



Minutes

Litigants in Person Engagement Group

Wednesday 30 November 2022, 16:00-18:00

Attendees:

Members: Mr Justice Knowles, Lauren Van Staden (HMCTS), [REDACTED] (HMCTS), [REDACTED] (HMCTS), [REDACTED] (Law for Life), [REDACTED] (Justice), [REDACTED] (Money Advice Trust), [REDACTED] (Judicial Office), [REDACTED] (Law For Life), [REDACTED] (Access to Justice), [REDACTED] (Citizens Advice), [REDACTED] (Access to Justice), [REDACTED] (RCJ Advice), [REDACTED] (Support through Court), [REDACTED] (Law for Life), [REDACTED] (Freshfields)

Other Attendees: [REDACTED] (HMCTS), [REDACTED] (HMCTS), [REDACTED] (HMCTS), [REDACTED] (HMCTS), [REDACTED] (HMCTS), [REDACTED] (HMCTS), [REDACTED] (HMCTS), [REDACTED] (HMCTS)

Apologies: [REDACTED] (Advice UK), [REDACTED] (HMCTS), [REDACTED] (HMCTS), Nick Goodwin (HMCTS)

Summary of Action and Recommendation Points

ID	Action	Owner
AP-62-22	Civil team to work with Advicenow to consider adding their suite of guidance for Civil claims signposting	Civil
AP-63-22	PUE team to facilitate a demo of the OCMC service at an engagement opportunity in the new year	Civil/PUE
AP-64-22	Civil Team to work with the Accessibility & Inclusion (A&I) team and engage with PUE groups on signposting for defendants when a Writ of Control is issued	Civil
AP-65-22	LiPEG members to supply additional signposting content, which could be added to the Bailiff Vulnerability Toolkit	LiPEG
AP-66-22	A&I team to continue to engage with the sector as the project progresses	A&I
AP-67-22	Members to get in touch with A&I team if they need a demonstration of the support journey or to ask questions	LiPEG
AP-68-22	Members to feedback to Comms/PUE if anyone has helped court users on the new divorce law and could share this information with HMCTS	LiPEG

Minutes

1 Welcome

Lauren van Staden welcomed members to the meeting.

2 Actions from Previous Meetings

2.1 [REDACTED] gave apologies for the actions not being sent through. This was due to unexpected sickness and leave absence

3. Overview from the HMCTS Civil team

3.1 The Civil team presented to LiPEG and invited feedback from members.

3.2 Feedback from members was that they were impressed with the scope of the project. Members said that this was an opportunity to make sure that the direction orders are simplified where possible.

3.3 Members welcomed the signposting guidance and asked if it included the AdviceNow suite of guidance on bringing civil claims.

3.4 Members were impressed with the percentage of cases going to mediation. A question was asked about the financial limit and whether it was mandatory.

3.5 [REDACTED] from the Civil team responded that the Ministry of Justice had recently consulted on the proposal for automatic referral to mediation for defended claims under £10,000. Responses are still being processed and the Government will publish their response in due course. Mediation is currently available for all defended claims under £10,000 where all parties agree to mediate.

3.6 [REDACTED] queried the timescale for the civil reform work in discovery and design. The Civil team responded that, for the enforcement and bulk claims project, there was a lot of work to do which will be pushed into the next financial year.

3.7 [REDACTED] asked if she could get involved with a demo of the complete system.

AP-62-22 Civil team to work with Advicenow to consider adding their suite of guidance for Civil Claims signposting

AP-63-22: PUE team to facilitate a demo of the OCMC service at an engagement opportunity in the new year

3.8 Members asked when the expansion of OCMC for claims over £10,000 would happen. The Civil team said that this should happen towards the end of March, but there was no definite date at this stage.

3.9 Members asked about the upload of evidence and when this would happen. The Civil team responded that the current plans were for around February 2023, but this could change.

3.10 Judge Knowles queried where the user satisfaction data of 95% came from. Lauren replied that, within the digital journey, the feedback survey came after the claim was issued. The HMCTS perception team was piloting a satisfaction

survey at the end of a user's journey within another service, to see if this was a viable method that could be adopted across HMCTS.

- 3.11 Judge Knowles spoke about the bridge from a judgement to enforcement, with the warrant of control being the next step after a judgement.
- 3.12 The Civil team spoke about work once a judgement had been granted and about research on the landing page where people can understand their options.
- 3.13 [REDACTED] spoke about the possibility of making payments more affordable and a payment schedule being built in.
- 3.14 [REDACTED] (Civil team) responded that this tied into a couple of points and the current three-month agreement between the court and defendant is an informal arrangement. She spoke about the need to get the financial statement right so it could be used by all.
- 3.15 [REDACTED] provided a short update from the insight team (from slide 10 of the slide deck) and [REDACTED] provided a civil BAU enforcement update.
- 3.16 [REDACTED] congratulated the service on the introduction of the automated payment line and asked if there would be any further developments especially for those with mental health issues.
- 3.17 [REDACTED] added that the debt advice sector would like to work on the revisions to Writs of Control.
- 3.18 [REDACTED] said that, as Civil was looking to improve the Writ of Control process, the team would also look to improve signposting for defendants when a writ is issued.

