

The Quality of Service provided for Jurors by Her Majesty's Courts Service (HMCS)

HM Inspectorate of Court Administration (HMICA) has been looking at what it is like to serve on a jury in the criminal courts of England and Wales. We particularly looked at:

- how people are selected for jury service
- what they find when they get to court (how they're treated, what facilities are available)
- how well jurors are compensated for any expenses incurred (travel costs, childcare, food & drink, loss of earnings).

We have visited courthouses, talked to jurors and HMCS staff, and invited jurors to share their experiences by responding to a questionnaire. Over 950 jurors took part in this survey.

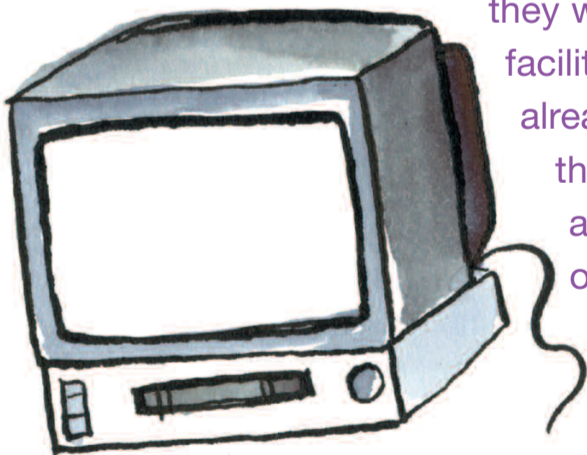
Nearly all jurors (98%) were happy with the information they received before attending court.



Jurors were generally very pleased with how court staff treated them.

The places where jurors wait to be called into court vary in the comfort and facilities they offer, but 84% told us

they were happy with the facilities. HMCS was already trying to improve the facilities for jurors, and will carry on doing so.



Although refreshments are usually available, many people commented that the allowance of £5 per day was not enough. Some courts offer free tea and coffee.



Most jurors felt safe and secure, but we feel HMCS needs to do a bit more work on jurors' safety and security. HMCS also needs to improve the access for jurors with disabilities, so that they don't get separated from other jurors, and needs to improve the storage facilities for jurors' possessions.

HMCS could think about displaying performance information to jurors in their waiting areas. Sometimes HMCS does things very well, but doesn't tell people about it.

Some jurors, especially the self-employed, complained they lose lots of money during their jury service and others said they had been forced by their employers to take holiday whilst being jurors. But:

- 81% of jurors received payment within ten days
- Only 4% had not been paid within 21 days
- 92% of jurors said the sums paid were accurate.



HMCS needs to think more about diversity – some jurors were surprised to be sitting on an all-white panel, especially in an area with a population of mixed ethnic origins. HMCS also needs to make sure people aren't just automatically offered the Bible when they swear an oath, and that they are given the choice of affirming instead.

HMCS needs to do the following things:

- **make sure jury selection is random and doesn't unfairly exclude or put off people, and make consistent decisions about who can be let off jury service**
- **check that the people coming to court are who they say they are, and that they are not disqualified from sitting as a juror.**
- **do things the same way in all courts across England and Wales and check to make sure this is happening.**