

# JUDICIAL REVIEW AND COURTS BILL

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### What these notes do

These Explanatory Notes relate to the Judicial Review and Courts Bill as introduced in the House of Commons on 21 July 2021 (Bill 152).

- These Explanatory Notes have been prepared by the Ministry of Justice in order to assist the reader of the Bill and to help inform debate on it. They do not form part of the Bill and have not been endorsed by Parliament.
- These Explanatory Notes explain what each part of the Bill will mean in practice; provide background information on the development of policy; and provide additional information on how the Bill will affect existing legislation in this area.
- These Explanatory Notes might best be read alongside the Bill. They are not, and are not intended to be, a comprehensive description of the Bill.

## Table of Contents

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Page of these Notes</b>
<b>Overview of the Bill</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Policy background</b>	<b>16</b>
Judicial Review	16
Remedies	20
<i>Cart</i> Judicial Reviews ( <i>Cart</i> JRs)	26
Criminal Courts	27
Enabling written/online preliminary pre-trial proceedings and more flexible allocation of cases	31
Removal of Local Justice Areas (LJAs)	35
Introducing a new AOCSSP procedure	35
Online Procedure Rule Committee	37
Employment Tribunals	38
Transferring responsibility for the making of procedure rules for ETs and EAT from the Secretary of State for BEIS to the Tribunal Procedure Committee	39
Aligning the power to make Employment Tribunal Procedure Rules with the TPC's power to make Tribunal Procedure Rules	40

Providing for two additional members to be appointed to the TPC	41
Allow for the delegation of judicial functions in the ET and the EAT to legal case officers	41
Make the Lord Chancellor responsible for determining the composition of the employment tribunals and EAT.	41
Transfer responsibility for the remuneration of ET judges from the SoS BEIS to the Lord Chancellor	42
Coroner's Courts	42
Discontinuance of investigation where cause of death becomes clear	43
Power to conduct non-contentious inquests in writing	44
Use of audio or video links at inquests	45
No requirement for jury at inquest where coronavirus suspected	46
Phased transition to new coroner areas	46
City of London Courthouses	49
<b>Legal background</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Territorial extent and application</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Commentary on provisions of Bill</b>	<b>56</b>
Part 1: Judicial Review	56

Clause 1: Quashing orders	56
Clause 2: Exclusion of review of Upper Tribunal's permission-to-appeal decisions	65
Part 2: Courts, Tribunals and Coroners	70
Chapter 1: Criminal Procedure	70
Clause 3: Automatic online conviction and penalty for certain summary offences	71
Clause 4: Guilty plea in writing: extension to proceedings following police charge	76
Clause 5: Extension of single justice procedure to corporations	80
Clause 6: Written procedure for indicating plea and determining mode of trial: adults	80
Clause 7: Initial option for adult accused to reject summary trial at hearing	92
Clause 8: Written procedure for indicating plea and determining mode of trial: children	96
Clause 9: Powers to proceed if accused absent from allocation hearing	103
Clause 10: Sending cases to Crown Court for trial	109
Clause 11: Powers of Crown Court to remit cases to the magistrates' court	112
Clause 12: Powers of youth court to transfer cases if accused turns 18	115

Clause 13: Involvement of parent or guardian in proceedings conducted in writing	117
Clause 14: Removal of certain requirements for hearings about procedural matters	119
Clause 15: Documents to be served in accordance with Criminal Procedure Rules	121
Clause 16: Power to make consequential or supplementary provision	121
Clause 17: Consequential and related amendments	122
Chapter 2: Online Procedure	122
Clause 18: Rules for online procedure in courts and tribunals	122
Clause 19: “Specified kinds” of proceedings	125
Clause 20: Provision supplementing section 18	126
Clauses 21 and 22: The Online Procedure Rule Committee and the powers of the Online Procedure Rule Committee	127
Clause 23: Power to change certain requirements relating to the Committee	127
Clause 24: Process for making Online Procedure Rules	128
Clause 25: Power to require Online Procedure Rules to be made	129

Clause 26: Power to make amendments in relation to Online Procedure Rules	129
Clause 27: Duty to make support available for those who require it	130
Clause 28: Power to make consequential or supplementary provision	130
Clause 29: Amendments of other legislation	131
Clause 30: Judicial agreement to certain regulations	131
Clause 31: Interpretation of this Chapter	132
Chapter 3: Employment Tribunals	132
Clause 32: Employment Tribunal Procedure Rules	132
Clause 33: Composition of tribunals	134
Clause 34: Saving for existing procedural provisions	138
Clause 35: Exercise of tribunal functions by authorised persons	138
Clause 36: Responsibility for remunerating tribunals members	139
Chapter 4: Coroners	139
Clause 37: Discontinuance of investigation where cause of death becomes clear	139
Clause 38: Power to conduct non-contentious inquests in writing	139

Clause 39: Use of audio or video links at inquests	140
Clause 40: Suspension of requirement for jury at inquest where coronavirus suspected	142
Clause 41: Phased transition to new coroner areas	142
Chapter 5: Other provisions about courts	146
Clause 42: Abolition of local justice areas	146
Clause 43: The Mayor's and City of London Court: removal of duty to provide premises	147
Clause 44: The City of London Magistrates' Court: removal of duty to provide premises	147
Part 3: Final provisions	148
Clause 45: Regulations	148
Clause 46: Extent	148
Clause 47: Commencement and transitional provision	149
Clause 48: Short title	149
Schedules	150
Schedule 1: Documents to be served in accordance with Criminal Procedure Rules	150
Schedule 2: Criminal Procedure: Consequential and related amendments	150
Schedule 3: Practice directions for online proceedings	157

Schedule 4: Online Procedure: amendments	158
Schedule 5: Employment Tribunal Procedure	
Rules: Further provision	159
<b>Commencement</b>	<b>170</b>
<b>Financial implications of the Bill</b>	<b>170</b>
<b>Parliamentary approval for financial costs or for charges imposed</b>	<b>171</b>
<b>Compatibility with the European Convention on Human Rights</b>	<b>171</b>
<b>Related documents</b>	<b>172</b>
<b>Annex A - Territorial extent and application in the United Kingdom</b>	<b>173</b>
Minor or consequential effects	177
Clause 3: Automatic online conviction and standard statutory penalty	177
Subject matter and legislative competence of devolved legislatures	178

## Overview of the Bill

- 1 The Judicial Review and Courts Bill introduces reforms to Judicial Review to make sure the Government and public authorities are subject to the law, apply the intent of Parliament, and protect individuals' rights. It also includes a number of measures to help address the backlog across criminal courts, tribunals and Coroner's Courts and continue to modernise the delivery of justice and improve efficiency.
- 2 In summary, the bill contains measures in the following areas:
  - Judicial Review
    - Give the Courts a discretion to suspend Quashing Orders for a period of time in certain circumstances. This discretion will include a non-exhaustive list of factors to consider.
    - Give the Courts a discretion to provide prospective-only remedies. This will include a list of non-exhaustive factors to consider.
    - Create a broad presumption for the Courts to use the new variations of Quashing Orders where it appears to the court that as a matter of substance, they offer adequate redress in relation to the relevant defect, unless there is a good reason not to do so.

- Removes *Cart* Judicial Reviews via an ouster clause. This will remove a person's ability to judicially review a decision of the Upper Tribunal to refuse permission to appeal from the First-tier Tribunal.
- Criminal courts
  - Introduces a new automatic online conviction and standard statutory penalty (AOCSSP) procedure for specified summary-only, non-imprisonable offences, that will enable defendants who wish to plead guilty, to choose to have their entire case completed online without the involvement of the court.
  - Enables defendants to indicate a plea in writing/online without the need for a magistrates' court hearing for all summary-only (SO), indictable-only (IO), and triable either-way (TEW) cases.
  - Enables magistrates' courts to proceed with the 'allocation decision' procedure, which is used by the court to decide on the most suitable mode of trial for a TEW case, without the need for a hearing in the magistrates' court.
  - Provides magistrates' courts with the chance to bypass the allocation decision

procedure for TEW cases by providing defendants with an earlier opportunity to elect for a jury trial at Crown Court.

- Enables magistrates' courts to proceed with the allocation decision procedure for TEW cases in the absence of defendants who fail without good cause to appear at court for their allocation hearing.
- Enables magistrates' courts to direct IO and TEW cases to the Crown Court for a jury trial or sentencing, without the need for a first hearing at the magistrates' court.
- Enables the Crown Court to remit certain cases back to a magistrates' court for trial (where defendants consent) or for sentencing (where magistrates' courts sentencing powers are adequate) in a wider range of circumstances.
- Removing the jurisdictional boundaries of magistrates' courts, known as local justice areas (LJAs), which currently restrict work and magistrates from being moved easily between courts in different areas.
- Removes the statutory requirement for documents to be sent by post so that they can be served in accordance with the Criminal Procedure Rules (CrimPR),

including by electronic means via the new Common Platform.

- Removes the statutory requirement to hold court hearings in order to determine applications for a witness summons or the lifting of reporting restrictions, so that decisions can be made on the papers instead in accordance with the CrimPR.
- Online Procedure Rule Committee
  - Establishes a framework for Online Procedure Rules, made by a new Online Procedure Rule Committee, to enable parties to civil, family or tribunal proceedings to use the online procedure. The rules are to apply to proceedings specified in regulations made by the Lord Chancellor. The Government expects the Committee to focus on the civil and family jurisdictions in the first instance.
  - Makes provision for the membership of the OPRC and its scope and remit, including the procedure for appointing members.
  - Enables the Lord Chancellor to alter the composition of the OPRC by regulations, made with the concurrence of the Lord Chief Justice and the Senior President of

Tribunals and after consultation of other senior judicial office holders, in order to assist in making of new online rules. The OPRC itself will be independent and will be made up of members of the judiciary and members with expertise in the lay advice sector and IT.

- Prescribes the process for making Online Procedure Rules: rules must be signed by at least half of the members of the Committee, including the chair, or a majority of the members of the Committee in any other case (the committee will be made up of 6 members) before being submitted to the Lord Chancellor or Secretary of State for approval.
- Confers power on the Lord Chancellor to require the OPRC to make online rules to achieve a specified purpose and/or within a reasonable period in accordance with the prescribed procedures for making rules.
- Permits the Lord Chancellor to make amendments to other legislation which are necessary or desirable in order to facilitate

the making of, or are consequential on,  
Online Procedure Rules.

- Employment Tribunals
  - To transfer the responsibility for the making of Employment Tribunals (ETs) procedure regulations and Employment Appeal Tribunal rules from the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (SoS BEIS) and the Lord Chancellor respectively to the Tribunal Procedure Committee (TPC), as a power to make unified Employment Tribunal Procedure Rules equivalent to the TPC's rule making power under the Tribunals Courts and Enforcement Act 2007;
  - To provide for two additional members to be appointed to the TPC to ensure expertise in employment matters: an employment judge to be appointed by the Senior President of Tribunals (SPT) and an employment practitioner to be appointed by the Lord Chancellor;
  - To allow for the delegation of judicial functions in the ETs and the EAT to authorised case officers on a similar basis to the First-tier Tribunal and Upper Tribunal;  
and

- To make the Lord Chancellor responsible for determining the composition of the employment tribunals and EAT on the same basis that he does for the First-tier Tribunal and Upper Tribunal.
- To transfer responsibility for the remuneration of ET judges from the SoS BEIS to the Lord Chancellor.
- Coroner's Courts
  - To allow virtual hearings in coroners' courts ("Virtual hearings");
  - To allow a coroner to discontinue an investigation where the cause of death is natural causes, without a post-mortem examination ("Discontinuing investigations where cause of death is natural causes");
  - To allow inquests to proceed without a hearing in non-contentious cases ("Inquests without a hearing in non-contentious cases");
  - To remove the requirement (on a temporary basis) for an inquest with a jury in relation to a death where COVID-19 (a notifiable disease) is suspected to be the cause ("No requirement for jury at inquest where coronavirus suspected"), with power to review and extend this provision after 2

years; and

- To allow the merger of coroner areas within a local authority where the new coroner area would not be the entire local authority area (“Merger of coroner areas”).
- City of London Courthouses
  - This measure will make amendments to primary legislation regarding provision of courthouses to HM Courts & Tribunals Service (HMCTS) by the City of London Corporation. HMCTS and the City of London have reached agreement on a scheme where two courthouses and accommodation are to be closed and replaced by a new combined courthouse and accommodation on a different site. The new court building will replace the ageing Mayor’s and City of London Court and the City of London Magistrates’ Court with new and modern facilities. The new court will also provide two additional county and eight Crown court, a total of 18 hearing rooms. Technical changes to legislation are required revoke provisions which currently place duties on the Corporation to provide county and

magistrates court capacity at the current locations.

## Policy background

### Judicial Review

- 3 Judicial Review is one of the mechanisms in the UK's Constitution which provides citizens with a means to ensure that those holding public office or exercising public powers are held accountable and use their powers according to the boundaries and the manner in which they should be exercised, as set down and as intended by Parliament.
- 4 Judicial review is not concerned with the merits of a decision, but with whether it was lawfully made. In England and Wales, an application for judicial review can be brought on the grounds of: illegality, procedural unfairness, unreasonableness/irrationality, or for breach of the Human Rights Act 1998. The court 'reviews' the decision at issue and decides if it is flawed and, if it is, may grant remedies.
- 5 In England and Wales, applications for judicial review are made to the Administrative Court, in the Queen's Bench Division of the High Court. In Northern Ireland, applications are made to the High Court (Northern Ireland); and in Scotland, to the Court of Session (Outer House).

- 6 In its manifesto ahead of the 2019 UK General Election the Government committed to ensuring “that judicial review is available to protect the rights of the individuals against an overbearing state, while ensuring that it is not abused to conduct politics by another means or to create needless delays.”
- 7 In light of that commitment in July 2020 the Government established the Independent Review of Administrative Law (IRAL), chaired by Lord Faulks QC, to consider options for reform to the process of Judicial Review. The IRAL panel was asked to examine trends with regards to the judicial review of executive action, in particular in relation to the policies and decision making of the Government, and to consider how the legitimate interest in the citizen being able to challenge the lawfulness of executive action through the courts can be properly balanced with the role of the executive to govern effectively under the law.
- 8 The panel’s terms of reference asked it to give particular consideration to:
  - a. Whether the amenability of public law decisions to judicial review by the courts and the grounds of public law illegality should be codified in statute;
  - b. Whether the legal principle of non-justiciability requires clarification and, if so, the identity of

subjects/areas where the issue of the justiciability/non-justiciability of the exercise of a public law power and/or function could be considered by the Government;

- c. Whether, where the exercise of a public law power should be justiciable: (i) on which grounds the courts should be able to find a decision to be unlawful; (ii) whether those grounds should depend on the nature and subject matter of the power and (iii) the remedies available in respect of the various grounds on which a decision may be declared unlawful; and
- d. Whether procedural reforms to judicial review are necessary, in general to “streamline the process”.

9 The IRAL conducted a Call for Evidence, which ran from 7 September to 26 October 2020. It submitted its final report to Government in January 2021 and that report was published on 18 March 2021.

10 The IRAL report made two recommendations for changes to the way the substantive law on judicial review operates. First, it recommended overturning the Supreme Court decision in *R (on the application of Cart) v The Upper Tribunal*

[2011] UKSC<sup>1</sup> concluding that “the continued expenditure of judicial resources on considering applications for a *Cart* JR cannot be defended, and that the practice of making and considering such applications should be discontinued.”<sup>2</sup>

Second, it recommended legislating to “give courts the option of making a suspended quashing order, that is, a quashing order which will automatically take effect after a certain period of time if certain specified conditions are not met.”<sup>3</sup> In addition, it made a number of recommendations for procedural reform.

11 Alongside the publication of the IRAL report on 18 March the Government also published a public consultation document in which it indicated its intention to accept the recommendations of the IRAL report for reforming the substantive law and additionally sought views on a number of further measures. These included:

- a. legislating for a general framework to clarify the effect of statutory ouster clauses;
- b. legislating to introduce remedies which are of prospective effect only, to be used by the

---

<sup>1</sup> Paragraph 3.46, Page 71, IRAL

<sup>2</sup> Paragraph 3.46, Page 71, IRAL

<sup>3</sup> Paragraph 3.49, Page 71, IRAL

- courts on a discretionary basis; and
- c. legislating on the principles which lead to a decision being a nullity by operation of law.
- 12 After considering the IRAL report and the responses to the public consultation the Government has focussed its reforms on two specific areas of the substantive law, both of which are included in this Bill. The Government has decided not to proceed with the proposal to legislate for a general framework to clarify the effect of ouster clauses or the wider proposal to legislate on the principles which lead to a decision being a nullity. Instead it will focus on removing the *Cart* JR avenue of review, and providing for additional powers to courts to suspend or alter the retrospective effects – this is to provide the courts with more flexibility when deciding how best to use any remedies.

## Remedies

- 13 Currently, when considering a judicial review, the High Court has various remedies available to it. These are:
- a. An order quashing the decision in question (quashing order, previously certiorari);
  - b. An order restraining the body under review from acting beyond its powers (prohibiting order, previously prohibition); and

- c. An order requiring the body under review to carry out its legal duties (mandatory order, previously mandamus).
- d. The High Court can also make declarations, issue injunctions, and in very rare cases grant damages.

14 The IRAL Panel recommended that the Government create a power for the courts to suspend the effects of quashing orders and suggested the Government should legislate to the effect that “on an application for Judicial Review the High Court may suspend any quashing order that it makes, and provide that the order will not take effect if certain conditions specified by the High Court are satisfied within a certain time period.”

15 The Panel’s reasoning was that such a remedy would increase the flexibility of the set of remedies available and increase the courts flexibility in deciding which remedy could be appropriate. The court would thus be better able to tailor its remedies to the facts of the case. The need for flexibility stems from the immediate effect of the current set of remedies – that they only provide for a decision being invalid or quashed immediately and retrospectively, or for no remedy to be given, or a declaration of unlawfulness. This legislation does not provide for a specific

mechanism for the second part of the IRAL's recommendation – that a court could set conditions, which if fulfilled would prevent the decision being quashed. It was considered that such a power could create practical complexities in its use and the set of cases where this remedy appeared feasible is extremely small.

16 The Panel saw two general areas where a suspended quashing order may be useful:

17 Firstly, in circumstances where a case raised significant constitutional questions, or where quashing a decision would pose significant risks to national security or the public interest, a suspended quashing order could be used to allow Parliament to clarify or amend the position.

18 Secondly in circumstances where a suspended quashing order would allow the defect to be corrected. For example, in *R (Hurley and Moore) v Secretary of State for Business, Innovation & Skills* [2012] EWHC 201 (Admin), the High Court found that the Secretary of State had, in issuing Regulations allowing universities to charge students up to £9,000 in fees, “failed fully to carry out his public sector equality duties” to assess properly whether the proposed Regulations would prove unacceptably discriminatory on grounds of race, sex or disability. Despite this, the High Court declined to quash the

Regulations because of the inconvenience that it would cause. Instead, the Court issued a declaration that the Secretary of State had acted unlawfully. As a remedy, a suspended quashing order may have provided more flexibility. Such an order could have indicated that that the Regulations would be quashed within a couple of months of the Court's judgment but would give the Secretary of State time to prepare for the effect of any quashing or to consider the "public sector equality duties" and whether the Regulations needed to be revised.

- 19 It is the Government's view that the argument for increased remedial flexibility extends to providing the courts with a further power to modify the retrospective effects of a quashing order. The Government's public consultation proposed legislating for 'prospective quashing orders' where the courts could declare an action or decision unlawful onwards from a particular point. Consultees had mixed views on this proposal and a number argued that they struggled to conceive of many cases where such a remedy would be appropriate. The Government acknowledges that these circumstances may arise relatively rarely, however, it believes that the courts will apply their discretion appropriately and as an additional tool for them to use in deciding on remedies the proposal does have merit. Therefore, the Bill

provides the courts an additional power to remove or limit the retrospective effect of any quashing order it makes.

20 With regards to the new remedial powers that the Government is providing for in this Bill it considers it appropriate to provide the court with a non-exhaustive list of factors that it should consider when deciding whether to suspend or alter the retrospective effects is suitable in that specific case. This should aid consistency as the courts consider when and how to apply the new remedies.

21 In addition, the Government is also providing for a general presumption to use these new remedial powers in circumstances where it appears to the court that they afford adequate redress unless there is a good reason not to do so. It would be up to the court to decide what kind of remedy would be appropriate – suspending or altering the retrospective effect of a quashing order may afford the defendant time to remake their decision. The diverse circumstances of possible cases make it difficult to assume that any one remedy or combination of remedies would be most appropriate in all circumstances.

22 Since *Anisminic v FCC* [1969] 2 AC 147, [1969] 2 WLR 163 and subsequent cases dealing with the question as to whether any error of law

constitutes a jurisdictional error thus invalidating the act in question, there has been arguable ambiguity as to what kind of errors make a decision invalid and which do not. The case *Ahmed v HM Treasury (No.2)* [2010] 2 AC 534 exposed one of the ramifications of invalidity on the court's remedial discretion. In *Ahmed (No. 2)* it was held that it would be pointless (and misleading) to suspend the coming into force of a quashing order because it would make no difference to the underlying legal position: it was not the quashing order that deprived the relevant orders of effect, but that fact that they were ultra vires. The clauses, while empowering the court to modify a quashing order, also provide for the effects of its doing so in the context of the doctrine of nullity. This means that the underlying invalidity of the act in question may be treated as if it were valid and treated as such until the quashing order comes into effect (in regards suspended orders) or its past use may be permanently treated as if it were valid. The inclusion of clauses dealing with this point should not be taken however to suggest that every error goes to the validity or invalidity of an action, simply that regardless of a particular error being deemed as invalidating the act the court may still suspend or alter the effect of a quashing order, which in turn would allow the act to be treated as valid, as if the error invalidating

the act had not occurred.

