

Useful Information

Belfast Combined Courts

Location

Belfast Combined Courts comprises two locations:

- **Laganside Courts** which houses Crown, County and Magistrates Courts; along with the Fixed Penalty Office and
- **The Old Town Hall** which houses Youth Court, Family and Domestic Courts and the Coroners Courts.

Laganside Courts is situated in Oxford Street in the centre of Belfast opposite the Waterfront Hall and beside the Royal Courts of Justice.

The Old Town Hall Building is located on the junction of Chichester Street and Victoria Street.

Transport

Both courthouses are close to Central Railway Station and the Laganside bus station at Donegall Quay which is one of the two city centre terminals for Ulsterbus. The other is in Glengall Street. At the moment there is no link between the two terminals so the quickest route is along Great Victoria Street to Wellington Place, leading directly into Chichester Street which meets Victoria Street at its junction. Go straight ahead to Oxford Street. This is about a 15 minute walk. There is a taxi rank at the City Hall. The nearest Citybus stop to the court is in Oxford Street, just before the Waterfront Hall. The main terminus is around the City Hall area in Donegall Square.

For information about bus and rail timetables contact Translink on 028 9066 6630 or www.translink.co.uk

Car parking

There is no public car parking at either of the two courthouses. However there are a number of car parks nearby e.g. Donegall Quay and Hilton Hotel. Average daily charges are about £7 to £10. Disabled Court Users can be accommodated but only by contacting the Customer Service Officer before your visit.

Opening hours

The building is open from 9.00am. The office is open to the public from 9.30am to 4.30pm. The courts generally start at 10.30am, stopping for lunch around 1.00pm and resuming at 2.00pm, until the daily business is finished. The office is open for fine or fixed penalty payments and any other business during lunch.

Refreshments & other facilities

Laganside Courts

There is a café on the ground floor level in Laganside Courts. It offers a varied menu, hot and cold beverages and confectionery. There are also vending machines located on each court level.

The Old Town Hall There is a vending machine which offers crisps and chocolate. If something more substantial is required, users are welcome to use the café in Laganside.

Toilet facilities

There are public toilets on all levels.

Phones and Photographic equipment

There are public phones available on all levels. Care must be taken in the use of mobile phones whilst in the precincts of the court. It is prohibited to use any photographic or recording device within the court building and the area immediately surrounding it.

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Some mobile phones are capable of performing this function and therefore you are advised not to use mobile phones for this purpose whilst attending court. Mobile phones must be switched off before entering a courtroom.

What services are provided?

Photocopying facilities are available at the reception desk in Laganside. This service does carry a charge. Language Line is available at the counter in Laganside Courts for non-English speaking customers. This facility allows a 3-way conversation to take place via a phone line, between the customer, and interpreter and the member of court staff.

Help and information

The staff in the main offices on the ground floors will help with any queries you may have. There are notice boards and plasma screens outside each courtroom at Laganside which display lists of the daily business. If you require additional information or need to meet someone on arrival, you can get help from either the reception desk or the Payments and Enquiries Office on the ground floor. This facility will be available from 9.30am each court day. If you have not already done so, you may wish to contact a solicitor before coming to court.

Please note that you must attend court at the time you have been given, although you may not be called until after this. If you feel you have been waiting too long, please contact a court official.

In Laganside, talking information signs are available on levels 0, 2 & 4. Choice of languages includes English, Irish and Cantonese.

There is also an information kiosk located in Café Legal on the ground floor where you can access Northern Ireland Court Service website and e-mail your comments.

Do you have a disability or a special need?

If you have a disability or a special need, please contact the Customer Service Officer who will provide you with information on the facilities available. For those with a hearing difficulty, necklaces are provided at Laganside to enable access to the Infrared hearing system facility. There is an induction loop system at the Old Town Hall.

Giving Evidence

If you are aged 14 or over and have to give evidence in court, you will be required either to take a religious oath or 'affirm' that you will tell the truth. The court clerk will ask you which method you want to use, and invite you to repeat after them the appropriate words. A religious oath is a sworn promise to tell the truth and is made on a holy book. An affirmation is a declaration to tell the truth but it is not sworn on a holy book.

Court Witness Service

If you are a victim or witness for the prosecution, Victim Support Northern Ireland offers a Court Witness Service at all the Crown Courts and Laganside Magistrates' Court, Belfast.

Before the Trial: opportunity to talk to someone; pre-trial familiarisation visit to court; information on court procedures

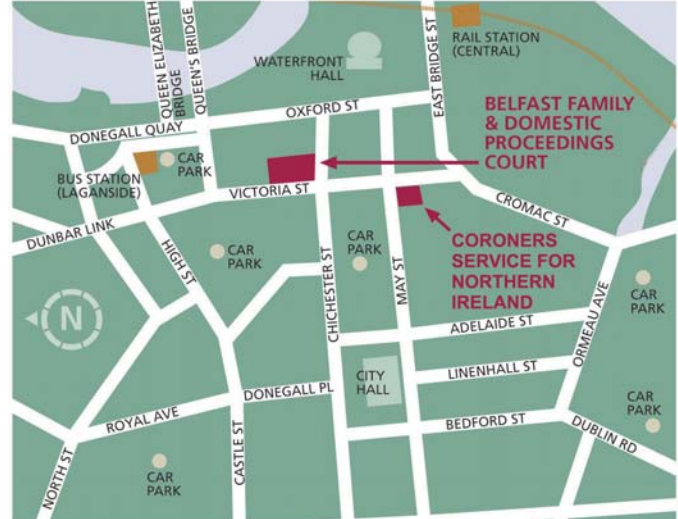
During the Trial: safe waiting area; liaison with court officers and legal representatives; arrangements for witnesses with special needs; accompanying witnesses into court

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After the Trial: preparing victims for case outcome; encouraging continued contact with Victim Support Community Service; referral on to other agencies

Contact Details

Court Witness Service

Laganside Court Witness Service:
028 9023 2523

Laganside Courts

Contact Information

For further information on Belfast Combined Courts please contact Customer Service Officer
Laganside Courts
Oxford Street
Belfast
BT1 3LL

Telephone 028 90728239
Fax 028 90310227
Email csmlaganside@courtsni.gov.uk

Contact Information

For further information on Old Town Hall Building please contact Customer Service Officer
Old Townhall Building
Victoria Street
Belfast
BT1 3FA

Telephone 028 90724519
Facsimile 028 90326260
Email belfastfamilydomestic@courtsni.gov.uk

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This information sheet will be made available in a range of alternative formats. Requests for alternative formats should be made to the Communications Group. For further information on other courthouses please contact

Northern Ireland Court Service

Communications Group
Laganside House
Oxford Street
Belfast BT1 3LT

Telephone 028 9032 8594

Textphone 028 9041 2920

Facsimile 028 9072 8942

Email communicationsgroup@courtsni.gov.uk

www.courtsni.gov.uk

The Northern Ireland Court Service is committed to improving its quality of service to all court users. By making comments about our services, you enable us to improve them. By making a complaint, you enable us to put things right.