

I would like to make the following brief submission regarding the Civil Justice Review and specifically the area relating to **(e) Achieving more effective and less costly outcomes for court users.**

I believe that more efficient use could be made of Garda time by installing live audio/video-links from “hub” Garda stations to courts throughout the State. This would obviate the requirement for Gardaí to travel often long-distances to Court in order to give their evidence. Search warrant applications could also be made in the same manner. Such a system has been in use in some police forces in the United Kingdom for a number of years and seems to work well.

I believe that the cost of the initial installation of such a system would quickly be met by a commensurate reduction in Garda hours spent travelling to and from court, waiting to give evidence as well as reducing the cost of vehicle fuel, vehicle wear-and-tear and travel and subsistence claims. More time could be spent on core police-work by those officers who would otherwise be kicking their heels for hours and sometimes days waiting to give evidence.

So-called “hub” stations could be selected in such a manner that they represented a good geographical coverage in terms of where Garda members are deployed.

The manner of giving evidence would remain unchanged – the Garda would swear or affirm as normal and would be subject to cross-examination in the same manner. Such a system would relate to the “bread-and-butter” trials rather than the more complex/serious crimes.