



HM Courts &  
Tribunals Service

# County Court Business Centre

## Code of Practice

**A number of sections of the Code of Practice make reference to relevant legislation. There is no attempt within the Code of Practice to interpret specific legislation, but where statutory requirements exist these naturally take precedence over the Code of Practice.**

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<b>Product Version</b>	4

### **County Court Business Centre**

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This document sets out the code of practice for claimants wishing to issue their claims through the CCBC. This code will be reviewed periodically and any amendments will be brought to the attention of claimants currently using the CCBC.
- 1.2 The work at the CCBC is issued in the name of the County Court Business Centre and comes under the jurisdiction of the judges of that court.
- 1.3 This document should be read in conjunction with Civil Procedure Rule 7.10 and the accompanying Practice Direction (7C).
- 1.4 Throughout this document, the claimant or representative will be referred to as the Centre User.

## 2 The role of the County Court Business Centre

- 2.1 The purpose of the CCBC is to provide a speedy service to court users and, at the same time, to relieve county courts of the routine, repetitive tasks associated with the processing of large volumes of specified amount claims in the areas of:
- pre-judgment work
  - entry of judgment
  - post judgment work (including issue of warrants of control and writs of control).
- 2.2 The role of the CCBC is confined to the following areas of case progression:
- issue of claims in bulk via electronic means
  - handling defences, part admissions and counterclaims
  - initial court contact for directions questionnaires and requests for mediation
  - entry of judgment by acceptance, default or determination
  - issue of warrants of control
  - transfer up to the High Court for enforcement by a writ of control
- 2.3 Where any case processed through the CCBC diverges from the above pattern, the administration of the case will be transferred to the appropriate county court hearing centre for action.
- 2.4 The Centre User shall correspond directly with the appropriate county court hearing centre once the action has been transferred. The claim number will remain unchanged.

### 3 Authority to issue through the Centre

- 3.1 Any claimant wishing to make use of the CCBC shall be an authorised user under CPR Rule 7.10.
- 3.2 The Centre User must use the Secure Data Transfer system (SDT) to issue their claims.
- 3.2 The Centre User shall give the CCBC reasonable notice of any occasion on which they desire to issue more than **3,000 claims on one day**. The Customer Insight team will liaise with the Centre's correspondence team, and the Centre reserves the right to suggest alternative claim issue dates if necessary.

### 4 Use of Secure Data Transfer

- 4.1 The Centre User shall submit the following within an XML submission:
- claims
  - judgments by default and on acceptance of offer or acceptance of part admission
  - warrants of control
  - cases fully paid, settled, and notices of discontinuance
  - The data formats for each type of process can be found in the SDT Customer Interface Definitions (CID).
- 4.2 Manual requests of the types detailed above can only be submitted in exceptional circumstances with the agreement of the Centre Manager.

### 5 Use of CCBC Facilities

#### 5.1 Claim issue

- 5.1.1 A copy of the claim pack will be served on the defendant by first class post. The claim will be deemed served on the defendant on the fifth day after issue, regardless of whether that is a Saturday or Sunday. A copy of the claim form will not be retained on file by the Centre. The particulars of claim will be retained on the CCBC computer system.

5.1.2 Centre Users may include in their particulars of claim a statement offering Welsh translation of documents.

## 5.2 Separate particulars of claim

5.2.1 The Centre User may, subject to paragraph 5.2.2 serve particulars of claim separately to the claim form. The Centre User must:

- a) state that the particulars of claim will follow; and
- b) include a brief summary of the claim in the claim form.

5.2.2 Where the Centre User serves the particulars of claim separately to the claim form, the Centre User must:

- a) serve the particulars of claim within 14 days after service of the claim form [see CPR rule 7.4.(1) (b)];
- b) within 14 days of service of the particulars of claim, file a certificate of service for these at CCBC; and
- c) file the particulars of claim at the court to which the proceedings are transferred for hearing within 7 days of service of the notice of transfer. The particulars must not, as a matter of course, be filed at the CCBC unless there is a specific request.

## 5.3 Claim not served and subsequent service

5.3.1 All claims returned to the CCBC via Royal Mail shall be forwarded to the Centre User. It will be assumed that the claim has been properly served unless the Centre User informs the CCBC. Where the Centre User has a new address for service, the Centre User shall amend and return the claim form to the CCBC for button sealing. The CCBC will return the claim form to the Centre User to serve and file a Certificate of Service with the CCBC.

