

## **PRESS NOTICE**

**Embargoed until – Monday 18 February 2008 at 00.01**



### **Northern Ireland Criminal Justice Week Court Open Days**

As part of Northern Ireland Criminal Justice Week, the Northern Ireland Court Service is holding a number of court open days throughout Northern Ireland. These will be held at –

- Armagh Courthouse [Monday 18 February]
- Londonderry Courthouse [Tuesday 19 February]
- Omagh Courthouse [Tuesday 19 February]
- Royal Courts of Justice, Belfast [Wednesday 20 February]
- Craigavon Courthouse [Thursday 21 February]
- Downpatrick Courthouse [Friday 22 February]
- Antrim Courthouse [Friday 22 February]

These events are primarily aimed at primary and secondary schools and will include a wide range of activities such as mock trials – including a mock trial with the Public Prosecution Service which ‘charges’ teachers with ‘Too Much Homework!’.

Pupils will also have the opportunity to meet with the judiciary, tour the courthouses and meet local criminal justice agency representatives such as the PSNI and Youth Conference Service.

Each courthouse is hosting a different event themed around issues such as crime prevention, safety, and victims and witnesses. In addition some of the courthouses will be hosting community open days aimed at local communities and providing an opportunity to tour the courthouses and meet with the various local criminal justice agencies.

### **Londonderry and Omagh**

The Minister for the Northern Ireland Court Service, the Rt Hon David Hanson MP, will be participating in the events at Londonderry and Omagh on Tuesday 19 February.

The Minister has commented that 'I am delighted to be in Londonderry and Omagh today to participate in Londonderry and Omagh Courthouse's Open Days which have been timed to coincide with Criminal Justice Week in Northern Ireland. It is important for the criminal justice system to actively engage local communities to help educate and inform the public on the services they provide. This includes young people - and I am therefore very pleased to find so many primary and secondary schools participating in the court open days that are taking place throughout Northern Ireland during this week'

Further details on these events can be found in the notes for editors.

ENDS

### **Notes for Editors**

1. The Rt Hon David Hanson MP is the Minister of State at the Ministry of Justice. He was appointed to the Ministry of Justice in May 2007 and has responsibility for the courts in Northern Ireland.

2. As part of Criminal Justice Week, "Criminal Justice in a Shared Future", the Northern Ireland Court Service is hosting court open days in each of the court divisions. Events are happening at 7 venues with school events in the morning [10.00 -13.00] and community events in the afternoon [14.00 – 16.00] where the local community can tour the courthouse,

speak to court staff on the how the courts operate, and also meet with other criminal justice agency representatives including the police, probation, prisons, and the voluntary sector.

3. The key themes for the open days are;

- **Community** – this event will concentrate on how the criminal justice system works and what organisations are involved
- **Victims & Witnesses** - this event is designed to showcase the NSPCC victim and witness link and to explain what it means to be a witness. The event will also show how the criminal justice system works together for victims and witnesses.
- **Crime Prevention** - this event will concentrate on the consequences of crime and how this is dealt with through the criminal justice system
- **Judicial and Legal** - this event is designed to show the role of the Judiciary and legal professionals in the criminal justice system within the surrounds of the highest Criminal Court in Northern Ireland.

4. The venues and themes for each event are;

- Armagh Courthouse [Monday 18 February] - Community event
- Londonderry Courthouse [Tuesday 19 February] - Victims and Witnesses
- Omagh Courthouse [Tuesday 19 February] - Community event
- Royal Courts of Justice, Belfast [Wednesday 20 February] - Judicial and Legal
- Craigavon Courthouse [Thursday 21 February] - Community event
- Downpatrick Courthouse [Friday 22 February] - Crime prevention
- Antrim Courthouse [Friday 22 February] - Community

If you are considering attending or have any further queries, please contact:

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