



Department for
Digital, Culture
Media & Sport



Ministry
of Justice

Open Government Network
18 Victoria Park Square
London
E2 9PF

26 November 2018

Dear Open Government Network,

Re: COMMITMENT TO OPEN JUSTICE IN THE OPEN GOVERNMENT NATIONAL ACTION PLAN (NAP) (2018 - 2020)

The concept of Open Government is more important now than ever. In a time of international upheaval, transparency and accountability helps to build and maintain citizens' trust that we as government are working in their interest.

Developing the UK's next National Action Plan for open government is a vital part of our commitment to open government, creating it in collaboration between Government and civil society central to its value. We are grateful to the Open Government Network and in particular the members of the Multi-Stakeholder Forum for encouraging us to be ambitious and strengthen the objectives detailed in the NAP.

We also believe that open government does not begin and end with the commitments in the two yearly National Action Plans; it must be a way of doing things throughout the policy process right across Government.

As a Government, we would like to take this opportunity to reiterate our commitment to open justice as we reform our courts and tribunals, and to consulting stakeholders as we progress throughout the HMCTS Courts Reform Programme.

We are committed to adhering to and upholding the principle of open justice as we reform our courts. In practice, this means we will develop solutions that, at a minimum, maintain current levels of openness in reformed services. As well as considering the legal framework for open justice, our Courts Reform Programme also provides us with a timely opportunity to review and improve some of our practices, such as improving processes to make information readily available to the public as far as is lawful and proportionate, so that our future courts and tribunals are effective for the judiciary, legal and media professionals, and the public.

We will be including the following statement to reflect our ongoing commitment to this agenda:

This government is investing over £1 billion to reform and modernise the justice system – which will include 21st century technology - to make it more convenient, easier to use, and provide better value for the taxpayer. Open justice is an essential element of our justice system and of paramount importance, and we remain committed to ensuring that the principle of open justice is upheld in the reformed services.

We also commit to working with the Open Government Network and civil society groups to develop our approach to this agenda over the coming year, with the goal of co-creating a full commitment for the 2020 - 2022 National Action Plan.

We look forward to continuing this work with you.



Minister for Digital and the Creative Industries



Minister for Courts