## 5.4 Extension of time for service of the claim

5.4.1 The Centre User shall apply to extend the time for service in line with CPR 7.6. The Centre User must give reasons why the claim has not been served and efforts made to trace the defendant. Failure to do so may result in the application being refused.

5.4.2 The CCBC shall notify the Centre User of the result of their applications.

## 5.5 Judgments

5.5.1 The CCBC shall arrange for the production and despatch of those judgments submitted via SDT by the Centre User. Judgments shall be despatched to the defendant only. The Centre User can request a sealed copy of the Judgment order if required, preferably by email.

5.5.2 Where a Tomlin order is in force and the defendant has defaulted under the terms of the order, the Centre User may submit a request for judgment by admission.

## 5.6 Determinations (pre-judgment)

5.6.1 The Centre User shall provide a copy of the defendant's reply to the claim in form N9A and a completed form N225 or N225A as appropriate.

5.6.2 The Centre User should apply *The Determination of Means Guidelines for court staff* (available on request) to the defendant's admission.

5.6.3 The Centre User shall provide a copy of the calculation using the determination calculator form (available from the CCBC), when requesting the court officer to fix the rate of payment.

5.6.4 Any application to the District Judge for reconsideration shall result in the claim being transferred to the defendant's "home" county court hearing centre (see 5.12).

5.6.5 The CCBC shall produce a standard form N30(2) (Judgment for Claimant [determination without hearing] ) and despatch to each party.

## 5.7 Cases Paid in Full, Settled or Discontinued

5.7.1 The Centre User shall submit details of all cases paid in full to the Centre but must not inform the CCBC until any payment by cheque has been cleared. The Centre User shall submit all requests by XML

5.7.2 When advised of payment in full, the CCBC shall notify Registry Trust of cases that are cancelled or satisfied, as appropriate.

5.7.3 The Centre User shall notify the executing court and not the CCBC of any payments made directly to himself by the defendant, where there is a live warrant.

## 5.8 Acknowledgment of service

5.8.1 Where the defendant or his solicitor files an Acknowledgment of Service within 14 days after service of the claim (or where judgment by default has not already been entered, up to a maximum of 28 days after service) the CCBC will accept and enter this to the court record.

5.8.2 Where an Acknowledgment of Service is filed by letter or email the CCBC will then send the Acknowledgment of Service directly to the CCBC User.

5.8.3 Where an Acknowledgment of Service is filed online the CCBC will send a schedule to the CCBC user which details the responses filed that day,

## 5.9 Defence and counterclaim

5.9.1 The CCBC shall treat all defences as a “states paid”.

5.9.2 The CCBC shall enter a defence onto the system. Where a defence was filed via letter or email the CCBC shall then serve a copy of the defence on the Centre User, together with a notice in schedule format. Where a defence is filed online the CCBC shall serve a schedule on the user. The user can then access the defence via Money Claim Online.

5.9.3 Where the centre user believes there has been a clear staff error in the processing of a defendant’s response, the Centre User shall write in requesting for this to be reviewed. The CCBC Team Leader will only review and reclassify a defence if it contains a clear admission to the claim, the Team Leader will not interpret the contents of a defence without a clear statement of admission. Where the CCBC Team Leader does not approve the request to reclassify the response, the Centre User may apply to strike out the defence with an application and fee, resulting in the file being referred to a District Judge. Alternatively the Centre User may send in an intention to proceed.

- 5.9.4 Where the Centre User wishes to continue with the claim, he must respond to the court within 28 days after service of the defence on him: failure to do so within the time limit will result in the claim being stayed. Any application to remove the stay is 'without notice' with the appropriate fee and the application will be referred to a District Judge.
- 5.9.5 Where a claim has been defended, the claimant has 28 days from service of the defence to confirm that the claim should continue. The CCBC will then send a notice to all parties giving a date to which the Directions Questionnaire should be filed with the CCBC.
- 5.9.6 The Centre User shall produce a Directions Questionnaire to be returned to the CCBC. The Centre User shall identify the appropriate county court hearing centre to transfer the claim to on the Directions Questionnaire as follows:
- where the defendant is an individual, to the defendant's local county court hearing centre
  - where the defendant is not an individual, and where the claimant is represented, transfer to the claimant's representative's local county court hearing centre
  - where the defendant is not an individual, and where the claimant is not represented, transfer to the claimant's local county court hearing centre.
  - In line with CPR part 26 where the defendant is not an individual, the claim can now be sent to the claimant's preferred hearing centre as indicated on the claim form or Directions Questionnaire.
- 5.9.7 Where the case has been provisionally allocated to the small claims track and both parties have ticked to confirm they would like to be considered for mediation, this will then be referred to the Small Claims Mediation Team. Where a case cannot be resolved through mediation the CCBC will send a Notice of Transfer to all parties.
- 5.9.8 Where the Centre User wishes to enter judgment on acceptance of the defendant's revised offer (following withdrawal of the defence) the Centre User must provide the CCBC with a copy of the defendant's consent. The CCBC will remove the bar and the judgment request can then be included in the next XML submission.
- 5.9.9 Where the defendant files a defence and counterclaim, and has paid the fee, the CCBC will transfer the administration of the claim to the appropriate county court hearing centre.