### *Cart* Judicial Reviews (*Cart* JRs)

23 *Cart* JRs are applications for judicial review of a decision of the Upper Tribunal (the UT) to refuse permission to appeal against a decision of the First-Tier Tribunal (the FtT).

24 This type of judicial review arose from the 2011 decision of the United Kingdom Supreme Court (the UKSC) in *R (on the application of Cart) v The Upper Tribunal; R (on the application of MR (Pakistan)) v The Upper Tribunal (Immigration & Asylum Chamber) and Secretary of State for the Home Department* [2011] UKSC 28. These two English cases were heard alongside a Scottish case raising the same issues, judgment for which was given separately (*Eba v Advocate General for Scotland* [2011] UKSC 29). All three cases were brought by claimants who had failed in their initial appeals to the FtT and were then refused permission to appeal to the UT – first by the FtT, and then by the UT itself.

25 In the absence of any further route of appeal against the UT's decision the claimants in the *Cart* cases asked the High Court (and the Court of Session, in *Eba*) to judicially review the UT's refusal of permission to appeal. The Government argued that the courts did not have such jurisdiction, however, the Supreme Court

disagreed and concluded that the High Court (and the Court of Session) retained a supervisory jurisdiction over such matters.

26 Since *Cart* JRs came into existence the number of challenges via this route is high, and the success rate is low. The IRAL panel assessed this success rate as just 0.22%. Having investigated this further the Government believes that the success rate is slightly higher and estimates it is around 3%. This remains lower than in most other types of judicial review.

## Criminal Courts

27 Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service (HMCTS) is an executive agency of the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and is responsible for the administration of courts and tribunals in England and Wales. This includes the criminal court system, which is comprised of magistrates' courts, the Crown Court, and the criminal division of the Court of Appeal.

28 There have been two notable reviews of the efficiency of the criminal court system in England and Wales in recent decades. ; Sir Robin Auld in his 'Review of the Criminal Courts (2001)'<sup>4</sup> and

---

<sup>4</sup> *A review of the Criminal Courts of England and Wales, Rt. Hon Robert Auld, LJ [2001]:*

Sir Brian Leveson in his ‘Review of Efficiency in Criminal Proceedings (2015)’.<sup>5</sup> Both of these reviews identified improvements that could be made to the structure, processes, and efficiency of the criminal justice system (CJS).

29 In September 2016, the then Government published a consultation paper titled ‘*Transforming our Justice System*’, which was released in tandem with a joint statement by the Lord Chancellor, Lord Chief Justice of England and Wales, and the Senior President of Tribunals.<sup>6</sup> The joint statement described plans for a modern court system, shared by the Government and senior judiciary, stating ‘the vision is to modernise and upgrade our justice system so that it works

---

[\[ARCHIVED CONTENT\] Criminal Courts Review \(nationalarchives.gov.uk\)](https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk)

<sup>5</sup> *Review of Efficiency in Criminal Proceedings, Rt. Hon Sir Brian Leveson, LJ [2015]:*

[Review of Efficiency in Criminal Proceedings by The Rt Hon Sir Brian Leveson \(January 2015\) \(judiciary.uk\)](https://www.judiciary.uk)

<sup>6</sup> *Transforming our Justice System, p3:*

[Transforming Our Justice System By the Lord Chancellor, the Lord Chief Justice and the Senior President of Tribunals \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk)

even better for everyone, from judges and legal professionals, to witnesses, litigants and the vulnerable victims of crime.’ The statement also identified a number of ‘real challenges’ that still remain in the justice system today through inefficient and outdated processes.

30 The majority of the criminal court measures contained within this Bill were first introduced in the Prisons and Courts Bill on 23 February 2017, which fell with the dissolution of Parliament when a general election was called that same year. The measures in this Bill will help the Government to continue to realise the vision for the criminal courts that was described in the 2016 joint statement, as well as delivering on more of the recommendations that featured in Lord Justice Auld’s and Lord Justice Leveson’s previous reviews of the criminal court system. Furthermore, the measures will also complement new criminal court measures that feature in the Police, Crime, Sentencing, and Courts Bill (“the PCSC Bill”) (which enable greater use of audio and video technology in criminal proceedings where appropriate), and the judicial powers of authorised court officers created by the Courts and Tribunals (Judiciary and Functions of Staff) Act 2018.

31 The criminal court measures in this Bill also form part of HMCTS’s criminal court reform

programme, in which the Government is investing over £1 billion to transform the courts and tribunals system, and a further £142 million of COVID-19 funding to upgrade court buildings so that they are digitally enabled. The measures will enable key parts of the reform programme so that the Government can continue to deliver vital improvements to the criminal court system and modernise the delivery of justice; this includes digitising and streamlining preliminary pre-trial court proceedings via the Common Platform,<sup>7</sup> removing unnecessary courtroom hearings, and forging stronger links between the Crown Court and magistrates' courts. This will make the criminal courts more easily accessible to users and provide greater flexibility for the effective deployment of its resources; saving court time, reducing delays, delivering swifter justice, and

---

<sup>7</sup> The Common Platform is a new ground-breaking online digital end to end case management system, which replaces several legacy IT systems with a single system and brings together all the relevant information about a criminal case from beginning to end. HMCTS began introducing the Common Platform into Magistrates' and Crown Courts for live operational use in September 2020, where it has since been used to support all manner of criminal cases. As of May 2021, the Common Platform is now live in 39 courts (13 Crown Courts and 26 Magistrates' Courts), with all sites scheduled to be live by December 2021.

supporting recovery.

32 While these measures are designed to reduce waiting times and unnecessary travel for court participants, a full hearing at court will always be available when needed and where the court considers it to be in the interests of justice.

### Enabling written/online preliminary pre-trial proceedings and more flexible allocation of cases

33 All criminal cases begin in a magistrates' court, however, criminal offences fall into three categories that affect which jurisdiction of the criminal court is able to try and sentence them: summary-only (SO) offences (which should normally be heard in a magistrates' court); indictable-only (IO) offences (which must be heard in the Crown Court), and triable either-way (TEW) offences (which may be heard in either a magistrates' court or the Crown Court). The decision to allocate a TEW case to the Crown Court is dependent on the complexity and severity of the case, the adequacy of magistrates' court sentencing powers, and a defendant's right to elect for a jury trial.

34 The legal framework for preliminary pre-trial proceedings for all categories of criminal offence is set out in primary legislation under the Magistrates' Courts Act 1980 ("the MCA 1980") and the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 ("the CDA

1998”). The practices and procedures which must be followed are generally set out in secondary legislation under the CrimPR, which are made and regularly maintained by the Criminal Procedure Rule Committee (CrimPRC).<sup>8</sup> This body of legislation and rules determines the circumstances in which a hearing must occur as part of a case’s progression, when and how to indicate and enter a plea, and how cases are allocated to be heard in a magistrates’ court or the Crown Court. The measures in this Bill will make changes to the legal framework provided by the MCA 1980, the CDA 1998, and consequential legislation in order to provide new preliminary pre-trial proceedings that will increase flexibility for how a defendant can interact with the court in the lead up to trial and remove unnecessary hearings.

35 The criminal court measures in this Bill will enable defendants in all cases to have the option to engage with the court in writing/online via the new Common Platform, a unified online platform for digital case management in the criminal justice

---

<sup>8</sup> The establishment of the Criminal Procedure Rule Committee was an outcome of the Auld Review 2001; and legislation in the Criminal Justice Act 2003: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/criminal-procedure-rule-committee/>

system. Defendants will have the option (with the assistance of a solicitor) to provide an indication of plea and, for TEW cases, engage with the allocation decision procedure in writing/online without the need for a hearing in the magistrates' court. If a defendant does not wish to engage through the new written/online procedure or the court does not wish to provide them with the option, they will be required to appear at a court hearing and proceed as normal. The addition of a new invitation for defendants to elect for a jury trial at an earlier stage of the proceedings in TEW cases will also provide magistrates' courts with the chance to bypass the subsequent allocation decision procedure (at court and in writing/online), which will save the court time by negating the need to decide on the most suitable mode of trial when a defendant is certain that they wish to elect to the Crown Court.

36 The criminal court measures will also provide greater flexibility to the way in which criminal cases can be allocated between magistrates' courts and the Crown Court, where this is deemed appropriate by the court. It will enable magistrates' courts to proceed with the allocation decision procedure in a defendants' absence if they fail without good cause to appear for the allocation hearing, which will provide the court with an important means of progressing cases which

would otherwise stall creating uncertainty and lengthy waiting times. It will also enable magistrates' courts to direct IO and TEW cases to the Crown Court for trial or sentencing without the need for a first hearing at magistrates' court, which will ensure cases reach the most appropriate venue earlier in the proceedings and avoid unnecessary hearings. Furthermore, the Crown Court will be able to remit certain cases back to a magistrates' court for trial (with a defendant's consent) or for sentencing (where a magistrates' courts sentencing powers are considered to be sufficient) in a wider range of circumstances than it currently can now.

37 The criminal court measures will aim to further improve efficiency and speed up court processes by removing statutory requirements to hold hearings in relation to certain matters, namely determining applications for a witness summons and applications to lift reporting restrictions. Although the court will continue to have the option of convening a hearing in these circumstances, the amendments will enable the court to make a decision 'on the papers' without a hearing, where satisfied that this is appropriate.

38 Finally, the criminal court measures will amend existing legislation to enable the service of documents in criminal proceedings and related

proceedings to be in accordance with the CPRs. This means the most appropriate means of service (including service by electronic means) can be used in any given case, taking into account the preferred method of those individuals receiving the documents and their access to digital resources and online communication.

## Removal of Local Justice Areas (LJAs)

39 This is one of several criminal court measures in this Bill which will help create a more flexible and unified criminal court system. England and Wales are currently divided into 75 LJAs and this measure will provide for the removal of these jurisdictional boundaries. This will provide the courts with the freedom and flexibility to manage their caseloads more effectively and ensure that cases are dealt with sooner and in more convenient places. It will also help create a more unified criminal court through the restructuring of the leadership and management arrangements for magistrates' courts, so they can be more closely aligned to the Crown Court.

## Introducing a new AOCSSP procedure

40 The then Government's joint 2016 statement in response to its consultation '*Transforming our Justice System*' also set out its intentions to proceed with a new AOCSSP procedure, which would provide a new means of dealing with certain

specified summary only non-imprisonable offences.<sup>9</sup>

41 Many defendants prosecuted for these types of offences can already choose to enter a plea in writing/online and have their case dealt with by a single magistrate (supported by a legal advisor) ‘on the papers’ outside of a magistrates’ court hearing via the Single Justice Procedure (SJP), which was established under the Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015 (“the CJCA 2015”).

42 The criminal court measures in this Bill will introduce the new AOCSSP procedure for a small number of summary-only non-imprisonable offences that will enable these cases to take place entirely online and without the involvement of a magistrate. Eligible offences will be specified in secondary legislation made by the Secretary of State and will need to be agreed by Parliament by the affirmative procedure. These will be the most straightforward cases and the Government’s intention is to initially extend this provision to travelling on a train or tram without a ticket and fishing with an unlicensed rod. Defendants will be required to opt-in for this procedure and choose to

---

<sup>9</sup> *Transforming our Justice System*, p8: [Transforming Our Justice System By the Lord Chancellor, the Lord Chief Justice and the Senior President of Tribunals \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/95222/transforming-our-justice-system-by-the-lord-chancellor-the-lord-chief-justice-and-the-senior-president-of-tribunals.pdf)

receive the automatic online conviction and the penalty specified for their offence.

## **Online Procedure Rule Committee**

46 This proposal will establish a framework for Online Procedure Rules, made by a new Online Procedure Rule Committee (OPRC), to enable parties to civil, family or tribunal proceedings to use the online procedure. The rules are to apply to proceedings specified in regulations made by the Lord Chancellor. The government expects the Committee to focus on the civil and family jurisdictions in the first instance. In addition, it will:

- a. Make provision for the membership of the OPRC and its scope and remit, including the procedure for appointing members.
- b. Enable the Lord Chancellor to alter the composition of the OPRC by regulations, made with the concurrence of the Lord Chief Justice and the Senior President of Tribunals and after consultation of other senior judicial office holders, in order to assist in making of new online rules. The OPRC itself will be independent and will be made up of members of the judiciary and members with expertise in the lay advice sector and IT.
- c. Prescribe the process for making Online Procedure Rules: rules must be signed by at

least half of the members of the Committee, including the chair, or a majority of the members of the Committee in any other case (the committee will be made up of 6 members) before being submitted to the Lord Chancellor or Secretary of State for approval.

- d. Confer power on the Lord Chancellor to require the OPRC to make online rules to achieve a specified purpose and/or within a reasonable period in accordance with the prescribed procedures for making rules.
- e. Permit the Lord Chancellor to make amendments to other legislation which are necessary or desirable in order to facilitate the making of , or are consequential on, Online Procedure Rules.

## **Employment Tribunals**

47 ETs were established under the responsibility for the Department for Trade and Industry (now Business Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS)). by the Employment Tribunals Act 1996 (ETA), which also made provision about the Employment Appeal Tribunal (originally established under the responsibility of the Lord Chancellor. by the Employment Protection Act 1975).

48 Following the transfer of the ETs and the EAT to the Tribunal Service (now Her Majesty's Courts

and Tribunal Service) in 2006, BEIS has retained responsibility for the rules and governance of ETs as well as the overarching policy framework for ETs and the EAT. Responsibility for making changes to the regulations which determine procedural matters within ETs continues to rest with BEIS ministers who make changes to regulations to address specific policy issues, including those that may be raised in consultation with stakeholders.

49 ETs are the only area of tribunal business where control over procedure rests with a Government minister in another department. This contrasts with all other matters heard in the justice system where procedural rules are the responsibility of independent judicial-led committees or of the Lord Chief Justice.

### Transferring responsibility for the making of procedure rules for ETs and EAT from the Secretary of State for BEIS to the Tribunal Procedure Committee

50 In 2016 the Government consulted on reforming the employment tribunal structure and announced the transfer of responsibility for ET and EAT rules from the SoS BEIS to the Tribunal Procedure Committee (TPC). This Bill will legislate for that change. The TPC is better placed to make and amend rules for the ETs, given that it is an independent rule-making committee. These

arrangements will also allow for a quicker response to the need to introduce, amend or revise ET procedure rules to help address the backlog in outstanding ET claims as well as dealing with other changing circumstances such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

51 Although the policy intention is to make the arrangements between the ETs and other tribunals more consistent, the Government wishes to retain the existing distinct and separate structure of the ETs and EAT. The ETs and the EAT will therefore remain outside the unified tribunal structure and continue to retain separate rules (Employment Tribunal Procedure Rules) from the unified tribunal system (Tribunal Procedure Rules).

### Aligning the power to make Employment Tribunal Procedure Rules with the TPC's power to make Tribunal Procedure Rules

52 The Bill makes provision so that arrangements for making Employment Tribunal Procedure Rules for the ETs and EAT mirror the arrangements for the FtT and UT, conferring on the TPC in relation to the ETs and EAT all the powers and duties exercised in relation to the tribunals in the FtT and UT.

## Providing for two additional members to be appointed to the TPC

53 The 2016 Consultation responses were strongly in favour of ensuring appropriate employment expertise on the TPC. To ensure that the membership of the TPC has the necessary skills and experience to fulfil its duties in relation to ETs and the EAT, the Bill provides for the TPC to have two additional members; one appointed by the Lord Chancellor, who has experience of advising on ET matters; and a second, appointed by the Lord Chief Justice, who has experience as a judicial or non-legal panel member of the ETs.

## Allow for the delegation of judicial functions in the ET and the EAT to legal case officers

54 The measures also include provision enabling delegation of certain judicial functions to authorised case officers. Such provision was made for tribunals in the unified structure by the Courts and Tribunals (Judiciary and Functions of Staff) Act 2018, and will now be extended to the ETs and EAT.

## Make the Lord Chancellor responsible for determining the composition of the employment tribunals and EAT

55 The measures also include provision to replicate for the ETs the arrangements used for determining the composition of panels in the FtT

and UT, so that they are a judicial function. This will enable panel composition to be more easily tailored according to the specific needs of users and the complexities of the case, streamlining the handling of cases whilst continuing to ensure that the tribunals' decisions are fair and informed.

### Transfer responsibility for the remuneration of ET judges from the SoS BEIS to the Lord Chancellor

56 The SoS for BEIS currently has the authority for remuneration for members of the ETs and EAT. Given the transfer of other responsibilities in relation to the ETs and EAT to the Lord Chancellor, it is considered appropriate for responsibility for remuneration of the ET judiciary to follow; consequently, the measures include provision to transfer the responsibility for the remuneration of the ET judges from the BEIS Secretary of State to the Lord Chancellor. This will produce a result in line with existing provision in the Tribunals, Courts and Enforcement Act 2007 which provides that the Lord Chancellor is responsible for remuneration, pay and expenses of judges and members of the First-tier Tribunal and Upper Tribunal.

### Coroner's Courts

57 Coroners are independent judicial officeholders who have a duty to investigate deaths reported to them that maybe violent, or

unnatural, that have an unknown cause or that occurred in prison or in other state detention.

58 The purpose of a coronial investigation is to determine who the deceased was and how, when and where they died. In order to do this, the coroner may hold an inquest which is a fact-finding inquiry in a court. In some cases, for example non-natural deaths in custody or other state detention, the inquest has to be held with a jury.

59 During the COVID-19 pandemic, coroners have reported backlogs of inquest cases, in particular jury and non-jury complex inquests due to social distancing regulations.

### Discontinuance of investigation where cause of death becomes clear

60 Section 4 of the Coroners and Justice Act (CJA) 2009 provides that coroners can only discontinue an investigation where the cause of death has been revealed by a post-mortem examination (PM). In practice, this provision allows a coroner who has commenced investigation into a death (under section 1 of the CJA 2009) to end this investigation without holding an inquest as long as the cause of death has been revealed by a PM. In all other circumstances, once an investigation has commenced, the coroner has no power to discontinue it and must hold an inquest.

61 The effect of this provision is that if the coroner discovers the cause of death by means other than a PM – for example through medical records that become available at a later stage - the coroner must proceed to inquest, even though the outcome may be a forgone conclusion. This is an unnecessary step which is time consuming, costly and adds to the distress of the bereaved family. This amendment will amend section 4 of the CJA 2009, broadening the circumstances in which coroners can discontinue investigations.

#### Power to conduct non-contentious inquests in writing

62 Each year, circa 30,000 inquests are held in England and Wales, and in a significant number of these cases, those most likely to attend (the bereaved family) are content not to attend. In practice, many hearings are held in a completely empty courtroom, with the coroner conducting the hearing to no-one (other than a recording device). This provision will give coroners the power to determine when an inquest can be held without a hearing, which could be where there is no practical need or public interest to do so, and in turn free up physical space and resources for inquests which do need a hearing. Whilst a significant number of inquests are entirely non-contentious, there will still be cases which genuinely need a full public hearing and coroners are expected to continue to

hold these.

63 Rule 23 of the Coroners (Inquests) Rules 2013<sup>10</sup> provides for a ‘documentary’ or ‘Rule 23 inquest’ which comes very close to being entirely on paper, but a limited public hearing must still take place (as per Chief Coroner’s Guidance No.29 – Documentary Inquests<sup>11</sup>). The intention is for the provision to serve as a natural extension of the existing arrangement. The Chief Coroner will provide further guidance to coroners accompanying any law change, ensuring that ‘paper’ inquests are conducted fairly and cases which require a full public hearing continue as required.

### Use of audio or video links at inquests

64 During the COVID-19 pandemic, coroners have sought ways to ensure that inquest hearings could continue, whilst being mindful of the need to support the government in its efforts to curb the spread of the virus. The Chief Coroner in his guidance 35 on hearings during the pandemic<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> [The Coroners \(Inquests\) Rules 2013 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)

<sup>11</sup> [Guidance-No.-29-Documentary-inquests.pdf \(judiciary.uk\)](https://www.judiciary.uk)

<sup>12</sup> Chief Coroner Guidance No.35- Hearings during the pandemic [Chief-Coroner-Guidance-No.-35-hearings-during-the-pandemic.pdf \(judiciary.uk\)](https://www.judiciary.uk)

noted that whilst it was possible for all parties who needed to be present could do so by virtual link, the coroner (or jury if there was one) had to be physically present at the hearing.

65 Whilst coroners have been able to continue to conduct very routine inquests, in almost all coroner areas backlogs have built up of more complex inquests with multiple attendees, in particular jury inquests, as courts have lacked the necessary infrastructure to operate during the lockdown restrictions.

