

Digital Tools and how they could potentially assist Litigants in Person before and during Court Proceedings

A. Introduction

In today's world there are lots of user centric digital, web and mobile phone-based applications (or "apps") in the market that allow for a smooth, efficient and cheaper way of managing systems and processes. For example, the Open Banking initiative has spawned a raft of digital experiences and solutions that have seen major transformations in personal and business banking. Other apps allow for much easier end to end management of day to day activities. One such example, is Onedox which allows all household utility bills, vehicle tax, MOT, mobile phone accounts etc to be managed via an app based tool downloaded onto a smartphone.

MOT appointments, taxing your vehicle, insuring it and your home, monitoring and switching of utility providers etc can all be done seamlessly via the app – reducing time, effort and paperwork.

It is easy to see how this type of functionality could be utilised and harnessed to enhance the LiP experience for the benefit of everyone involved – across education, process and procedure, and case management. Some of the friction being experienced in the legal system currently could be avoided/lessened by the use of digital tools and assets when LiPs are considering or are already involved in court proceedings. This could potentially drive efficiencies, reduce costs and have a positive impact on the emotional wellbeing of LiPs.

B. How apps could be used by LiPs

There are a range of ways that digital platforms could be used to make the LiP experience less burdensome on all parties. Below are some examples of what could be supplied by way of an app.

1. In advance of court proceedings

Instructional content could be supplied via an app that covers:

- what you need to know about becoming a LiP;
- legal and court terminology and definitions;
- signposting for forms and resources;
- functionality for forms to be filled out, saved and submitted and shared online/via an app;
- video content, for example, court "walk-throughs" or how you should behave in court;
- introduction to key personnel - What is their role? What will they be wearing? Where will I find them?

- requests for translation services etc.

2. At Court:

i. Notifications/check in:

- automatic check in to court using location-based services;
- push notifications on delays, updates etc on the day;
- check in and location-based services;
- integration with digital signage in courts;
- personalisation of messages to ease stress on LIPs.

ii Case management:

- sharing documents. For example, track when documents are opened, reviewed etc
- serving court papers;
- timetable & reminders;
- sending/receiving secure messages.

Note

In reviewing and considering improvements to information systems, it must also be borne in mind that not all court users are comfortable with or have access to IT solutions. Steps should therefore be taken to ensure that alternative sources of information are available which are clear and easily accessible.

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