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Why I'm striking over Common Platform

A Legal Adviser who is dyslexic explains how Common Platform makes her work harder as it hasn't been designed to consider the needs of all users.

I am [taking strike action](#) over HMCTS Common Platform, which has made my role as a Legal Adviser infinitely harder.

I am dyslexic. 6.3 million people (around 10% of the UK population) have dyslexia but Common Platform has been designed with no consideration for my needs.

If I have a printed copy of a document, I use highlighter pens to mark different parts of the text, such as headings, sub-headings, details that relate to each other etc. This means when I look at it my brain is able to process the information in a logical way, rather than all of the information juggling around the whole page and making no sense whatsoever.

But in Common Platform I feel completely blind and helpless. I really struggle to physically focus on the screens when I am entering data or reading off it. This is because of quite a few problems including:

- It is all black on white, with no headings or subheadings.
- The offences are not laid out in the same order between screens
- There are too many different screens you have to go to, in order to carry out simple tasks such as changing defendant details or updating charges.
- The results screen once saved doesn't accurately reflect what you have entered on the entry screen, so if you are trying to check your results (I have short term memory problems as part of my dyslexia) it is almost impossible to do this from the entry screen in real time.

I raised these points and more with my line manager and as a consequence spoke with one of the CP development team (at least I think that was who he was). He listened but said a lot of what I was asking for just wasn't possible. And that was that.

Everyone is struggling with CP but for those of us with specific processing needs, it is like putting you in front of a screen and all the words are in a foreign language which you don't speak.

It is time for HMCTS to listen to PCS and its members. It is time for HMCTS to stop introducing IT that has a discriminatory impact on court takers who are dyslexic.