



Ministry
of Justice

The Right Honourable
David Lammy MP
Deputy Prime Minister
Lord Chancellor & Secretary
of State for Justice

Andy Slaughter MP, Chair
Justice Select Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Ref: 131446

02 February 2026

Dear Andy,

JUSTICE SELECT COMMITTEE – EVIDENCE SESSION DECEMBER

Thank you for inviting me to appear in front of the Committee on 16 December 2025 to give evidence on justice issues and the work of the Department. During the session I agreed to write to the Committee to provide some additional detail on topics discussed.

Criminal Court Reform – Jury Trials

Tony Vaughan MP asked about the proportion of the criminal budget that is used up by the 1.5% of cases that will lose jury trials. The overall criminal courts budget comprises a range of components, including judicial salaries, court staff, court maintenance, and juror and magistrate expenses. Costs also extend beyond the operations of the court itself to both the prosecution (through the CPS) and the defence (via legal aid). These elements are closely linked, and therefore it is not possible to separate them in order to identify the specific cost of a jury trial or the proportion of the budget attributable to the 1.5% of cases referenced.

Although jury trials represent only around 3% of trial cases in the criminal courts, they account for approximately 63% of Crown Court hearing time. That figure is based on historical data and should not be interpreted as an indication of potential time savings from limiting jury trials. What it does illustrate is that jury trial cases require a significant amount of Crown Court time and resource. The reforms I have announced will make the system more efficient and ensure a more proportionate allocation of resources across the criminal courts.

The Government has already made significant investments in court capacity, infrastructure, technology, and the legal professions. Yet the system remains under an unsustainable strain – driven by a failure to address the growing backlog and by the changing volume and complexity of cases entering the courts. As Sir Brian Leveson highlighted in his independent report, efficiency improvements and additional funding alone will not resolve this. Structural court reform is also necessary.

As is usual practice, impact assessments will be provided alongside the necessary legislation for these reforms, and I remain keen to work with the Committee as it scrutinises these measures.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David', followed by a long horizontal stroke and a small loop at the end.

RT HON DAVID LAMMY MP

**DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER
LORD CHANCELLOR AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR JUSTICE**