66 This provision will allow pre-inquests reviews and inquests to take place where all participants, including the coroner will be able to participate remotely. It will help to address issues in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic and recovery which are likely to continue for many years, in particular, help reduce the backlog quicker and contribute to the effort to stop the spread of the virus. Wholly remote hearings are allowed in mainstream courts and tribunals so this provision will bring coroner's courts in line with them, and avoid them being outliers.

### No requirement for jury at inquest where coronavirus suspected

67 The classification of COVID-19 as a notifiable disease (notifiable to Public Health England (PHE) under the Health Protection Regulations 2019 for

public health purposes) meant that, under section 7(2)(c) of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 (the 2009 Act), any inquest into a death where the coroner had reason to suspect that the death was caused by COVID-19 would have had to take place with a jury. This could have had very significant resource implications for Local Authority run coroner services.

68 Although inquests requiring a jury could have been adjourned until the pandemic had passed, this would have deprived bereaved families of swift closure and would, in any event, simply build up resource pressure for the future. The Coronavirus Act 2020 (CVA 2020) therefore modified the 2009 Act to disapply the requirement that coroners must conduct any inquest with a jury where they have reason to suspect the death was caused by COVID-10

69 There is concern that when the CVA 2020 sunsets, coroners will be required again to hold inquests with a jury where they have reason to suspect a death has been caused by COVID-19. If there were future outbreaks of COVID-19 after March 2022, or coroners were already investigating deaths then where COVID-19 was suspected to be the cause, they would be required to hold an inquest with a jury. If coroners were required to hold jury inquests in cases where

COVID-19 were suspected as the cause of death, this would add to the existing backlog of jury inquests. The intention is to replicate Section 30 within the 2009 Act when the CVA sunsets.

70 Coroners would still be able to conduct an inquest with a jury if a death was suspected to have been caused by COVID-19 under existing powers, should they wish to do so, where they think there is good reason to do so. They would still be required to hold an inquest with a jury where another notifiable disease is suspected to be the cause.

71 There will be an additional clause which will require Lord Chancellor via a delegated power to review this provision every 2 years and to extend it if the Lord Chancellor considers it would be expedient for the coronial system for this provision to be retained longer.

### Phased transition to new coroner areas

72 It is a long-standing central government and more recently Chief Coroner objective to merge coroner areas when the opportunity arises to improve consistency of coroner provision and standardise practice. Paragraph 2 of Schedule 2 to the CJA 2009 provides that a coroner area consists of a local authority area or the combined areas of two or more local authorities. In practice, this means that where there are a number of

coroner areas within a local authority, it is not possible to merge them if that would result in the new coroner area consisting in less than the area of the local authority.

73 This has caused difficulties. For example, a local authority area which consists of three or more separate coroner areas may wish to combine all of them into one coroner area, but may prefer to achieve this piecemeal by merging one area with another as and when a senior coroner from one of the coroner areas retires. This is not possible under Schedule 2 to the CJA 2009 in its present form. Schedule 2 therefore needs minor revision to provide greater flexibility. The provision will amend Schedule 2 to permit two coroner areas to combine, by order of the Lord Chancellor, into one coroner area which consists of the area of a local authority or part of the area of the local authority.

## **City of London Courthouses**

74 The City of London currently provides three court buildings to HMCTS under a statutory provision. The City of London is working in partnership with HMCTS to provide a flagship new court building on Fleet Street. The Mayor's and City of London Court and the City of London Magistrates' Court are ageing, grade two listed buildings. Their heritage status imposes

operational restrictions and they provide only four courtrooms each. The new court will be a purpose built 18 room centre with technology suitable for the needs of modern justice.

75 This measure will revoke provisions which currently place duties on the Corporation to provide county and magistrates court capacity at the current locations. There will be a transitional period when HMCTS is occupying existing sites and has taken on the lease of the new building and is completing fit out works. Court hearings will then move to the new site when it is ready for occupation; at this stage the duty on the City of London regarding the existing buildings will cease. Obligations in relation to the replacement courthouse and accommodation will be governed by contractual arrangements.

76 The Central Criminal Court has formed no part of the discussions between HMCTS and the City of London and is to remain.

## **Legal background**

- 77 The Bill amends the following legislation:
- a. Part II of the Senior Courts Act 1981 in relation to adding a new provision on quashing orders and making changes to existing provisions on quashing orders.

- b. Part 1, Chapter 2 of the Tribunals, Courts and Enforcement Act 2007, which relates to review of decisions and appeals of the First-tier Tribunal and Upper Tribunal and provisions on quashing orders.
- c. Magistrates' Court Act 1980 in relation to creating the automatic online conviction scheme, to pre-trial procedures in the magistrates' court and in the youth court and in relation to removing the requirement for a hearing of an application to lift reporting restrictions.
- d. Children and Young Persons Act 1933 in relation to involvement of a parent or guardian in criminal proceedings.
- e. Criminal Procedure (Attendance of Witnesses) Act 1965 in relation to removing the requirement for a hearing for a witness summon.
- f. Senior Courts Act 1981 in relation to the powers of the Crown Court to remit to the magistrates' court.
- g. Criminal Justice Act 1987 in relation to removing the requirement for a hearing of an application to lift reporting restrictions.
- h. Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act 1996 removing the requirement for a hearing

- of an application to lift reporting restrictions.
- i. Crime and Disorder Act 1998 in relation to sending cases to Crown Court and the powers of the youth court.
  - j. Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1998 removing the requirement for a hearing of an application to lift reporting restrictions.
  - k. Criminal Justice Act 2003 in relation to the institution of criminal proceedings.
  - l. Sentencing Act 2020 in relation to remitting for sentence to the magistrates' court or youth court.
  - m. Schedule 1 of the Bill replaces rules for service of documents in criminal or related proceedings with those set out in the Criminal Procedure Rules in the following fourteen Acts; Road Traffic Act 1960, Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, Prices Act 1974, Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act 1975, Isle of Man Act 1979, Magistrates' Courts Act 1980, Public Passenger Vehicles Act 1981, Video Recordings Act 1984, Weights and Measures Act 1985, Road Traffic Act 1988, Road Traffic Offenders Act 1988, Transport and Works Act 1992, Powers of the Criminal Courts (Sentencing) Act 2000 and the Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001.

- n. The Employment Tribunals Act 1996, which provides for employment tribunals and the Employment Appeal Tribunal and for their composition and powers and for practice and procedure in proceedings before them.
- o. The Civil Procedure Act 1997, which establishes the Civil Procedure Rule Committee and the power to make Civil Procedure Rules.
- p. The Courts Act 2003, which among other things establishes the Family Procedure Rule Committee and the power to make Family Procedure Rules.
- q. The Tribunals, Courts and Enforcement Act 2007, which among other things establishes the Tribunal Procedure Committee and the power to make Tribunal Procedure Rules.
- r. Section 4 of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009, which relates to discontinuance of investigation where cause of death becomes clear before inquest.
- s. The Bill will disapply Section 7(2)(c ) of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 which requires a coroner to hold an inquest by jury where they have reason to suspect that the cause of death is by a COVID-19 (a notifiable disease).
- t. The Bill adds Section 9C to the Coroners and

- Justice Act 2009 to give a power to coroners to conduct non-contentious inquests in writing.
- u. Section 45 of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009, which relates to coroners rules.
  - v. The Bill adds Section 9C to the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 to give a power to coroners to conduct non-contentious inquests in writing.
  - w. The Bill adds Paragraph 1A into Schedule 22 of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 (transitional provisions) so that two or more coroner areas may be combined even if the new coroner area is not the entire local authority area (as is otherwise required by paragraph 1(2) of Schedule 2 of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009..
  - x. Section 29 of the Courts Act 1971, which relates to the current statutory duty on the City of London to provide the Mayors and City of London Court.
  - y. Repealing paragraph 16 of Schedule 2 to the Courts Act 2003, in respect of the City of London Magistrates' Court; and paragraph 35 of Schedule 14 to the Access to Justice Act 1999, consequential on that repeal.

## **Territorial extent and application**

78 Clause 46 sets out the territorial extent of the Bill, that is the jurisdictions in which the Bill forms

part of the law. The extent of a Bill can be different from its application. Application is about where a Bill produces a practical effect. Subject to the exceptions provided below, the Bill extends to England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

79 Sections 1(4), 2(2) and 34 have the same extent as the amendments or repeals to which they relate.

80 The following provisions extend only to England and Wales:

a. Section 40

b. Section 42(1)

c. Paragraph 3 of Schedule 2

d. Part 1 of Schedule 3

81 Part 3 of Schedule 3 extends only to England and Wales and Scotland.

82 See the table in Annex A for a summary of the position regarding territorial extent and application in the United Kingdom.

## Commentary on provisions of Bill

### Part 1: Judicial Review

#### Clause 1: Quashing orders

83 This clause grants the courts a new power in Judicial Review by way of amendment to the Senior Courts Act 1981. The provisions are concerned with suspending or altering the effects of quashing orders.

84 Subsection (1) of clause 1 inserts a new section 29A to the Senior Courts Act 1981.

85 The new section 29A(1)(a) deals with suspension: that the quashing order does not take effect until a date specified in the order, to be specified by the court. Subsection (7) of new section 29A makes further provision that Section 29(2) of the Senior Courts Act 1981 does not prevent the ability of the court to vary the time specified for the suspension.

86 Subsection (1) (b) of new section 29A deals with the permanent limitation of the retrospective effects of a quashing order, from some point in the past or future. It provides courts with power to remove or limit any retrospective effect of the quashing. Subsection 1(a) and (b) of new section 29A may be used independently or cumulatively.

87 New section 29A subsection (2) provides that in using the powers in subsection (1), the court may make that order subject to conditions. The clause provides no limit or prescription on the type or nature of the conditions, leaving this determination to the court.

88 Subsections (3) (4) and (5) of new section 29A deal with the effects of these powers on a decision found to be invalid. The case *Ahmed v HM Treasury (No2)* [2010] UKSC<sup>13</sup> found that suspending a quashing order would be of no effect and in fact pointless, as the performative aspect of the court's judgment was the finding of invalidity due to the decision in question being *ultra vires*. A quashing order would be merely declaratory. It was the fact in that case that the decision was *ultra vires* which deprived it of legal effect, not the quashing order.

89 To address this point, subsection (3) of new section 29A provides that using the power under subsection (1)(a) means that the impugned act in question may be treated as valid for all purposes (subject to any conditions imposed by virtue of subsection (2)) until the quashing takes effect. Suspending the effects of the quashing order in this way creates another effect – for an act found

---

<sup>13</sup> Her Majesty's Treasury v Ahmed and others [2010] UKSC 5 – see: [HM Treasury v Ahmed & Ors \[2010\] UKSC 5 \(04 February 2010\)](https://www.bailii.org/uk/uksc/cases/2010/uksc05.html) ([bailii.org](https://www.bailii.org))

to be invalid, to be treated as if it were valid, until the quashing order comes into effect at the end of the period of suspension. Subsection (6) of new section 29A clarifies what happens when the quashing order comes into effect, confirming that the act in question would henceforth be treated as void *ab initio*, and what was treated as valid during the period of suspension would at that point not be so treated. This does not preclude the possibility of the court also setting a limit on the retrospective effect, by also using the power in subsection (1)(b).

90 Subsection (4) of new section 29A sets out the implications in circumstances where the power in subsection (1)(b) is used. In this instance the use of that power means that the decision or act in question is to be treated as valid for all purposes for the period of time before the quashing order comes into effect. This means that any decisions or actions under the impugned decision would permanently be treated as valid (subject to any conditions imposed by virtue of subsection (2)) up to the point the quashing order takes effect.

91 Subsection (5) of new section 29A provides that where the action or decision in question is upheld by virtue of section 29A(3) or (4), it is to be treated for all purposes as if its validity and force were, and always had been, unimpaired by the

relevant defect. Relevant defect is defined in subsection (11) as “the defect, failure or other matter on the ground of which the court is making the order”. Subsection (5) therefore does not prevent defects, failures or other matters which are not the subject of the order from having an effect on the validity of the impugned act.

#### Example (1): Effect of suspended relief

The court finds a decision by a public body to create a regime for issuing certain licenses to be invalid. This does not prevent the court from issuing a quashing order which is suspended for 30 days on condition that no new licenses are issued. This means that licenses issued already would be treated as valid for the 30 days. A person who had been issued a license would need to prepare for that license to be invalid, but could continue to rely on it for the 30 days. The public body would also have time to put in place transitional arrangements, set up a new licensing regime, or take any other action considered necessary.

#### Example (2): Effect of prospective

## relief

The court finds a decision by a public body to authorise and set in motion a process for assessing and developing potential sites for spaceports, to be unlawful. The court has the power to suspend or make prospective the relief it grants. Immediate and retrospective quashing would mean actions pursuant and ongoing to the decision would be invalid. The court decides to give prospective relief to take effect in 30 days, on the condition that activity at any of the sites ceases until the order takes effect. The decisions based off the impugned decision are thus permanently treated as lawful for that period and for the past. This means the public body does not have to undo any actions already taken and is afforded the opportunity to re-make its decision in a lawful way and put in place any other arrangements necessary.

92 Subsection (8) of new section 29A provides

that the courts must have regard to certain factors in deciding whether to exercise their powers under subsection (1). This subsection guides a court's considerations towards the use of the powers under subsection (1). The list provided is non-exhaustive and does not constrain the court's discretion to consider other relevant factors, as made explicit in subsection (8)(f).

- a. The first factor (8)(a) addresses what kind of error is in question. The fact that an error may be technical or minor, or is more substantive, or fatally undermines the entire decision in question is relevant to determining whether to suspend or alter the retrospective effect of a quashing order. Similarly, the court could have regard to whether the decision maker had acted outside their actual jurisdiction or permitted field of activity.
- b. The second factor addresses the potentially disproportionate effects exercising or failing to exercise the new power on public administration. Such consequences might include economic or financial instability resulting from the immediate quashing of a regulation, or the public authority being in a position where it had to immediately set up new arrangements, or pay compensation, or reverse actions taken pursuant to the quashed

decision.

- c. The third factor pertains to the interests of the claimant or third parties who would benefit from an act being quashed with immediate effect. The court would consider whether the interests of justice required those persons be given immediate relief, for instance if suspending or limiting relief would cause prejudice to their rights in tort or contract, rights under the Human Rights Act 1998, or their ability to raise a defence in criminal proceedings, or would deny the claimant an effective remedy.
- d. The fourth factor pertains to third parties who may have relied or are relying on the act in question in good faith that it was lawfully made. Their interests may be at stake if they were suddenly unable to conduct their business for instance, as it relied on a certain licence which was quashed retrospectively.
- e. The fifth factor addresses a situation where the defendant (or some other person with responsibility over the act in question) has taken any action or proposes to take action or made undertakings to the court. This may concern actions to rectify any unlawfulness, or review a decision in light of the court's judgment. They may include representations

that the case is constitutionally significant and contentious, and warrants Parliament being given an opportunity to pass emergency legislation.

- f. Sub-subsection (f) makes provision that the court can consider any other factors it deems relevant.

93 Subsection (9) and (10) of new section 29A provides a presumption that if the court is making a quashing order, the court uses the new remedial powers in subsection (1) in circumstances where it appears to the court, as a matter of substance, that the use of the provisions would offer adequate redress in relation to the relevant defect unless there is good reason not to do so. This presumption, in subsection (10), also directs the courts to take into particular account the considerations in subsection (8)(e).

94 Subsection (11) of new section 29A defines certain terms used in the section. Including (purported thing) as part of the definition of ‘impugned act’ means that the court has the power to use these remedies and that the remedies take effect in the manner set out in the section, regardless of any effect of ‘nullity’. Nullity is the concept whereby what was considered by the decision maker to be an action with effect in law, when found to be invalid, is revealed as an action

that does not and did not have effect in law, and thus it was no action (in a legal sense) at all.

Therefore, even when a court considers a decision to be a nullity, the powers in subsection (1) are available.

95 The definition of ‘relevant defect’ in subsection (11) of new section 29A is “the defect, failure or other matter on the ground of which the court is making the quashing order.”

96 Subsection 2 of clause 1 updates the power to remit in the Senior Courts Act 1981 to ensure it is compatible with the new remedial powers in subsection 1(1) of new section 29A. This ensures that the court, as well as using any of the powers in subsection 1(1) of new section 29A, can remit the decision back to the decision maker so that a fresh decision can be reached.

97 Subsection 3 of clause 1 makes consequential amendments to the Tribunals Courts and Enforcement Act (TCEA) 2007. The tribunals operating under the TCEA have a judicial review jurisdiction, which currently functions (in relation to cases arising under the law of England and Wales) in broadly the same way as the Judicial Review jurisdiction of the High Court of England and Wales. To maintain this arrangement, this amendment provides the Upper Tribunal with the powers as set out in section 29A of the Senior

Courts Act 1981 and makes a further consequential change on remittance.

98 Subsection 4 of clause 1 provides that the powers in clause 1 will be available in respect of proceedings commenced on the day of or after commencement of these provisions.

## Clause 2: Exclusion of review of Upper Tribunal's permission-to-appeal decisions

99 This clause makes certain decisions of the Upper Tribunal final, and stipulates that they are not subject to review by any other court. This will operate subject to certain exceptions.

100 Subsection (1) inserts a new section 11A into the Tribunals, Courts and Enforcement Act 2007 (“TCEA 2007”).

101 Subsection (1) of the new section 11A sets out which decisions of the Upper Tribunal are affected by this clause. The clause will only apply to decisions by the Upper Tribunal to refuse permission to appeal further to applications under Section 11(4)(b) of the TCEA 2007. This means that the following decisions are not affected by the clause:

- a. decisions of the Upper Tribunal in relation to applications for permission (or leave) to appeal from bodies other than the First-tier Tribunal;

b. decisions of the Upper Tribunal which do not relate to applications for permission (or leave) to appeal under section 11(4)(b).

102 Subsection (2) of the new section 11A provides that no other court can question or set aside the Upper Tribunal's decision about permission (or leave) to appeal. It should be noted that subsection (7) of new section 11A defines "decisions" as including "purported decisions". This means that even decisions which might otherwise be regarded as a nullity, are caught by the clause.

103 Subsection (3) of new section 11A re-iterates and further clarifies the extent of the rule. Subsection (3)(a) provides that, if the Upper Tribunal were to make an error in reaching its decision on permission (or leave) to appeal, this does not mean that the Upper Tribunal has acted beyond its powers. Such decisions will therefore still be caught by the rule. Subsection (3)(b) emphasises the effect of subsection (2) in preventing the making of an application to a court of supervisory jurisdiction about the decision, as the jurisdiction of that court does not extend to these decisions.

104 Subsection (4) of the new section 11A provides for specific exceptions to subsections (2) and (3), that is, certain circumstances where a

challenge can still be brought against decisions of the Upper Tribunal on applications for permission (or leave) to appeal. This includes where the Upper Tribunal did not have jurisdiction, whether because it did not have before it a valid application under section 11(4)(b) (subsection (4)(a)), or because the Tribunal itself was not properly constituted to carry out its task (subsection (4)(b)). Subsection (4)(c) cover actions in bad faith or those which constitute fundamental breaches of the principles of natural justice. Fundamental breaches of the principles of natural justice include such things as the decision being affected by bias or corruption. All these scenarios would be very unlikely to arise, but it is important to ensure that such decisions would still be subject to review.

105 Subsection (5) of new section 11A makes provision for an exception in cases where the First Tier Tribunal's jurisdiction over the underlying matter in question was or could have been created by an Act of the Scottish Parliament or an Act of the Northern Ireland Assembly passed without consent of the Secretary of State. This means that Upper Tribunal decisions about permission (or leave) to appeal are reviewable when the underlying decision, considered by the First-tier Tribunal, is a kind of decision for which it would be within the jurisdiction of the Scottish Parliament or Northern Ireland Assembly.

106 Subsection (6) of the new section 11A clarifies that nothing in the clause affects the normal position in regards to judicial review challenges to substantive decisions of the First-tier Tribunal. The subsection is designed so that the court of supervisory jurisdiction should not alter its standard approach of refusing permission to bring a judicial review of an inferior court or tribunal's decision, where an alternative remedy exists. Nothing in the clause changes the fact that an alternative remedy (i.e. application for permission or leave to appeal to the Upper Tribunal) is available in relation to substantive decisions of the First-tier Tribunal.

107 Subsection (7) of the new section 11A defines 'decision' for the purposes of this section, so that it includes 'purported decision' meaning that regardless of whether a decision is a nullity, the provisions in this section still apply. 'the supervisory jurisdiction' is also defined, making clear to which courts this refers.

108 Subsection 2 of the clause sets out the transitional arrangements for new section 11A, and provides that decisions of the Upper Tribunal made before the section comes into force are not affected.

Example (1): Review of the Upper Tribunal not permitted

A claimant fails in a claim before the First-tier Tribunal. The claim relates to a non-devolved matter. The claimant applies to the First-tier Tribunal for permission to appeal the decision to the Upper Tribunal. The First-tier Tribunal refuses permission. The claimant then makes a valid application for permission to appeal directly to the Upper Tribunal under section (11)(4)(b) of the TCEA 2007. The Upper Tribunal, properly constituted, refuses permission to appeal. The claimant thinks the Upper Tribunal's decision was wrong. The Upper Tribunal did not act in bad faith, or fundamentally breach the principles of natural justice.

The effect of this clause is that the claimant cannot seek to challenge the Upper Tribunal's decision in any court, including by way of an application for judicial review.

