

Short timeframes and late-arriving evidence

Case study with Dr Russell Keenan, Director of the Expert Witness Gateway



In urgent litigation, delay is rarely caused by the expert's clinical work. More often, it is created by the mechanics around it: emails missed, attachments blocked, and multiple hand-offs between solicitor and expert. The Expert Witness Gateway exists to remove that friction – not by changing the expert's duties, but by giving both parties a secure, structured and always-available workflow that matches the reality of modern court timetables.

This case study from February 2026 illustrates why that matters.

The problem: short timeframes and late-arriving evidence

In many medico-legal matters, the expert's report cannot be finalised until evidence is available. Haematology is a good example: results may be required to confirm a diagnosis, exclude differential causes or provide an evidential foundation for causation. Those results are produced by laboratories operating on their own processing windows, and they do not adapt to the court's timetable simply because a hearing is imminent.

In this case, the hearing was listed for **Monday 2 February 2026**. The haematology testing was essential to the expert's analysis and needed to be considered before the report could be completed. Despite appropriate pursuit of the outstanding results, the laboratory did not issue them until **Sunday 1 February 2026** – less than 24 hours before the hearing.

That is not unusual. It is, however, the precise scenario in which traditional instruction models often fail: where the expert is ready to work, the evidence arrives late, and the remaining risk sits entirely in how quickly the completed report can be transmitted.

The traditional bottleneck: agency hand-offs and office hours

Under a typical agency-led process, the final step is often the slowest. Even if the expert works on a weekend, the report may still be routed through agency administration for onward transmission. If the report is finished on a Sunday, the agency may not even see it until staff return on Monday

morning. At that point, the report must still be checked, processed, and forwarded to the solicitor – with the very real prospect that the legal team receives it too late to prepare.

This is not a criticism of agency staff; it is a structural limitation. If access, processing and onward delivery rely on office-hours workflows, then the system cannot cope with late-breaking evidence in a case listed for Monday morning. The effect is predictable: the report arrives at the point of maximum urgency, leaving the solicitor with little time to review.

The Gateway model: direct, secure, 24/7 collaboration

The Expert Witness Gateway is built around a different principle: the expert and the instructing solicitor should be able to collaborate and exchange key documents securely at the pace demanded by the case – including outside conventional business hours – while maintaining clear structure.

In this case, once the laboratory results were received on **Sunday 1 February 2026**, the expert was able to complete the report that same day. Crucially, the report did not need to "wait for Monday" to reach the solicitor. The expert uploaded it straight to the Gateway immediately upon completion.

Because the Gateway provides **24/7 access** for authorised users, the solicitor was able to log in and access the report on the Sunday evening. That single feature – round-the-clock access to the authoritative final document – converted what could have been a Monday-morning crisis into a controlled, manageable situation. The solicitor had the report in hand ahead of the hearing, with sufficient time to read it.

Why that is "effectiveness", not just speed

Efficiency matters, but the more important point is effectiveness: the ability for an expert opinion to be delivered in a way that is actually usable for court.

A report received after a hearing begins may be academically excellent, but functionally irrelevant. The Gateway's workflow prevents that failure mode by removing unnecessary intermediaries in the final mile, without removing the safeguards

that solicitors and experts need. The expert remains responsible for the content and independence of their opinion; the solicitor remains responsible for case management and compliance. What changes is the reliability of delivery and access at critical times.

In practical terms, the Gateway improves effectiveness in four ways:

- (1) **Continuity under time pressure**
- (2) **Reduced risk of missed communications**
- (3) **Immediate solicitor access and readiness**
- (4) **Clearer collaboration**

The takeaway: resilience when the timetable compresses

This February 2026 case demonstrates a simple truth: when the evidence arrives late, the only way to meet the court's timetable is to remove avoidable delay everywhere else. The Expert Witness Gateway did not change when the lab released results; it changed what happened next.

The expert completed the report on **Sunday 1 February 2026**, uploaded it immediately, and the solicitor accessed it the same evening – fully prepared for the **Monday 2 February 2026** hearing. Under a traditional agency model, the report would likely have been trapped behind office hours, with the solicitor receiving it too late.

In urgent cases, that difference is decisive. The Gateway's 24/7, secure, direct access model turns fragile workflows into resilient ones.

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