

Royal Courts of Justice

Location

The courthouse is situated in lower Chichester Street, Belfast opposite the Waterfront Hall and beside Laganside Courts.

Public Transport

The courthouse is close to Central Railway Station and Laganside bus station, which is one of the two city-centre bus stations for Ulsterbus. The other is in Glengall Street. There is a Centrelink bus service available between Laganside and Glengall Street bus stations, leaving approximately every 15 minutes. The quickest pedestrian route from Glengall Street to the Royal Courts of Justice is along Great Victoria Street to Wellington Place, leading directly into Chichester Street and meeting Victoria Street at its junction. 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 bus terminus is around the City Hall area in Donegall Square. For information about the bus and rail timetables contact Translink on 028 9066 6630 or www.translink.co.uk

Car parking

Car parks are available within the immediate vicinity of the Royal Courts of Justice. Multi-storey parking facilities are available at the Hilton Hotel (adjacent to the Waterfront Hall); at Laganside Bus Station; at Victoria Square Shopping Centre and at Montgomery Street off Chichester Street. Car parking is available for those with mobility difficulties within the grounds of the Royal Courts of Justice. Access must be pre-arranged by contacting the RCJ Admin office on (028) 90 724662.

Opening hours

The building is open to the public from 9.00am to 5.00pm and offices are normally open from 9.30am to 4.30pm. The courts sit at different times from 9.00am each morning, usually stopping at 1.00pm for lunch.

Refreshments

There is a Refreshment/Tea bar located on the ground floor, which is opened from 9.00am to 4.15am on Monday - Thursday and 9.30am to 2.15pm on Friday.

Public toilets

Public Toilets, including facilities for the disabled, are located on the ground floor and close to all the waiting areas, offices and courtrooms on the first and second and floors.

Telephones

There are pay phones at the entrance and at the rear of the building on the ground floor.

Non English speaking court users

RCJ provides access to **Language Line**; a free service which is available to help customers with general procedural enquiries. It enables customers, whose first language is not English, to speak to someone in their own language, via a telephone call (30 languages are available). Please speak to a member of staff at our **Front of House** office to make use of this service.

Mobile Phones and Photographic equipment

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

Note Taking in Court

Anyone wishing to take notes in court must obtain the judge's prior permission.

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Witness & Child waiting areas

Public waiting areas are located in the main hall and in close proximity to courtrooms on the 1st and 2nd floors. Provision can be made for vulnerable witnesses who require separate waiting facilities on request to the Customer Service Officer.

Rooms for mothers with children, fathers with children and a baby changing room are located on the first floor.