#### **Example (2): Review of the Upper Tribunal permitted**

A claimant fails in a claim before the First-tier Tribunal. The claim relates

to a non-devolved matter. The claimant applies to the First-tier Tribunal for permission to appeal to the Upper Tribunal. The First-tier Tribunal refuses permission. The claimant then makes a valid application for permission to appeal directly to the Upper Tribunal under section (11)(4)(b) of the TCEA 2007. The Upper Tribunal, properly constituted, refuses permission to appeal. In the course of adjudicating on the application, the Upper Tribunal judge refused to hear submissions from the claimant for no good reason.

The effect of this clause is that the claimant can seek to challenge the Upper Tribunal's decision in another court, including by way of an application for judicial review, because the judge acted in bad faith or there is a fundamental breach of the principles of natural justice .

## **Part 2: Courts, Tribunals and Coroners**

### **Chapter 1: Criminal Procedure**

### Clause 3: Automatic online conviction and penalty for certain summary offences

- 109 Clause 3 inserts new sections 16G to 16M into the Magistrates' Courts Act 1980 to provide for the new automatic online conviction and standard statutory penalty process.
- 110 New section 16G defines the references in these sections to a person being offered the automatic online conviction option and a person (or their legal representative) accepting this option (see new subsections 16G(1) and (2)). It also provides that an offer or acceptance of the automatic online conviction option by electronic notification means a written notification by electronic means, in accordance with the Criminal Procedure Rules (new subsection 16G(4)).
- 111 New section 16H provides that in order for a person accused of an offence to receive a criminal conviction under this new online option, the “qualifying conditions” must be met and the accused person must be offered and accept the automatic online conviction option in respect of the offence (new subsection 16H(1) and (2)).
- 112 The qualifying conditions are set out in new subsection 16H(3) to (6). Where the automatic online conviction option is offered, the offence must be a non-imprisonable summary offence (new subsection 16H(4)) which is specified in

regulations made by the Lord Chancellor (new subsection 16H(3)(a)). These regulations are to be made by a statutory instrument laid under the affirmative procedure (new subsection 16H(5)).

113 The other qualifying conditions as to when this automatic online conviction option may be offered, include that the accused person must also be 18 years of age when charged (or a body corporate) (new subsection 16H(3)(b)), and the “required documents” (as defined in new subsection 16H(6)) served on the accused in accordance with the Criminal Procedure Rules (new subsection 16H(3)(c) and (d)).

114 New section 16I provides for the penalty and other related costs to be imposed on offenders convicted via the new automatic online conviction procedure. In all cases, a penalty will be imposed on offenders convicted via this new procedure, which will consist of a fine and surcharge of an amount specified for the offence (new subsections 16I(2) and (8)), and prosecution costs which will be determined by the relevant prosecutor (new subsections 16I(6) and (7)).

115 In certain cases, the penalty may also consist of a specified number of penalty points to be endorsed on the offender’s driving record (new subsection 16I(3)) or an amount of compensation if specified for the offence which will be

determined by the relevant prosecutor but not exceed the maximum amount specified for the offence (new subsection 16I(4) and (5)).

- 116 Defendants (which throughout these Explanatory Notes with regards to criminal procedure, includes all ‘accused persons’) will be given full details of the prospective fixed fine, surcharge and other costs (for example, compensation and/or penalty points if relevant) before agreeing to accept the automatic conviction and penalty.
- 117 New section 16J gives the Lord Chancellor the power to, by regulations, specify different amounts of fines, compensation and surcharge for different offences and for different circumstances in which a particular offence is committed (new subsection 16J(1), (3) and (4)). With regard to penalty points, regulations may only specify this in association with an offence if it is an offence that would or could ordinarily result in the endorsement of the offender’s driving record with penalty points if convicted (new subsection 16J(2)). These regulations are to be made by a statutory instrument laid under the affirmative procedure (new subsection 16J(6)).
- 118 The way in which the fixed fine is set using the above powers will be based on current fining practice. Relevant factors in setting the fine level

for each offence may be the overall average of fines imposed for the offence, sentencing guidelines published by the Sentencing Council, current sentencing practice, and income data.

119 New subsection 16K(1) provides that the time when a conviction under section 16H takes effect is to be determined in accordance with the Criminal Procedure Rules.

120 New subsections 16K(2) to (7) state that a conviction under section 16H and a penalty imposed under section 16I (including all elements of said penalty: fine, prosecution costs, surcharge and, if applicable, compensation and/or endorsement of a person's driving record) are to be treated as if they had been imposed by the specified magistrates' court (as defined in new subsection 16K(8)).

121 New section 16L deals with notice of conviction and penalty. Subsection 16L(1) provides that a person convicted under section 16H must be given a notice of conviction and penalty by electronic means.

122 New subsection 16L(2) set out that this electronic notice of conviction and penalty will set out each separate penalty imposed on the offender under section 16I, and specify a magistrates' court for the purposes of subsections 16K(2) to (7). The notice will also require the

offender to pay the overall penalty in the manner specified in the notice and within the 28-day period beginning with the day on which the person's conviction took effect (new subsection 16L(3)).

123 New section 16M provides the magistrates' court with a power to set aside a conviction under 16H or replace a penalty imposed on a person under section 16I. New subsection 16M(1) provides that a magistrates' court may set aside a conviction if it appears to the court that the conviction is unjust, and that this can be considered on the papers by a single justice (new subsection 16M(3)). However if a magistrates' court composed of a single justice is minded to refuse to set aside the conviction, new subsection 16M(4) specifies that the decision must then be referred to a full magistrates' court which must consider the matter at a hearing where the parties may make representations.

124 New subsection 16M(5) provides that a magistrates' court may set aside a penalty imposed under new section 16I if it appears that the amount is unjust and if it does so then it may then impose any sentence that it could have imposed for that offence if the person had pleaded guilty before it at the earliest opportunity. That sentence will then be a normal sentence imposed by the magistrates' court, rather than one imposed

under section 16I.

125 A magistrates' court may exercise this power to set aside a conviction or replace a penalty whether as a result of an application by the person convicted, the relevant prosecutor or of its own motion (see subsection 16M(7)).

#### Clause 4: Guilty plea in writing: extension to proceedings following police charge

126 Section 12 of the MCA 1980 currently sets out the procedure that is commonly known as 'pleading guilty by post', which enables prosecutors to provide a defendant who is prosecuted for a summary-only offence and is aged 16 years and over (or under 16 years when jointly charged with an adult) with the option to indicate a guilty plea in writing and opt that a magistrates' court may proceed to try, convict, and sentence them at a court hearing in their absence, without the need for the defendant or other parties in the case to make a court appearance at any stage of the proceedings. This procedure can only be applied to the prosecution of summary-only offences that have been initiated against a defendant in writing by a postal requisition or summons away from a police station.

127 Clause 4 subsection (1) introduces amendments to section 12 of the MCA 1980 that will enable prosecutors to apply the procedure for

pleading guilty by post to the prosecution of a summary-only offence against a defendant who is of appropriate age that has been initiated by charging them in person at a police station and granting them police bail to appear at a magistrates' court for a first hearing.

128 Clause 4 subsection (2) amends subsection 12(1)(a)(ii) of the MCA 1980 removing the power that currently enables the Secretary of State to order the exclusion of a specific summary offence from the pleading guilty by post procedure. This power has never been exercised and is considered to be unnecessary; if a case is identified as being unsuitable for the procedure (because for example, the defendant is likely to receive a custodial sentence), the relevant prosecutor need not apply the procedure and the court may also disapply the procedure. Existing subsection 12(6) of MCA 1980 also retains the safeguard that if the court receives a notification withdrawing an indicated guilty plea on behalf of the defendant prior to a trial hearing, the court shall proceed to deal with the summary offence as if the indication had not been given.

129 Clause 4 subsection (3) inserts new subsection 12(2A) of the MCA 1980 to enable prosecutors to apply the procedure for pleading guilty by post to cases where a defendant aged 16

years and over has been charged with a summary-only offence at a police station and bailed to appear at magistrates' court under Part 4 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 ("the PACE Act 1984").

130 Clause 4 subsection (4) amends subsection 12(3) of the MCA 1980 to provide details about the documents which must be served upon the defendant by the prosecutor in order to apply the pleading guilty by post procedure for a defendant who has been charged and bailed from a police station; which includes a notice as to the possible effects of procedure, details of the charge against them, and any information relating to them that may be supplied to the court by the prosecutor.

131 Clause 4 subsection (5) amends subsection 12(5) of the MCA 1980 so that a magistrates' court can proceed to try, convict, and sentence a defendant who has opted to proceed with the pleading guilty by post procedure subsequent to being charged and bailed from a police station at a court hearing in their absence.

132 Clause 4 subsection (6) inserts new subsection 12(5A) of the MCA 1980 to give a magistrates' court the power to discharge a defendant from their duty to surrender to the custody of the court where they have opted to proceed with the pleading guilty by post procedure

having been charged and bailed from a police station. This will enable the court to proceed deal with and dispose of the case without the need for the defendant to appear at court for the hearing. New subsection 12(5B) enables that the function under new subsection 12(5A) can be carried out by a single justice.

133 Clause 4 subsection (6) also inserts new subsections 12(5C) to 12(5F) of the MCA 1980 to retain the current prohibitions on sentencing a defendant in absence having proceeded with the case through the pleading guilty by post procedure, no matter how the prosecution was initiated. New subsection 12(5D) dictates that having tried and convicted a defendant in absence under the procedure, a magistrates' court will not have the power to impose a custodial sentence or other type of detention without first bringing the defendant before the court for a sentencing hearing. New subsection 12(5E) dictates that where a magistrates' court intends to impose a driving disqualification, the court must first adjourn the case to give the defendant the opportunity to appear at court but can then disqualify them in absence at the next hearing. New subsection 12(5F) dictates that where a trial is adjourned with a view to its resumption for the purpose of new subsection 12(5E), the notice required by existing section 10(2) of the MCA 1980 must include notice

of the reason for the adjournment.

134 Clause 4 subsection (7) amends subsection 12(7) of the MCA 1980 so that subsections 12(7)(a) and 12(7)(aa), which dictate details of what information that was served on the defendant must be read out at court prior to accepting a guilty plea and convicting them in absence, also apply to prosecutions initiated by charge and bail from a police station.

135 Clause 4 subsection (8) repeals sections 12(12), and 12(13) of the MCA 1980 which dealt with service of documents in Scotland. Accordingly, this repeal only extends and applies to England, Wales and Scotland. Section 12(13) is a superfluous provision given that equivalent provision is made in section 39 of the Criminal Law Act 1977 (as amended by the Criminal Justice Act 2003).

### Clause 5: Extension of single justice procedure to corporations

136 Clause 5 amends section 16A of the Magistrates' Courts Act 1980 to clarify that the single justice procedure can be used to prosecute legal persons such as corporations, as well as individuals.

### Clause 6: Written procedure for indicating plea and determining mode of trial: adults

- 137 As previously explained above, criminal offences are categorised as summary-only offences (which should be tried in a magistrates' court), indictable-only offences (which must be tried in the Crown Court), or triable either-way offences (which can be tried in a magistrates' court or the Crown Court depending on the seriousness and complexity of the case, or the wishes of the defendant).
- 138 Section 17A of the MCA 1980 provides for the 'plea before venue' procedure that takes place at a magistrates' court hearing during which a defendant is invited to indicate a plea to a triable either-way offence when they make their first appearance at court. If the defendant pleads not guilty or fails to indicate a plea during the hearing, sections 18 to 23 of the MCA 1980 sets out the subsequent 'allocation decision' procedure which provides the magistrates' court with the framework it must follow to decide whether the triable either-way is more suitable for a summary trial in the magistrates' court, or for trial on indictment in the Crown Court.
- 139 The MCA 1980 requires that the procedures for plea before venue and the allocation decision must be conducted in the defendant's presence at court during a hearing, with only a small number of exceptions to this rule (for example, if the court is

unable to proceed in the defendant's presence due to their disorderly conduct).

140 Clause 6 subsection (1) introduces amendments to the MCA 1980 that will enable the procedures for both plea before venue and the allocation decision for an adult defendant prosecuted in triable-either way cases to be conducted in writing/online via the Common Platform, without the need for a court hearing or the defendant's appearance at magistrates' court to do so.

141 Clause 6 subsection (2) inserts new section 17ZA of the MCA 1980 that enables a defendant charged with a triable either-way offence to be provided with the choice to engage with the plea before venue procedure and indicate a plea in writing/online, without the need for a court hearing.

142 New subsection 17ZA(1) specifies that this new section can only apply to a defendant who has attained the age of 18 years when they are charged; or who has attained the age of 18 years after they were charged but before they appeared at court to answer the charge or provided a written/online indication of plea.

143 It will not always be appropriate for the court to provide a defendant with the choice to proceed with the plea before venue procedure in writing/online therefore, new subsection 17ZA(2)

provides that the Criminal Procedure Rules may make provisions about circumstances in which the new written/online plea procedure cannot be used for a case.

144 New subsections 17ZA(3) and 17ZA(4) state that a magistrates' court must provide a defendant with certain information in order to proceed with the new written/online plea procedure, including explanations as to the procedure, choices, effects of those choices, and any other information specified by the Criminal Procedure Rules.

145 Where a defendant provides a written/online indication of a guilty plea, new subsection 17ZA(5) directs the magistrates' court to proceed in accordance with new subsection 17ZB (see next subheading below for further detail).

146 Where a defendant provides a written/online indication of a not-guilty plea, new subsection 17ZA(6) of the MCA 1980 directs the magistrates' court to proceed with the allocation decision procedure in accordance with new section 17ZC of the MCA 1980 if the defendant is content to continue to engage in writing/online; or proceed with a normal court hearing in accordance with section 18 of the MCA 1980 if the court or defendant do not wish to continue to proceed in writing/online.

147 Where a defendant fails to provide a

written/online indication of plea, new subsection 17ZA(7) of the MCA 1980 directs the magistrates' court to proceed with a normal court hearing in accordance with section 17A of the MCA 1980 in order to receive the defendant's plea.

148 New subsection 17ZA(8) of the MCA 1980 ensures that any plea provided by a defendant in writing/online is treated as an indication and thus, is not binding until they make a subsequent appearance at a court hearing to confirm or change their indicated plea.

149 New subsection 17ZA(9) of the MCA 1980 dictates that the new written/online plea procedure will not apply to cases that receive a prosecutor's notice under section 51B or 51C of the CDA 1998 (which relates to serious or complex fraud cases and certain cases involving children/young people and requires the case to be sent to the Crown Court).

150 New subsections 17ZA(10) and 17ZA (11) of the MCA 1980 direct a magistrates' court to cease with the new online/written procedures and proceed with a normal court hearing to receive an indication of plea in accordance with section 17A of the MCA 1980 where a defendant notifies the court that they wish to withdraw a prior written/online indication of plea: before the start of a summary trial under section 9 of the MCA 1980;

before the allocation decision procedure under section 18(1) of the MCA 1980; or before they are sent to the Crown Court for trial.

151 New subsection 17ZA(12) of the MCA 1980 provides that the new written/online plea procedure can be applied to prosecutions initiated in various different ways, including defendants who have been summonsed, have received a written charge and requisition, or have been charged and bailed to court from a police station.

152 New subsection 17ZA(13) of the MCA 1980 provides additional information about the definition of the term “written indication of plea” used in new section 17ZA of the MCA 1980 and new section 17ZB to existing section 18 of the MCA 1980, which includes when an adult is considered to have failed to provide an indication of written/online plea.

153 Clause 6 subsection (2) also inserts new section 17ZB of the MCA 1980 (after new section 17ZA of the MCA 1980) that will provide a magistrates’ court with the option to send a case to the Crown Court for conviction and sentencing after a defendant has indicated a guilty plea in writing/online in accordance with new subsection 17ZA of the MCA 1980.

154 New subsection 17ZB(1) of the MCA 1980 dictates that this new section can only be

proceeded with if the defendant has provided a written/online indication of plea in accordance with new section 17ZA.

155 New subsection 17ZB(2) of the MCA 1980 provides that the Criminal Procedure Rules may make provisions about circumstances in which new section 17ZB of the MCA 1980 cannot be used for a case.

156 New subsections 17ZB(3) and 17ZB(4) of the MCA 1980 provide that a magistrates' court can consider whether the defendant is likely to require a Crown Court sentence if he or she pleads guilty at the summary trial. In such cases the court may write to the defendant seeking their agreement to be sent direct to the Crown Court for sentencing (new subsection 17ZB(5) of the MCA 1980). The court must provide the defendant with an explanation of the procedure, choices and the effects of those choices (new subsection 17ZB(6) of the MCA 1980). The court must also inform the prosecutor in writing and give them the opportunity to object (new subsection 17ZB(7) of the MCA 1980).

157 If the defendant and prosecutor do not object, the magistrates' court can send the case direct to the Crown Court (new subsection 17ZB(8) of the MCA 1980). However, if either the defendant or prosecutor object to the case being sent direct to

the Crown Court, the magistrates court must proceed with a summary trial (new subsection 17ZB(9) of the MCA 1980). If a defendant confirms their indication of a guilty plea at the hearing, then the defendant can be convicted in accordance with section 9 of the MCA 1980. On conviction, the magistrates' court could either proceed to immediately sentence the defendant or commit the case to the Crown Court for sentence under sections 3 or 3A of the Powers of Criminal Courts (Sentencing) Act 2000 ("PCC(S)A 2000") if the court considered its sentencing powers to be inadequate.

158 If a defendant changes their indication of written/online plea and pleads not guilty at a summary trial held in accordance with section 9 of the MCA 1980, the trial and the indicated written/online plea are void and the court must instead proceed with a hearing for the purposes of section 17A of the MCA 1980 on the basis the defendant was pleading not guilty (new subsection 17ZB(10) of the MCA 1980).

159 New subsection 17ZC of the MCA 1980 enables a magistrates' court to provide an adult defendant with the option to engage with the allocation decision procedure to decide on the most suitable mode of trial for a triable either-way offence in writing/online, subsequent to the

defendant having indicated a not-guilty plea in writing/online under new section 17ZA of the MCA 1980. This new subsection also provides a magistrates' court with the chance to bypass the allocation decision procedure for a triable either-way case by providing a defendant with an earlier additional opportunity to elect for their case to be sent to the Crown Court for a jury trial.

160 Where a defendant provides an indication of a not-guilty plea in writing/online in accordance with new section 17ZA, new subsection 17ZC(1) specifies that the court must proceed in accordance with new subsections 17ZC(3) or 17ZC(5) of the MCA 1980. The applicable new subsection that the court will proceed under will be dependent on whether the offence in question is a "scheduled offence" (for example, criminal damage contrary to section 1 of the Criminal Damage Act 1971) prescribed under Schedule 2 of the MCA 1980. This is because a scheduled offence requires the court to make additional considerations during the allocation decision procedure in accordance with section 22 of the MCA 1980 as to whether the value involved exceeds £5,000, as this will effect which modes of trial will be available for the case.

161 New subsection 17ZC(2) of the MCA 1980 provides that the Criminal Procedure Rules may

make provisions about circumstances in which new section 17ZC of the MCA 1980 cannot be used for a case.

162 Where the offence in question is not a scheduled offence, new subsections 17ZC(3) of the MCA 1980 specifies that a magistrates' court must provide the defendant with certain information and ask whether they wish to indicate in writing/online that they do not consent to summary trial and, if they do not wish to do so, whether they wish to engage with allocation decision procedure in writing/online. New subsection 17ZC(4) specifies the information that must be provided by the court to the defendant, which includes an explanation of the procedure, choices, the effects of those choices, relevant time periods, and any other information specified by the Criminal Procedure Rules.

163 Where the offence in question is a scheduled offence, new subsection 17ZC(5) of the MCA 1980 specifies a magistrates' court must provide the defendant with certain information and ask whether they wish to engage with the written/online allocation decision procedure and provide a written/online indication of non-consent to summary trial and if the defendant does not wish to do that, whether they simply wish to engage with the written/online allocation decision

procedure. New subsection 17ZC(6) of the MCA 1980 specifies the information that must be provided by the court to the defendant, which includes an explanation of the procedure, choices, the effects of those choices, relevant time periods, and any other information specified by the Criminal Procedure Rules.

164 New subsection 17ZC(7) of the MCA 1980 specifies that where, in accordance with new subsection 17ZC(3) of the Act, a defendant informs a magistrates' court in writing/online that they would not consent to a summary trial, the court must send the case for trial on indictment to the Crown Court in accordance with section 51 of the CDA 1998.

165 New subsection 17ZC(8) of the MCA 1980 specifies that where a defendant declines the 'invitation' to provide a written/online indication of non-consent to summary trial but otherwise complies with new subsection 17ZC(3) or 17ZC(5) of the MCA 1980, a magistrates' court must proceed as normal with the pending allocation decision procedure by way of a hearing at court in accordance with new subsection 18(1A) of the MCA 1980 (paragraph 6(7)(a) of schedule 2) or by way of written/online procedures in accordance with new subsection 18(4A) of the MCA 1980 (paragraph 6(7)(b) of schedule 2) depending on

the defendants decision. After the ‘allocation decision’ has been reached, the court can use existing case management powers to prepare the case for trial in the relevant criminal court, at the start of which the defendant will be asked to confirm their plea.

