

Useful Information

Belfast Combined Courts

Location

Belfast Combined Courts comprises one location:

- Laganside Courts which houses Crown, County, Family Care and Magistrates Courts, Youth Court, Family Proceedings and Domestic Courts, Fixed Penalty Office, Civil Processing Centre and Fine Recovery Team
- Coroner's Inquests may also be held in Laganside Courts

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

Transport

The location is close to Central Railway Station and Laganside bus station at Donegall Quay which is one of the two city centre terminals for Ulsterbus. The other is in Europa Bus Centre, Glengall Street. At the moment, there is no link between the two terminals so the quickest walking 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 Europa Bus Centre and the City Hall. The nearest Translink Metro 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 the location (there is some limited on-street parking at May Street). However there are a number of car parks nearby e.g. Donegall Quay, Hilton Hotel, Lanyon Place and Victoria Square. Average daily charges vary depending on the car park.

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 10:00am/10:30am and continue until the daily business is finished.

Laganside Court office is open for fine or fixed penalty payments and any other business during lunch.

Refreshments & Other facilities

Due to Coronavirus there are currently no provisions for food or drink. You may bring refreshments with you but please note you may be asked to taste test liquids on entry to the building. There is a tannoy system throughout the building. There is a no smoking policy in Laganside Courthouse.

Toilet facilities

There are public toilets (including universally accessible toilets) on all levels in Laganside

Phones & Photographic Equipment

There are no public phones available in this court venue. If you require assistance, please contact a member of security or Court staff.

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 are advised not to 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.

What services are provided?

Photocopying facilities are available at the reception desk in Laganside Courts. This service does carry a charge. A telephone interpreting service 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, interpreter and member of court staff.

Help and Information

The staff in the main offices on the ground floor 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 some-

one 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 in the ground in Laganside Courts), 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 Courts, talking information signs are available on levels 0, 2 and 4. Choice of languages includes English, Irish, Cantonese and Polish.

Do you have a disability and/or a specific need when attending court?

If you have a disability and require a particular facility or adjustment to enable you to attend or take part in court proceedings, please contact the Disability Liaison Officer (see contact details below) for information on the facilities available and to discuss any particular need that you might have, what is already in place or what can be put in place to assist. For those with a hearing difficulty, necklaces are provided at Laganside to enable access to the infrared hearing system facility.

For further information on the facilities for disabled in Laganside Courts please follow the attached link:

<https://www.accessable.co.uk/belfast-city-council/access-guides/laganside-courts>

Giving Evidence

Giving evidence if you are aged 14 or over and have to give evidence in court, you will be required to either 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 Magistrates and Youth courts.

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

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

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

Witness Service

Laganside Court Witness Service

028 9023 2523

NSPCC Young Witness Service

The Young Witness Service is a free, independent and confidential service provided by a team of social work staff and trained volunteers. We provide direct support, assistance and information to children and young people under the age of 18 who may have to give evidence for the Prosecution in criminal courts in Northern Ireland.

They provide support before, during and after trial, including a pre-trial visit to the court and undertaking the role of accompanying adult in TV link cases. The service includes:

- Practical and emotional support to young witnesses and their families;
- Minimising the stress of giving evidence by ensuring young witnesses needs are met;
- Ensuring the onward referral to other agencies is organised if needed; and
- Providing an advisory/consultancy role to other professionals working with young witnesses.

NSPCC Young Witness Service

028 9024 0847

Contact Information

For further information on Belfast Combined Courts please contact:

Customer Service Officer

Laganside Courts

Oxford Street

Belfast BT1 3LL

Telephone: 0300 200 7812

Email: csmlaganside@courtsni.gov.uk

Disability Liaison Officer

Telephone: 028 90 72 8236

Email: csmlaganside@courtsni.gov.uk

This information sheet will be made available in a range of alternative formats. Requests for alternative formats should be made to the:

Customer Service Centre

PO Box 256

Londonderry BT48 4AP

Telephone: 0300 200 7812

Email:

customerservicecentre@courtsni.gov.uk

For further information on other courthouses, please contact:

NI Courts & Tribunals Service

Laganside House

Oxford Street

Belfast BT1 3LA

Telephone: 0300 200 7812

Web address: www.justice-ni.gov.uk/courts-and-tribunals



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