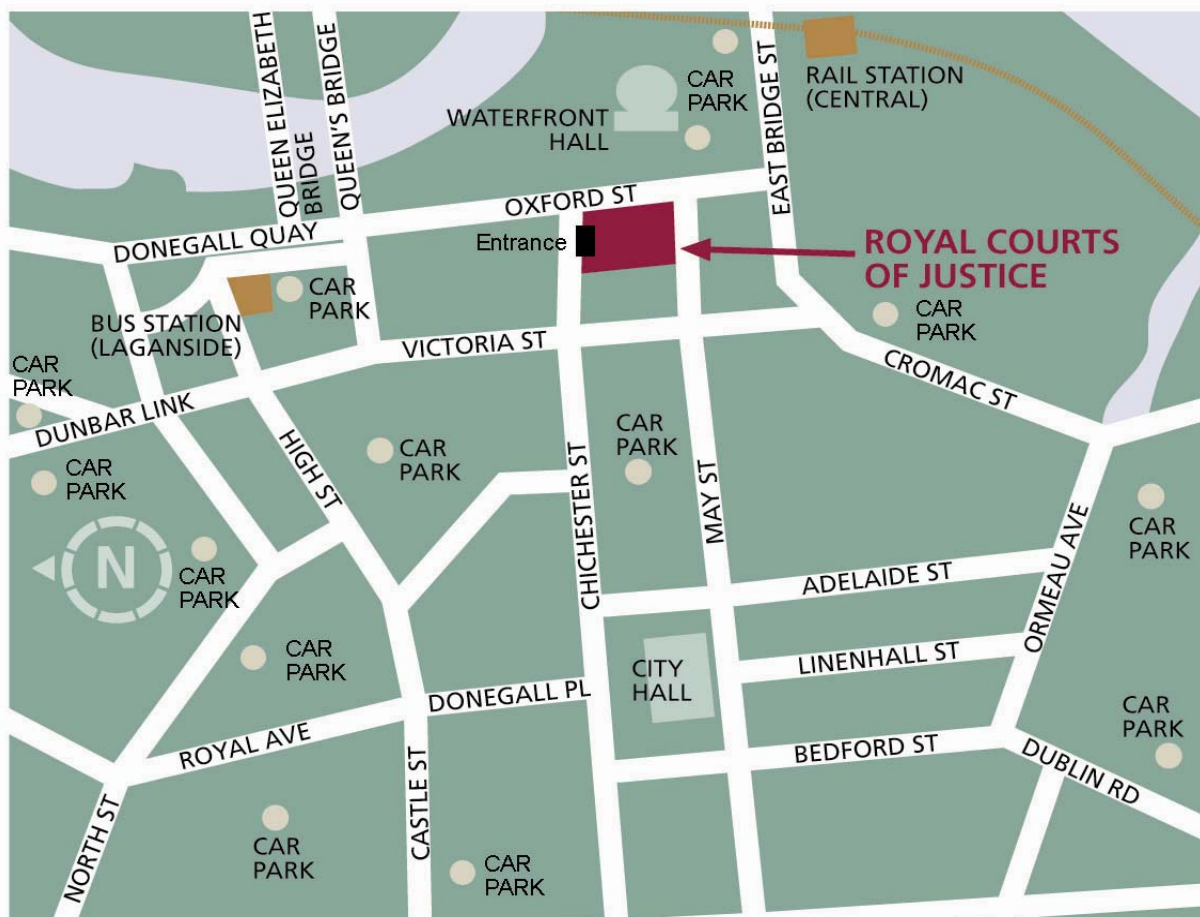
Help and information

There is a reception desk at the main entrance to the Royal Courts of Justice building. This is manned from 9.00am to 5.30pm to provide assistance on directions and facilities within the building. There is a public address system throughout the building. Daily court lists are posted in display units in the main hall. The name and contact details for the RCJ Customer Service Officer are published at all public counter points.

There are a number of leaflets available providing information for court users in relation to court proceedings. If you require additional information before attending court and/or require assistance on arrival please contact the Customer Service Officer.

If you have not already done so, you may wish to contact a solicitor before coming to court.

If you are required to attend the RCJ you may request assistance from the Customer Service Officer (CSO) 028 9072 4661. The CSO is available to talk to you prior to your hearing and to facilitate a visit to court to allow familiarisation. During your hearing the CSO can arrange a safe waiting area, liaison with court officers and they can arrange assistance for those with specific needs. After trial the CSO can assist with a referral to other support agencies.



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The Housing Rights Service (HRS) provides free of charge help, advice and court representation for those facing repossession proceedings. HRS staff are available in RCJ every Tuesday and Thursday morning, with private facilities set aside for consultation.

For further information please contact the Housing Rights Service directly on: 028 9024 5640 or at their website www.housingrights.org.uk

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.

Facilities for disabled customers

There is a ramp to allow access to the building and a lift to all floors. There are toilets for disabled people at both ends of the main hall on the ground floor. There is a loop and infrared system in most of the courtrooms and at Front of House for people who use hearing aids. Please ask at Reception if a Head Set is required for the Infra Red System for use in Court.

If you have a disability or a special need, please contact the Customer Service Officer either before you come to court or on arrival, who will provide you with information on the facilities available.

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 (appropriate to your faith). An affirmation is a declaration to tell the truth but it is not sworn on a holy book. When addressing the court, a Judge should be referred to as "My Lord" and a Master as "Master".

Contact information

Juror Information

028 9072 4672

Court offices can be contacted by ringing the Court Service switchboard on: 028 9032 8594 or by email using the office email below.

Central Office

centraloffice@courtsni.gov.uk

Chancery Office

chanceryoffice@courtsni.gov.uk

Matrimonial

matrimonial@courtsni.gov.uk

Office of Care & Protection

officeofcare&protection@courtsni.gov.uk

Official Solicitors Office

officialsolicitorsoffice@courtsni.gov.uk

Probate

probate@courtsni.gov.uk

RCJ Front of House

frontofhouseofficercj@courtsni.gov.uk

RCJ Administrators Office

adminoffice@courtsni.gov.uk

Tipstaff

tipstaff@courtsni.gov.uk

For further information on the Royal Courts of Justice please contact:
The Customer Service Officer
Royal Courts of Justice
Chichester Street,
Belfast BT1 3JF
Telephone: 028 9072 4661
Fax: 028 9031 3508

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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 Communications Group. For further information on other courthouses please contact:

NI Courts and Tribunals Service
Communications Group
Laganside House,
Oxford Street,
Belfast BT1 3LA

Telephone: 028 9032 8594
Facsimile: 028 9072 8942
Email: communicationsgroup@courtsni.gov.uk
www.courtsni.gov.uk

The Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals 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.