166 New subsection 17ZC(9) of the MCA 1980 provides additional information about the definition of certain terms used in the drafting of new subsection 17ZC, section 18, and section 22 of the MCA 1980, which includes “election for written allocation proceedings”, “written indication of non-consent to summary trial”, and references to person’s failing to do either of those things.

167 New subsection 17ZC(9) of the MCA 1980 also provides additional information about the meaning of references to a person’s failing to elect to engage with the written/online allocation decision procedure or a person’s failing to give a written indication of non-consent to a summary trial. These are defined as defendants who have been provided with the information about the procedure and asked the relevant questions required by new subsection 17ZC(3) or 17ZC(5) of the MCA 1980 but have then failed to provide a written/online indication within the relevant time period.

168 Section 22A of the MCA 1980 currently

provides that offences of low-value shoplifting where the value is not in excess of £200 are triable only summarily but are still subject to a defendant's right to elect for their case to be sent to the Crown Court for a jury trial. Clause 6(3) inserts new subsections 22A(1A) to 22A(1E) of the MCA 1980 (after section 22A(1) of the MCA 1980) in order to provide a defendant charged with a low-value shoplifting offence who has provided an indication of a not-guilty plea in writing/online, with the choice to also exercise in writing/online their right to elect for a jury trial at Crown Court; without the need for a court hearing or appearance.

### Clause 7: Initial option for adult accused to reject summary trial at hearing

169 The sequence of the allocation decision procedure conducted at a traditional court hearing for an adult defendant who indicates a not-guilty plea to a triable either-way offence during plea before venue is currently restricted by primary legislation under section 17A to 23 of the MCA 1980.

170 Where a magistrates' court decides that an offence triable either-way is more suitable for summary trial, it must reach this decision: after the defendant indicates a not guilty plea during 'plea before venue' (subsection 17A(7) of the MCA 1980); after the court is required to follow through

with the ‘allocation decision’ procedure set out under section 19 to 23 of the MCA 1980 (subsection 18(1) of the MCA 1980); after hearing representations from the prosecution and defendant and considering other specified issues as to suitability (subsection 19(2) to 19(4) of the MCA 1980); before the defendant is notified of the decision and may request an ‘indication of sentence’ (subsection 20(3) of the MCA 1980); and before the defendant is asked by the court whether they consent to be tried summarily or wish to be tried on indictment (subsection 20(9) of the MCA 1980).

171 Clause 7 inserts new section 17BA of the MCA 1980 that enables a magistrates’ court to provide a defendant who appears before them at a hearing charged with a triable either-way offence – who did not indicate a guilty plea during plea before venue – with the opportunity to inform the court at an earlier additional stage in the proceedings that they would not consent to summary trial if this was later offered to them; before the court needs to proceed with the pending allocation decision procedure under sections 19 to 23 of the MCA 1980.

172 This clause essentially seeks to replicate the new ‘written/online’ opportunity to indicate non-consent to a summary trial at an earlier stage

in the allocation decision procedure (provided for under new section 17ZC of the MCA 1980), so that this provisions is also available for plea and allocation procedures that take place ‘at court’ during a traditional hearing.

173 New subsection 17BA(1)(a) of the MCA 1980 specifies this section has effect where a defendant indicates at the hearing, or their legal representative indicates on their behalf if the defendant is absent from the hearing (section 17B of the MCA 1980), that they would plead not guilty to a triable either-way offence.

174 New subsection 17BA(1)(b) disapplies this section where the offence in question is a scheduled offence, which must be treated as summary-only where the value involved does not exceed £5000 in accordance with section 22(1) of the MCA 1980. However, where section 21(1) of the MCA 1980 applies and it subsequently does not appear to the court clear that the value involved exceeds the relevant sum, the court will proceed in accordance with new subsections 17BA(2) to 17BA(6) of the MCA 1980 (paragraph 6(9)(a) of schedule 2).

175 New subsection 17BA(2) of the MCA 1980 specifies that where a defendant appears at the hearing, a magistrates’ court must explain to the defendant that they may provide an indication to

the court that they would not consent to a summary trial of the offence and the consequences of their choice. The court must explain that where the defendant chose to provide an indication, this would result in the defendant being sent to the Crown Court for trial without having the opportunity to make any representations as to which mode of trial is more suitable under section 19(2) of the MCA 1980 or to obtain an indication of sentence under section 20(3) of the MCA 1980. The court must explain that where the defendant chose not to provide an indication, this would result in the court proceeding with the allocation decision procedure in accordance with section 18(1) of the MCA 1980. Once a magistrates' court has provided these explanations, the court must proceed to ask the defendant if they wish to make such an indication to the court.

176 New subsection 17BA(3) of the MCA 1980 specifies that where a defendant is not present at the hearing, the court must ask the defendant's legal representative whether the defendant would wish to indicate that they would not consent to a summary trial of the offence.

177 New subsection 17BA(4) specifies that where a defendant, or their legal representative in their absence, provides an indication to a magistrates'

court that they would not consent to a summary trial, the court must send the case to the Crown Court for a jury trial in accordance with section 51 of the CDA 1998.

178 New subsection 17BA(5) specifies that where a defendant, or their legal representative in their absence, declines to provide an indication to a magistrates' court that they would not consent to summary trial, the court must proceed as normal with the allocation decision procedure at the hearing in accordance with subsection 18(1) of the MCA 1980.

179 New subsection 17BA(6) provides additional detail about the meaning of the term "in-court indication of non-consent to summary trial" used in the drafting of new subsection 17BA and section 18 of the MCA 1980. This term is in reference to an indication given by a defendant or their legal representative in response to the questions asked under subsection 17BA(2) or 17BA(3) that the defendant would not consent to a summary trial in a magistrates' court for the offence they are being prosecuted for.

### Clause 8: Written procedure for indicating plea and determining mode of trial: children

180 The age of criminal responsibility in England and Wales is 10 years of age, which means that children and young people aged between 10 and

17 can be prosecuted for criminal offences at court. The criminal court system recognises the increased vulnerability and additional requirements that children have, so treats these types of defendants differently from adults in the youth court. This includes bespoke plea before venue and allocation decision procedures in legislation which also take into account the fact that children and young people do not share the same right as adults to elect for their case to be sent to the Crown Court for a jury trial. Therefore, children and young people also require bespoke legislation for the new written/online plea and allocation procedures to cater for their needs.

181 Clause 8 inserts new section 24ZA of the MCA 1980 that enables a child or young person under 18 years who is charged with a triable either-way offence to be provided with the choice to indicate a plea in writing/online, without the need for a youth court hearing.

182 New subsection 24ZA(1) specifies that this new section can only apply to a defendant who is a child or young person under the age of 18 years when they were charged with an offence other than one falling within section 51A(12) of the CDA 1998, has not since attained the age of 18 years since being charged, and a magistrates' court would have to determine whether to send the case

to the Crown Court for trial.

183 New subsection 24ZA(2) provides that the Criminal Procedure Rules may make provisions about circumstances in which new section 24ZA of the MCA 1980 cannot be used for a case.

184 New subsections 24ZA(3) and (4) dictate that a magistrates' court must provide a child or young person with certain pieces of information in order to proceed with the new written/online plea procedure, including explanations as to the procedure, choices, effects of those choices, and any other information specified by the Criminal Procedure Rules.

185 Where a child or young person provides a written/online indication of a guilty plea, new subsection 24ZA(5) directs the youth court to proceed to try the defendant under section 9 of the MCA 1980 when they appear at court for a hearing. If a child or young person appears at a summary trial in accordance with subsection 24ZA(5) and pleads not guilty, new subsection 24ZA(6) dictates that the trial and the indicated plea are void and the youth court must proceed as if the hearing was instead for the purpose of section 24A of the MCA 1980 (child or young person's indication of plea at court) and the child or young person had plead not guilty.

186 Where a child or young person provides a

written/online indication of not guilty plea, new subsection 24ZA(7) directs the youth court to provide the prosecutor and the child or young person with an opportunity to make any representations in writing about whether the court should send the case to the Crown Court for trial before the court makes its decision.

187 Where a child or young person fails to give a written indication of plea, new subsection 24ZA(8) of the MCA 1980 directs the youth court to proceed with a normal court hearing in accordance with section 24A of the MCA 1980.

188 New subsection 24ZA(9) of the MCA 1980 ensures that any plea provided by a child or young person in writing/online is treated as an indication and thus, is not binding until they make a subsequent appearance at a court hearing to confirm or change their indicated plea.

189 New subsection 24ZA(10) of the MCA 1980 provides that the new written/online plea procedure can be applied to prosecutions initiated in various different ways, including children and young people who have been summonsed, have received a written charge and requisition, or have been charged and bailed to court from a police station.

190 New subsection 24ZA(11) of the MCA 1980 provides additional information about the definition

of the term “written indication of plea” used in new section 24ZA, new section 24ZB, section 24A, and section 24B of the MCA 1980, which includes when a child or young person is considered to have failed to provide a written/online indication of plea.

191 New subsection 24ZA(12) of the MCA 1980 provides additional information about the definition of the term “relevant determination used in new section 24ZA and new section 24ZB of the MCA 1980, which means the determination referred to in new subsection 24ZA(1)(c) of the MCA 1980 with regards to whether to send the case to the Crown Court for trial.

192 Clause 8 also inserts new section 24ZB of the MCA 1980 which dictates how a magistrates’ court should proceed if a child or young person attains the age of 18 years and over or wishes to withdraw an indication of written/online plea.

193 New subsection 24ZB(1) of the MCA 1980 specifies that new section 24ZB of the MCA 1980 can only apply where the court has provided a child or young person with the relevant information in compliance with new subsection 24ZA(3) of the MCA 1980.

194 New subsection 24ZB(2) of the MCA 1980 specifies that if the child or young person attains the age of 18 years before providing, or failing to

provide, an indication of plea in writing/online, the procedure under section 24ZA of the MCA 1980 will cease to have effect and the court must instead proceed in accordance with the new adult written/online plea procedure under section 17ZA of the MCA 1980.

195 New subsections 24ZB(3) and 24ZB(4) of the MCA 1980 specify that if a child or young person attains the age of 18 years after they have provided a written/online indication of plea, but before a summary trial begins or a decision is made as to whether to send the case to the Crown Court for trial, the court must consider its powers under section 29 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963 (“the CYPA 1963”) whether to proceed and deal with the case in a way in which it could have if the child or young person had not attained that age. Where the court does not exercise its powers under section 29 of the CYPA 1963, new subsections 24ZA(5) or 24ZA(7) of the MCA 1980 will cease to apply and the court will instead proceed as if the written/online indication of plea had been provided via the written/online plea procedure for adults under new section 17ZA of the MCA 1980.

196 New subsections 24ZB(5) and 24ZB(6) of the MCA 1980 specifies that if a child or young person attains the age of 18 years having failed to provide

a written/online indication of plea, but before a hearing takes place at court for the purposes of receiving the child or young person's plea under section 24A of the MCA 1980, the court must proceed as if the child or young person had failed to provide a written/online indication of plea via the written/online plea procedure for adults under new section 17ZA of the MCA 1980.

197 New subsections 24ZB(7) and 24ZB(8) of the MCA 1980 direct the court to cease with the new online/written procedures and proceed with a normal court hearing to receive an indication of plea in accordance with section 24A of the MCA 1980 where a child or young person notifies the court that they wish to withdraw a prior indication of written/online plea: before the start of a summary trial under section 9 of the MCA 1980; before the plea before venue procedure under section 24A(2) of the MCA 1980; or before they are sent to the Crown Court for trial. This is so long as the written/online indication of plea is not at that time being treated as if it had been given via the adult procedure under new section 17ZA of the MCA 1980.

198 New subsection 24ZB(8) also provides that where a child or young person attains the age of 18 years having withdrawn a prior written/online indication of plea before a hearing for the purpose

of section 24A(2) of the MCA 1980, the court may consider its powers under section 29 of the CYPA 1963 and decide to proceed as if the child or young person had provided and withdrawn their written/online plea under the written/online procedure for adults under section 17ZA of the MCA 1980.

### Clause 9: Powers to proceed if accused absent from allocation hearing

199 Subsection 18(2) of the MCA 1980 requires that the allocation decision procedure for a triable either-way offence provided for under sections 19 to 22 of the Act must be proceeded with in the presence of the defendant at a court hearing. The only current exceptions to this rule that will allow the court to proceed in the absence of the defendant are where: the defendant's disorderly conduct before the court it is not practicable for the proceedings to be conducted in their presence (subsection 18(3) of the MCA 1980); or the defendant has legal representation who in the defendant's absence, signifies the defendant's consent to this and the court is satisfied there is good reason for doing so (section 23 of the MCA 1980).

200 Clause 9 subsection (1) amends the MCA 1980 to enable a magistrates' courts to proceed with the allocation decision procedure for a

triable-either way offence in the absence of an adult defendant who fails without good cause to appear at court for their allocation hearing in a wider range of circumstances.

201 Clause 9 subsection(2) omits subsection 18(3) of the MCA 1980 because the effect of this subsection will be preserved and provided for under new subsection 23(1F) of the MCA 1980 (see below for further details), so that the powers to proceed if an adult defendant is absent from an allocation hearing are consolidated together under section 23 of the MCA 1980.

202 Clause 9 subsection (3)(a) changes the heading of section 23 of the MCA 1980 from “power to proceed with allocation hearing in absence of represented accused” to “power to proceed if accused absent from allocation hearing” to account for the wider range of circumstances that will be provided for.

203 Clause 9 subsection (3)(b) substitutes subsection 23(1) of the MCA 1980 with new subsections 23(1A) to 23(1F), which specify the wider range circumstances in which section 23 of the MCA 1980 has effect so that a magistrates’ court may proceed with the allocation decision for triable either-way offences in the absence of an adult defendant.

204 New subsection 23(1A) provides overarching

safeguards in that the court can only proceed in the absence of a defendant if a hearing is held in accordance with section 18(1) or 18(1A) of the MCA 1980, the defendant fails to appear at the hearing, and the court is satisfied that it is not contrary to the interests of justice to do so in combination with any of the conditions specified in new subsections 23(1B) to 23(1F) of the MCA 1980.

205 The first condition specified under new subsection 23(1B) of the MCA 1980, is that a defendant's legal representative is present at the hearing and has been instructed by the defendant to consent to the hearing in the defendant's absence.

206 The second condition specified under new subsection 23(1C) of the MCA 1980, is that that the defendant's legal representative is present at the hearing and the court considers there is no acceptable reason for the defendant's failure to attend.

207 The third condition specified under new subsection 23(1D) of the MCA 1980, is that the court is satisfied that a notice of the allocation proceedings was served on the defendant within a reasonable time before the hearing and there is no acceptable reason for the defendant's failure to attend.

208 The fourth condition specified under new subsection 23(1E) of the MCA 1980, is that the defendant has appeared in court on a previous occasion to answer the charge (when the matter would have been listed for the allocation hearing in the defendant's presence) and the court does not consider there is an acceptable reason for the defendant's failure to attend.

209 The fifth condition specified under new subsection 23(1F) of the MCA 1980, which essentially preserves the effect of omitted subsection 18(3) of the MCA 1980, is that the court considers that it is not practicable for the proceedings to be conducted in the defendant's presence because of their disorderly conduct and it would not be contrary to the interest of justice to do so, they can proceed in the absence of the defendant.

210 In cases where the allocation decision is proceeded with in a defendant's absence, they are deemed to have indicated a not-guilty plea, and the court will proceed to allocate the case for a summary trial in the magistrates' court or a jury trial on indictment in the Crown Court. This allocation decision is made on the basis of the complexity of the case and whether the magistrates' sentencing powers would be adequate to deal with the case on conviction.

211 Clause 9 subsection (3)(c) amends subsection 23(4) of the MCA 1980, which directs how the court should proceed if it decides that the offence is more suitable for a summary trial in a defendant's absence, in order to provide that subsections 23(4)(a) and 23(4)(b) can only apply if a legal representative of the defendant is present at the hearing.

212 Clause 9 subsection (3)(d) inserts new subsections 23(4A) and 23(4B) of the MCA 1980, which direct how the court should proceed if the court decides that the offence is more suitable for summary trial in the defendant's absence when a legal representative is also not present at the hearing. New subsection 23(4A) of the MCA 1980 enables the court to prepare for and proceed with a summary trial of the offence. However, new subsection 23(4B) of the MCA 1980 specifies that where an offence is allocated for summary trial in the absence of a defendant and a legal representative, the defendant (who will not have previously consented to be tried summarily), may at any time before the start of the summary trial apply to the court for the question of the mode of trial to be re-opened. If the court agrees that it would be in the interest of justice to do so (having particular regard to the reason why the defendant previously failed to appear), it may cease to proceed to trial and instead recommence the

allocation decision hearing so that the defendant may elect for a jury trial if they wish.

213 Clause 9 subsection (4) inserts new section 24BA of the MCA 1980, which enables the magistrates' court to proceed with the allocation decision procedure for an offence in respect of a defendant who is a child or young person under the age of 18 years in their absence when the child or young person has both failed to provide an indication of plea in writing/online (in accordance with new section 24ZA of the MCA 1980) and failed without good cause to appear at the subsequent allocation hearing.

214 New subsection 24BA(1) of the MCA 1980 provides overarching safeguards that specify the court can only proceed to allocate the offence in the absence of a child or young person in accordance with new section 24BA where: a hearing is being held for the purpose of subsection 24A(2) of the MCA 1980; the child or young person has not appeared at the hearing; the child or young person has failed to provide a written/online indication of plea in accordance with new section 24ZA of the MCA 1980; it is either satisfied that notice has been served on the defendant in good time or the defendant has appeared at court on a previous occasion to answer the charge; the court considers there is no

acceptable reason for the child or young person's failure to appear; and the court is satisfied that it would not be contrary to the interests of justice for the hearing to proceed in the child or young person's absence.

215 New subsection 24BA(2) of the MCA 1980 provides that where the court proceeds in accordance with new section 24BA, section 24A will cease to apply.

216 New subsection 24BA(3) of the MCA 1980 specifies that if an absent child or young person has no legal representation present at the hearing, the court is to proceed with the allocation decision as if the child or young person had appeared and indicated a not-guilty plea.

217 New subsection 24BA(4) of the MCA 1980 specifies that if an absent child or young person does have legal representation present at the hearing, the court is to proceed in accordance with the existing provisions for allocation in the absence of a child or young person provided for under subsection 24B(2) of the MCA 1980.

### Clause 10: Sending cases to Crown Court for trial

218 Clause 10 will amend section 51 (sending of adult defendants to Crown Court for trial) and section 51A (sending of children or young persons to Crown Court for trial) of the Crime and Disorder

Act 1998 (“CDA 1998”) to enable indictable offences to be sent to the Crown Court without a first hearing in the magistrates’ court. This is both in respect of offences that are only triable on indictment and those that are triable either way, but which have been allocated for trial in the Crown Court.

219 Amendments to section 51 of the CDA 1998 are set out in subsections (2) to (5), and amendments to section 51A of the CDA 1998 are set out in subsections (7) to (11). The application of sections 51 and 51A of the CDA 1998 turn on the age of the accused when the court considers sending a case to the Crown Court.

220 New subsections 51(2A) and 51A(3A) provide for sending at a hearing if the accused is present before the court when it is determined that the case is to be sent. However, if the accused is not present when it is determined that the case is to be sent, the magistrates’ court must give certain documents on the person being sent to the Crown Court for trial (new subsections 51(2B) and 51A(3B)). This includes documents which state the charge against the accused; explain that the court is required to send the accused to the Crown Court for trial for the offence; and any other information as required by the Criminal Procedure Rules.

221 As soon as practicable after the relevant documents have been given to the accused, the magistrates' court must send him or her to the Crown Court for trial (new subsections 51(2C) and 51A(3C)). This can be done outside of a court hearing.

222 The Criminal Procedure Rules can make provisions about the circumstances in which a person is not to be served the documents giving him or her notification of being sent to the Crown Court for trial, and how a person is to be sent to the Crown Court for trial in such circumstances (new subsections 51(2E) and 51A(3E)).

223 The circumstances when joined cases or co-defendants are also to be sent to the Crown Court along with the main offence will be dealt with by the Criminal Procedure Rules under new subsections 51(3A) and (3B), and 51A(4A) and (4B). This may include provision for related summary-only offences to be sent to the Crown Court (see new subsection 51(3B)(a)(iii) and 51A(4B)(a)(iii)); however, in the event that, for whatever reason, the indictment subsequently changes so that only the summary offence(s) remains, there is a new general power to remit such cases from the Crown Court to the magistrates' court (see Clause 11).

224 The circumstances where indictable offences

can be sent straight to the Crown Court without a first hearing will apply to cases where defendants have been charged by postal charge and requisition or charged and bailed by the police. Consequently, Clause 10 also inserts new subsection (2A) into section 52 of the CDA 1998 to provide that where the court sends a person for trial under section 51 or 51A other than in open court, it must do so on bail (see new subsection 52(2A)(a)) and that bail must be unconditional (if the accused not already on bail, or is on unconditional bail), or if the accused is already on bail subject to conditions, subject to the same conditions (see new subsection 52(2A)(b)). However, this is a discretionary power, and magistrates' courts will only deem a case suitable to be sent under this power where it is appropriate to issue bail on the papers.

