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Our reference: CRI/88 631/9/1

Your reference:

The Clerk to the Justices (with a copy for
the Chairman of the Bench for information)
The Clerk to the Magistrates' Courts Committee

20 October 1989

Dear Clerk,

HOME OFFICE CIRCULAR 80/1989

PRESS ACCESS TO COURT LISTS AND TO THE REGISTER OF DECISIONS IN MAGISTRATES' COURTS

This circular encourages justices' clerks to meet reasonable requests by the media for copies of court lists and the register of decisions in magistrates' courts.

Court lists

2. In the Home Secretary's view, as is the current practice of most magistrates' courts, copies of court lists should be available to the media in court on the day of the hearings and as a minimum should contain each defendant's name, age, address and, where known, his profession and the alleged offence. Where provisional lists are prepared in advance, copies should also be made available on request.

Register of court decisions

3. Several magistrates' courts already provide their local newspaper with a copy of the court register when it is prepared. The Home Secretary would welcome the adoption of this practice by all courts. It may be possible by local arrangement for a single copy to suffice on the basis that this is shared by all local news media.

Charges

4. It is strongly recommended that the news media should be asked to meet the full economic costs of providing all copies of court papers. This is likely to vary from court to court but should include the cost of materials and staff resources required to prepare copies.

Confidentiality of certain material

5. Court results will include information that may not lawfully be published. It will be the responsibility of the editors concerned to ensure that the relevant legal restraints on publication are observed in the same way as they are responsible for the accuracy of the results of cases which they publish.

6. Any enquiries about this circular should be addressed to Roger Welsford (01 273 3521).

Yours sincerely,
E A Grant

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E A GRANT

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