## **5.10 Application for Summary Judgment**

- 5.10.1 All applications for Summary Judgment result in the claim being transferred to the appropriate county court hearing centre (see 5.9.6).



5.10.2 Where the application for Summary Judgment is made following receipt of an **Acknowledgment of Service**, the Centre will account for the application fee and transfer the application to the appropriate county court hearing centre. There is no Directions Questionnaire generated at this point. Should the defendant file a defence at the Centre after the case has been transferred, the Centre will forward this to the appropriate hearing centre.

5.10.3 Where the application for Summary Judgment is made following receipt of a **defence**, the Centre will still account for the application fee and transfer the claim.

## 5.11 Part admissions

5.11.1 The CCBC shall enter a valid part admission to the system. Where a part admission was filed via letter or email the CCBC shall then serve a copy of the part admission on the Centre User, together with a notice in schedule format. Where a part admission is filed online the CCBC shall serve a schedule on the user. The user can then access the part admission via Money Claim Online.

5.11.2 Where the centre user believes there has been a clear staff error in the processing of a defendant's response the Centre User shall write in requesting for this to be reviewed. The Team Leader will not consider any requests to reclassify a Part Admission to a Full Admission where a) the defendant has only admitted to part of the debt and offered no defence to the rest or b) the defendant has not admitted the costs or interest. As per CPR 14.5 (9) the claimant may enter judgment for the amount admitted plus costs (if no defence to the costs have been stated). Where the CCBC Team Leader does not approve the request to reclassify the response, the Centre User may apply to strike out the Part Admission with an application and fee, resulting in the file being referred to a District Judge. Alternatively the Centre User may send in an intention to proceed.

5.11.3 The Centre User should respond to the court within 14 days after service of the part admission on him. Where the Centre User fails to reply within the time allowed, the claim is stayed until the Centre User requests judgment by acceptance or files a notice that they wish to proceed with the claim. No application or fee is necessary where a part admission is filed. The CCBC will then send a notice to all parties giving a date to which the Directions Questionnaire should be filed with the CCBC.

5.11.4 The Centre User shall produce a Directions Questionnaire to be returned to the CCBC. The Centre User shall identify the appropriate county court hearing centre to transfer the claim to on the Directions Questionnaire as follows:

- where the defendant is an individual, to the defendant's local county court hearing centre
- where the defendant is not an individual, and where the claimant is represented, transfer to the claimant's representative's local county court hearing centre

- where the defendant is not an individual, and where the claimant is not represented, transfer to the claimant's local county court hearing centre.
- In line with CPR part 26 where the defendant is not an individual, the claim can now be sent to the claimant's preferred hearing centre as indicated on the claim form or Directions Questionnaire.

5.11.5 Where the case has been provisionally allocated to the small claims track and both parties have ticked to confirm they would like to be considered for mediation, this will then be referred to the Small Claims Mediation Service. Where a case cannot be resolved through mediation the CCBC will send a Notice of Transfer to all parties.

5.11.6 Where the Centre User wishes to accept the part admission, judgment can be requested by XML.

5.11.7 Where the Centre User wishes to enter judgment on acceptance of the defendant's revised offer (following admission of the remainder of the claim) the Centre User must provide the CCBC with a copy of the defendant's consent. The CCBC will remove the bar and the judgment request can then be included in the next XML submission.

## 5.12 Transfer of case records to county court hearing centres

5.12.1 The transfer of records from the CCBC to county court hearing centres falls into two categories: pre and post judgment.