AP-64-22: Civil Team to work with the A&I team and engage with PUE groups on signposting for defendants when a Writ of Control is issued

- 3.19 [REDACTED] commented on the use of the phone line as part of the reforming service. [REDACTED] confirmed that an online option is being considered for the reform project.
- 3.20 [REDACTED] asked about Attachment of Earnings. The Civil team responded that this enforcement option remained in use, although volumes had decreased over the last 12 months.
- 3.21 Members asked if Charging Orders were in the pipeline to be digitised? The Civil team responded that these orders were not within the scope of reform, but it was something the team oversee and they were aware of the potential for future improvements.
- 3.22 Judge Knowles referred to the importance of providing clear information and signposting for claimants as well as defendants, as it was rare for Legal Aid to be available for enforcement.
- 3.23 [REDACTED] (Civil team) stated that the service appreciated the members' feedback on the work with the Determination of Means Working Group. The team would continue to work the group and the HMCTS Accessibility & Inclusion team.
- 3.24 [REDACTED] (Civil team) presented work on the Bailiff vulnerability toolkit to members.

- 3.25 [REDACTED] asked if the service was looking to signpost to agencies dealing with debt. [REDACTED] responded that they would like to provide bailiffs with as much information as possible. [REDACTED] mentioned some organisations which were not charities providing free debt advice. One specific organisation was an insolvency practitioner firm and not a charity providing a free helpline. The Civil team confirmed that they would remove this organisation from the leaflet.

AP-65-22: LIPEG Members to supply additional signposting content, which could be added to the Bailiff vulnerability toolkit

4. Supporting our court and tribunal users

- 4.1 [REDACTED] the Accessibility & Inclusion (A&I) team, updated members on work carried out to connect users to additional support. Where needs cannot be met by HMCTS, a signposting strategy has been created to connect users with external support services. The following material was presented to members:
- 4.2 Judge Knowles fed back that the summary findings captured the current situation very well. This was a world that needed to be moved away from e.g. out of date leaflets and staff being concerned that signposting was giving advice. Judge Knowles was encouraged because the presentation indicated that the ethos of the HMCTS was changing.
- 4.3 He gave further feedback on the potential value of the presentation, referring to the interface between HMCTS Staff at frontline line and public users.
- 4.4 He said that LiPEG was a living example of how relationships with agencies to support litigants could be developed, as this support in this area was very difficult to deliver.
- 4.5 [REDACTED] (Civil team) was invited to comment by Judge Knowles. [REDACTED] spoke about the signposting work linking to work that has been carried out in Enforcement giving staff additional guidance. Civil is currently carrying out work on staff training and guidance on this at present and explained the issues of having staff with differing levels of experience.
- 4.6 [REDACTED] spoke about the importance of having senior Judiciary on board with signposting.
- 4.7 [REDACTED] complimented the A&I Team on the thorough work they had carried out. She suggested training court staff up with a range of resources that they could use in courts.
- 4.8 Judge Knowles suggested the A&I team set up an offline meeting with [REDACTED] and other leaders of front-line agencies to go through the national resources that resources are available.
- 4.9 [REDACTED] AdviceNow has a help directory with national organisations within in it.
- 4.10 The A&I Team responded that they would continue to engage with the sector to understand what national resources are available as the project progresses.

AP-66-22 A&I team to continue to engage with the sector as the project progresses.

- 4.11 [REDACTED] (A&I team) then moved on to speak about how, throughout Reform, HMCTS had developed an improved way for users to request support, in particular reasonable adjustments. She also covered how requests are managed, and how support is provided.
- 4.12 [REDACTED] explained to members that when the solution is implemented, they are expecting to have much better data on what user needs are and to get a better managed process. It is hoped this will then allow services to better understand user needs and areas of service delivery needing improvement.
- 4.13 Lauren suggested that members get in touch with [REDACTED] the wider A&I team if they would like a demonstration of the model or to ask questions.

AP-67-22: Members to get in touch with A&I team if they need a demonstration of the support journey or to ask questions.

5. Post Reform Engagement Model

- 5.1 [REDACTED] presented the post reform engagement model for forums to members and discussed how engagement between HMCTS and the third sector would change as the service moves out of reform. The proposal is for a strategic engagement group looking across HMCTS with Robin and Lauren continuing as chairs. This group would be supplemented by four jurisdictional public engagement groups will be established with practitioner level membership.
- 5.2 Lauren acknowledged that there was a lot to share in a short amount of time, but stressed the importance of the engagement from members and the importance of continuing with it.
- 5.3 Judge Knowles stated the Public User Engagement event in February would be an opportunity to reflect and remarked on the success that had been achieved working with engagement groups.

6. AOB

- 6.1 [REDACTED] spoke about the request from HMCTS Comms for any organisation to come forward if they can share any experiences from having helped court users with the new divorce law introduced earlier in the year.

AP-68-22: Members to feedback to Comms/PUE if anyone has helped court users on the new divorce law and could share this information with HMCTS.

- 6.2 [REDACTED] spoke about the PUE Annual User Event that will be held in Petty France. Originally the date for the event was 7 February but this has now been updated to **Wednesday 22 March**. Tickets are available on Eventbrite.
- 6.3 The chairs closed the meeting and expressed their gratitude to members for their sharing their commitment, time and experience.

Meeting Closed