email us if you have an issue/question in the meantime
- If urgent and in working hours contact us on WhatsApp

Courtwatch London communications

- Social media guidance
- How you can get involved
- Follow us on @CourtWatchLDN

NEWS | UK

Court staff 'do not understand spirit of open justice' as public thrown out of hearings, report reveals

Members of the public say they face 'hostility' at court and have been blocked from watching trials



COURTWATCH HAS CALLED FOR A MAJOR OVERHAUL OF OPEN JUSTICE MEASURES IN MAGISTRATES COURT



CourtWatch London
@CourtWatchLDN

COURTWATCHING BEGINS

Milestone alert! This week our first tranche of volunteers completed courtwatching training and started visiting courts. Courtwatchers will be observing London magistrates' courts until the end of this year.

What are courtwatchers seeing so far? 🗣️



Inside Croydon



Volunteers wanted to make sure justice is seen to be done



insidecroydon

1 month ago

A public-interest charity is recruiting volunteers to become the eyes and ears of their community in Croydon's courts.



Enjoy your day in court: Transform Justice wants you to volunteer as an observer

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Next steps

Next training session will cover:

- Talking through the forms
- How to upload your notes afterwards
- Travel and lunch expenses process
- Your first courtwatch

The image shows a close-up of a courtwatching form. The form is divided into several sections. The top section is for 'M / F / NK :'. It has three columns: 'Black (British, Caribbean or African) ☐', 'Gypsy, Roma, Irish Traveller ☐', and 'Mixed/ Multiple ethnicities ☐'. There is also a section for 'Other (please specify)'. Below this is a section for 'Sentencing ☒', 'Trial ☒', and 'Plea entry ☐'. The next section is for 'No ☒', 'Self represented ☒', 'Courtroom ☐', 'Video link ☐', 'Presence ☐', 'CPS ☐', 'Clerk ☐', 'Witness ☐', and 'Other ☐'. The bottom section is for 'No ☒', 'Unsure ☐', and 'If yes, who? ☐'. The form is filled out with handwritten marks, including checkmarks and the words 'Self represented'.

Thank you!

