

# Video conferencing serves justice



A central tenet that puts clients first has characterised JR Jones since the West London law firm was founded in 1989. Today JR Jones has lawyers that span most areas of legal practice, including family law and human rights. The firm's fight for justice on behalf of the parents of murdered black teenager Stephen Lawrence culminated in the Macpherson Enquiry. This led to a series of measures that fundamentally changed policing methods and accountability in the UK.

## BT video conferencing services help safeguard the security of vulnerable witnesses during court proceedings

### Challenge

JR Jones often deals with difficult situations such as domestic violence. Balwinder Ubha, a solicitor specialising in family law at JR Jones, explains: "Sometimes our clients fear for their personal safety and are reluctant to attend court in person. The needs of our clients are uppermost in our minds, so we always seek to find the right solution."

Video can hold the key to protecting vulnerable witnesses and many UK court buildings are equipped with video conferencing facilities. JR Jones recently needed help to set up a remote video link for one such case.

Balwinder Ubha used search engines and looked at various web sites to understand the best way to proceed. "I remembered that we had successfully used BT audio conferencing services in the past," she recalls. "When I saw that BT had a specialist legal sector services team, I called them straightaway. The people I spoke with at BT Conferencing were extremely helpful."

### Offices worldwide

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### Solution

BT Conferencing has wide expertise in video conferencing and offers an extensive product portfolio – ranging from sophisticated TelePresence suites to desktop solutions and hosted services – that can assist law firms in extending the scope of their client services.

Having taken the initiative, Balwinder Ubha located a suitably equipped court and gained agreement for the case to be held using BT video conferencing services. The two-day hearing involved two people at the remote location – the client and a clerk from JR Jones – whilst the barrister representing the client conducted proceedings from the Kingston upon Thames County Court building.

Balwinder Ubha recalls:

"The BT technology worked perfectly. Our barrister was even able to have a private pre-hearing discussion with the client using the video link. In pursuit of justice, video conferencing helped us enormously to protect the welfare of our client."

### Value

A particularly valuable aspect was that the BT video conferencing service provided the ability to record the proceedings. The lawyers involved found this really useful and it could have, for example, future training applications.

Looking to the future, JR Jones predicts a steady increase in the use of video conferencing for sensitive cases to help protect vulnerable witnesses. There are also other potential legal applications, such as conducting committal hearings remotely to avoid the costs and risks of transporting people from prison to court.

Balwinder Ubha sums up:

"The BT video conferencing service was truly excellent and BT responded immediately to any questions we had. I think video has an important role to play in the future of the legal profession."

For information on special measures that are available to assist witnesses to give evidence in criminal proceedings visit: [www.hmcourts-service.gov.uk/infoabout/attend/witness/special-measures.htm](http://www.hmcourts-service.gov.uk/infoabout/attend/witness/special-measures.htm)

For more information visit: [www.btconferencing.com](http://www.btconferencing.com)

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