5.12.2 The Centre User shall request transfer of a claim by letter or email, stating the reason for transfer.

5.12.3 The Centre User must identify the appropriate county court hearing centre and county court location code in the request.

5.12.4 The CCBC recommend that multiple requests are submitted in schedule form and sent via email. If submitting in schedule form, the Centre User shall submit the requests for transfer in case number order.

5.12.5 The Centre user shall submit all requests for enforcement to the relevant County Court hearing centre except those which can be dealt with at the CCBC. Requests for transfer should not be submitted to the CCBC in these instances.

5.12.6 The CCBC shall automatically transfer the record to the appropriate county court hearing centre on receipt of an application to set aside judgment (see 5.13.2), other

application to be heard on notice or a request to issue part 20 proceedings submitted by the defendant. The CCBC shall despatch a notice of transfer to the Centre User and defendant.

5.12.7 The CCBC shall return any invalid requests to transfer to the Centre User, indicating the reason for rejection (e.g. the case has already been transferred).

5.12.8 The CCBC shall send the data electronically to the county court hearing centre. Any relevant documents will be sent by post. A copy of the file will not be retained by CCBC.

### 5.13 Application to set aside judgment

5.13.1 An application to set aside the judgment may be filed by the Centre User, the defendant or both (by consent).

5.13.2 The CCBC shall automatically transfer the administration of the case to the defendant's local county court hearing centre on receipt of an application submitted by the defendant (see 5.12.6).

5.13.3 The Centre User shall submit applications to set aside judgment in triplicate in the form of a proposed order (see annex B). All applications shall contain grounds. The CCBC shall notify the Centre User of the result of all his applications.

**Note: Applications should contain legitimate grounds and should not simply serve to remove the defendant's name from the Register of Judgments, Orders and Fines. Such applications will not be granted and will be referred to the district judge.**

5.13.4 The CCBC shall notify Registry Trust Limited of all judgments set aside requesting that the entry be cancelled.

### 5.14 Application to vary an instalment order and Determinations (post judgment)

5.14.1 The CCBC shall forward a copy of the defendant's application to the Centre User.

5.14.2 The Centre User shall reply within 14 days of service if the offer is not acceptable, using a determination of means calculator (available from the CCBC).

5.14.3 The Centre User shall be requested to apply the Department's determination of means guidelines (available on request) to the defendant's application.

- 5.14.4 The Centre User shall provide a completed determination calculator form (available from the CCBC), when requesting the court officer to fix the rate of payment.
- 5.14.5 The CCBC shall manually produce a form N35A (variation order [determination]) and despatch to each party.
- 5.14.6 Any application to the District Judge for reconsideration shall result in the claim being transferred to the appropriate local county court hearing centre (see 5.12).
- 5.14.7 Where the Centre User has not lodged an objection to the defendant's application, the CCBC shall produce form N35 (variation of an instalment order) 16 days after receipt of the defendant's application.
- 5.14.8 The Centre User shall use form N294 when making an application to decrease the amount of the instalment order.
- 5.14.9 Where the Centre User is applying to increase the amount of the instalment order, the CCBC shall, after accounting for the appropriate fee, transfer the action to the defendant's local county court hearing centre (see 5.12).

## 5.15 Warrants of control

- 5.15.1 The Centre User shall submit all requests for warrants of control by XML.
- 5.15.2 The Centre User shall send all correspondence on live warrants, including notification of any payments received direct, to the executing county court hearing centre and **not to the CCBC**. The Centre User shall quote in all correspondence the date of issue, claim number, warrant number and the defendant's address.

## 5.16 Reissue of warrants of control

- 5.16.1 The Centre User shall submit requests to reissue warrants of control on form N445 to the County Court Hearing Centre responsible for executing the warrant. The Centre User shall identify the defendant's "home" county court hearing centre and the county court location code in the request form. There is no fee to reissue a CCBC warrant.

5.16.2 A new warrant number will be provided following reissue.

### 5.17 Certificates of judgment and Writs of Control

5.17.1 The Centre User may apply to the CCBC for a Certificate of Judgment, by completing form N293

5.17.2 The CCBC will check and seal the N293 and return the same to the Centre User.

5.17.3 Where the Centre User obtained judgment at CCBC and wishes to use Northampton District Registry to issue a writ of control, the Centre User will submit all relevant forms and the appropriate fee to CCBC.

