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## **Press Notice**

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### **Supreme Court of the United Kingdom comes into existence**

The new Supreme Court of the United Kingdom came into existence today (1 October 2009) and is now the highest court in the United Kingdom.

Replacing the Appellate Committee of the House of Lords, the Court's creation is a landmark moment in constitutional and legal development.

The new home of the Supreme Court is the former Middlesex Guildhall, on Parliament Square. It has been painstakingly renovated over the past two years with new life breathed into the building. Many original features have been restored and brought back to full splendour.

Established through the Constitutional Reform Act 2005, the Supreme Court will hear civil appeal cases from England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland, as well as criminal appeal cases from England, Wales and Northern Ireland. It takes over the devolution jurisdiction of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council (JCPC). The JCPC continues to be the final court of appeal for certain Commonwealth countries and other jurisdictions, such as Crown Dependencies.

The Supreme Court is set to transform the public's awareness of justice at the highest level. One of the Court's fundamental aims is to be as transparent as possible in its judgments and proceedings.

For the first time at any court in the United Kingdom, proceedings will be routinely filmed and made available to broadcasters. The building is open to the public during working hours and press summaries of judgments will be provided to the media.

The Court will educate as well as adjudicate, with a specially created exhibition on the Court's work and the UK's judicial systems.

Following the swearing in this morning, the Justices will process in their robes to Westminster Abbey to attend the annual service that marks the start of the new legal year in England and Wales.

Lord Phillips of Worth Matravers, President of the Supreme Court, said: "For the first time, we have a clear separation of powers between the legislature, the judiciary and the executive in the United Kingdom. This is important. It emphasises the independence of the judiciary, clearly separating those who make the law from those who administer it."

As Justices of the Supreme Court we will be more visible to the public than we ever were when sitting as members of the House of Lords. This is desirable as the Court will only decide points of law of public importance. Justice at the highest level should be transparent and the new Court will have a crucial role in letting the public see how justice is done.”

Jenny Rowe, Chief Executive of the Supreme Court, said: “The establishment of the Supreme Court is an important historic moment.

“The improvements and modernisation that this brings creates exciting new opportunities to show the wider public how justice is done at the highest level, to increase awareness of the UK’s legal systems and the impact the law has on people’s lives.”

## **Ends**

## **Notes to editors**

- The start of the legal year in England and Wales is traditionally marked by a procession of judges arriving at Westminster Abbey from the Royal Courts of Justice in The Strand for the service, followed by the Lord Chancellor’s ‘breakfast’ in the Great Hall in the Houses of Parliament.
- The swearing in of Justices will start at approximately 10am on Thursday 1 October at The Supreme Court of the United Kingdom. The Service in Westminster Abbey commences at 11.30am. Sworn in Justices will process to the Abbey at approximately 10.50am.

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