



Ministry
of Justice

Sarah Sackman KC MP
Minister for Courts and
Legal Services

Andy Slaughter MP
Chair, Justice Select Committee
House of Commons
London
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Dear Andy,

NIGHTINGALE COURTS

I am writing to inform you, as Chair of the Justice Select Committee, that tomorrow I will be announcing plans to bring the four remaining Nightingale Courts into our main estate, securing courtroom capacity for the longer term.

The Committee will be aware that Nightingale courts were opened during the pandemic to provide additional temporary space for hearings, in line with COVID-19 social distancing restrictions. They then provided additional physical capacity to help us tackle the outstanding caseload and respond to temporary local requirements.

The continued use of Nightingale venues has been kept under regular review, and decisions to extend their temporary use have been based on local operational need. Over time, we have closed most Nightingale venues. The privately hired Nightingale Court in Croydon is closing at the end of its term in March 2026. The four remaining sites at Chichester, Cirencester, Fleetwood and Telford, are all former court buildings.

Having considered our future operational requirements, we have decided that these four remaining venues will revert to our permanent court estate from April 2026. This will provide greater certainty and stability for local court users, staff and the judiciary. We will now be considering the longer-term building maintenance needs and how we can improve IT provision at these sites.

The venues will become permanent courthouses and will cease being referred to as temporary Nightingale court venues. Should there be any future proposal to permanently close these courts, with hearings moving out of the local area, this would be subject to public consultation as is standard practice for a permanent courthouse.

I trust that both you and the Committee find this update helpful.

Yours sincerely,

SARAH SACKMAN KC MP
Minister Of State