### County Court Hearing Centre Codes

County Court Hearing Centre	Code
Aberystwyth	102
Accrington	103
Aldershot & Farnham	104
Altrincham	106
Aylesbury	113
Banbury	114
Barnet	117
Barnsley	118
Barnstaple	119
Barrow in Furness	120
Basildon	153
Basingstoke	122
Bath	123
Bedford	124
Birkenhead	126
Birmingham	127
Blackburn	130
Blackpool	131
Blackwood	132
Bodmin	136
Bolton	137
Boston	138
Bournemouth and Poole	139
Bow	140
Bradford	141
Brecknock	143
Brentford	144
Bridgend	146
Brighton	150
Bristol	151
Bromley	152
Burnley	154
Bury	156

County Court Hearing Centre	Code
Bury St. Edmunds	157
Buxton	158
Caernarfon	159
Cambridge	162
Canterbury	163
Cardiff	164
Carlisle	165
Carmarthen	166
Central London	372
Chelmsford	167
Chester	170
Chesterfield	171
Chichester	172
Chippenham & Trowbridge	353
Clerkenwell & Shoreditch	321
Colchester	176
Conwy & Colwyn	178
Coventry	180
Crewe	181
Croydon	182
Darlington	183
Dartford	184
Derby	185
Doncaster	187
Dudley	189
Durham	190
Eastbourne	191
Edmonton	194
Exeter	198
Gateshead	202
Gloucester and Cheltenham	203
Great Grimsby	208
Guildford	211
Halifax	212
Hammersmith	368
Harrogate	214
Hartlepool	215

County Court Hearing Centre	Code
Hastings	216
Haverfordwest	217
Hereford	220
Hertford	221
High Wycombe	223
Horsham	227
Huddersfield	228
Ipswich	233
Kendal	235
Kettering	236
Kings Lynn	238
Kingston Upon Hull	239
Kingston Upon Thames	240
Lambeth	241
Lancaster	242
Leeds	243
Leicester	244
Lewes	247
Lincoln	249
Liverpool	251
Llanelli	253
Llangefni	254
Luton	258
Macclesfield	260
Maidstone	261
Manchester	262
Mansfield	263
Mayors & City of London	266
Medway	267
Merthyr Tydfil	269
Middlesbrough	270
Milton Keynes	388
Mold	271
Morpeth	273
Newcastle upon Tyne	278
Newport (Gwent)	280
Newport (IOW)	279



County Court Hearing Centre	Code
Neath & Port Talbot	274
North Shields	283
Northampton	282
Norwich	285
Nottingham	286
Nuneaton	287
Oldham	288
Oxford	291
Peterborough	294
Plymouth	296
Pontypridd	299
Portsmouth	302
Preston	303
Reading	305
Reigate	307
Rhyl	308
Romford	387
Rotherham	310
Salisbury	317
Scarborough	318
Scunthorpe	319
Sheffield	320
Skipton	325
Slough	327
South Shields	331
Southampton	328
Southend	329
St. Albans	313
St. Helens	315
Stafford	333
Staines	334
Stockport	336
Stoke on Trent	338
Sunderland	343
Swansea	344
Swindon	345
Tameside	112

County Court Hearing Centre	Code
Taunton	347
Telford	364
Thanet	348
Torquay & Newton Abbot	352
Truro	354
Tunbridge Wells	355
Uxbridge	356
Wakefield	357
Walsall	358
Wandsworth	359
Warrington	360
Warwick	361
Watford	362
Welshpool	366
West Cumbria	373
Weston Super Mare	370
Weymouth	371
Wigan	374
Willesden	375
Winchester	376
Wolverhampton	378
Woolwich	379
Worcester	380
Worthing	383
Wrexham	384
Yeovil	385
York	386

**Request/order set aside judgment**

Annex B

County Court Business Centre

Between                      The Claimant PLC                                      Case Number XXXXXXXX

and    Mr Defendant  
         The House  
         The Street  
         The Town  
         The County  
         The Postcode

Before an Officer of the Court

<please give grounds for application here>

**IT IS ORDERED THAT**

1. The Judgment entered herein on the (date) be and is hereby set aside.
2. The registration entry be and is hereby cancelled.
3. There be no order as to costs.

Dated

The court office at  
21-27 St Katharine's Street,  
Northampton  
NN1 2LH  
Open from Monday to Friday 10am to 4pm.