### Clause 11: Powers of Crown Court to remit cases to the magistrates' court

225 Clause 11 inserts new section 46ZA into the Senior Courts Act 1981 as to give the Crown Court a new general power to send a person back to a magistrates' court for trial (see new subsection 46ZA(1)).

226 New subsection 46ZA(2) states that this power to remit cannot be exercised if the offence in question is indictable-only (or falls within section

51A(12) of the CDA 1998 if the defendant is under 18). Where the offence in question is triable either-way, the Crown Court must obtain the defendant's consent to do so where the defendant has attained the age of 18 (or is a body corporate): new subsection 46ZA(3). Accordingly, defendants' right to elect for jury trial is unaffected (there is no requirement for the defendant to consent to the court remitting a summary-only offence).

227 In light of the general principle of summary trial in the youth court for under 18-year-olds, new subsection 46ZA(4) requires the Crown Court to consider (if need be of its own motion) whether to send a person under the age of 18 who appears before the Crown Court back to a magistrates' court; and if it decides not to send a under-18 defendant back, the court must give reasons for not sending.

228 In deciding whether to exercise the power (new subsection 46ZA(5)), the Crown Court must consider all other offences which are joined to the main offence, whether in relation to the same defendant or a co-defendant, and have regard to any allocation guidelines.

229 New subsection 46ZA(6) also provides that where the Crown Court exercises the power set out in subsection 46ZA(2) it may give the necessary directions in regard to whether the

accused is retained in custody or released on bail until the accused can appear or be brought before the magistrates' court.

230 New subsection 46ZA(7) states that there is no right of appeal against an order under new subsection 46ZA(1).

231 Clause 11 also inserts new section 25A into the Sentencing Code to give the Crown Court the power to remit an adult defendant to a magistrates' court for sentence (new subsection 25A(2)). New subsection 25A(1) sets out that this power can only be exercised where a person has attained the age of 18 (or is a body corporate), and where an individual has either been convicted of an offence by a magistrates' court and committed to the Crown Court for sentence, or has been convicted of a offence by the Crown Court following a plea of guilty.

232 In deciding whether to exercise the power (new subsection 25A(3)) the Crown Court must consider all other offences which are joined to the main offence, whether in relation to the same defendant or a co-defendant, and have regard to any allocation guidelines.

233 New subsection 25A(4) states that there is no right of appeal against an order under new subsection 25A(2).

234 Clause 11 will also inset new subsection (2A) into section 25 of the Sentencing Code to provide for the court's ability remit back to youth court for sentencing. It is likely to be used in relation to those individuals believed to be over 18 who have been committed for sentence by the magistrates' court, who later turn out to be under 18 years of age.

### Clause 12: Powers of youth court to transfer cases if accused turns 18

235 Clause 12 amends section 47 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (powers of youth court) in order to make provisions for the youth court to remit defendants to the adult magistrates' court or the Crown Court, where a person who appears or is brought before a youth court charged with an offence subsequently attains the age of 18 (new subsection (A1)). New subsection (4A) sets out that, under this section, a person is taken to be the age which that person appears to the court after considering any available evidence.

236 New subsection (1) sets out that where a defendant has been charged with either a summary offence or an offence triable either way, and has subsequently attained the age of 18, the youth court may remit the person for trial to an adult magistrates' court at any time before the start of the trial. Where a defendant has been charged

with an indictable offence, and has subsequently attained the age of 18, the youth court may send the person for trial to the Crown Court at any time before the start of the trial (new subsection (1A)).

237 Where the youth court is proposing to remit a person to an adult magistrates' court for an offence triable either way, the court must give the defendant the opportunity to elect for a jury trial and, if the person does so elect, must send the person for trial to the Crown Court (see new subsection (1C)(b)).

238 New subsection (1D) provides that this power does not have to be exercised in open court in the presence of the defendant in question; however, if it is not, then the youth court must give certain documents to the defendant which state the charge against them; explain that the court is proposing to either remit or send the defendant for trial to an adult magistrates' court or to the Crown Court; and any other information as required by the Criminal Procedure Rules.

239 The circumstances when joined cases or co-defendants are also to be sent to the Crown Court along with the main offence will be dealt with by the Criminal Procedure Rules under new subsections (1E) and (1F). This may include provision for related summary-only offences to be sent to the Crown Court.

## Clause 13: Involvement of parent or guardian in proceedings conducted in writing

240 Section 34A of the Children and Children and Young Persons Act 1933 (“the CYPA 1933”) states that where a child or young person under the age of 18 years is charged with an offence or is for any other reason brought before the court, the court may (if they are 16 years and over) or must (if they are under 16 years) require a parent or guardian to attend at court during all stages of the proceedings unless it would be unreasonable to do so having regards to the circumstances of the case.

241 Clause 13 subsection (1) introduces a number of amendments to section 34A of the CYPA 1933 so that the court must consider notifying a parent or guardian when proceedings against a child or young person under the age of 18 years are conducted in writing/online outside of a courtroom hearing (for example, when a child or young person is invited to provide a written/online indication of plea where an allocation decision is required in accordance with new section 24ZA of the MCA 1980).

242 Clause 13 subsection (2) changes the heading of section 34A of the CYPA 1933 from “attendance at court of parent or guardian” to “attendance at court or other involvement of parent or guardian”

to account for the additional written/online proceedings that will also be addressed within this section.

243 Clause 13 subsection (3) inserts new subsections 34A(1A) to 34A(1C) of the CYPA 1933, which specify the circumstances in which a court may or must notify a parent or guardian of proceedings conducted in writing.

244 New subsection 34A(1A) of the CYPA 1933 specifies that where a child or young person is charged with an offence, the court may (if they are 16 years and over) or must (if they are under 16 years) exercise the functions conferred by new subsections 34A(1B) and 34A(1C) of the CYPA 1933 unless it would be unreasonable to do so having regards to the circumstances of the case.

245 New subsection 34A(1B) of the CYPA 1933 specifies that where any stage of the proceedings against a child are conducted in writing/online, the court may or (as the case may be) must ascertain whether the child or young person's parent or guardian is aware that the written/online proceedings are taking place and if they are not, provide them with information about the proceedings.

246 New subsection 34A(1C) of the CYPA 1933 specifies that where a child or young person provides a written/online indication of plea under

new subsection 24ZA of the MCA 1980, the court may or (as the case may be) must ascertain whether the child or young person's parent or guardian is aware that a written/online indication of plea has been provided and if they are not, provide them with information about the plea.

247 Clause 13 subsection (4) amends subsection 34A(2) of the CYPA 1933, which provides additional directions in relation to a child or young person for whom a local authority have parental responsibility, so that new subsections 34A(1A) to 34A(1C) also apply.

#### Clause 14: Removal of certain requirements for hearings about procedural matters

248 Clause 14 allows the Crown Court to determine an application for a witness summons in criminal proceedings without a hearing. It also removes certain statutory requirements in criminal proceedings for the court to hold a hearing before lifting reporting restrictions. Although the court will continue to have the option of convening a hearing in these circumstances, the amendments will enable the court to make a decision 'on the papers' without a hearing, where satisfied that this is appropriate.

249 Paragraph 1 amends section 2(8)(d) of the Criminal Procedure (Attendance of Witnesses) Act 1965 to allow the Crown Court to determine an

application for a witness summons in criminal proceedings on the papers.

250 Paragraph 2 to 7 amend various provisions to enable courts in England and Wales to be able to consider written representations rather than have to hear oral representations from an accused person who objects to the lifting of reporting restrictions imposed in relation to:

- a. a pre-trial ruling by a magistrates' court;
- b. a preparatory hearing in a complex or serious fraud case or an appeal arising from such a hearing;
- c. a preparatory hearing in a complex, serious or lengthy case, or an appeal arising from such a hearing;
- d. a pre-trial ruling in a case which is to be tried on indictment;
- e. allocation or sending proceedings;
- f. an application for dismissal of a charge in a case which has been sent to the Crown Court for trial;
- g. a special measures direction in relation to a vulnerable or intimidated witness;
- h. a direction for a vulnerable accused to give evidence through a live link; and

- i. a direction prohibiting an accused person from cross-examining a witness in person.

## Clause 15: Documents to be served in accordance with Criminal Procedure Rules

251 Clause 15 gives effect to Schedule 1, which contains amendments to existing legislation to enable the service of documents in criminal proceedings to be in accordance with Criminal Procedure Rules. As a result, such service can be effected by whichever means is the most appropriate in any given case including by electronic means

## Clause 16: Power to make consequential or supplementary provision

252 This clause allows the Lord Chancellor to make regulations which make consequential or supplementary provisions in relation to any of the provisions in this Chapter.

253 The regulations may amend, repeal or revoke primary and secondary legislation, but may only amend, repeal or revoke provision of an Act passed before this Bill is passed or in the same Session or any secondary legislation made before the regulations come into force.

254 Under subsections (3) and (4), regulations

under this section will be subject to the negative resolution procedure in Parliament unless they amend primary legislation, in which case they will be subject to the affirmative resolution procedure. Clause 45 provides further provisions in relation to such regulations.

### Clause 17: Consequential and related amendments

255 This clause introduces Schedule 2, which makes consequential amendments to other legislation.

## Chapter 2: Online Procedure

### Clause 18: Rules for online procedure in courts and tribunals

256 This clause provides in subsection (1) that there are to be rules, to be known as Online Procedure Rules, which, for specified proceedings (meaning proceedings specified in regulations made by the Lord Chancellor under clause 19) require parties to civil, family or tribunal proceedings to use electronic means to start proceedings or take steps in them (i.e. online procedure). Rules may provide for all or any part of the procedure for conducting proceedings online, including starting and defending proceedings and participating in hearings. Subsection (2) provides that these rules are to be

called Online Procedure Rules; subsection (3) provides for objectives to which regard must be had whenever the power to make Online Procedure Rules is exercised, including the objective of securing that practice and procedure under the rules are accessible and fair (for which subsection (4) specifically provides that regard must be had to those who need support to take part in any way using electronic means. Subsection (5) provides for different rules to be able to be made for different kinds of proceedings.

257 Subsection (6) requires provision to be made in Online Procedure Rules for litigants who are not legally represented (meaning, by virtue of subsection (7), represented by a person authorized to conduct litigation, such as a solicitor) to be able to choose to take by non-electronic means steps which they would otherwise be required to take by electronic means. Subsection (8) provides that Online Procedure Rules, where they require a person to use electronic means, must also provide that a court or tribunal may direct the use instead of non-electronic means. Subsection (9) makes clear that Online Procedure Rules may provide for matters to be determined by electronic means as a result of steps taken, or failed to be taken, by the parties by electronic means (so that, for example, a matter might be determined by electronic means in default of a

response which a party was required to provide by electronic means).

258 Subsections (10) to (12) provide for circumstances in which the rules are not to apply or are to cease to apply to proceedings so enabling, for example, particularly complex cases to be transferred out of the online procedure to the appropriate court or tribunal and so become subject to the civil, family, or tribunal procedural rules ('the applicable standard rules') as appropriate; and for the rules to be able to provide for alternative procedures to accommodate those cases to which the Online Procedure Rules would otherwise cease to apply. For example, this might apply where a party might not have access to the requisite IT, so creating a parallel procedure which may still be subject to those features of the online procedure that are readily available to the parties. Subsection (13) permits rules to provide for separate proceedings to be taken in a different court than the normal one and for separate proceedings to be taken together (so that, for example, certain housing-related matters might be brigaded together in a single set of proceedings before a single court or tribunal rather than having to be spread across one or more courts and/or tribunals) Subsection (14) makes it clear that this clause is subject to clause 20 (which allows the Lord Chancellor to provide in regulations for

parties to have the option of proceeding under Online Procedure Rules or the “applicable standard rules”; and subsection (15) introduces Schedule 3, which makes provision about practice directions in relation to proceedings governed by Online Procedure Rules.

### Clause 19: “Specified kinds” of proceedings

259 Subsection (1) of this clause allows for proceedings which are of one of the listed types of proceedings (civil, family, First-tier or Upper Tribunal, employment tribunal or Employment Appeal Tribunal) be specified in regulations as subject to the online procedure and accordingly to Online Procedure Rules.

260 Subsection (2) provides a non-exhaustive list of the factors by reference to which proceedings may be specified as coming within the scope of the online procedure, including the legal basis of the proceedings (for example, a breach of contract) and the factual basis of the proceedings (for example, a money claim), and the value of any claim within the proceedings.

261 Subsections (3) and (4) make regulations under this clause subject to the “concurrence requirement” (i.e. requiring the concurrence of the Lord Chief Justice, or Senior President of Tribunals if the regulations concern proceedings before tribunals – see clause 30) and to affirmative

resolution procedure.

## Clause 20: Provision supplementing section 18

262 Subsection (1) enables the Lord Chancellor to specify the circumstances in which a party to proceedings may choose whether to proceed under Online Procedure Rules or under the applicable standard rules for the appropriate alternative civil or family court or tribunal, and subsection (2) makes it clear that practice directions for online proceedings (under Schedule 3) do not apply where the applicable standard rules apply because of provision made under subsection (1). Subsections (3) and (4) enable the Lord Chancellor to specify the circumstances in which Online Procedure Rules should not apply, or cease to apply, to specified proceedings (defined by subsection (5) as “excluded proceedings”) and to provide for the circumstances in which such proceedings may nonetheless remain subject to the Online Procedure Rules, so enabling the rules to provide for alternative procedures under clause 18 (10) to (12).

263 Subsections (6) and (7) make regulations under this clause subject to the “concurrence requirement” (i.e. requiring the concurrence of the Lord Chief Justice or Senior President of Tribunals – see clause 30) and to affirmative resolution procedure.

## Clauses 21 and 22: The Online Procedure Rule Committee and the powers of the Online Procedure Rule Committee

264 These clauses set out the membership of the OPRC and its powers. They also include the procedure for appointing members. The Lord Chancellor is authorised to reimburse the committee members for travel expenses and out of pocket expenses incurred whilst on committee business. The Committee has the same rule making powers that are available to the Civil Procedure Rule Committee, the Family Procedure Rule Committee and the Tribunal Procedure Committee (including the ability to make rules providing for a matter to be provided for in a practice direction), and may apply any other procedural rules or procedural provisions not in rules (such as provision contained in a statute for a particular area).

## Clause 23: Power to change certain requirements relating to the Committee

265 This clause (which is on similar lines to provision made in relation to other rule committees) enables the Lord Chancellor to alter the composition of the OPRC, by amending clause 21, with the concurrence of, the Lord Chief Justice and the Senior President of Tribunals and following consultation with senior members of the

judiciary. This flexibility is considered necessary because, as the scope of the Online Procedure Rules increases, it may be necessary to increase the Committee's membership or widen its expertise in order to assist in making rules.

## Clause 24: Process for making Online Procedure Rules

266 This clause describes the process for making Online Procedure Rules (which mirrors that for rules made by other rule committees). Before making or amending rules, the Committee must hold a meeting (unless it is inexpedient to do so) whether in person or otherwise, and consult any appropriate persons, which allows the committee to call on the expertise of non-committee members to inform discussion about any proposed rule changes. Any rules drafted by the Committee must be signed by at least half the members of the committee, where one is the chair, or a majority of the committee members in any other case, before being submitted to the Lord Chancellor who may allow or disallow the rules. Where a rule is disallowed, the Lord Chancellor, having appropriate regard for digitally excluded people, must give the Committee written reasons for doing so. Rules come into force on such a date as the Lord Chancellor decides and are to be contained in a statutory instrument subject to the negative

resolution procedure.

## Clause 25: Power to require Online Procedure Rules to be made

267 The Lord Chancellor may (as with other rule committees) give the OPRC written notice that the Lord Chancellor thinks that the online rules should include provision to achieve a specified purpose. The Committee must on being given such a notice make the rules within a reasonable period and in accordance with the procedure for making rules, outlined above. Although rarely used, it is a matter of expediency that the appropriate Minister should be able to direct the Committee to make rules, which might be required as a matter of urgency, without additional procedure. This is consistent with current powers in section 3A of the Civil Procedure Act 1997 and section 79A of the Courts Act 2003 and Part 3 of Schedule 5 to the Tribunals Courts and Enforcement Act 2007.

## Clause 26: Power to make amendments in relation to Online Procedure Rules

268 These clauses (mirroring provision in relation to Civil Procedure Rules and rules made by other rule committees) enable the Lord Chancellor by regulations to amend primary and secondary legislation as the Lord Chancellor considers necessary or desirable either in consequence of Online Procedure Rules or to facilitate the making

of Online Procedure Rules. Regulations which amend primary legislation must be made subject to affirmative resolution procedure (*subsection (5)*), while those which amend subordinate legislation alone are subject to negative resolution procedure (*subsection (6)*). It is anticipated that this power will be used to make minor revisions to legislation in order, for example, to regularise and modernise terminology to match that in new rules. Before making regulations, the Lord Chancellor must consult the Lord Chief Justice and the Senior President of Tribunals (*subsection (3)*).

### Clause 27: Duty to make support available for those who require it

269 This clause provides for the Lord Chancellor to arrange for the provision of such support as the Lord Chancellor considers appropriate and proportionate to allow digitally excluded people to participate fully in proceedings using electronic means.

### Clause 28: Power to make consequential or supplementary provision

270 This clause allows the Lord Chancellor to make regulations which make consequential, supplementary, incidental, transitional, transitory or savings provision in relation to any provisions of the Bill.

271 Regulations may amend, repeal or revoke primary and secondary legislation, but may only amend, repeal or revoke provision of an Act passed before this Bill is passed or in the same session or any secondary legislation made before the regulations come into force.

272 Under subsections (3) and (4), regulations made under this section will be subject to the negative resolution procedure in Parliament unless they amend primary legislation, in which case they will be subject to the affirmative resolution procedure.

### Clause 29: Amendments of other legislation

273 This clause introduces Schedule 4, which makes amendments to other legislation.

### Clause 30: Judicial agreement to certain regulations

274 This clause explains what is meant by the “concurrence requirement” for certain powers to make regulations. Subsection (1) gives the meaning, namely that for regulations subject to the concurrence requirement, the regulations require the concurrence of the Lord Chief Justice (if or to the extent that they relate to civil or family proceedings) and/or the Senior President of Tribunals (if or to the extent that they relate to proceedings in the First-tier Tribunal, Upper Tribunal, employment tribunals or the Employment Appeal Tribunal). Subsection (2) allows for the

Lord Chief Justice to delegate the function of concurring in the making of such regulations to a judicial office holder.

### Clause 31: Interpretation of this Chapter

275 This clause defines terms used in clauses 19-31 and Schedules 3 and 4.

## Chapter 3: Employment Tribunals

### Clause 32: Employment Tribunal Procedure Rules

276 This clause (together with Schedule 5, which it introduces) makes provision for there to be Employment Tribunal Procedure Rules, to be made by the Tribunal Procedure Committee, replacing the powers of the Secretary of State and Lord Chancellor to make employment tribunal procedure regulations and Employment Appeal Tribunal rules respectively.

277 Subsections (1) to (4) make the main provision to replace/transfer the powers, replacing existing sections 7 and 30 of the Employment Tribunals Act 1996 (the 1996 Act), which respectively provide for employment tribunal procedure regulations and Employment Appeal Tribunal rules, with new sections providing for “Procedure Rules” to govern practice and procedure in the employment tribunals (section 7) and Employment Appeal Tribunal (section 30), and inserting into the

1996 Act a new section 37QA which provides that there are to be Employment Appeal Tribunal Procedure Rules made by the Tribunal Procedure Committee, and that “Procedure Rules” in the 1996 Act as amended means those rules.

278 Subsection (1) is introductory and provides for the Employment Tribunals Act 1996 to be amended as provided by subsections (2) to (4).

279 Subsection (2) substitutes for section 7 of the 1996 Act a new section 7 which provides that Procedure Rules are to govern the practice and procedure to be followed in the ETs.

280 Subsection (3) similarly substitutes for section 30 of the 1996 Act a new section 30, subsection (1) of which provides that Procedure Rules are to govern the practice and procedure to be followed in the EAT, while subsection (2) provides that the EAT (which is, by virtue of section 20 of the 1996 Act a superior court of record) retains the power to regulate its own practices and procedures, subject to Procedure Rules, directions on tribunal composition made under section 28, practice directions made under Section 29A and any other provision made by or under an enactment.

281 Subsection (4) inserts into the 1996 Act a new section 37QA which (together with new Schedule A1 which it introduces into the 1996 Act) provides for the power to make Employment Tribunal

Procedure Rules, how such rules are to be made and what they may contain. Subsection (1) of the new clause provides that there are to be Employment Tribunal Procedure Rules made by the Tribunal Procedure Committee; subsection (2) provides that the term “Procedure Rules” used in the Act means such rules; subsection (3) introduces Schedule A1, which makes provision about the making of Employment Tribunal Procedure Rules and what they may contain which corresponds to that made for Tribunal Procedure Rules by Schedule 5 to the Tribunals, Courts and Enforcement Act 2007; and subsection (4) makes it clear that the breadth of the power to make rules is not constrained by any other provision which states what the rules may or must contain.

282 Subsection (5) introduces Schedule 5, which contains further provisions in connection with the provision made by the rest of the clause (including consequential amendments ensuring that things which may be done by or which relate to employment tribunal procedure regulations may be done by, or relate to, Employment Tribunal Procedure Rules).

