

Home>Taking legal action>Legal systems - EU and national>**National Justice systems**

National justice systems

England and Wales

This section provides you with a brief overview of the courts in England and Wales.

Organisation of justice – judicial systems

The UK has three jurisdictions: England and Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland. This page discusses the courts in the England and Wales jurisdiction.

Administration of the courts

Responsibility for the administration of many of the courts in England and Wales lies with Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service ([HMCTS](#)). HMCTS is an agency of the [Ministry of Justice](#), the government department with responsibility for the justice system in England and Wales.

Types and hierarchy of courts – short description

Criminal cases in England and Wales are heard in the magistrates' courts, the Crown Court, criminal division of the Court of Appeal.

Civil cases in England and Wales are mainly heard in the county courts, the High Court and the civil division of the Court of Appeal, with Magistrates' courts having jurisdiction for a range of applications made under various pieces of legislation.

The [Supreme Court](#) of the United Kingdom is the final court of appeal in the United Kingdom for both criminal and civil cases, although Scottish criminal cases do not have the right of appeal to the Supreme Court.

Other courts with jurisdiction in England and Wales include the [European Court of Human Rights](#) whose functions to uphold the European Convention of Human Rights as it relates to national law. In addition the [Court of Justice of the European Union](#) can make rulings on the Application of European Union Law, which by virtue of the European Communities Act are binding on England and Wales.

More detailed information about courts in England and Wales can be found on the page describing ordinary courts in England and Wales and on the website of [Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service](#). Information about some of the tribunals and specialised courts in England and Wales can be found on the page describing specialised courts in England and Wales.

Related Links

[HMCTS](#), [Ministry of Justice](#), [Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service](#), [Supreme Court](#), [European Court of Human Rights](#),

[Court of Justice of the European Union](#)

Last update: 12/12/2016

The national language version of this page is maintained by the respective Member State. The translations have been done by the European Commission service. Possible changes introduced in the original by the competent national authority may not be yet reflected in the translations. The European Commission accepts no responsibility or liability whatsoever with regard to any information or data contained or referred to in this document. Please refer to the legal notice to see copyright rules for the Member State responsible for this page.