Witness Service

The media in court

3 March 2026

The media in court

Courts in England and Wales are considered public buildings. This means members of the public can watch trials, and journalists and members of the press are normally able to attend to observe and report on trials.

Journalists typically sit in the public gallery. In some courts, such as some Crown Courts, there may be a designated press bench or media area. This is often alongside or near the prosecution lawyer but separate from the legal teams.

Journalists must follow court rules and etiquette. For example, they're not able to take photographs or make recordings without permission.

You can report it if you feel the media has intruded on your privacy. For unwanted attention from newspapers or magazines, you can contact the Independent Press Standards Organisation. For TV and radio, you should contact the station first and then Ofcom.

Evidence given in private

One of the special measures the court can grant is to clear the public gallery so the witness can give their evidence in private. (This is under Section 25 of the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999.)

This means the courtroom may be cleared of anyone who does not legally need to be there. However, if the trial is being reported on by the media, one nominated member of the media will be allowed to stay to report on the trial.