### Clause 33: Composition of tribunals

283 This clause replaces the existing provisions defining the composition of an ET and the EAT with new arrangements that make the Lord

Chancellor responsible for determining the composition of the ET and the EAT.

284 Subsection (1) to (4) amend the Employment Tribunals Act 1996 to provide for these new arrangements, replacing sections 4 and 28 of the 1996 Act (concerning ETs and the EAT respectively) with new sections, and making minor consequential amendments.

285 Subsection (1) is introductory and provides for the Employment Tribunals Act 1996 to be amended as provided by the following subsections.

286 Subsection (2) substitutes for section 4 of the 1996 Act, containing the existing provisions on the composition of ETs, a new section 4 containing new arrangements.

287 Subsection (1) of the new section 4 establishes the basic proposition that an employment tribunal is to be composed of a member or members chosen by the Senior President of Tribunals; subsection (2) requires members to be so chosen to belong to a panel that is appointed in accordance with regulations made under section 1(1) of the Act (regulations establishing employment tribunals); subsection (3) provides that the Senior President of Tribunals (or anyone to whom the Senior President of Tribunals has delegated the function of choosing members)

must choose members in accordance with regulations made by the Lord Chancellor under subsection (4) and that the Senior President of Tribunals or such delegate may choose themselves if they are eligible by virtue of regulations made under section 1(1); subsection (4) requires the Lord Chancellor to make regulations providing for the number of members composing an ET panel for every category of case which may come before an ET; and subsection (5) provides that where regulations under subsection (4) provide for a panel to be made up of one member, they must provide for that member to be an Employment Judge.(to prevent a non-legal member from sitting alone). Subsection (6) requires regulations that provide for panels to be composed of more than one member to provide that at least one member must be an employment judge, to provide for the numbers of employment judges and other members for each category of case, and to provide for the qualifications which non-judge members of a panel must have for each category of case. Subsection (7) allows for a duty under subsections(4) and (6) to make provision for determining something to be met by providing for that thing to be determined by the Senior President of Tribunals or the President of Employment Tribunals in accordance with provision in the regulations; subsection (8)

similarly allows for the requirement to specify qualifications in subsection (6)(c) to be met by giving the Senior President of Tribunals or the President of Employment Tribunals the power to determine those requirements in accordance with provision in the regulations. Subsection (9) permits an ET comprised of more than one member to proceed in the absence of one or more members, as long as a) the parties to the case agree and b) at least one of the remaining members is an Employment Judge; and subsection (10) permits an ET to proceed even where a member does not have the required qualification if the parties agree. Subsection (11) places a duty on the Lord Chancellor to consult the Senior President of Tribunals before making regulations on the composition of ETs; and subsection (12) makes provision for interpretation.

288 Subsection (3) similarly substitutes for section 28 of the 1996 Act, containing the existing provisions on the composition of the EAT, with a new section 28 containing new arrangements. The new section 28 mirrors for the EAT the provision for ETs made by the new section 4.

289 Subsection (4) makes amendments consequential on the substitution of the new sections 4 and 28, to ensure that cross-references to those sections operate correctly.

## Clause 34: Saving for existing procedural provisions

290 This clause makes saving provision to ensure that existing procedural regulations and rules are not automatically revoked by the repeal of the provisions under which they are made, so that the transition between the existing provisions and new Employment Tribunal Procedure Rules can be managed appropriately.

## Clause 35: Exercise of tribunal functions by authorised persons

291 This clause amends Chapter 2A of Part 1 of the Tribunal, Courts and Enforcement Act 2007 so that the ability of authorised case officers to perform certain judicial functions, where authorised by Tribunal Procedure Rules, which is allowed for by that Chapter, is extended to include case officers so authorised by Employment Tribunal Procedure Rules.

292 Subsection (1) is introductory and provides for Chapter 2A of the 2007 Act to be amended as provided in the following subsections.

293 Subsection (2) makes the main changes to effect the extension. These are to amend the definitions of terms presently used in Chapter 2A so that they are broadened to include references to (for example) a “relevant Procedure Rule”, and then providing a definition of the new terms which

includes both Tribunal Procedure Rules and Employment Procedure Tribunal Rules (and also include employment tribunals and the Employment Appeal Tribunal as well as the First-tier Tribunal and Upper Tribunal).

294 Subsection (3) substitutes in a number of places in Chapter 2A the more broadly defined term “a relevant procedure Rule” for the existing wording which captures only Tribunal Procedure Rules.

### Clause 36: Responsibility for remunerating tribunals members

295 This clause amends the Employment Tribunals Act 1996 to transfer responsibility for the remuneration of members of the ET and the EAT from the Secretary of State for BEIS to the Lord Chancellor. Paragraph (a) does this for remuneration of ET members by amending sections 5(1), (2) and (3) of the 1996 Act, and paragraph (b) for the remuneration of EAT members by amending section 27(1), (2), (3) and (4) of the Act

## Chapter 4: Coroners

### Clause 37: Discontinuance of investigation where cause of death becomes clear

296 This is an amendment to Section 4 of the

Coroners and Justice Act 2009 (“the 2009 Act”) which will broaden the circumstances in which an investigation can be discontinued. Subsection (1) is introductory and provides for Section 4 to be amended as provided in the following subsections.

297 Subsection (2) substitutes “revealed by post-mortem examination” for “becomes clear before inquest”.

298 Subsection (3) sets out the circumstances when the investigation can be discontinued, which are when:

“(a) the coroner is satisfied that the cause of death has become clear in the course of the investigation,

“(aa) an inquest into the death has not yet begun.”

### Clause 38: Power to conduct non-contentious inquests in writing

299 This clause will give coroners the flexibility to forgo the need for an inquest in non-contentious cases. Under this provision, the coroner would issue a written ruling like a judgement. Rule 23 of the Coroners (Inquests) Rules 2013 (the 2013 Rules) provides for a ‘documentary’ or ‘Rule 23 inquest’ which comes very close to being entirely on paper, but a limited public hearing must still take place (see Chief Coroner’s Guidance 29).

This would therefore just be a natural extension of the existing arrangement.

300 Subsection (1) is introductory and states that the 2009 Act will be amended as provided in the following subsections.

301 Subsection (2) inserts new section 9C after section 9B in the 2009 Act.

302 New section 9C(1) provides that where an inquest is to be held without a jury, it can be held at a hearing or in writing if the senior coroner decides that a hearing is unnecessary.

303 New section 9C(2) sets out the circumstances in which the Senior Coroner can decide if a hearing is unnecessary. They are:

(a) the coroner has invited representations from each interested person known to the coroner,

(b) no interested person has represented on reasonable ground that a hearing should take place;

(c) it appears to the coroner that there is no real prospect of disagreement among interested persons as to the determinations or findings that the inquest could or should make; and

(d) it appears to the coroner that no public

interest would be served by a hearing.

304 Subsections (3) to (5) amend sections 10(1), 45(2) and 47(2) of the 2009 Act to in order that those provisions also apply in circumstances where an inquest has been held in writing without attendance.

305 Subsection (6) amends paragraph 11 of Schedule 1 to the 2009 Act 9 to allow an inquest resumed after an adjournment to be held at a hearing or in writing.

### Clause 39: Use of audio or video links at inquests

306 This clause is to allow pre-inquest reviews and inquests to take place where all participants, including the coroner, participate remotely. Subsection (1) is introductory and provides for the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 to be amended. Subsections (2) and (3) are to allow coroners to conduct wholly virtual hearings so that they are in the same position as civil courts.

### Clause 40: Suspension of requirement for jury at inquest where coronavirus suspected

307 This clause is to continue (on a temporary basis) the provision first enacted in section 30 of the Coronavirus Act 2020 that disapplies the requirement for a coroner to conduct an inquest with a jury in a case where a death is suspected to have been caused by COVID-19, which is a

notifiable disease.

308 Subsection (1) amends Section 7(2)(c) of the 2009 Act which requires a coroner to hold an inquest with a jury where the coroner has reason to suspect that the death was caused by a notifiable disease. This subsection inserts a new subsection (5) into the 2009 Act to disapply this requirement in relation to COVID-19.

309 Subsection (2) clarifies that subsection (1) affects any inquest opened on or after the day on which the section comes into force, regardless of the date of death.

310 Subsection (3) provides for the new subsection (5) in section 7 of the 2009 Act to expire after a period of two years. The two-year period begins on the day this section comes into force.

311 Subsection (4) requires the Lord Chancellor to assess the likely effects on the coronial system of the provision expiring.

312 Subsections (5) and (6) allow the Lord Chancellor, having carried out that assessment, to make regulations to prevent the new subsection (5) in section 7 of the 2009 Act from expiring. Subsection (6)(b) allows for the new expiry date to be specified in the regulations, and subsection (7) requires that the date may be no later than two

years after the previous expiry day.

313 Subsection (8) requires that regulations made under subsection (6) are subject to the affirmative resolution procedure, as set out in section 45(3) of the 2009 Act.

314 Subsection (9) requires that subsection (2) expires when the new subsection (5) expires, meaning that it cannot be renewed again by subsection (6).

315 Subsection (10) clarifies terms used in the new subsection (5).

316 Subsection (11) omits section 30 of the Coronavirus Act 2020. Subsection (12) provides that subsection (11) does not affect any inquest opened while section 30 of the Coronavirus Act 2020 was still in force.

#### Clause 41: Phased transition to new coroner areas

317 This clause is to address a quirk in the 2009 Act that requires a coroner area to be the whole local authority area or larger.

318 This has caused difficulties because under paragraph 1(2) of Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, each coroner area is to consist of the area of a local authority or the combined areas of two or more local authorities. Two coroner areas may not be merged into one coroner area if that area will consist in total of less than the area of a local

authority.

319 This clause inserts a new paragraph 1A after paragraph 1 of Schedule 22 to the 2009 Act to permit two or more coroner areas each of which is wholly within the area of the same local authority and is specified in either the transitional order, or an earlier order made by virtue of the paragraph to combine, by order, without the resulting coroner area having to satisfy paragraph 1(2) of Schedule 2 i.e. not having to be the whole of the area of a local authority.

#### Example (1): merger of coroner areas

Kent consists of four separate coroner areas. Kent County Council, with the approval of the Chief Coroner, wishes all four areas to be combined into one coroner area, coterminous with the area of Kent County Council and Kent Police Authority. Kent would have liked to achieve this piecemeal, merging one area with another as and when a senior coroner from one of the coroner areas retires. But that is not possible under Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act in its present form. This

amendment will permit Kent County Council by order of the Lord Chancellor to combine all four areas into one coroner area.

## **Chapter 5: Other provisions about courts**

### **Clause 42: Abolition of local justice areas**

320 Clause 42 provides for the abolition of local justice areas (LJAs) (see subsection 42(1)), which will have a number of effects.

321 Removing the requirement set out in statute that magistrates' courts in England and Wales must be divided into separate local justice areas will require a great number of consequential amendments to existing legislation to remove and replace references to local justice areas, as well as deal with fines and community orders and additionally to make provision for the appointment deployment, training, development, appraisal of magistrates who are currently appointed to local justice areas.

322 Consequently, Clause 42(2) (and Clause 45) provides the Lord Chancellor with a power to make consequential or supplementary provisions amending, repealing or revoking provisions made by or under other Acts of Parliament whenever passed or made (see new subsections 42(4) .

These regulations are to be made by statutory instrument laid under the affirmative procedure (new subsection 42(5)).

### Clause 43: The Mayor's and City of London Court: removal of duty to provide premises

323 Subsection (1) establishes that the Bill will make changes to Section 29 of the Courts Act 1971.

324 Subsection (2) makes amendments to Section 29 of the Courts Act 1971, removing the specific obligation to provide the Mayor's and City of London Court premises.

325 Subsection (3) makes amendments to substitute "courts" for "court" as a result of changes made in subsection (2). This is necessary as Section 29 of the Courts Act 1971 as the obligation to provide the Central Criminal Court will remain.

### Clause 44: The City of London Magistrates' Court: removal of duty to provide premises

326 Subsection (1) removes a paragraph from Schedule 2 to the Courts Act 2003, removing the specific obligation to provide the City of London Magistrates' Court premises.

327 Subsection (2) makes consequential changes to paragraph 35 of Schedule 14 to the Access to Justice Act 1999.

## Part 3: Final provisions

### Clause 45: Regulations

328 Subsection (1) sets out that any regulations made under the future Act will be made by statutory instrument, and in making such regulations subsection 2 provides the power to make incidental, transitional or saving provision.

329 Subsections (3) and (4) outline the affirmative and negative resolution procedures respectively for statutory instruments laid under the Bill.

330 Subsection (5) notes that subsection (4), which relates to regulations subject to the negative resolution procedure, does not apply if a draft of the statutory instrument has been laid before and approved by a resolution of each House of Parliament.

### Clause 46: Extent

331 This clause sets out the territorial extent of the Bill. Subsection (1) notes that any amendment or repeal made by the future Act has the same extent as the provision it amends or repeals.

332 Subsection (2) notes that sections 1(4), 2(2), and 34 have the same extent as the amendments or repeals to which they relate.

333 Subsection (3) specifically notes certain

provisions in the future Act that extend only to England and Wales.

334 Subsection (4) notes that Part 3 of Schedule 3 extends only to England and Wales and Scotland.

335 Subsection (5) clarifies that apart from the exceptions set out in this clause, the future Act will extend to England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

### Clause 47: Commencement and transitional provision

336 This clause sets out when the measures in the Bill will come into force.

337 Subsection (1) states that Part 3 comes into force on the day the future Act is passed.

338 Subsection (2) notes the specific provisions that will come into force two months after the future Act passes.

339 With the exception of the provisions in subsection (2), which come into force two months after the future Act passes, the remainder of the clauses will come into force by means of commencement regulations made by the Lord Chancellor, as set out in subsections (3) to (6).

### Clause 48: Short title

340 Clause 48 notes that the Bill, and subsequent Act, may be cited as the Judicial Review and Courts Act 2021.

## Schedules

### Schedule 1: Documents to be served in accordance with Criminal Procedure Rules

341 Paragraphs 1 to 14 amend references to service requirements in existing legislation so as to enable service of documents to be in accordance with Criminal Procedure Rules. As a result, service can be effected by whichever means are prescribed in the Rules, including by electronic means.

### Schedule 2: Criminal Procedure: Consequential and related amendments

342 This schedule makes various amendments to other legislation consequential on the implementation of clauses 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11 and 12.

#### *Amendments in connection with Clause 1: Automatic online conviction*

343 The Magistrates' Court Act 1980 is amended as set out in sub-paragraphs 1(2) to (6). This includes amendments to section 16A(1) to provide that a magistrates' court cannot try a case under single justice procedure if the accused has accepted the automatic online conviction option; amendments to section 89 (transfer of fines within

England and Wales) and section 90 (transfer of fines to Scotland and Northern Ireland) ensure it applies to a penalty imposed by a virtue of a conviction under 16H of the Act; and amendments to section 150 clarify the definition of “fine” to encompass the new automatic conviction provisions (paragraph 1(6)).

344 Section 108 of the MCA 1980 is also amended so that any person convicted under section 16H of that Act may not appeal to the Crown Court against the conviction or sentence, unless they have been re-sentenced by a magistrates’ court under new section 16M(5)(b).

345 Section 8 of the Road Traffic Offenders Act 1988 (duty to include date of birth and sex in written plea of guilty) which extends and applies to England, Wales and Scotland is amended by paragraph 2 to ensure that this applies appropriately to the new online conviction procedure, which will require the provision of a date of birth by the accused.

346 Schedule 5 to the Courts Act 2003, which deals with arrangements for the collection of fines and other sums imposed on conviction, is amended as set out in paragraphs 3(2) to (10) to apply its provisions as appropriate to those individuals who have been given a notice of conviction and penalty (within the meaning of

section 16L of the MCA 1980). The intention is that the enforcement powers available in respect of court-imposed fines will also be available in respect of penalties issued under the automatic online conviction procedure.

347 Schedule 6 to the Courts Act 2003, which deals with discharge of fine by unpaid work, is amended in paragraph 3(11) to ensure this provision also applies to those individuals who have been given a notice of conviction and penalty (within the meaning of section 16L of the MCA 1980).

348 The Criminal Justice Act 2003 is amended as follows in paragraphs 4(2) to (4) to ensure the provisions apply appropriately to the new automatic online conviction procedure. Section 29 which provides for criminal proceedings to be commenced by way of written charge accompanied either by a requisition or by a single justice procedure notice, is amended by paragraph 4(2) to clarify that a single justice procedure notice may be issued only if the offence is summary-only and non-imprisonable, and where the accused has attained the age of 18 (or is a body corporate).

349 Section 29 of the Criminal Justice Act 2003 is further amended in order to stipulate that the single justice procedure notice must also explain that, if the specific offence is specified in

regulations under section 16H(3)(a) of the MCA 1980 and the relevant prosecutor deems it appropriate for the automatic online conviction option (see new subsection 29(2C)), the steps the accused can take if they wish to be offered the automatic online conviction option, and that if they are offered and accept that option, the requirements under the single justice procedure will no longer apply (see new subsection 29(2D)). New subsection 29(2E) also provides that the Lord Chancellor can make provisions about the factors that should be taken into account by the relevant prosecutor when considering whether a specified offence is appropriate for the automatic online conviction option.

### *Amendments in connection with sections Clauses 6-8*

350 Paragraph 6 amends sections 17A, 18, 22 and 23 of the Magistrates' Courts Act 1980 to take account of the new 'plea before venue' procedures which enable a defendant in an either-way case to indicate a plea (new section 17ZA) and decide allocation (new 17ZC) in writing or online without the need for a court hearing; and which enable the magistrates' court to 'invite' a defendant, who does not indicate a guilty plea, to indicate whether they would refuse summary trial if this was later offered

to them, before the court proceeds with the pending 'allocation decision' procedure under sections 19 to 23 of the MCA 1980 (new section 17BA).

351 Paragraph 6(8) amends section 20 of the Magistrates' Courts Act 1980 which deals with allocation procedures where a summary hearing is deemed suitable. An indication of guilty plea in writing/online must be confirmed by the defendant at his or her first appearance in person at court. Section 20 provides that, in circumstances where a defendant has indicated a guilty plea online/in writing but then goes on to confirm a not guilty plea at their sentencing hearing, the plea and hearing become void. The court must revisit the allocation decision and ask the defendant whether they would consent to a summary trial. If the defendant consents the court must adjourn and make arrangements for a summary trial. If the defendant does not consent, the court must send the case to the Crown Court for jury trial.

352 Paragraph 6(11) inserts new section 1A at section 24A of the Magistrates' Courts Act 1980 which sets out the court process for taking an indication of plea from a child or young person under 18 years appearing before a magistrates' court and deciding whether the defendant should be sent to the Crown Court. New section 1A

enables the court to skip this process and move straight to allocation where the defendant has indicated a plea in writing/on-line and confirms this at their first appearance.

353 Paragraph 6(12) amends section 27A of the Magistrates Courts Act 1980 to enable a magistrates' court to transfer a case at any time before the trial to another magistrates' court. This would cover circumstances, for example, where a youth court has been conducting preliminary proceedings with a child or young person under 18 years in writing or online and that defendant turns 18 years old before trial. If the youth court considers it appropriate for the defendant to be tried as an adult, the case can be sent to a magistrates' court and the receiving court does not have to begin preliminary proceedings again.

354 Paragraph 8 amends section 50A of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 which sets out the process for allocating either-way cases where a defendant appears before the magistrates' court. It inserts new subsection 50A (5) to disapply this procedure in cases where an adult or child/young defendant chooses to engage with the plea before venue process in writing/on-line.

355 Paragraph 9 amends section 24 of the Magistrates Courts Act 1980 to enable the

magistrates' court to determine the allocation of a case in respect of a child or young person under the age of 18 years in their absence where the defendant has both failed to indicate a plea in writing/online and attend the hearing at which allocation is to be decided (new section 24BA).

356 The Magistrates' Court Act 1980 is amended by paragraphs 10(2) and (3) to reflect the changes made to section 51 and 51A of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, this includes section 24A(1)(b) (child or young person to indicate intention as to plea in certain cases).

357 The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 is amended by paragraphs 11(2) and (3) to clarify that the Criminal Procedure Rules are able to define what is "related" in terms of one offence to another.

358 Schedule 3 to the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, which deals with the procedure where individuals are sent to the Crown Court for trial, is amended by paragraphs 12(2) and (3) to reflect the Crown Court's powers to remit such cases.

359 Section 122(1) of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009, which deals with allocation guidelines, is amended to reflect that the Crown Court must have regard to any allocation guidelines under new subsection 46ZA(5)(b) of the Senior Courts

Act 1981 and new subsection 25A(3)(b) (see paragraph 13).

360 Section 26 of the Sentencing Code (provision about remission by Crown Court) is amended by paragraph 14 to reflect the addition of section 25A into the Sentencing Code which provides the Crown Court with new powers to remit adult offenders to a magistrates' court for sentence and remit to the youth court, offenders who have been committed to the Crown Court for sentence and later turn out to be under 18 (alongside the Crown Court's existing power under section 25(2) in the Sentencing Code to remit youth offenders to a youth court for sentence).

361 The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 is amended as set out in paragraphs 15(2) to (4) to clarify that the relevant provisions apply in relation to a case sent to the Crown Court under new subsection (1A) of section 47. This includes section 51D, which deals with the notice to be given on sending to the Crown Court for trial; section 52, which deals with supplementary provisions about sending to the Crown Court for trial; and, Schedule 3, which deals with the procedure where accused is sent to Crown Court for trial.

