



**SUPREME COURT OF JUDICATURE OF NORTHERN IRELAND
CROWN COURT PRACTICE DIRECTION**

No. 2 of 2015

TARGET TIMES FOR CASES IN THE CROWN COURT

1. This direction replaces direction No. 2 of 2009.
2. The **target time** for arraignment shall be **6 weeks** from the date on which the defendant is committed for trial.
3. For County Court cases the target time to fix the date for trial is **6 weeks** from the date of committal.
4. The **target time** shall be **18 weeks** from the date of committal for trial to the start of the trial.
5. The **target time** shall be **6 weeks** from the date of plea or finding of guilt to sentencing¹.
6. In calculating these target times the Halloween recess, the Christmas Vacation, the Easter Vacation and the Long Vacation are to be left out of account.
7. As assigned County Court judge will keep under review the progress of individual Crown Court cases within his Division. In addition, a High Court judge will normally review all High Court Crown cases on a regular basis until the trial judge is allocated. In complicated or lengthy High Court cases the trial judge will be appointed at an early date to manage the case.

¹ In cases where there are multiple defendants with mixed pleas or a defendant has multiple charges with mixed pleas, measurement is taken from the latest finding of guilt or acquittal, which is the earliest date ("date of readiness") on which the court can proceed to sentence the defendant.

Where a judge defers sentence under the provisions of Article 3 of the Criminal Justice (NI) Order 1996 and the deferral is made within the target period of 6 weeks, the case will not be included in the calculation of the target time notwithstanding the fact that the final sentence has yet to be passed.

8. The target times set out in this Practice Direction will be kept under review.

9. The target times in this Direction already apply and this Direction will, therefore, come into effect immediately. The second part of the footnote to the target in paragraph 5 is new and provides that cases where the judge has deferred sentence will not be included within the calculation of the target time even though sentence has not yet been passed.



The Rt Hon Sir Declan Morgan
Lord Chief Justice of Northern Ireland

18 November 2015