### Schedule 3: Practice directions for online proceedings

362 In relation to Part 2, Chapter 2 of the bill, Part 1 of this Schedule allows the Lord Chief Justice or

his nominee, with the approval of the Lord Chancellor, to issue practice directions in civil and family proceedings governed by Online Procedure Rules. The Lord Chancellor's approval of a practice direction is not required where the practice direction consists of guidance about the application and interpretation of the law or the making of judicial decisions. Such directions require consultation with the Lord Chancellor as well as the approval of the Lord Chief Justice. Part 2 of Schedule 3 sets out similar procedures in respect of the First-tier and Upper Tribunals and Part 3 of Schedule 3 sets out similar procedures in respect of employment tribunals and the Employment Appeal Tribunal – save that it is the Senior President of Tribunals (or in some cases a Chamber President, or the President of the Employment Appeal Tribunal or a territorial President who may make directions, and directions under Parts 2 and 3 which require only consultation with (rather than approval of) the Lord Chancellor will require the approval of the Senior President of Tribunals, rather than the Lord Chief Justice.

#### **Schedule 4: Online Procedure: amendments**

363 Schedule 4 makes amendments to the Employment Tribunals Act 1996, Civil Procedure Act 1997, Courts Act 2003 and Tribunals, Courts

and Enforcement Act 2007 in relation to the power to make Employment Tribunal Procedure Rules, Civil Procedure Rules, Family Procedure Rules and Tribunal Procedure Rules respectively, and practice directions associated with those Rules, in order to ensure that “standard” Rules and Online Procedure Rules, and their associated practice directions, do not cut across each other. The amendments make similar provision for each Act amended, in each case (a) requiring the Rules to be framed so that they do not govern practice and procedure in “online proceedings” (by which is meant proceedings which have been specified for the purposes of clause 18/OP2) except in so far as those proceedings are not, or cease to be, governed by Online Procedure Rules; and (b) making it clear that practice directions made under the powers in those Acts do not apply in relation to proceedings which are governed by Online Procedure Rules.

## Schedule 5: Employment Tribunal Procedure Rules: Further provision

364 Part 1 of Schedule 5 relates to making and content of Employment Tribunal Procedure Regulations. Paragraph 1 inserts into the Employment Tribunal Act 1996 the new Schedule A1 which is introduced by subsection (3) of the new section 37QA (inserted by subsection (4) of

clause 32). The new Schedule A1 makes a range of additional provision in relation to the making and content of Employment Tribunal Procedure Rules (covering such matters as the objectives of the Tribunal Procedure Committee in making Employment Tribunal Procedure Rules, the things Employment Procedure Rules may contain and the process for making Employment Procedure Tribunal Rules), which mirrors the corresponding provisions of Schedule 5 to the Tribunals, Courts and Enforcement Act 2007 in relation to Tribunal Procedure Rules, so that the powers and processes for Employment Tribunal Procedure Rules are appropriately aligned with those for making Tribunal Procedure Rules.

365 Part 2 of Schedule 5 relates to other amendments of the Employment Tribunals Act 1996.

366 Paragraph 2 is introductory and provides for the Employment Tribunals Act 1996 (the Act) to be amended as provided in the subsequent paragraphs, many of which simply amend existing provision which operates by reference to Employment Tribunal Procedure Regulations so that it operates instead by reference to “Procedure Rules” (i.e. Employment Tribunal Procedure Rules)..

367 Paragraph 3 makes amendments to

provisions about practice directions. Sub-paragraphs (1) to (5) amend the Act to provide for the Senior President of Tribunals and the territorial Presidents to make practice directions about the practice and procedure of employment tribunals. It also provides the power to vary or revoke directions made in exercise of the power, and the power to make different provision for different purposes (including different provision for different areas). Sub-paragraph (6) provides that directions made by the territorial Presidents may not be made without the approval of the Senior President of Tribunals, and the Lord Chancellor.

368 Paragraph 4 amends the Act to make provision about mediation. Sub-paragraphs (1) and (2) amend the Act to provide that anyone making Procedure Rules or practice directions must give regard to the principles that a) mediation can only take place by agreement between parties and b) the outcome of mediation should not affect the outcome of the proceedings. Sub-paragraph (3) sets out that practice directions may provide for members to act as mediators in relation to disputed matters in a case that is the subject of proceedings; and Sub-paragraph (4) that a member may act as a mediator in a case even though the member has been selected to decide matters in the case.

369 Paragraph 5 makes provision about pre-hearing reviews. Sub-paragraphs (1) and (2) make amendments to the Act to provide that if Procedure Rules authorise an employment tribunal to carry out a pre-hearing review, Procedure Rules may make provision for enabling the powers prescribed by the Rules to be exercised in connection with the pre-hearing review; and Sub-paragraph (3) makes provision that the Rules may include provision for authorising any tribunal carrying out a pre-hearing review under the regulations to require a party to the proceedings to pay a deposit of an amount not exceeding £1,000 as a condition of: continuing to participate in those proceedings, or pursuing any specified allegations or arguments; and for prescribing the manner in which the amount of the deposit is determined, the consequences of non-payment, and the circumstances in which a deposit may be refunded or be paid over to another party. Sub-paragraph (4) sets out that Procedure Rules cannot increase the deposit above £1,000; sub-paragraph (5) sets out that Procedure Rules may not enable a power of striking out to be exercised in a pre-hearing review on a ground which does not apply outside a pre-hearing review; and sub-paragraph (6) transfers the power to increase the maximum deposit from the Secretary of State for BEIS to the

Lord Chancellor . Sub-paragraph (7) omits the power to include in ET procedure regulations provision for authorising an employment tribunal to hear and determine separately any preliminary issue meeting a description set out by the regulations. Sub-paragraph (9) defines ‘pre-hearing review’ as a review of any proceedings before an employment tribunal which takes place at a time before a hearing held for the purpose of determining them.

370 Paragraph 6 makes provision in relation to proceedings in which issues concerning national security arise, so that provision which may presently be made in Employment Tribunal Procedure Regulations by the Secretary of State is made instead in regulations made by the Lord Chancellor.

371 Paragraph 7 repeals section 10A of the Act, relating to the ability of employment tribunals to sit in private where confidential information is involved, which is covered by more general provisions about the things Employment Tribunal Procedure Rules may (like Tribunal Procedure Rules) contain.

372 Paragraphs 8 and 9 amend provisions permitting Employment Tribunal Procedure Regulations to restrict publicity in cases involving sexual misconduct and disability respectively so

that they permit this to be done by “Procedure Rules”; paragraph 10 similarly amends provisions about Employment Tribunal Procedure Regulations regulating matters relating to costs and expenses so that they refer instead to “Procedure Rules” regulating those matters; and paragraph 11 likewise amends provisions permitting Employment Tribunal Procedure Regulations to make provision for payments in relation to preparation time to refer to “Procedure Rules” making such provision.

373 Paragraph 12 makes amendments with the effect of transferring the power to make orders in respect of interest payable in pursuance of decisions of employment tribunals from the Secretary of State for BEIS to the Lord Chancellor.

374 Paragraph 13 amends provisions permitting the recovery through the county court of sums payable in pursuance of a decision of an employment tribunal in accordance with employment tribunal procedure regulations, to refer to this being in accordance with “Procedure Rules”.

375 Paragraph 14 amends provisions permitting Employment Tribunal Procedure Regulations to make provisions relating to the requirement to contact ACAS before instituting proceedings, to refer instead to regulations made by the Secretary

of State.

- 376 Paragraph 15 amends provisions requiring Employment Tribunal Procedure Regulations to make provisions relating to conciliations procedures, so as to refer to “Procedure Rules”; and paragraph 16 similarly amends provisions permitting Employment Tribunal Procedure Regulations to provide time limits for an application for a declaration that a settlement sum is not be recoverable under the general law of contract, so they refer to “Procedure Rules”.
- 377 Paragraph 17 amends provisions relating to Practice Directions for the EAT so that they describe the power to make directions (as to practice and procedure) consistently with other powers to make practice directions.
- 378 Paragraph 18 inserts into the Act a new section 30A making provision about EAT proceedings in which issues relating to national security arise. Subsection (1) of the new section permits the Lord Chancellor to make provisions about the composition of the EAT where the proceedings meet the criteria set out in subsections (2) and (3) - subsection (2) covering particular Crown employment proceedings where a Minister considers it expedient in the interests of national security, and subsection (3) providing that an order under this section may be made by a

judge of the EAT if the judge considers it expedient in the interests of national security. Subsection (4) sets out that the Lord Chancellor has the power to make the same regulations for the EAT as those under the national security provisions contained in Sections 10(5), (6) and (7) for ETs; and subsection (5) permits references to things done under the national security provisions contained in sections 10(5) and (6) to be read across to the things done under subsection (4). Subsection (6) sets out that the powers set out in Section 10B to restrict publicity in ET cases involving national security also apply to the EAT. Subsection (7) sets out that references in the national security provisions contained in sections 10B(1) to 10B(6) are to be read across to subsection (4) where applicable.

379 Paragraphs 19 and 20 update provisions permitting Appeal Tribunal procedure rules to restrict publicity in cases involving sexual misconduct or disability respectively so that they refer to “Procedure Rules”.

380 Paragraph 21 updates provisions relating to permitting Appeal Tribunal procedure rules to regulate matters relating to costs and expenses so that they refer to "Procedure Rules".

381 Paragraphs 22 to 25 make amendments to Part 3 of the Act, centred on a new section 37QB

of the Act, providing powers for the Lord Chancellor to amend legislation in connection with Procedure Rules (on a similar model to that provided for Tribunal Procedure Rules. Paragraph 22 simply amends the heading of Part 3 to refer to “General and Supplementary”. Paragraph 23 inserts the new section 37QB, providing powers for the Lord Chancellor to amend, repeal or revoke any enactment in order to facilitate the making of Procedure Rules or in consequence of the provisions set out in Schedule A1 on the making of Procedure Rules or of any Procedure Rule. It also defines “enactment” as meaning any enactment whenever passed or made, including an enactment comprised in subordinate legislation within the meaning of the Interpretation Act 1978. Paragraph 24 makes amendments to ensure that any order making amendments to primary legislation must be by the affirmative procedure. Paragraph 25 updates section 42(1) to remove definitions of “Appeal Tribunal procedure regulations” and “employment tribunal procedure regulations” and replace them with the definition of Procedure Rules for the ET and EAT. It also removes an extraneous ‘and’ immediately prior to the definition of “trade union”. It also inserts a definition of “Tribunal Procedure Committee” to mean the committee of that name constituted under Part 2 of Schedule 5 to the Tribunals,

## Courts and Enforcement Act 2007.

382 Part 3 of the Schedule outlines related amendments of other legislation. Paragraph 26 amends the Employment Rights Act 1996 to provide that, where an ET determines a complaint related to unfair dismissal in the same proceedings as a question around eligibility for or the amount of a redundancy payment, the provisions setting out that the employee shall not, unless the contrary is proved, be presumed to have been so dismissed by reason of redundancy have no effect insofar as it relates to the unfair dismissal proceedings.

383 Paragraph 27 amends the Tribunals, Courts and Enforcement Act 2007 to sets out that the Senior President of Tribunals cannot delegate the functions set out in paragraph 2 of Schedule A1 of the Employment Tribunals Act 1996.

384 Paragraph 28 amends the Tribunals, Courts and Enforcement Act 2007 to provide for additional members to be added to the TPC, increasing the number of persons who may be appointed by the Lord Chancellor to four and requiring that at least one of the appointees must have experience of practice in the ET and the EAT or experience of advising persons involved in ET and EAT proceedings. It also increases the number of persons appointed by the Lord Chief

Justice from three to four, one of whom must be a judge, or other member, of the Employment Appeal Tribunal or a member of a panel of members of employment tribunals (whether or not a panel of Employment Judges).

## Commencement

265 Clause 47 outlines the commencement of the Bill. Clause 47(2) provides for the following provisions to come into force two months after the day the future Act is passed: section 14 (removal of certain requirements for a hearing in procedural matters), section 15 (Schedule 1) (documents to be served in accordance with Criminal Procedure Rules), Chapter 4 of Part 2 (Coroners), and any other provision of the Bill that confers a power to make orders or regulations, but only for the purpose of making such orders or regulations.

266 The remainder of the Bill will be brought into force by means of commencement regulations made by the Lord Chancellor (Clause 47(3)).

## Financial implications of the Bill

267 The main public sector financial implications of the Bill fall to criminal and civil justice agencies, particularly HM Courts and Tribunals Service. However, the measures will result in increased efficiencies for the court system, with estimated net benefit of £37.4m over a 10 year period. These figures are estimated based on a number of assumptions about implementation which are subject to change. Further details of the costs and benefits of individual provisions are set out in the

impact assessments published alongside the bill.

## **Parliamentary approval for financial costs or for charges imposed**

268 A money resolution will be needed for the Bill. A money resolution is needed where a Bill authorises new charges on the public revenue – broadly speaking, new public expenditure. There is potential Government expenditure under some provisions of the Bill. Clauses 3, 6, 8 and 18 will introduce new online procedures in courts and tribunals, and this will require investment in technology and training. Clause 27 will require support to be provided for those who would otherwise have difficulty making use of the new online procedures. The House of Commons will be asked to agree that expenditure arising from these clauses is to be paid out of money provided by Parliament.

## **Compatibility with the European Convention on Human Rights**

269 The Government does not consider that the Bill raises any significant issues in relation to the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and the Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice, Robert Buckland QC, has made a statement under section 19(1)(a) of the Human

Rights Act 1998 that the Bill is compatible with the ECHR.

## Related documents

270 The following documents are relevant to the [Bill/Act] and can be read at the stated locations:

- [The Independent Review of Administrative Law Report](#), March 2021,
- [Judicial Review Reform](#), Government Consultation, March 2021
- Judicial Review Reform Response, Government Response, July 2021
- [The Coroner Service](#), Justice Select Committee Report, May 2021

## Annex A - Territorial extent and application in the United Kingdom

Provision	England	Wales		Scotland		Northern Ireland	
	Extends to E & W and applies to England?	Extends to E & W and applies to Wales?	Legislative Consent Motion process engaged?	Extends and applies to Scotland?	Legislative Consent Motion process engaged?	Extends and applies to Northern Ireland?	Legislative Consent Motion process engaged?
Clause 1	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Clause 2	Yes	Yes	No	In part	No	In part	No
Clause 3	Yes	Yes	No	In part	No	In part	No
Clause 4	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Clause 5	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Clause 6	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Clause 7	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Clause 8	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Clause 9	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Clause 10	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Clause	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No

Provision	England	Wales		Scotland		Northern Ireland	
	Extends to E & W and applies to England?	Extends to E & W and applies to Wales?	Legislative Consent Motion process engaged?	Extends and applies to Scotland?	Legislative Consent Motion process engaged?	Extends and applies to Northern Ireland?	Legislative Consent Motion process engaged?
11							
Clause 12	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Clause 13	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Clause 14	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Clause 15	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Clause 16	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Clause 17	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Clause 18	Yes	Yes	No	In part	No	In part	No
Clause 19	Yes	Yes	No	In part	No	In part	No
Clause 20	Yes	Yes	No	In part	No	In part	No
Clause 21	Yes	Yes	No	In part	No	In part	No
Clause 22	Yes	Yes	No	In part	No	In part	No
Clause 23	Yes	Yes	No	In part	No	In part	No
Clause 24	Yes	Yes	No	In part	No	In part	No

Provision	England	Wales		Scotland		Northern Ireland	
	Extends to E & W and applies to England?	Extends to E & W and applies to Wales?	Legislative Consent Motion process engaged?	Extends and applies to Scotland?	Legislative Consent Motion process engaged?	Extends and applies to Northern Ireland?	Legislative Consent Motion process engaged?
Clause 25	Yes	Yes	No	In part	No	In part	No
Clause 26	Yes	Yes	No	In part	No	In part	No
Clause 27	Yes	Yes	No	In part	No	In part	No
Clause 28	Yes	Yes	No	In part	No	In part	No
Clause 29	Yes	Yes	No	In part	No	In part	No
Clause 30	Yes	Yes	No	In part	No	In part	No
Clause 31	Yes	Yes	No	In part	No	In part	No
Clause 32	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No
Clause 33	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No
Clause 34	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No
Clause 35	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No
Clause 36	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No
Clause 37	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Clause 38	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No

Provision	England	Wales		Scotland		Northern Ireland	
	Extends to E & W and applies to England?	Extends to E & W and applies to Wales?	Legislative Consent Motion process engaged?	Extends and applies to Scotland?	Legislative Consent Motion process engaged?	Extends and applies to Northern Ireland?	Legislative Consent Motion process engaged?
Clause 39	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Clause 40	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Clause 41	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Clause 42	Yes	Yes	No	In part	No	In part	No
Clause 43	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No
Clause 44	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No
Clause 45	N/A	N/A	No	N/A	No	N/A	No
Clause 46	N/A	N/A	No	N/A	No	N/A	No
Clause 47	N/A	N/A	No	N/A	No	N/A	No
Clause 48	N/A	N/A	No	N/A	No	N/A	No
Schedule 1	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Schedule 2	Yes	Yes	No	In part	No	In part	No
Schedule 3	Yes	Yes	No	In part	No	In part	No
Schedule 4	Yes	Yes	No	In part	No	In part	No

Provision	England	Wales		Scotland		Northern Ireland	
	Extends to E & W and applies to England?	Extends to E & W and applies to Wales?	Legislative Consent Motion process engaged?	Extends and applies to Scotland?	Legislative Consent Motion process engaged?	Extends and applies to Northern Ireland?	Legislative Consent Motion process engaged?
Schedule 5	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No

## Minor or consequential effects<sup>14</sup>

The following provisions that apply to England have effects outside England, all of which are, in the view of the Government of the United Kingdom, minor or consequential:

### Clause 3: Automatic online conviction and standard statutory penalty

This measure introduces a new online process for dealing with summary-only, non-imprisonable offences, without the need for involvement of a court. (The offences will be specified in regulations.) It means that offenders can choose to plead guilty, be convicted and sentenced to the specified penalty online. The sum payable will be treated as a fine imposed by a court. If not paid and the offender resides in Scotland or Northern Ireland it can be transferred to a court there for enforcement as with

<sup>14</sup> References in this Annex to an effect of a provision being minor or consequential are to its being minor or consequential for the purposes of Standing Order No. 83J of the Standing Orders of the House of Commons relating to Public Business.

other fines.

## **Subject matter and legislative competence of devolved legislatures**

The provisions in the Bill relate to Judicial Review, court procedure. Subject to certain measures detailed below, all these are all matters within the legislative competence of the Scottish Parliament and Northern Ireland Assembly.

Overtaking the *Cart* judgment by removing the ability of the senior courts to review Upper Tribunal decisions to refuse permission to appeal from the First-tier Tribunal will apply UK-wide. For Scotland and Northern Ireland, these proposals will, in large part, remove the jurisdiction of the Court of Session and High Court of Northern Ireland over decisions of the Upper Tribunal (as established by the Tribunals Courts and Enforcement Act 2007 ('TCEA')) on applications for permission to appeal from the First-tier Tribunal. The relevant provision will incorporate a "carve-out" so that it does not apply to cases which relate to devolved policy. Because the TCEA is reserved (insofar as the tribunals therein are dealing with reserved matters), any changes required to Scottish or Northern Ireland legislation will be consequential.

In relation to *Cart* and the Tribunals in Wales, the functioning of the TCEA Upper Tribunal is a reserved

matter. The measure does not affect devolved tribunals or their decisions, only decisions of the Upper Tribunal made in relation to applications for permission to appeal decisions of the First-tier Tribunal under section 11(4)(b) of the Tribunals, Courts and Enforcement Act 2007.

The provisions relating to powers in respect of quashing orders in the Bill will only affect the powers of the High Court of England and Wales, again a reserved matter as regards Wales.

The Online Procedure Rule Committee measure relates in part to the UK (with regard to the First-tier and Upper Tribunals), in part to England, Wales and Scotland (for Employment Tribunals), and in part to England and Wales only.

One of the criminal court measures, introducing an Automatic Online Conviction and Standard Statutory Penalty Procedure, will involve consequential amendments for Scotland and Northern Ireland, as set out above.

The Employment Tribunals measures extend to England, Wales and Scotland. Responsibility for Employment Tribunals in Scotland is due to transfer to the Scottish Government following the Government's acceptance of the recommendations of the Smith Commission. Until that point, the rule making Committee would have rule-making powers for the Employment Tribunal and Employment Appeal

Tribunal in England and Wales and the equivalent Tribunals in Scotland.

The City of London Courthouses measure will apply to England only.

# **JUDICIAL REVIEW AND COURTS BILL**

## **EXPLANATORY NOTES**

These Explanatory Notes relate to the Judicial Review and Courts Bill as introduced in the House of Commons on 21 July 2021 (Bill 152).

---

---

Ordered by the House of Commons to be printed,  
21 July 2021

---

---

© Parliamentary copyright 2021

This publication may be reproduced under the terms of the Open Parliament Licence which is published at  
[www.parliament.uk/site-information/copyright](http://www.parliament.uk/site-information/copyright)

**PUBLISHED BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE  
OF COMMONS**